

South Dakota Unified Judicial System

Our mission:
Justice for All

Our vision:
We are stewards of an open, effective, and accessible court system, worthy of the public's trust and confidence.

Members of the South Dakota Supreme Court



Justices of the Supreme Court, left to right: Hon. Glen A. Severson, Sioux Falls, Second District, Hon. Judith K. Meierhenry, Sioux Falls, Fourth District, Hon. Steven L. Zinter, Pierre, Third District, Hon. John K. Koenkamp, Rapid City, First District, and Hon. David Gilbertson, Chief Justice, Lake City, Fifth District.



State of South Dakota
Unified Judicial System
Office of the State Court Administrator



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The Unified Judicial System (UJS) realized many accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2010, despite the impact of a one percent cut to our operating expense budget. This Annual Report documents the work of the UJS, from the counter in the clerk of court offices, to the courtrooms and offices of our employees, to the committee rooms across the state, the Capitol, and places in between.

The Report itself has been restructured to reduce the number of pages and thereby reducing costs, environmental impact, and to take advantage of technology. In the following pages, there are statewide caseload tables from the Supreme Court and Circuit Courts. Detailed information broken down to the circuit and county level, for both caseload filings and receipts and disbursements, can now be found on our website at <http://ujis.sd.gov>. There you'll also find additional detail on selected case types previously reported, such as DUI filings, protection orders, tobacco possession by a minor, and abuse & neglect of children.

Over 151,000 criminal matters and over 84,000 civil matters were heard in our circuit courts last year. While the total number of combined filings is down slightly from the prior fiscal year, the complexity of cases heard and the increasing number of cases where parties are self-represented (no lawyers) is significant. Our new case management system, currently in development and scheduled for implementation in FY2012, is intended to give us better information about these and other performance indicators in the future.

The signing of a contract with Tyler Technologies for its Odyssey Case Management System was a long-awaited development. The current systems we have in place were state-of-the-art in the 1980's and 1990's when they were designed, but they were not intended to respond to the public's demands of today. Our goal is to have the new system implemented statewide, to include an electronic document management system and e-filing technology in use, within five years.

Another major highlight for us this past year was the adoption of a Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and statement of Key Philosophical Values, culminating in our first Strategic Plan. This Plan was the work of many individuals over a two year time span. We again extend our appreciation to the South Dakota State Bar Association for their participation as well. You'll find a summary of our Strategic Plan in this Report.

We hope this report is useful to you, and that the access to more detailed information on the website will be convenient. Feel free to comment about our changes or share your ideas for future improvements.

Patricia Duggan

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Duggan".

State Court Administrator

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