

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Annual Report of the Maine Judicial Branch

Fiscal Year 2000
July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000

Judge assembles Web site to assist prospective jurors

By BETTY ADAMS
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — Those called for jury service in any of Maine's superior courts can find directions, get answers to their questions and obtain hints about where to park through the new mainejuror.com Web site created by Andrew M. Mead, chief justice of the Maine Superior

"You have to understand (Mead) is technologically one of our more competent judges. We have judges who



Courthouse expansion gets initial financing

THE COURIER GAZETTE
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approval for the Knox expansion. He said the latest cost estimate for the expansion to serve the court system is \$4 million to \$5 million. He noted this was separate from the renovations being planned to meet with opposition from lawyers as well as city officials. In January 1999, an initial plan by the state to expand the existing courthouse came in at \$3 million. That rose to about \$5 million by

Local / Maine

Group plans opening of juvenile drug court

By PETER POCHNA
Blethen Maine Newspapers

juveniles, makes them accountable for what they do, provides them with the necessary services, and gives them inducements to become pro- that juvenile court will have a much longer life span. He said he expects that federal funds will continue to be available for the foreseeable future.

Year in Review: Fiscal Year July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000

Court Unification Task Force Legislation Shuffles Caseload

In its second session, Maine's 119th Legislature enacted laws that substantially changed the structure of Maine's court system. The legislation grew out of the work of the "Court Unification Task Force" ("CUTAF"). CUTAF met regularly from September 1998 through December 1999 to accomplish its charge: "to develop recommendations to implement the unification of the Superior and District Courts." Chaired by former Chief Justice Vincent L. McKusick, members included representatives of the Maine State Bar and Trial Lawyers Associations, District Attorneys, community advocates, and the courts. The Task Force further defined its mission as "to improve court services for Maine citizens by redesigning the trial courts, (with)... the obligation to recommend unification measures that will provide a net benefit to the users of the court system...."

The primary changes, effective January 1, 2001, were:

- All divorces and family matters are filed in District Court. This change requires that all divorce and family cases be processed and managed through the Family Division of the District Court.
- Almost all appeals, with a few exceptions including small claims and forcible entry and detainer cases, go directly to the Law Court instead of the Superior Court. This substantially reduces the intermediate appellate function of the Superior Court.
- Almost any civil case can be filed in District Court, regardless of the amount of damages sought. Previous statute capped civil action damages at \$30,000.
- Civil and Criminal rules were amended, including an entirely

new set of appeal rules applying to both civil and criminal appeals. The filing fees were adjusted so that cost of filing a civil suit is \$100 in either the District or Superior Court.

- In a separate action, the Legislature amended the jurisdiction of the District Court to encompass the jurisdiction of the Administrative Court, which included actions regarding business and professional license violations and appeals. Effective March 15, 2001, this act abolishes the Administrative Court, which was created in 1973 and became part of the Judicial Branch in 1978.

Juvenile Drug Courts: Changing Lives, one kid at a time

The Maine Juvenile Drug Treatment Court program began operation on January 1, 2001. Funded primarily (90% of \$800,000) through a federal Juvenile Justice Accountability Block Grant, the program was authorized by the Maine Legislature, which provided the necessary 10% in matching funds. The Juvenile Drug Court aims to reduce the time between offense and court appearance of juvenile offenders, screen juvenile offenders for substance abuse, provide case managers to monitor each case, make complete and efficient use of available community resources, require regular — as often as weekly — court appearances for offenders, allow judges to control and review individual cases, and provide incentives or disincentives for measured progress or regression on the part of juvenile offenders. Chief Justice Wathen noted, "This program provides us a new opportunity of constant court attention, assessment, and pressure to achieve a necessary goal of freedom from drugs and a

constructive, law-abiding pattern of life."

The true impact of the Juvenile Drug Court is evident in the changing life stories of the youths who participate in the program, and in the experience of the judges who provide guidance and caring to "their kids." One judge offered this poignant description of her experience with juveniles under her "care": "Each (juvenile) is so unique, with a special set of challenges, but very funny, human and vulnerable. They started on drugs and alcohol so young, some using regularly as early as seven or eight years old — smoking dope, swallowing illegal prescription drugs, drinking hard liquor and smoking cigarettes. They hardly know themselves unless they are under the influence of substances; most have a hard or wisecrack exterior but are so young and vulnerable underneath. Their problems go way beyond peer pressure or being cool; they are truly addicted at fourteen years old. I have a sixteen year old girl who came into the drug court using pot and illegal antidepressant prescription drugs. She was living with her mother's boyfriend; her Mom was living with another friend because she had broken up with the boyfriend, and the girl's father had sexually abused her. Now this girl is living in her own apartment, going to school full time and getting A's and B's, working part time, and has been clean for four months. She's doing great, but she's still only sixteen and I wake up at night thinking about the pressure she is under and that there is no one there to kiss her good morning and make her breakfast or bring her juice if she has a cold. Of course, this is true for lots of kids we see, but she's my kid at least once every week and being a juvenile drug court judge is very personal."

continued next page

Year in Review *continued*

The Drug Court treatment program provides a variety of events, challenges, and celebrations for the juveniles and the community of adults that work with them. Judges, probation officers, treatment providers, and drug court managers organize and attend barbecues, pizza parties, charitable projects, and even canoeing and ropes courses. The opportunities for growth and positive self-awareness enrich the lives of the juveniles, as a Bangor judge reports: "A female drug court participant exhibited a horrible attitude about participating in a ropes challenge outing. Her resistance was weakened only when faced with the choice between the ropes adventure or the Northern Maine Juvenile Detention Facility. During the event, with strong encouragement from another participant, she scaled a rope contraption 30 feet in the air. It is impossible to describe her expression of true pride and self-satisfaction as she reached the top. It was the first smile I had ever seen from her throughout her weeks of participation in the Drug Court."

Foundation Laid for Adult Drug Court System

The 119th Legislature enacted legislation allowing for "the establishment of alcohol and drug treatment programs in Maine courts." The law sets out strong goals for the program: to reduce alcohol and drug abuse and dependency among criminal offenders; to reduce criminal recidivism; to increase personal familial and societal accountability of offenders; to promote healthy and safe family relationships; to promote effective interaction and use of resources among justice system personnel and community agencies; and to reduce the overcrowding of prisons. The act calls for the Judicial Branch to collaborate with prosecutors, defense

attorneys, Corrections, state departments, and local community agencies and businesses to establish and maintain programs. The legislature included funding for an Adult Court Coordinator position and money for training in its FY'01 budget.

Over the course of the next year, planning and training efforts will be accomplished. The Drug Court Committee will present its recommendations to the Legislature. The Adult Drug Court, which must be operated separately from the juvenile drug courts, is expected to yield the same quality of justice and change that the juvenile program has produced.

Jurors Gain Website, Parking and Recognition

Superior Court Chief Justice Andrew M. Mead, determined to ease and enhance the experience for jurors, taught himself how to program and successfully created a website specifically for Maine jurors. The site, www.mainejuror.com provides prospective jurors with basic information about what to expect from jury service, and includes maps and parking hints as well as photos of each courthouse. Although "home-grown", the website has received mention on the Apple web page, as an example of website production using a Macintosh computer.

Justice Mead, a strong advocate for improving compensation for jurors, testified before the Legislature for increases in juror pay and expense reimbursement. Although the rate of \$10/day was not increased, the legislature did approve a



budget that included funding to reimburse jurors for their parking expenses.

Maine's first *Juror Appreciation Day* was proclaimed by Governor Angus S. King, Jr., and celebrated on Law Day, May 1, 2000. The governor, Chief Justice Wathen and Speaker of the House Stephen Rowe participated in a ceremony to "pay tribute and gratitude to the thousands of Maine men and women who have rendered service to their country and state by their service as jurors."

Family Court Continues to Grow

Less than three years after its creation, the Family Division of the District Court has established itself as an accessible and respected forum for family disputes. Goals that were set at the program's beginning continued to guide the daily operation. These include promoting a timely resolution of family cases, facilitating parenting arrangements in the best interest of children, providing effective case management, providing a better understanding of the court process (especially for unrepresented parties) and minimizing the harm to children caused by the conflict involved in family law cases.

Case Management Officers are charged with advancing these goals. To accomplish this, the CMO's have many roles: facilitator, educator, decision maker, and case controller. Maine's CMO's have fulfilled these roles with excellence, as reflected in the comments made by litigants and attorneys who provided this feedback: *"This family division (is) the best innovation in the court system in this half century... Instrumental in settling difficult cases... Litigants are comfortable, able to ask questions and receive answers and are more inclined to participate in the decision and order... Made an otherwise unpleasant experience better."*

CASA Program Expands and Strengthens

With the opening of two new satellite offices, in Skowhegan and Belfast, CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates) spread its presence and services throughout the state. The two regional coordinator positions that make this expansion possible are funded through a grant from the National CASA Association. Expanded recruitment and training efforts helped to increase the roster to over 150 volunteers who are actively involved in child protection cases in 26 of 31 District Court locations.

CASA volunteers serve as "a child's voice in court" throughout protective proceedings, evaluating the child's circumstances and making recommendations to the court regarding the child's best interests. Judge Joseph Field, stepping down as chair of the CASA advisory Board, expressed his appreciation for the crucial contributions of CASA volunteers, saying, "As a judge, I regularly benefit from the investigative work and insightful judgments of CASA volunteers. Deciding the futures of children in protective care is the most important and frequently the most difficult decisions I am required to make. CASA volunteers function as my eyes and ears. They bring the independent impartial viewpoint needed to make the best possible decisions about each child's best interests."

Technology Advances

Having been introduced in all Superior Courts in the previous year, the criminal module of the Maine Judicial Information system (MEJIS), made its way into the District Courts throughout FY'00. MEJIS is the computerized docketing system that has been developed by the employees of the Office of Information Technology, who provide not only the

programming but also the technical support and training to sustain the daily operation. MEJIS advances over the past year included transmission of vital information to other state agencies, and performance of key financial operations.

Provision of continuous technical education for staff in clerks' offices throughout the state is an enormous task. Training sessions were conducted for sites that received MEJIS for the first time and were followed by on-site support during the first week of operations. In addition, training for new employees and refresher courses for veterans were offered throughout the year.

Training Department Has Banner Year

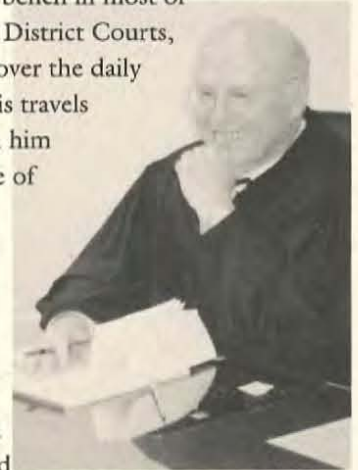
Over the course of FY'00, the Training Department provided 93 training opportunities that yielded over 750 units of attendance by Judicial Branch employees. Seventy-five percent of these sessions were facilitated by about a dozen dedicated employees who volunteer to present training programs to their fellow employees. These "internal trainers" must develop skills to become proficient presenters, become knowledgeable in a variety of subjects, and travel to present programs. The success of the group is a product of not only their own hard work and enthusiasm, but also relies on the support of their supervisors and co-workers, who must fill the gaps when the trainers have to take time from their regular assignments.

In addition to the internal training opportunities, several Judicial Branch employees accessed the funds provided by the "Education, Training and Career Mobility Fund" and the "Confidential Employees Education and Training Fund" to attend seminars and conferences, take college courses and build skills.

Many other employees accessed the materials available through the training library, borrowing books as well as audio and video tapes to enhance their personal and professional skills.

Chief Justice on the Trial Trail

Chief Justice Daniel E. Wathen continued his quest to visit and serve in all the trial courts across the state. Over the past couple of years, he has sat on the bench in most of the state's District Courts, presiding over the daily docket. His travels have given him knowledge of the challenges and conflicts that face the trial courts and he has used his



understanding as an effective advocate for changes in the court system.

Chief Wathen's days in court have led him to promote improvements in court facilities, staffing and security. Judicial Branch budgets have included requests for additional clerks and judges, court facility replacement and renovation, and greater resources for court security. Having witnessed the struggles of pro se litigants, he has led the fight to provide more funds for legal services for the poor. He has also championed the cause of "unbundling" legal services which would allow litigants to purchase specific legal advice without having to pay the cost of total case representation.

Maine Judicial Branch Presents Awards for Excellence, 2000

The Maine Judicial Branch honored a number of Maine citizens for their contributions toward the accomplishment of justice in the state during an award ceremony that was held in conjunction with the fourth annual all-employee meeting.

Judicial Branch Employee of the Year was **Vicki Hardy**, clerk of the combined Franklin Superior-Farmington District court. She was recognized as an exemplary leader, providing her employees with encouragement, gratitude and respect. Ms. Hardy was joined by her entire team, **the Franklin County Court Team** in receiving a **Special Service Award** for hosting a Christmas party for foster children in Franklin County. In one nominator's words, "The party epitomized the excellent work done by the courts, allowing children and court staff to meet each other in a safe, non-threatening and even fun way. The staff reached out to the children whose lives are affected by the proceedings in the Courtroom and through their warmth and kindness made the Court and its processes seem friendly and caring."

The **Advocates for Justice** award, which recognizes citizens who "have most effectively championed the cause of justice in our society," was presented to two individuals who have provided leadership within the Judicial Branch and in the Legislature, yielding significant changes over the past few years. **District Chief Judge Michael Westcott** has been a tireless visionary leader, implementing a number of innovations in the District Court. He led the courts through such major changes as regional-based organizational structure, the creation of the Family Division, a case management system for Child Protection cases, training and rostering of Guardians ad Litem, the development of statewide parent education programs, and the initiation of Juvenile Drug Treatment Court. **State Representative Richard Thompson** has been a strong and effective advocate for the Judicial Branch in the Legislature. Working as chair of the Judiciary Committee, Rep. Thompson enabled the Judicial Branch to secure the necessary resources to improve the delivery of justice to Maine's citizens.

Supreme Court secretary Christie-Lynn Clifford was presented a **Special Service Award** for her willingness to reach beyond her daily assignments and become a valuable asset to the entire Judicial Branch. She has volunteered to actively serve on the Performance Council, taking on leadership roles in the council's activities. She is also the co-editor of the employee newsletter *Just'Us-for-All*, and organizes and distributes listings of educational opportunities to all sites.

Terry Hayes of Buckfield, was honored as the **Judicial Branch Volunteer of the Year**. Ms. Hayes has been a member of the District Court's Guardian ad litem Committee since its inception. In just a few years, the GAL Committee has developed rules and standards for GAL's, organized and conducted statewide training programs and instituted a rostering process. Ms. Hayes was instrumental in all of these projects. In addition, she serves as a CASA volunteer and as a member of the CASA advisory board. Her enthusiasm and dedication have resulted in tangible and important advances in the representation of children's interests in the courts.



Farmington employees Ronda Nelson and Holly Smith decorate a couple of holiday party guests. (photo courtesy Franklin Journal)



District Chief Judge Michael Westcott receives the "Advocates for Justice" Award.



Christie Clifford accepts her "Special Service" award while Justice Alexander proudly watches.



The raucous and proud employees of Farmington Court accept their "Special Service" award for having hosted a holiday party for foster children in their area. (L to R: Bob "Santa" Bowering, Judge Bob Mullen, Gwen Corson, Holly Smith, Chief Justice Wathen, Ronda Nelson, Christine Quirion, Employee of the Year Vicki Hardy, and Del Lagasse.)

State of Maine Court Structure (as of March 15, 2001)

How Does Maine Select Judges?

All of Maine's judges (at the District Court level) and justices (at the Superior and Supreme Court level) are appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Legislature, and serve seven-year terms. They may be reappointed at a term's end, and may be appointed to active status upon retirement. Each judge is appointed to serve at a particular court level, but may be assigned to serve at other court levels upon request of the Chief Justice.

Supreme Judicial Court (Law Court)

7 Justices, 25.2 support positions

The Supreme Judicial Court, located in Portland, is the governing body of the Judicial Branch, and, sitting as the Law Court, it is the Court of final appeal. The court hears appeals of civil and criminal cases from the District and Superior Courts, appeals from final judgments and decrees of the Probate Courts (which is a county system), appeals of decisions of the Public Utilities Commission and the Workers' Compensation Board. In addition, single justices handle admission to the Bar and Bar disciplinary proceedings. The court makes decisions regarding legislative apportionment and renders advisory opinions concerning important questions of law when requested by the Governor or Legislature.

Average Filings	
Civil Cases	622
Criminal Cases	195
Total Caseload	817



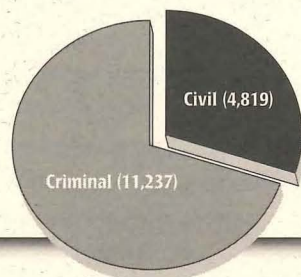
Supreme Judicial Court:
(front row) Robert W. Clifford, Daniel E. Wathen (Chief Justice), Paul L. Rudman; (back row), Donald G. Alexander, Howard H. Dana, Jr., Leigh I. Saufley, Susan W. Calkins.

Superior Court

16 Justices, 103.6 clerk's office and support positions; 17 locations, one in each county seat and an auxiliary location in Aroostook County

The Superior Court, located in 17 courthouses around the state, is Maine's trial court of general jurisdiction. The Chief Justice serves as administrative head of the court. The court has original or exclusive jurisdiction over all criminal and civil matters that are not the exclusive jurisdiction of the District court. The Superior Court is the only court where civil and criminal jury trials are held.

Average Filings	
Civil Cases	4,819
Criminal Cases	11,237
Total Caseload	16,056



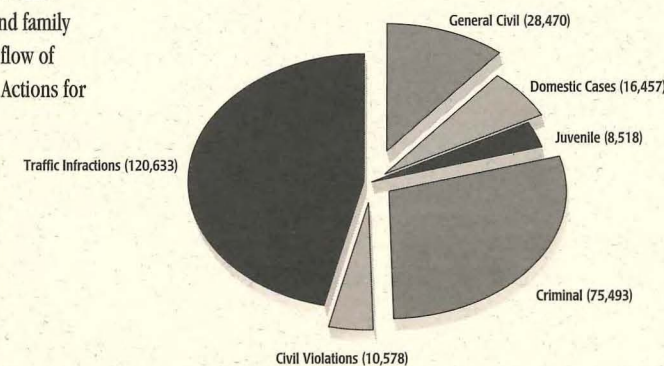
Superior Court Justices: (front row) Nancy Mills, Roland A. Cole, G. Arthur Brennan, Thomas E. Delahanty, II, Margaret J. Kravchuk, Paul T. Pierson, Paul A. Fritzsche, Andrew M. Mead. (back row) Stephen L. Perkins (activated retired), Thomas D. Warren, Thomas E. Humphrey, Donald H. Marden, Robert E. Crowley, Francis C. Marsano, John R. Atwood, S. Kirk Studstrup, Jeffrey L. Hjelm, Carl O. Bradford (active retired). Absent from photo: Ellen A. Gorman, Ian MacInnes (active retired).

District Court

33 judges, 8 Case Management Officers, 236.2 clerk's office and support positions; 31 court locations; 1 centralized Maine Judicial Branch Violations Bureau

The District Court, located in 31 courthouses around the state, is a court of limited jurisdiction that hears both civil and criminal matters and always sits without a jury. Within the District Court is the Family Division, which hears all divorce and family matters, including child support and paternity cases. Case Management Officers hear family cases, and manage the case flow of primarily uncontested cases. The District Court also hears child protection cases, and serves as Maine's juvenile court. Actions for protection from abuse or harassment, mental health, small claims cases (in which the damages are not more than \$4,500) and money judgments are filed in the District Court. Traffic infraction tickets are processed primarily through a centralized Violations Bureau, which is part of the District Court system. Hearings contesting traffic infraction or civil violations are heard by the District Court. Most misdemeanor criminal cases (classes D & E), when the defendant waives the right to jury trial are tried in the District Court.

Average Filings	
General Civil	28,470
Domestic Cases	16,457
Juvenile	8,518
Criminal	75,493
Civil Violations	10,578
Traffic Infractions	120,633
Total Caseload	260,148



District Court Judges: (front row) Keith A. Powers, Peter J. Goranites, Jane S. Bradley, Michael N. Westcott, Jon D. Levy, Bernard C. Staples, Patricia G. Worth, John C. Sheldon. (Row 2) John D. McElwee, James E. MacMichael, William R. Anderson, André G. Janelle, Jessie B. Gunther, Robert E. Mullen, John B. Beliveau, Ann M. Murray, Rae Ann French, Rick E. Lawrence. (Row 3) E. Paul Eggert, Kevin L. Stitham, Roland Beaudoin, Paul A. Cote, Jr., Joseph H. Field, Vendean V. Vafiades, Ronald D. Russell, A. Mark Horton. Absent from photo: Douglas A. Clapp, Ronald A. Daigle, Christine Foster, David B. Griffiths, John C. Nivison, John V. Romei, Joyce A. Wheeler.



Case Management Officers: J. David Kennedy, Nancy D. Carlson, Marilyn E. Stavros, Bruce A. Jordan, Louise A. Klaila, Lisa J. Friedlander, Paul D. Mathews. Absent from photo: Joan M. Kidman

Mission

To administer justice by providing an accessible, efficient and impartial system of dispute resolution that serves the public interest, protects individual rights, and instills respect for the law.

Guiding Principles

- strive to make justice accessible to all;
- treat everyone with respect, dignity and courtesy;
- work as a team and encourage and recognize the contributions of all employees;
- communicate public information openly and effectively;
- provide employees with opportunities for continuous learning, growth and advancement; and,
- provide the service that will best serve the public.

Maine Volunteers for Justice

The mission of MVJ is to increase citizen access to justice, public understanding of Maine's court system, and the efficiency of court offices by engaging volunteers in a variety of quality service experiences. We work with individuals, agencies, and educational institutions throughout the state to match volunteers to opportunities on a court-by-court basis. Volunteer duties range from clerical work, electronic recording of courtroom proceedings, and special analytical projects; to providing gifts for small children enduring long waits in district court halls, or special assistance as Court Appointed Special Advocates. Volunteers are also referred to other non-profit legal assistance agencies.

For more information, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at the Administrative Office of the Courts by calling 822-0780 or email Penny.Hilton@state.me.us.

State of Maine Court Locations



Visit the Court's web page at www.courts.state.me.us

Administrative Office of the Courts

(41.5 positions, offices in Portland and Augusta)

The Administrative Office of the Courts (A.O.C.) administers all of Maine's courts except for the Probate Courts, which are managed at the County level.

The A.O.C. provides support services to the court system including fiscal and personnel services, technology, planning, facilities management, grant oversight, legislative liaison, public information, library administration, statistical reporting, and training and education.

For More Information...

Contact the Administrative Office of the Courts at 207/822-0792 for available publications (also at <http://www.courts.state.me.us>)

- *A Guide to Small Claims Proceedings in the Maine District Courts* (describes small claims court cases, how to file or respond to a claim, and court procedures).
- *Traverse Juror Handbook* (describes the jury system as it is used in Superior Court, the rights and duties of jurors, and the jury selection process).
- *A Guide to Protection from Abuse and Harassment Actions* (provides information about protection case procedures).
- *Caseload Statistical Information for all levels of Court* (various caseload information detail by location and case type).

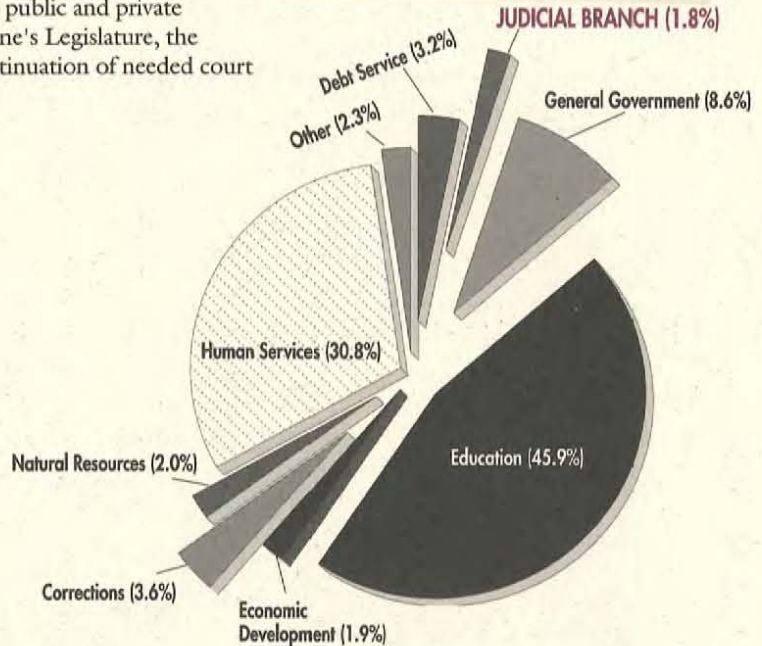
Fiscal Report

The Judicial Branch operates primarily from state general funds appropriated by the Maine Legislature. It also receives some grants from public and private sources. With the cooperation of the Governor and Maine's Legislature, the Judicial Branch secured a budget which permits the continuation of needed court services and a measured program of improvement.

General Fund Appropriations FY '00

Category	Budget	%
Judicial Branch	\$40,917,023	1.8%
Economic Development	\$43,552,404	1.9%
Natural Resources	\$45,399,243	2.0%
Other	\$53,829,248	2.3%
Debt service	\$74,334,582	3.2%
Corrections	\$83,156,231	3.6%
General Government	\$198,907,148	8.6%
Human Services	\$713,524,216	30.8%
Education	\$1,063,009,103	45.9%
TOTAL	\$2,316,629,198	100.0%

Other includes Labor, Transportation, Public Protection, Executive Branch, Collective Bargaining increases, and Employee Health Insurance Premium Increase

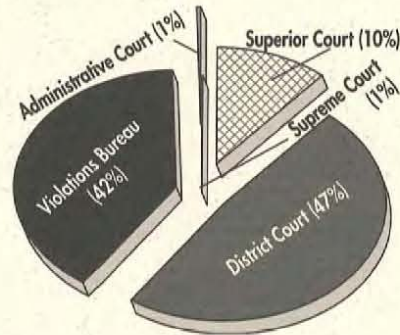


FY'00 Judicial Branch Revenue Collections & Distributions

Sources	Fines (a)	Fees (b)	TOTAL
Supreme Court	\$0	\$31,106	\$31,106
Superior Court	\$1,922,495	\$1,284,985	\$3,207,480
District Court	\$11,240,385	\$2,837,755	\$14,078,140
Violations Bureau	\$14,135,026	\$440,739	\$14,575,765
Administrative Court	\$156,720	\$1,546	\$158,266
Total/All Courts	\$27,454,625	\$4,596,131	\$32,050,756

(a) Fine revenue includes all civil and criminal fines, and surcharges
 (b) Fee revenue includes civil filing fees, mediation fees, transcript fees, bail defaults, interest income and amounts paid by indigent defendants.

Revenue collections reached a record high of \$32,050,756, nearly 10% more than FY'99 and 39% higher than FY'95.



DISTRIBUTIONS:

		% of total
General Fund	\$24,175,147	75.43%
Highway Fund (D.O.T.)	\$2,182,631	6.81%
Traffic Safety Fund (D.O.T.)	\$1,218,492	3.80%
Civil Legal Services Fund	\$933,460	2.91%
Victims' Compensation Fund	\$547,995	1.71%
Inland Fish & Wildlife	\$529,337	1.65%
Govt. Services (County/Jail)	\$509,314	1.59%
Court Appt. Counsel Reimbursement	\$437,977	1.37%
Mediation Fund	\$330,265	1.03%
Law Enforcement Agency Reimbursement Fund	\$300,062	0.94%
Maine Community Policing (UMA)	\$234,524	0.73%
Dept. of Public Safety (1% of surcharge)	\$227,045	0.71%
Court Technology (1% of surcharge)	\$227,478	0.71%
Tobacco Enforcement/Licensing (DHS & Crim. Just. Acad.)	\$113,348	0.35%
Municipalities (Local Ordinances)	\$83,681	0.26%
TOTAL	\$32,050,756	100.00%

Revenue Collection: FY'96 - FY'00



- 86% of revenues collected by the Judicial Branch were fines and surcharges assessed in criminal, traffic and civil violation cases.
- The largest portion of the revenue, 75.43%, was deposited into the General Fund.

KENNEBEC JOURNAL DEC 24 1999

System set to hasten civil cases

By BETTY ADAMS
Staff Writer

the slow, civil side of superior court and to help erase a backlog of cases, some of which have been in progress for five years.

AUGUSTA — Judges' names in big capital letters appear on almost every complaint in the thick black

Garwood said about 100 cases have been assigned so far to each of three justices in Kennebec County.

administrator for Region III, which includes Kennebec County, said, "It kind of mirrors the federal system with more efficient case management."
She said the judges continually stay on top of the cases, which leads

COURT WEB SITE

■ A list of active civil cases in Kennebec County Superior Court and the justices assigned

ASSIGNMENTS

Superior Courts in four Maine counties will use the Single Justice Assignment of Civil Cases.

The Franklin Journal

AND FARMINGTON CHRONICLE
Serving you since 1840

Vol 154 No 102

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 24, 1999

Court makes sure kids enjoy holiday



By Greg Davis

FARMINGTON — Santa paid a visit, a magician entertained with tricks and illusions, there was food and games, and dozens of children climb aboard a fire truck.

All of this happened in and around the Farmington District Court building, with over 50 foster children of all ages participating.

For many of the children, it was the first time they had been involved with the court clerk and judge in a social setting, away from the impersonal tone and paperwork surrounding court issues.

These are children who, for many

discuss, delighting some with card tricks and illusions, others, water, doll and ball and other objects.

A security officer pulled the title of a friendly Santa.

The party was moderated by Judge Robert F. Mullen, from who he got from a 10-minute before. He mentioned the judge the court clerk here, "and they with the ball," he said.

"We got a list together of 50 foster children, from one of age to 21, a person who giving a ring to his former foster parent and asked if it was a

OCT 25 1999 KENNEBEC JOURNAL

Mediation found to be key

Pilot project's success spurs proposal for all civil lawsuits

By PETER POCHINA
Blethen Maine Newspapers

PORTLAND — The Maine

percent during the project's test period in Ardenne County.
"This is a way to meet the desire of Maine citizens for a more user-friendly judicial system," said Bernie Kubetz, a

lawsuit is filed in Superior Court, the meeting would last about three hours and would cost \$200. The parties would split the cost.

The theory is that getting the parties in the same room discussing their differences rationally could eliminate months, or perhaps years, of legal wrangling. In a typical lawsuit, both parties don't sit together in the same room until the case goes to trial.

mandatory mediation adds a step that in many cases won't help.

One proposal the Supreme Court will consider to offset the cost of mediation is waiving the \$300 jury fee litigants currently pay. The fee would only have to be paid if mediation fails.

The Nov. 4 hearing begins at 1 p.m. in the Cumberland County Courthouse.

Page 18

Maine LAWYERS REVIEW, October 11, 2000

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Mandatory ADR Comes to Maine Courts

by Peter P. Michaud

constitutional challenges to state laws escape the rule's requirements. The Committee noted that the state is not

would probably agree that any third-party evaluation within 120 days after the pretrial scheduling order is re-

Since arbitration is more content-focused, method and style often take a back seat to substantive knowledge and

Report Backs Expanding Role of District Courts

By BRAD MORIN

where people can move cases from their reduce superior

State courts install aid for hearing-impaired

JUL 8 2000

BANGOR DAILY NEWS

AUGUSTA — The Maine court system will open a new statewide text telephone system, or TTY, starting July 10, making it possible for people who are deaf or hearing-impaired to communicate directly

District Court TTYs

Bangor, Susan Curre, 941-8253
Belfast, Terri Curtis, 338-6927
Biddisford, Nancy Lafontaine, 294-2577

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