



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
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19TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT RECIPIENT OF NACo AWARDS

Chief Judge Victoria Rossetti announced today that she has received a letter from the National Association of Counties (NACo) indicating that two programs developed and implemented in the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit are being awarded the 2011 NACo Achievement Award. "The Circuit is very proud of the fact that it is being acknowledged for the hard work, commitment and innovative ideas that are eventually recognized as best practices programs," said Chief Judge Rossetti. "These concepts are cost effective, improve services and provide for a more efficient court system."

NACo, founded in 1935, is the only national organization that represents county governments in the U.S. and provides cost-saving services to the nation's 3,068 counties to help save counties and taxpayers money. NACo's Achievement Award Program seeks to recognize innovative county government programs that have become operational after January 1, 2003 and have measurable results.

The Nineteenth Circuit's programs receiving the NACo Awards are:

- Digital Pen Technology. In the past, probation officers prepared bond report forms with a regular pen and submitted them to the court in handwritten format. Laptops and use of voice recognition were tested but were found unusable and unreliable. Winnie Webber, Director of the Circuit's Judicial Information Services Division, determined the digital pen technology offered additional benefits, and it was decided to implement its use in the pretrial bond services unit. Basically, it is still a manual process; however, the

pen contains a tiny infrared camera and processor that captures all the written information which is then transferred and converted into a readable text format on the computer. Changes and updates can be easily made on the computer and the final report is readily available electronically. The digital stored data is easily referenced and retrievable with a couple strokes on the keyboard. The achievements resulted in: consistent format; easier to read reports; spending less time to edit and review changes; redundancy of information reduced on multiple pages; ability to re-use captured data to share with other justice partners including offices of the State's Attorney and the Public Defender, and private attorneys; and electronic transmission of reports.

➤ Lake County Pretrial Risk Assessment and Case Classification. Pretrial Services provide defendant information to the court relevant for purpose of bond decision and supervise defendant's compliance with any and all conditions of bond as ordered by the court. Prior to the Lake County Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (LCPRAI) and Case Classification, bond recommendations were predicated on the experience, knowledge, and perceptions of the bond report investigator.

The goals of the Lake County Risk Assessment and Case Classification System are (1) to provide verified background information and the use of an objective risk assessment tool on pretrial defendants for the purpose of bond review, and (2) to provide a supervised pretrial release alternative to jail incarceration that can assure court appearance and community safety.

LCPRAI was adapted from the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (VPRAI) authored by Marie VanNostrand, Ph.D. Modifications exclusive to Lake County are included in the LCPRAI.

The achievements resulted in providing unbiased bond recommendations that identify failure-to-appear and re-arrest risks and effective supervision strategies to minimize the risk of pretrial failure before trial.

NACo's Achievement Award Program began in 1970. The presentation of NACo's 2011 awards for the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit's programs entitled "***Digital Pen Technology***" and "***Lake County Pretrial Risk Assessment and Case Classification***" increases the Circuit's number of awards to 56. The Circuit received its first award for the "Adult Volunteers in Probation" program in 1973, and the remaining awards were presented in the

following time frame: 2 additional awards in the 1970's; 20 such awards in the 1980's; 13 in the 1990's; 18 in the 2000's; and 2 to date in the 2010's.

This year, NACo will host the 15th Annual Awards Ceremony during its 2011 Annual Conference in Multnomah County, Oregon. The reception will be held in the Oregon Ballroom at the Oregon Convention Center on Sunday, July 17, 2011, between the hours of 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Award winners will be collectively recognized at that time

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