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## **SECURITY FOR PERSONNEL IN RURAL COURTS**

This paper will evaluate the level of security currently maintained in rural courts in the State of Missouri and the possible impact upon the court should it be found that courts are sorely unprepared for emergencies. Specifically, the lack of personnel security measures is the focus of this piece. Currently, we are desensitized to violence as it is almost an expected reaction to many emotions, and therefore, becoming tolerable. Courts, as any other employer, have a responsibility to their employees to ensure their safety in the workplace. This responsibility should also extend to the public, litigants, attorneys, jurors, and even defendants. A joint statement of Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren E. Berger and United States Attorney General William French Smith before the Judicial Conference of the U.S., March 11, 1982 addressed court security. “If we cannot ensure the safety of all participants in the judicial process, we cannot maintain the integrity of the system, we cannot—in sum—“establish justice,” as mandated in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States.”<sup>1</sup>

The goal of this project is to measure the lack of procedure and protocol currently found in Missouri’s rural courts. Based upon the findings of this endeavor, recommendations will be made to assist rural courts in obtaining some measure of security. A survey method was used to determine the level of security in rural courts. The recipients of the survey were county commissioners, county clerks, and circuit clerks. County population was taken into

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<sup>1</sup> National Association for Court Management, Court Security Guide.1995.

consideration in selecting respondents, as rural courts were the focus. Respondents were asked to describe local security measures currently in place and were asked to comment on security incidents they may have experienced. Population of county was taken into consideration in selecting respondents as rural courts were targeted. Respondents' attitude in general about instituting security measures for personnel was explored.

Although the manual designed as a result of this project has not been distributed for use by the rural courts, it is anticipated that it will be widely used as a tool for the deterrence of violence. At the most basic level, it will make employees aware of potential threats and instruct them in responses.

It was determined each county should form a security committee. The county commission must take responsibility in training supervisors in the use of security procedures and, in fact, the whole issue of safety. Involvement of all parties is crucial to the success of any program. Use the handbook as a workbook allowing employees to survey their surroundings and make comments about observations they make. The committee should be prepared to listen to their employees examine, discuss and whenever possible follow their recommendations.

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## **DEVELOPING AN AUTOMATED INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM FOR THE MISSOURI 22<sup>ND</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT PROBATE COURT**

This study evaluated the manual Case Management System utilized by the Missouri Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit Probate Court. The research for this study was based on the survey method.

Records are the core of probate courts; they contain vital information and must be accurate and easily accessible. Therefore, the focal point of the study is the information retrieval process of the Case Management System. The following entities user responsiveness, service time, and the quality of service provided by the manual system were weighed. The National Court Performance Standards were used as a tool to measure the effectiveness of the manual information retrieval system. Surveys, interviews, and personal knowledge made it possible to evaluate the system currently used and conclude how the Missouri Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit Probate Court would benefit from an automated record retrieval system.

While the manual retrieval system did meet some objectives of the National Court Performance Standards. It fell short in that information was not easily accessible and not always accurate. This was a strong indication that there was a need for changes to the current system.

The findings of this project resulted in the implementation of “an automated information retrieval system.” The benefits include improved customer service, a decrease in inquiry time, and an overall increase in employee productivity.

The State of Missouri’s Electronic Court 2004 Project (EC2004) is currently implementing BANNER, a vendor Case Management System solution by System and Computer

Technology Corporation (SCT) statewide in phases. Banner was implemented in the Twenty Second Judicial Circuit Probate Court June 2000, after this study was completed.

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This [research paper](#) is available in its entirety in portable document format. To access, you must first obtain and install the Adobe Acrobat Reader.



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