



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Expanded Use of ‘Virtual’ Courtrooms Generates Savings, Enhances Security

LANSING, MI, June 12, 2015 – In remarks today to the Rotary Club of Lansing, Michigan Supreme Court Justice David F. Viviano will report that the expanded use of videoconferencing technology to create “virtual” courtrooms has saved the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) nearly \$5 million over the past two years. Because of this technology initiative, prisoners can participate in court hearings without the security risks and traditional costs involved in transporting them to court.

“Videoconferencing is common sense technology that saves time and money,” Justice Viviano said. “At the same time, not transporting prisoners reduces risk. That’s a win-win.”

Currently, 417 courtrooms in Michigan have videoconferencing capabilities. Since its launch in 2010, the program has expanded so that high definition videoconferencing is installed in at least one circuit, district and probate court in all 83 counties. Seventy-eight counties now have videoconferencing systems in every courtroom.

With MDOC “video” transports representing approximately 30 percent of requested court proceedings, savings from the program are expected to continue growing. In addition, savings to local units are estimated to exceed savings to the state. This includes freeing up deputy sheriffs for other public safety functions instead of transporting prisoners.

Partners with the Michigan Supreme Court in this project include the Michigan State Police Forensic Lab and state mental health facilities. Through this initiative, police technicians can also use videoconferencing to participate in arraignments, pretrial conferences, and other court hearings without the time and expense of travel.

Videoconferencing is part of a Supreme Court priority to help local trial courts improve efficiency and service to the public by implementing new technology. Other key priorities highlighted in Justice Viviano’s speech include:

- **Measuring performance and implementing best practices.** For example, a recent survey of 26,000 court users showed that the vast majority were satisfied with their experience in Michigan trial courts.
- **Re-engineering court processes to increase efficiency.** For example, three out of four counties statewide have plans to share resources and collaborate. At the same time, the number of judges statewide is being cut by 40, saving taxpayers \$6.4 million annually.

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SCAO Video Project Statewide Courts Deployment

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