

## **Chief Justice De Muniz Announces Oregon eCourt Governance Changes**

**July 22, 2009**

As the Judicial Department moves into the next phase of implementing Oregon eCourt, we need to adjust the program's governance structure to expand input from trial court users, ensure that Oregon eCourt maximizes benefits to the trial courts and the people who use them, and continue to carefully manage program resources to ensure they are being used efficiently and effectively.

First, I am expanding the eCourt Executive Sponsors group to include members from all courts. Court of Appeals Chief Judge David Brewer and Multnomah County Circuit Court Judge Nan Waller will join me and State Court Administrator Kingsley Click as the program's Executive Sponsors. This will provide all courts and divisions within the Judicial Department an active role in approving major Oregon eCourt decisions.

Second, I am creating an Oregon eCourt Steering Committee, chaired by Chief Judge Brewer and consisting of four trial judges and three trial court administrators. The trial court members have not yet been determined. This will give trial courts an added voice in setting the direction for Oregon eCourt and ensure that we are addressing the long-term needs of all trial courts as well as addressing immediate implementation and roll-out issues in the pilot courts. I am considering adding a noncourt stakeholder to this group, to allow Oregon eCourt users from outside OJD to help guide this next critical stage. The Oregon eCourt Implementation Team (OEI) will maintain its current implementation and coordination functions, with appropriate changes in membership.

Finally, I have asked Trial Court Administrators Jim Adams and Ernie Mazorol to accept temporary assignments in Salem, at least through October 1, to strengthen Oregon eCourt linkages with the trial courts. They will serve as interim support for the Executive Sponsors and Steering Committee and address a number of important Oregon eCourt projects. Jim and Ernie will visit a number of courts in August and interview judges, staff, and external stakeholders to assess trial court readiness and obtain input about best practices to implement Oregon eCourt in local communities.

Bud Borja will continue the duties of our Chief Information Officer and Oregon eCourt Program Director. With the infusion of additional administrative support, he will be able to focus more on technology issues and rely on others' expertise from trial courts to determine how Oregon eCourt can best integrate with local court operations and functions.

The governance changes I am directing will build on the work that Bud and ETSD staff have done in getting us to where we are today – poised to deliver on the promise of Oregon eCourt to make the courts' work easier and more efficient, and to enhance access to Oregon courts. These changes will help address issues raised by legislative reviews and by the Oregon eCourt Quality Assurance contractor.

The decisions and progress we make in the next two years will be critical for the success of Oregon eCourt. We have done a substantial amount of planning, have successfully implemented some elements of Oregon eCourt in the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court, and are on the cusp of implementing

Oregon eCourt elements in the first pilot trial court in less than a month. Applying those plans and providing the benefits of Oregon eCourt to trial courts is the next step, and is a major expansion of the program.

It is essential that Oregon eCourt continue to build upon its success with minimal disruption to court operations, that court staff are prepared to use Oregon eCourt to their maximum advantage, and that we take every reasonable step to reduce risks and increase our ability to successfully implement Oregon eCourt at the trial-court level. This is especially true in the current environment of reduced operating budgets, in which the impetus to perform our work efficiently with modern technology needs to be balanced against the imperative of protecting precious operational resources for the courts. We absolutely must do this correctly.

I deeply appreciate all the work that judges and OJD staff have contributed in getting Oregon eCourt to this juncture. I am grateful that people such as Jim Adams and Ernie Mazorol are willing to answer the call and contribute their considerable talent and experience to keep Oregon eCourt on track to succeed. These changes are needed to fulfill my original vision that Oregon eCourt would be governed by its critical users and to apply comparable governance resources as the program develops and expands.

Oregon eCourt is an ambitious, wide-ranging program that will dramatically affect how our courts do business and serve the people of Oregon. I continue to believe that Oregon eCourt can and will be a national model for using technology to improve court services. The changes I have outlined will increase the trial courts' ability to shape decisions and prepare for Oregon eCourt; improve Oregon eCourt governance at the highest levels of the department; prudently manage Judicial Department resources; and help maintain the trust and confidence of judges, court staff, legislators, and court stakeholders in the value of the Oregon eCourt program.

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