

CREATING ORDER IN LAW

ON THE CASE WITH SYSCON:

CLIENT: Gautier Municipal Court and Police Department, Gautier, MS.

PROBLEM: Paper-based, manual process was time-intensive and error-prone

SOLUTION: Syscon Court Clerk System including software platform, courtroom access stations, electronic signature pads, biometric fingerprint scanners, and document scanners

BENEFITS: Dramatic reduction in data-entry and filing errors; improved efficiency; saves money, paper, and the environment; increased court attendance through court-date reminder service; higher payment rate from non-residents due to online credit card payment capabilities

Gautier Municipal Court's case load may have grown, but the judiciary's savvy adoption of proven yet leading edge technology has empowered employees to quickly and accurately dispense warrants, letters, and fines.

That, however, was not always the case, recalled Donna Davis, Court Clerk at the Mississippi agency. Before it acquired a document management software solution from Syscon, Gautier Municipal Court was using an application by another software provider that required a lot of manual input, multiple copies, and frequent use of a calculator for adding fines, she said.

"There were some forms I had to handwrite," said Davis. "I had to go, page by page on my docket, to see who didn't appear at court, and issue a warrant one-by-one. I would have to go to each case. So if one person had four charges, I would have to go to each case, print four warrants and four letters manually. If I had to do 70 warrants in a night, I would have to go in 70 times to print 70 warrants. The most I've ever printed in court was 110 warrants---which is a lot to do one at a time."

Having seen a demonstration of Syscon's software in 2006, when Gautier Municipal Court received budget approval for a new court and docket management software system, it was obvious which solution they wanted. In the intervening years, Syscon had further-extended the solution's capabilities, said Davis, adding more features such as biometric fingerprint scanning and online credit card payments.

"Dispatchers help us scan tickets into Syscon. I don't have to handwrite everything. I just scan my signature and print the letters," she said. "It gives me more time to do other things. I have time to get other things done a lot quicker. We clear court faster and get ready for court a lot faster."

Syscon also offers an e-ticket import module that would no longer require that users manually enter tickets. Gautier Municipal Court hopes to purchase this add-on capability in the near future, said Davis. By adopting this option, Gautier Municipal Court will move closer to its paperless objective, she said.

"Everybody here wants to go to e-tickets," said Davis. "It saves a lot of time for the officers and the administrators."

Unlike the prior system, which required manual entry of multiple letters and warrants, Syscon's streamlined solution automatically combines all a person's letters and fines, tallies-up the total, and prints a letter with the totals. Once the docket is cleared at the end of the court's session, Davis clicks

Failure to Appear, and the system automatically prints warrants for all user selected individuals who did not attend court that day, she said.

"Whoever's left gets a warrant. I hit the print button, and it prints all the warrants. After that the letters automatically print," said Davis. "I hit the FTA notice and it will print all the letters for me and tell me how much they owe."

Previously, the judge needed to hand-sign each warrant and letter. Biometric fingerprint scanners and document scanners from Syscon enable the judge to simply touch a fingerprint scanner to legally sign documents.

"We have an original and a copy of the warrant, and he would have to sign each warrant twice. Now he just pushes his finger and it signs it," said Davis. "It's very good for the time savings. He doesn't have to be here very long."

"There's also a tool where the system automatically calls to remind them [defendants] of their court date. We surely weren't fixing to do that," Davis said.

Employee Friendly, Customer Focused

Court employees prefer the Syscon system, which reduces the time spent within the courtroom and is more convenient for people facing fines and warrants. The convenience of online payments has also been very helpful.

The police department uses Syscon as well, because they take both payments and affidavits for the court, said Davis. Altogether, Gautier has nine users including the chief of police, the two court clerks, dispatch, Central Intelligence Division, and the patrol captain, she noted.



Syscon's solution is easy to use, despite its sophistication and range of extensive capabilities, she said. And the company is quick to respond in the case of questions or requests, added Davis.

"If we have a problem, we just call and get it taken care of right then," she said. "They keep in close touch with us, and keep us informed about what's going on. They're always willing to listen, and the training was great. It really prepared us for operating the court on Syscon."

Syscon, incorporated in 1973, is a leading provider of Windows-based client and server document management software and technology services that address the needs of government entities. Syscon's family of products and services includes: *PROMIS*, a public records optical management information system; *Court Clerk*, a court records and docket management system; online payment processing; and document preservation to provide digital backup and disaster recovery capabilities for existing paper records. All products feature integrated imaging and are utilized in counties and municipalities with populations ranging from 1,500 to more than 750,000. For more information about Syscon, please call 1-888-797-2661 or go to the company website www.syscononline.com.