

TOLEDO MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGES  
TIMOTHY C. KUHLMAN, PRESIDING JUDGE  
555 North Erie Street  
Toledo, OH 43604  
419-245-1949

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2008

#### COURT ANNOUNCES SINGLE JUDGE ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM

Beginning July 15, 2008, the Toledo Municipal Court will implement Single Judge Assignment which will "link" offenders who have open probation files or pending criminal or traffic cases to a single judge. Any new cases set for trial will be assigned to that "Link Judge," according to Timothy C. Kuhlman, Presiding Judge.

The "Link Judge" or single judge assignment will provide more effective and efficient case management for the offenders, court staff, attorneys and judges.

A "Link Judge" is established by an open probation file. On July 14, 2008, all probation files for each defendant will be consolidated to the judge who most recently placed the defendant on probation. On and after July 15, 2008, the Link Judge will not change until all probation supervision matters for a defendant are terminated.

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If a defendant is on probation and enters a plea of not guilty on a new case, the new case will be assigned to the Link Judge.

If a defendant enters a plea of not guilty on a new case and is not on probation supervision, but has other pending cases assigned to a judge, the new case will be assigned to the judge with the oldest pending case. If a defendant is not on probation and has no pending cases, the case will be randomly assigned to a judge which is the current practice. All Housing Cases will continue to be assigned to Housing Judge C. Allen McConnell.

The Northwest Ohio Regional Information System (NORIS) developed the necessary integration between the Clerk's information system (CLIP) and the Judges' assignment system (CATS) to provide the computer functionality for single judge assignment. This programming determines the Link Judge and identifies the assigned judge with the oldest pending case for each defendant.

“This project could not be implemented without the highly skilled NORIS staff whose understanding of the integrated criminal justice system in northwest Ohio is unparalleled. Their analysis of our needs and ability to integrate two systems seamlessly is on par with any national computer vendor. We are fortunate to have the ability to effectuate major changes in our case management system at a reasonable cost and in a short time,” Judge Kuhlman stated.

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The court also thanks Toledo Municipal Court Clerk Vallie Bowman-English, Chief Probation Officer Kim Oats, Assignment Commissioner Karen Wood and their staffs. Without the hard work and expertise of all the people involved, this valuable change would not be possible.

“The Link Judge assignment process is the most significant case management change made by the Toledo Municipal Court since the implementation of the Rules of Superintendence promulgated by the Ohio Supreme Court in 1975,” Judge Kuhlman stated.

Similar single judge assignment systems are in place in other large Ohio municipal courts such as Hamilton County Municipal Court and Dayton Municipal Court.

Presiding Judge Kuhlman presented an overview of the new assignment system to members of the bar at the Toledo Bar Association’s Municipal Courts Committee April meeting and the Municipal Court’s CLE Seminar last year.

The court first began working toward implementation of the link judge system in April, 2007. Court rule changes and transition plans were discussed by the judges in September, with final agreement of the proposed assignment changes in February, 2008. Due to an insufficient NORIS budget, program analysts and development personnel were not available to dedicate full time to this project, which delayed its implementation.

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Toledo Municipal Court Local Rule 15 has been revised to reflect the changes that go into effect July 15, 2008.

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Attachment: Toledo Municipal Court Local Rule 15

Contact: Timothy C. Kuhlman, Presiding Judge

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cc: Mayor Carleton Finkbeiner

Members of City Council

Vallie Bowman- English, Clerk of Court

Pat Wright, Executive Director, CJCC/NORIS

Toledo Bar Association