MDEC MARYLAND ELECTRONIC COURTS

Client Case Study

Clark County, Nevada, District Court

Clark County, Nevada

- 1,996,542 citizens
- Accounts for more than 75 percent of the population of Nevada
- Contains the city of Las Vegas

Business Objective

- Manage growth and budget reductions
- Create new courtrooms out of space used for paper handling and storage

Business Solution

- Tyler Technologies' Odyssey File & Serve

Business Results

Court Employees More Productive

- Less staff required for paper filing - resourced to other activities
- Staff focused on providing improved customer service – complaints reduced

Reduced paper usage and associated costs

- Within the first 90 days, paper usage reduced by 858,000 pages

Reduced space requirements

- Archived more than 35 million pages of old files
- Eight additional courtrooms built where paper was previously stored

Reduced traffic congestion and citizen wait time

- E-filing has reduced the need for self-represented citizens to come to Regional Justice Center
- Parking and congestion have improved

Increased speed and accuracy in processing filings

- Once documents are accepted by the court, images and associated financial data are instantly posted to the official case docket.
- Cases can be initiated and assigned to the proper judicial departments once accepted by the court.
- Former eight-step manual process automated
- Automated daily financial reconciliation with reporting and posting capabilities
- Judges, justice partners and the public can view the case simultaneously-almost real time.

THE STORY

Las Vegas Improves Court Operations through Electronic Filings

The Clark County Courts serve the judicial needs of more than two million people in Clark County Nevada. Court staff spent a significant percentage of their time dedicated to getting filings processed in a timely manner and to managing the eight-step manual process required to handle the hundreds of thousands of pieces of paper associated with the filings.

The challenge was to improve court operations by reducing space requirements and manual errors. These efforts would ultimately empower the people associated with the filings — justice partners, citizens, legal community — through real-time access to relevant information.

Some of the tasks required the implementation of new front counter business procedures, employing efficient financial and reconciliation processes as well as the creation of a quick review process so firms could get thier filings stamped and docketed pleadings actionable.

From scanning an unmanageable 10,000 pages per day to the lack of case management integration, case dockets could take weeks to become current. The challenges seemed insurmountable, but the right technology combined with diligent process restructure yielded astounding results.

A Model of Justice Served

Clark County has received national recognition as a leader in e-filing and has welcomed delegations from across the country as well as several foreign countries that want to model their accomplishments.

THE RESULT

More Time, Lower Expenses and Expanded Resources

The Clerk of the Court decided to try electronic filing on a trial basis for complex litigation; predominantly construction defect civil cases where there can be an excess of 200 parties on any given action. The impetus for using Tyler Technologies' Odyssey® File & Serve was to save time and file storage space. One recently archived civil case resulted in 55 banker boxes of paper — more than 80,000 pieces of paper — and no storage space to accommodate it. The amount of paper, equipment, storage and supply costs, combined with staffing expenditures to manually process the paperwork made the overall expense unimaginable.

Based on the successes of the initial trial, that began with three construction defect cases and 12 law firms, Clark County Courts began implementing electronic filing on additional case types.

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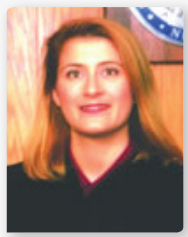
"Mandatory e-filing of our civil files using Odyssey File & Serve has reduced our customer service traffic so much that the Court will be able to move the Legal Counter to a much smaller area. The space vacated by the Legal Division will be part of a major construction project to build much needed courtroom space, providing greater access to justice."

— Art Ritchie,
Judge, Clark County, Nevada



"Our success is measured by operational efficiencies for both the courts and attorneys. Tyler's e-filing solution eliminates waste, reduces scanning and data entry, and improves online access and document submission for attorneys — resulting in a better overall use of our clerks' time. It's been a game changing experience for us."

— Jennifer Togliatti, Chief Judge,
Clark County Courts

The results have been nothing less than extraordinary:

- Setting up a case and the associated files reduced from days to hours
- Simplified case tracking and rapid access to files
- Immediate update of case dockets after pleading accepted
- Daily financial reconciliation with automated reporting and posting
- Reduced customer service windows in use from 13 to three
- Number of employees dedicated to manually filing paperwork from 20 to three
- Converted 20,000 square feet on the third floor of Regional Justice Center from the clerk's office to eight new courtrooms
- Converted fourth floor file room from file storage to 50 cubicles and four supervisor offices

By the Numbers

In February 2010, Clark County mandated e-filing for all civil and family cases. Within 90 days:

- 143,017 accepted submissions with average page count of six
- The equivalent of 572 bankers boxes of paper were eliminated
- Average daily e-file count was approximately 3,000
- 95% of documents were viewed the same day they were submitted – and in most cases within hours

Lessons Learned

Courts Facing Similar Challenges Can Also Succeed

In a perfect world, technology adoption would be seamless and the transition to a virtually paperless court system embraced. In the real world, there are always obstacles to overcome, despite the obvious benefits of change. Fortunately, in Clark County the judiciary was engaged in the process and committed to making the change a reality. They managed any potential political pitfalls because the benefits to the court far outweighed any potential obstacles.

Ultimately, the results speak for themselves. Before Odyssey File & Serve, documents were manually stamped, bar-coded and scanned before they reached the case and were available for view or access by either internal or external customers. This process alone could often take weeks before critical updates would reach case dockets. Then file folders had to be prepared for each case. The paper documents were staged, sorted, transported to the file room and manually filed into the case file. Odyssey eliminated all of those steps and replaced them with a review of the document on the computer screen, acceptance (or rejection) and, if there are no problems, immediate filing into the online case file with case dockets updating at the same time. What previously took several days is now accomplished in hours.

Along with the processing of papers, the same issues were reflected in managing the financial procedures. What was once a highly manual process is now an efficient financial management system that includes daily financial reconciliation with automated reporting and posting, providing a tremendous reprieve from both a resource perspective and accuracy standpoint.

Clark County went from 20 employees dedicated to manually scanning and filing papers to three. The balance of the employees now review documents more efficiently using just a computer. Storage issues have been resolved and what were formerly storage rooms for paper filing, have been reconstructed into eight additional courtrooms. Before e-filing all 13 service windows of the service desk were often in use. Now three open windows are all that are needed. And, even with those reduced numbers, customer satisfaction is at all time high. While most litigants now file from their office or home, those who do come to the courthouse find shorter lines, faster processing, less traffic congestion and more open parking spaces.