Missouri Judicial Report
Fiscal Year 2003

Supreme Court of Missouri
P.O. Box 150
Jefferson City, MO 65102

I am pleased to present the Missouri Judicial Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003. As was true throughout the country due to enduring economic difficulties, the more than 3,000 employees of the Judicial Branch strove to continue providing efficient, professional service to the citizens of this great state with even fewer resources. It also was a year of cooperation, as the Supreme Court formed the Commission on Children's Justice—comprised of members from all three branches of state government as well as the private sector—to help find solutions to the problems facing abused and neglected children in this state. And in the end, I believe we succeeded in improving Missouri's judicial system. With hard work and continued cooperation, I believe we can accomplish even more in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Ronnie L. White

Ronnie L. White
Chief Justice

Court Automation Highlights

- The Justice Information System (JIS), the software business tool for court case and financial management, was installed in Audrain and Christian counties and in the associate divisions in Taney and Warren counties. These installations completed the automation of the 12th and 38th judicial circuits. At the close of the fiscal year, the Supreme Court, the three districts of the Court of and 26 circuit courts (68 counties) were totally automated on JIS, and two additional circuits were partially automated.
- An upgrade of the JIS case management system was deployed to 27 circuits, the three Court of Appeals districts and the Supreme Court. This was the first of a two-phase upgrade based on court feedback about the product and recent changes in the administration of justice. With only one case management program to maintain for the state, upgrades are much more efficient for both technical teams and software users.
- With federal grant assistance, 13 juvenile courts began using JIS to manage cases and to track juveniles and the services they receive.
- The Missouri Juvenile Justice Information Sharing (MOJJIS) software, which allows juvenile officers to track prior juvenile court, mental health and social service contacts with a particular child, was written, tested and readied for piloting in four judicial circuits.
- With the addition of 38 new counties by June 30, 2003, the automated Jury Management System (JMS) was available in 94 of the state's 115 counties.
- The information technology division completed Windows 2000 rollout, which involved updates for approximately 3,500 work stations and approximately 320 servers in the Judicial Branch.
- Staff in the Office of State Courts Administrator provided telephone support for more than 53,000 inquiries from Judicial Branch employees and the public.

Time Standards

Supreme Court Operating Rule 17 establishes case processing time standards to ensure the prompt and fair disposition of cases filed in Missouri's circuit courts. Achievements for fiscal 2003 include:

- At least one circuit met the standards for all categories.
- The statewide performance improved in both circuit civil and domestic relations cases.
- The most improvement was made in the domestic relations category, where the number of circuits meeting both standards increased by 2 percent statewide.
- Six circuits met the standards for circuit felony cases, compared with four circuits in fiscal 2002.
- Twenty-four circuits, more than half of the 45 circuits, met the standards for the associate civil category.

Case Processing Time Standards
Age of Case At Dispostion
FY2003

Time Standard Category	Standard for Age of Case at Dispostion in the State	Actual Performance Statewide	Percent Change from FY2002	Circuits Meeting Both Standards in FY2003
Circuit Civil				
In 18 months	90%	80%	2%	14
In 24 months	98%	88%	1%	
Domestic Relations				
In 8 months	90%	84%	2%	5
In 12 months	98%	91%	2%	
Circuit Felony				
In 8 months	90%	83%	-6%	8,13,14,19,32,34
In 12 months	98%	92%	-2%	
Associate Civil				
In 6 months	90%	85%	-1%	1,2,3,4,6,9,10,13,14,19, 23,26,29,30,32,33,34, 35,36,38,39,41,42,45
In 12 months	98%	96%	0%	
Associate Criminal				
In 4 months	90%	74%	-1%	32
In 6 months	98%	86%	0%	

Court Services Highlights

- The Supreme Court Family Court Committee produced the *Missouri Resource Guide for Best Practices in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases.* The guide was distributed to all judges and commissioners hearing abuse and neglect cases, and all juvenile court staff and division of children's services caseworkers were trained in best practices.
- The Circuit Court Budget Committee completed the clerical weighted workload addendum study on time-intensive circuit civil cases. The clerical weighted workload provides an objective measure for comparing the workload of court clerks in the 114 counties and the city of St. Louis.
- The central transcribing unit of the Office of State Courts Administrator produced more than 100,000 pages of transcripts.

Court Education Highlights

- In an effort to provide training to court staff in a more cost-effective manner, four web-based courses were developed for training on JIS, and three mobile wireless training labs were purchased to take training to the users. This allowed judicial staff to continue training while reducing the need for travel.
- The Judicial Education Commission coordinated instruction for 1,858 judiciary employees in 131 classes. In addition, 1,060 Judicial Branch employees accessed 156 different web-based training courses, and many of these individuals also participated in classroom courses.

Case Information

Chart 1 depicts the number of filings for five case categories. Circuit criminal cases are cases where an indictment or information is filed alleging a commission of a felony offense. Circuit civil filings are petitions involving amounts greater than $25,000. Domestic relations filings are cases such as dissolution of marriage, adult abuse and motions to modify. Associate criminal cases include misdemeanor cases and preliminary hearings for felonies. Associate civil cases include petitions filed for amounts less than $25,000 and small claims cases with a limit of $3,000.

Chart 1

Case Category	FY1994	FY1998	FY2003		% Change FY1994 to FY1998	% Change FY1998 to FY2003	% Change FY1994 to FY2003
Circuit Criminal	26,405	33,814	38,298		28.06%	13.26%	45.04%
Circuit Civil	31,701	33,377	35,124		5.29%	5.23%	10.80%
Domestic Relations	85,973	100,400	106,358		16.78%	5.93%	23.71%
Associate Criminal	131,189	177,925	186,366		40.57%	4.74%	47.24%
Associate Civil/Small Claims	124,314	146,041	179,854		17.48%	23.15%	44.68%
TOTAL	**373,177**	**457,743**	**507,702**		**22.66%**	**10.91%**	**36.05%**

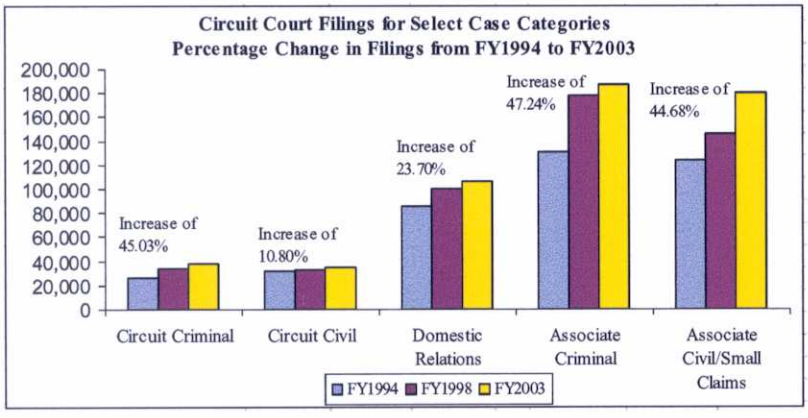
Overall, filings increased 36.05 percent from fiscal 1994 to fiscal 2003 for these court cases. The most dramatic change occurred in the associate criminal category, which experienced a 47.24 percent increase in the number of case filings, followed closely by circuit criminal case filings, which increased by 45.03 percent. These increases may be due in part to the various statutory regulations passed for preventing or controlling illegal drug production, possession and distribution and for various statutory changes regarding driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol (DWI) or blood alcohol content (BAC) levels.

The large increase in associate civil filings (23.15 percent) from fiscal 1998 to fiscal 2003 is related to the large increase in cases filed involving breach of contract. In fiscal 1998, there were 69,059 such filings, and in fiscal 2003, there were 101,371 breach of contract filings, an increase of 46.79 percent. Court clerks also report an increase in filings from businesses such as credit card companies, "pay day" loan companies and medical facilities, which arguably correlates with the downturn in the local economy and the inability to pay debt.

The large increase in domestic relations cases is due to a 23.27 percent increase in adult abuse and child protection order filings. In fiscal 1998 there were 39,574 filings; in fiscal 2003 there were 48,904 filings.

Although not depicted in Table 1, probate and juvenile filings also increased from fiscal 1994 to fiscal 2003. In fiscal 1994, there were 12,561 probate filings and 25,737 juvenile filings. In fiscal 2003 there were 13,738 probate filings and 37,198 juvenile filings. Also not depicted in Table 1 are traffic filings handled by court staff. These filings have decreased since the July 1, 2001, inception of the Fine Collection Center (FCC) to process many routine traffic cases. In fiscal 2003, court staff processed 257,189 traffic cases. Of the 115,305 cases the FCC received in fiscal 2003, 74,111 cases (64.27 percent) were disposed with a guilty plea.

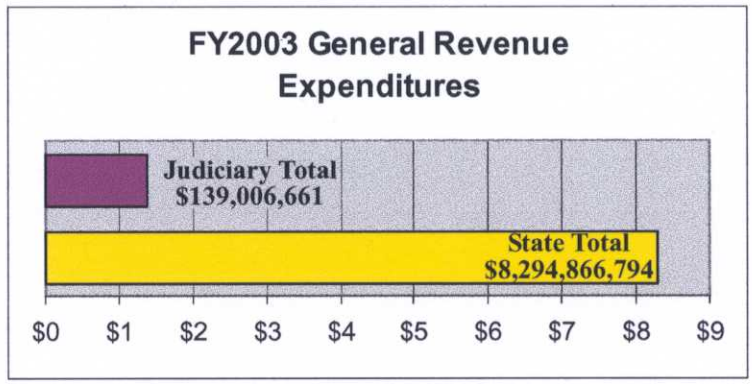
Table 1



In addition, filings of appeals and writs in the three appellate districts of the Court of Appeals remained virtually unchanged from fiscal 1998 (3,842 filings) to fiscal 2003 (3,776 filings). Filings of appeals, writs, applications to transfer and supervisory matters in the Supreme Court also were stable from fiscal 1998 (3,282 filings) to fiscal 2003 (3,211 filings).

Revenue and Expenses

In fiscal 2003, the Judicial Branch again comprised a very small percent of the state's general revenue budget, totaling 1.68 percent of the overall budget. Of all funds, from general revenue and other resources, the judicial branch spent 68 percent of its budget on its circuit courts, which include the general trial courts available in each county.



The Judicial Branch also contributed funds back into the state's revenue stream. Of the $370 million total collected by the courts in fiscal 2003, more than $26 million in fees were paid into either the state's general revenue fund or into specific statewide funds. This figure does not include all the fees the courts collected for the schools (fines and a portion of bond forfeitures) or for local county funds, such as sheriff's fees and training funds for law enforcement and prosecutors. In addition, approximately 60,168 crime victims compensation act judgements were assessed in fiscal 2003.

FY2003 Judicial Branch Budget Breakdown
(Including Supplemental Funding)

Total	***$164,321,940***	***100.00%***
Circuit Court	$112,297,703	68.34%
Federal and other funding	$ 13,737,492	8.36%
Court Automation	$ 13,018,646	7.92%
Court of Appeals	$ 10,219,638	6.22%
Supreme Court	$ 4,482,557	2.73%
Office of StateCourts Administrator	$ 4,356,879	2.65%
Judicial Branch Education	$ 3,015,733	1.84%
Drug Courts	$ 1,821,500	1.11%
Other (less leases)	$ 1,371,792	0.83%

Collections by the Judicial Branch

Total	***$26,052,507.63***	***100.00%***
Court Fees paid into General Revenue	$12,565,104.71	48.23%
Crime Victims Compensation	$ 6,951,734.37	26.68%
Court Automation Fees	$ 4,296,106.59	16.49%
Spinal Cord Injury	$ 562,329.32	2.16%
Head Injury Fund	$ 457,855.40	1.76%
Independent Living Center Fees	$ 363,772.89	1.40%
Prosecution Fees	$ 290,091.84	1.11%
Domestic Relations Resolution Fund	$ 233,048.80	0.89%
Motorcycle Safety Trust	$ 230,595.84	0.89%
Court-Appointed Special Advocates	$ 88,952.87	0.34%
Merchandise Practices Revolving Fund	$ 12,915.00	0.05%

The Annual Judicial Report is distributed by the Office of State Courts Administrator:
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