

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
ANNUAL REPORT**

Introduction. During the past 18 months the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio has undergone significant organizational change. Judge James G. Carr was elevated to Chief Judge in December, 2004 and the Court bid farewell to former Chief Judge Paul R. Matia (May, 2005) and District Judge John W. Potter (October, 2004) who retired from the Court. The Court also welcomed new District Judge Christopher A. Boyko who joined the bench in January, 2005. In addition, two district judgeship vacancies were created when Judge David A. Katz from the Western Division took senior status on January 1, 2005 and Judge Lesley Wells from the Eastern Division took senior status on February 14, 2006. On March 16, Judge Jack Zouhary, who served on the Lucas County Common Pleas Court, was confirmed by the United States Senate to fill the Western Division vacancy.

There was also significant change within the Probation and Pretrial Services Offices. After many years of distinguished service, Chief Probation Officer John Peet, Chief Pretrial Services Officer Jeff Johnson and Deputy Chief Probation Officer Lenora Barry retired and Greg Johnson was appointed by the Court as the new Chief Probation Officer. After the Chief Pretrial Services Officer retired, Greg Johnson was also appointed to fill that role on an interim basis as the Court considered the possibility of consolidating the Probation and Pretrial Services offices into one unit. On February 6, 2006, the Court unanimously decided to consolidate these Court units with Greg Johnson serving as Chief of the Pretrial Services and Probation Office.

In October 2004, the Court consolidated the automation departments of the Clerk's Office, the Probation Office and the Pretrial Services Office under the direction of a single Director of Information Technology to improve service and to better utilize our limited automation resources. The Court is also exploring sharing other administrative services such as human resources, budget/finance and property/procurement among its Court units to provide superior service, gain additional operating efficiencies and to better operate within the current budget climate. All District Court units work collaboratively and meet regularly in these areas, most recently in the planning and provision of new phone systems in Akron and Toledo. The District Court units have also worked closely with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court on our rejuvenated Joint Court Unit Training Committee, which was established in 1993 and was the first of its kind in the Judiciary. The current focus is on staff development and the creation of Individual Development Plans for each employee.

During the past year, the Court has also made extensive outreach efforts to its Congressional representatives and the media to better inform key decision makers and the public of the important role played by the Courts in our democracy and the necessity of providing the Judiciary with adequate funding to continue its mission.

Northern Ohio. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio serves the 5.9 million citizens of the 40 most northern counties in Ohio, with 4.4 million people now residing in the Eastern Division and 1.5 million people residing in the Western Division. With 12 authorized district judgeships, it is among the 17 largest U.S. district courts. The district holds court in Cleveland, Akron, and Youngstown in the Eastern Division and Toledo in the Western Division.

District Judges. The Northern District of Ohio is authorized 12 judgeships, 11 permanent and one temporary. The district currently has one district judgeship vacancy in the Eastern Division. The Court is hopeful that the vacancy will be filled soon. The Court is concerned that it could lose its temporary judgeship because, absent congressional action, authorization for the position will lapse with the creation of the first judgeship vacancy occurring on or after November 15, 2006. While the Judicial Conference has recommended that the temporary judgeship be extended for an additional five years, Congress has not acted on the issue. Extending the term of the temporary judgeship remains a high priority.

The district is fortunate that our five senior judges (Judge John M. Manos, Judge Ann Aldrich, Judge David D. Dowd, Jr., Judge Lesley Wells and Judge David A. Katz) share the Court's workload and participate in the case assignment draw.

In addition to their work for this Court, several judges serve on national Judicial Conference committees and/or have assisted other courts. For instance, Chief Judge Carr serves on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Court and the judges regularly sit by designation on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. Judges serving on Judicial Conference Committees include: Judge Dan A. Polster, who has been a member of the Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judge System since 2002; Judge James S. Gwin, who has been a member of the Committee on Information Technology since 2003; and Judge Kathleen M. O'Malley, who has served on the Committee on Space and Facilities since 2005.

Magistrate Judges. The Northern District of Ohio has eight magistrate judges, including one on retired-recalled status, with five assigned to Cleveland and one each to Akron, Toledo and Youngstown.

The role of the magistrate judges in the management of civil cases continues to be significant. Magistrate judges were the presiding judicial officers for 355 (7%) of the civil cases that were resolved in 2005. Excluding MDL actions, magistrate judges presided over nearly 7% (179 of 2,680) of the pending civil docket at the close of 2005. The Court has permitted magistrate judges to accept pleas of guilty in criminal cases upon the consent of all counsel and the defendant since October, 1999. Magistrate judges also help counsel establish budgets for death penalty habeas corpus cases and monitor those budgets on behalf of the Court. Magistrate judges participate in Court governance through their membership on Court committees, where their contributions have been invaluable.

Congressional Outreach: The Court, under the leadership of Chief Judge Carr, has actively pursued opportunities to meet with our Congressional representatives for the purpose of keeping the Congress better informed on issues related to the Judiciary. Chief Judge Carr regularly visits with our Congressional representatives while conducting judicial business in Washington, D.C. and the other judges maintain regular contact with those whom they know. On October 12, 2005, several judges met with U.S. Senator Mike DeWine, at his invitation, to discuss issues of interest to the Senator and the Court. On February 3, 2006, the Court had the privilege of hosting U.S. Senator George V. Voinovich at the Carl B. Stokes Court House. Among the topics discussed were judiciary funding, security, GSA rental rates, funding for the new Toledo Court House, and cameras in the courtroom.

International Judicial Outreach. The Court is proud to continue its ongoing efforts in hosting visiting members of the international judiciary. In February 2006, the Court participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program's "Administration of Justice and Rule of Law: A Regional Project for the Western Hemisphere," hosting judges, attorneys and administrators from Columbia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. This past October, Judges Adams and Dowd, along with Clerk's Office representatives, hosted Russian attorneys visiting from the Russian Legal Services Program.

Media Outreach. The Court has also endeavored to reach out to media representatives to better inform them, and through them the public, of the mission and activities of the Court. The Clerk's Office has established media level read-only access accounts to the Court's electronic filing system to provide media representatives with access to a virtual online press box, access to written opinions and the ability to obtain automatic email notification in cases that they wish to follow. In addition, Court calendars were made available on the Court's web site for the convenience of the media, the bar and the public. The Clerk's Office has also provided training to media representatives in how to best obtain information from the Court's web site, PACER and the CM/ECF system.

Bench / Bar Conference. In September 2005, the district joined with the Southern District of Ohio to conduct our third combined Bench Bar Conference in Columbus. The Conference included both plenary and breakout sessions covering a wide variety of topics including: a Supreme Court update, a Sixth Circuit criminal law update, electronic discovery, sentencing after Booker, effective evidence presentation, current issues in employment law, juror's view of the courtroom, the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005, and the interplay between the Courts and the Congress. U.S. Senator Mike DeWine, of the Senate Judiciary Committee, also participated in the question and answer period with attendees of the Conference via speaker phone.

Strategic Planning. The Court continues its strategic planning efforts by regularly reviewing its goals and working to anticipate and prepare for the future. In September 2004, judges and Clerk's Office staff participated in a strategic planning session in Cleveland sponsored by the Federal Judicial Center and facilitated by Dr. R. Dale Lefever that helped the Court share ideas and set goals related to case management,

the use of judicial settlement conferences, and responding to the need for increased security while still maintaining an environment conducive to promoting openness to the public and collegiality among judges. In May 2004, judges and all court units participated in a Strategic Planning for Information Technology program led by Jim Buchanan of the FJC that helped the Court set short and long term goals for IT staff including providing judges with improved remote access. Chief Judge Carr, Judge Oliver, Judge O'Malley, Clerk of Court Geri Smith, Chief Pretrial Services and Probation Officer Greg Johnson and selected staff will also attend the 2006 FJC Strategic Planning Workshop in March, 2006.

Criminal Docket. The pending criminal case load in Northern Ohio continues to rise, despite the fact that the Court closed more criminal cases and criminal defendants in 2005 than ever before. The Court closed 665 criminal cases, over 18% more than in 2004, and 1,137 criminal defendants, nearly 30% more than the prior year. Nevertheless, the number of pending criminal cases rose 4% to 496 and the number of pending criminal defendants rose 2% to 865 as the number of criminal case filings also reached record highs. Criminal case filings rose 4.6% from the prior high of 652 in 2004 to 682 in 2005. The number of new criminal defendants rose 8.3% from 1,069 in 2004 to 1,158 in 2005.

Civil Docket. The pending civil caseload increased 22% from 6,768 at the close of 2004 to 8,312 at year-end 2005. The change can be attributed to a 41% increase in pending civil MDL matters, which typically remain on the dockets longer than other cases. Overall, civil filings fell nearly 29% from 8,256 in 2004 to 5,890 in 2005 due to a significant decline in new MDL filings. Traditional civil filings rose 3.4% from 3,449 in 2004 to 3,565 in 2005. At the same time MDL filings decreased 52% from 4,731 to 2,305 and asbestos cases declined from 76 to 20.

MDL Cases. The Northern District of Ohio is now the transferee court for seven Multi District Litigation matters involving several thousand cases. Attorneys have requested that cases be transferred to Northern Ohio because of the district's central location and ease of access, the availability of the Court's electronic filing and electronic courtroom systems, and the priority that judicial officers have provided these matters. One of Judge Kathleen M. O'Malley's three MDL matters, the welding rod litigation, is comprised of over 5,000 pending cases. Judges Peter C. Economus, Donald C. Nugent, James S. Gwin and David A. Katz also have MDL matters on their dockets.

Civil Justice Reform Act. Much of the district's success in maintaining current dockets during a decade which has included record levels of civil case filings can be attributed to the case management programs adopted by the Court pursuant to its role as a Demonstration District under the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1990. Under that program, the district adopted a Differentiated Case Management (DCM) Plan, a wide menu of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) options and a Pending Inventory Reduction Plan (PIRP) to manage its civil caseload. These programs have proven highly successful and remain popular with the bench and the bar. Since these programs were initiated, the number of cases three years and older has been reduced by over 77% and the number of motions pending six months or longer has declined by 83%.

Security / Emergency Planning. Security continues to take up more and more of our time, with updating of Occupant Emergency Plans, Shelter in Place Plans and Continuity of Operations Plans. As the tenant with most employees in three of our four facilities, the responsibility for the those facilities rests with the Clerk of Court. Members of our management team have attended various training programs to help implement the emergency and security plans as well as to provide training and guidance to other building tenants. Blackberry 8700s were purchased for Judges and management staff to enable communication during an emergency. Building Security Committees meet regularly to communicate security issues with all tenants.

New Toledo Court House. Even though the Judicial Conference moratorium on new courthouse construction projects was in effect, we continued to work with Chief Judge Carr on site issues for the new Toledo Court House. This past June, the Court participated in a two-day workshop in Toledo sponsored by GSA to consider all urban planning issues with community planners and leaders and to develop a master plan for the Civic Mall, the site for the new Court House. We continue to follow up on these issues with GSA. We eagerly await proceeding with the Court House design later this year with Mehrdad Yazdani, the architect selected for the project.

HMM Court House Prospectus Project. The completion of the four-year project to renovate and modernize the historical Howard M. Metzemaum Court House culminated in the rededication of the Court House on September 20, 2005. While the U.S. Bankruptcy Court is now the primary tenant of the building, the District Court retained the two historical third floor courtrooms and chambers which have been renovated, including new life safety systems and new audio systems in the courtrooms. Judge Lesley Wells, who recently took senior status, relocated into her former chambers in the Howard M. Metzemaum Court House in December, 2005.

Cyclical Facilities Maintenance. With the cyclical facilities maintenance funding now provided by the Administrative Office, we have worked hard to maintain a schedule to replace carpeting, paint, ceiling tiles, etc. Our goal over the past year has been to update the judicial chambers in Toledo to accommodate judges' relocations in preparation for the appointment of a new judge.

Procurement. After a joint meeting of the Court Unit Executives last November, all court units agreed to look for ways of sharing services in procurement and other general administrative functions. We have made several joint purchases this fiscal year for greater efficiency and cost savings to the tax payers. Most notable was the purchase of an "enterprise" phone system for the Bankruptcy Court, District Court, and the Probation and Pretrial Services Divisional Offices, which can be administered centrally. The new phone system should reduce our monthly telephone bills considerably. Other joint purchases include postage meters for all locations, digital fingerprinting machines, fitness equipment, walkie-talkie radios, and numerous IT service contracts. Clerk's Office procurement staff members participated in AO pilot on-line training for contracting officers, each logging 20+ hours of training. We have also contracted out our juror questionnaire mailings, saving staff hours and postage.

Electronic Courtrooms. The Northern District of Ohio recently installed four additional electronic courtrooms in the Carl B. Stokes U.S. Court House in Cleveland. We now have eleven electronic courtrooms district-wide, with eight in Cleveland and one each in Akron, Toledo and Youngstown. The courtrooms are in regular use throughout the year by all judicial officers and have contributed to substantial savings of trial time. The district strives to provide litigants with the best facilities available to assist in the efficient administration of justice. Each electronic courtroom has an evidence presentation system, through which counsel can display exhibits, video recordings or multimedia presentations and view realtime transcripts with the push of a button. The systems include a document camera for displaying documents, x-rays and three-dimensional objects; 15" flat-panel video displays on counsel tables, the judge's bench and between jurors; VGA connections to display documents, multimedia presentations or images from a portable computer on any monitor in the courtroom; technology-ready counsel tables; realtime court reporter transcription; a visual image printer to produce 3" x 5" prints of any image displayed through the system; annotation devices which permit on-screen drawing and highlighting to emphasize specific details of evidence; a videocassette recorder; and infrared equipment for listening assistance and language translation.

Video Conferencing and Satellite Reception. The district has had video conferencing and satellite reception equipment at each court location since January, 1999. Video conferencing is available in at least 3 fixed locations within each court house. Supplemental portable video conferencing equipment has also been procured for each office. The equipment has been used for remote witness testimony, prisoner video conferencing, arraignments, judges' meetings, Clerk's Office meetings, and participation in long-distance learning programs offered by the Administrative Office and the Federal Judicial Center. The Court will soon be participating in an AO capital construction video conference on court house design for the Toledo court house, a program which in the past required participants to travel to the location of the seminar. The Court has saved significant amounts of travel time and costs through electronic participation in these events. Savings have also been achieved by other courts and the U.S. Marshal Service who have, upon occasion, brought prisoners held in nearby facilities to this Court to participate in oral argument on a motion via video conferences, rather than flying the prisoners to other Court locations. The Court and the U.S. Marshal's Service continue to work together to urge detention facilities to obtain video-conference facilities to reduce the time and cost of transporting detainees in situations that could be accommodated using video-conferencing. The Court has satellite receivers that receive informational and educational training broadcasts from the Federal Judicial Television Network that may be viewed on monitors located at several locations within each court house. In Cleveland, the FJTN broadcasts are also available on our desktop computers. The ability to view FJTN broadcasts on desktop computers will be made available in our divisional offices in the upcoming months.

Juror Utilization. The Northern District of Ohio is constantly striving to achieve effective juror utilization. Our District improved the utilization rate from 32.5% of jurors not selected or challenged in calendar year 2004 to 26% of jurors not selected or challenged in calendar year 2005, which is below the Judicial Conference goal of 30%

not utilized. This was accomplished through a concentrated effort among the Judicial Officers and their staff, and the Jury Department. Techniques such as staggering jury starting times, multiple voir dire, and assessing costs for both late pleas and settlements have made this improvement possible. The Clerk joined several Judges and staff representing our divisional offices in attending a Jury Utilization Seminar for small courts this past year and established the goal of allowing jurors to call in to our jury service recordings earlier than in the past to give them more time to make arrangements to report for jury duty.

Juror Information. The Court has all serving petit and grand jurors complete service questionnaires. The results are compiled and shared with the Judicial Officers involved in the trials, as well as with the Clerk and the AUSA's for the grand juror results. The Court is interested in the comfort and morale of jurors. We offer coffee to jurors as well as healthy breakfast and snack items to serving jurors. Our jury assembly areas offers cable television, magazines, puzzles, and a quiet area for jurors using their lap top computers. The Court's website at <http://www.ohnd.uscourts.gov> contains juror information including handbooks, answers to frequently asked questions, maps, hotel listings, parking facilities, restaurants, and a convenient link which allows jurors to e-mail the jury administrator with questions. Jurors have expressed appreciation for these efforts.

Interpreters. With the delegation of procurement authority for contract court reporters this past year, we established new procedures for procurement of these services and communicated this information to all certified interpreters and courtroom deputies. We have also trained all courtroom deputies on the Telephone Interpreting Program (TIP).

Naturalization of New Citizens. The Court administered the oath of allegiance to 3,531 new citizens in 2005. In Cleveland, ceremonies are held twice per month, and in Toledo, naturalization ceremonies were conducted monthly. Five special ceremonies were also held at public locations throughout the district.

Court Recording. The Northern District of Ohio employs 12 official court reporters and one full-time Electronic Court Recorder (ECR), assisted on a regular basis by a variety of deputy clerks, to serve its 24 judicial officers. By pooling court reporters, the district is able to save thousands of dollars in contract court reporter fees each year. Official court reporters in Cleveland are placed on a one-month assignment to a district judge, and reporters in Akron, Toledo and Youngstown are assigned by the court reporter coordinator in a manner which efficiently meets the needs of the judges. Court reporters frequently travel to other court locations to assist in providing coverage to judicial officers. The court has established a goal that all court reporters become realtime certified. Currently, ten of the twelve court reporters are Certified Realtime Reporters.

Clerk's Office. Our Clerk's Office currently supports 24 judicial officers. The Clerk of Court, Geri M. Smith, serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the Court as well as the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Judge. The Clerk's Office takes a leadership role in the emergency planning, sharing of administrative services (automation, human resources, finance, space/facilities, procurement), implementation of electronic filing

and video conferencing, the installation and support of electronic courtrooms, the installation of audio-digital recording equipment, and the renovation of Court facilities mentioned elsewhere in this report. The Clerk's Office is proud of its Internet web site, as well as its internal Intranet, both of which provide a wealth of information and educational materials regarding Court policies, local rules, Clerk's Office procedures, electronic filing and upcoming activities. During the past 18 months, Clerk's Office staffing has been reduced from 95 individuals (93.5 work units) on board to 86 (85.65 work units) through early retirements, buyouts and attrition. Although the Clerk's Office is authorized 119.8 positions for FY 2006, it cannot safely hire up to that number since the authorized number is so highly dependant upon MDL filings, which fluctuate widely from year to year. Excluding MDL filings, the Clerk's Office would be allocated about 78 positions. Over 25% of the Clerk's Office staff are courtroom deputies assigned to judicial officers. The Clerk's Office was visited by the AO Work Measurement team in December, 2005, and all Clerk's Office staff were interviewed regarding the tasks they perform and the time it takes to complete those functions, as part of the nation-wide review and reformulation of the District Court work measurement formula.

Electronic Case Filing. The Northern District of Ohio is proud to have been the first Court ever to permit attorneys to file documents over the Internet. Since the district first pioneered the system in 1996, it has been adopted by nearly every district and bankruptcy court in the country. The Case Management / Electronic Case File (CM/ECF) system permits users to file and view documents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Following conversion of the data that had been stored in our old ICMS docketing system, the Court now has records for 125,000 traditional civil, criminal and asbestos cases available online. The number of documents filed electronically by attorneys increased 15% from 48,878 in 2004 to 54,485 in 2005. Overall, 6,068 attorneys have filed 218,375 documents electronically since the Court began accepting electronic filings in non-asbestos civil (October, 1997) and criminal (May, 2005) cases. Beginning January 1, 2006, attorneys are required to file electronically absent a showing of good cause. Last summer, the Court's CM/ECF server was ported from the aging Solaris system to the new Linux platform resulting in improved response time and productivity for all users. The project was significant because Ohio Northern had the oldest, and one of the largest, electronic databases in the country to convert. The Court was one of the first in the nation to adopt the MJSTAR reporting system which electronically submits magistrate judge statistics to the AO and does away with the need to complete and mail the monthly manual JS-43 reports. The Clerk's Office also automated and streamlined the process by which Judgment and Commitment orders are distributed to appropriate Court units and other agencies via CM/ECF generated e-mails. We are currently working to adopt the automated JS-10 reports which will report district judge statistics in a similar manner. In the upcoming months, we will also implement: the automated case assignment system within CM/ECF, which paves the way for finally disposing of the legacy ICMS system; online credit card payments through AO approved Pay.Gov; and electronic filing of complaints by attorneys.

Training. The Northern District of Ohio is committed to the professional development of its staff. The district has had a Joint Court Unit Training Committee since 1993 and a Joint Unit Automation Sub-Committee since 1996, consisting of staff from the Clerk's

Office, Probation Office, Pretrial Services Office and Bankruptcy Court. These committees work together to ensure that training resources are utilized wisely and efficiently. A two-day training seminar for all Clerk's Office staff, court reporters and judicial assistants / secretaries was held in July 2005 focusing on establishing individual development plans. Through the consolidated IT Department, we implemented a new automation training program for all users in district court, probation, and pretrial services. Classes are held multiple times each week here in the Cleveland automation training room, as well as remotely from Toledo and to users in the other divisional offices. We added a new training section on the Court's intranet, including an easy to use training calendar, as well as the ability to register for classes online. Classes have been tailored to address needs expressed in a User Technology Survey that was distributed to all users, collected, and analyzed earlier in the fiscal year.

Consolidated IT Department. The automation staff from the Clerk's Office, the Probation Office and the Pretrial Services Office were consolidated into one department under the leadership of the Clerk of Court and a single Director of Information Technology on October 1, 2004. The new department is organized by function rather than by court unit to provide desktop support, network support, and support for national applications. The talent and experience of the combined group, along with a centralized Help Desk and training program, allow for more efficient and integrated use of staff and resources and improved service to all court units. The integrated department also encourages the use of standardized technology throughout the district that can more efficiently distributed and deployed across the entire court. For instance, following consolidation, all network server configurations for District, Probation, and Pretrial Services were standardized to run on Windows2003 server and the redundant Novell operating systems were eliminated. This allowed us to maintain network systems with a smaller network group, saving the court and public significant personnel costs. In 2005, Judges, Court Unit Executives and IT department managers participated in a Federal Judicial Center Strategic Planning for Information Resources program which assisted the Court establish the future direction it wished IT services to pursue. While the District Court and Bankruptcy Court automation departments remain separate entities, they meet quarterly and have shared much useful information with each other, as well as discussed ways to back each other up on COOP/disaster recovery, network and telephone switch support, offsite storage of backup tapes and sharing of expensive network tools.

Pretrial Services and Probation Office. On February 6, 2006, the Court decided to consolidate the Pretrial Services Office and the Probation Office into one unit under the direction of a single Chief. Greg Johnson has been designated the Chief of the combined Pretrial Services and Probation Office. The following information reflects the achievements of those offices prior to consolidation.

Probation Office. In FY 2005, there was a 14% increase in the number of presentence reports (1,019). The number of cases on supervision (1,717) decreased by 3%. Approximately 220 offenders met the early termination standards and their supervision was terminated by the Court. The probation office must be mindful of budgetary concerns but also strike a balance in delivery of meeting the offender and Court needs. The expenditures for Drug and Alcohol treatment were \$353,604 with an additional

\$193,846 spent on Mental Health treatment. Home confinement with electronic monitoring placement was at 198 offenders. The total expenditure for the home confinement program was \$42,729.00.

After almost 30 years of service, for Chief Probation Officer John J. Peet III retired January 3, 2005. Under his tenure, the office expanded programs in firearms, defensive tactics and computer crimes and began the initiative for search and seizure. Deputy Chief II Lenora Barry delayed her retirement, staying on to assist in the transition of the new Chief Probation Officer, until June 30, 2005 after earning national recognition for serving as an Audit Member of the Federal Corrections and Supervision Divisions, as well as a Leadership Development Advisory Member of the Federal Judicial Center, and with Administrative Office's Human Resources Work Group.

Following the transition, Probation undertook a major training commitment for the safety of the officers who were participating on the search team and for officers in the areas of defensive tactics, firearms, and updating safety vests. With a commitment to improve the employment rate of offenders, the Probation Office also hosted a two-week workshop with staff and community agencies who will be embarking to secure employers who will hire offenders. The staff has been trained in methods to assess the skills and needs of offenders with their employment endeavors. In addition, the Probation Office was selected to host two national conferences, one for Pretrial in 2007 and the other for the Workforce Development initiatives in 2008.

Significant Court cases affected daily operations. The *Booker/Fanfan* decision and a 6th Circuit case resulted in significant changes in the format of the pre-sentence report. The Probation Office has begun to revamp the monthly Offender Orientation Program with participation and interest of members of the bench. This program is conducted by supervisors when offenders begin supervision and presentation are made at FCI Elkton and FCI Milan on a quarterly basis. The Office also participates in mock job fairs at those facilities.

Pretrial Services Office. On September 30, 2005, Chief Pretrial Officer Jeff Johnson retired with more than 30 years in service to the Court. Prior to the retirement, the Court had begun to examine the feasibility of consolidating Probation and Pretrial Services. Prior to the official decision to consolidate, Chief Probation Officer Greg Johnson was assigned oversight of the Pretrial Services budget to facilitate the transition. The Pretrial Services management team now joins the Probation management team for weekly meetings. The joint venture, which now extends beyond combined training efforts, has produced a collegial environment among the staff of both units. Communication has improved particularly in the continuity of services to the Court.

Heritage Celebrations. The district also participates in the AO's Heritage Celebration Series by holding an annual African-American Heritage Ceremonies in both Toledo and Cleveland each February and an Hispanic Heritage Celebration in the fall. The Court was pleased to have retired Judge Nathaniel R. Jones, Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, serve as the keynote speaker of our most recent African-American Heritage Ceremony.

Advisory Group. One of the most positive aspects of the Civil Justice Reform Act process was the creation of the CJRA Advisory Group. That group provided an avenue for a continuing dialog between the bench and the bar on effective case management and other issues of interest. Although courts are no longer required to have an advisory group in place, the Northern District of Ohio has followed the recommendation of the Judicial Conference that the advisory group process be continued. The mission of the Advisory Group for the Northern District of Ohio is to cover all matters of interest, whether civil or criminal, to the bench and the bar. The group meets with the judges semiannually in May and October and has established three committees that meet independently as needed: Civil Rules, Criminal Rules and Alternative Dispute Resolution. The continued support of the Advisory Group has proven invaluable to the Court.

Respectfully Submitted,

James G. Carr
Chief Judge