



Clerk of District Court

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Do you have a topic you'd like us to include in the next "NOTES?"
If so, please call us or email asutton@tetonwyo.org

Helpful information from JUDGE DAY'S CHAMBERS is on page 4.

THE LAUNCH OF NOTES FROM THE CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT

INTRODUCTION

Happy almost Spring! What a winter it has been. We are pleased to pilot "Notes from the Clerk of District Court." This idea came up during a visit with a former Bar president. We thought there may be some value to sharing some of the "behind the scenes" perspectives about clerk work as custodian of the court record and the initial point of contact for case inquiries. The "Notes" will share insights about what clerks see and have to keep in mind when we process your pleadings and answer case inquiries, in an effort to help all of us work as accurately and efficiently as possible. We will also speak to our other duties providing child support assistance, processing passports, and court interpreting. We welcome your feedback and ideas about our goal and this "Notes" approach.

-Anne C. Sutton and staff

OUR STAFF

For those of you who may not know all of our staff, they are a pleasure to work with and I am pleased to introduce them below. Our team has a valuable combination of new and historical office perspectives as well as a variety of past work experience that all contribute to our office operations. Our team works very hard behind the scenes to evolve our office in ways that we hope benefit the judicial system, court patrons, and taxpayers.

Debbie Hassler. Debbie has lived in Jackson all of her life. Debbie will have 20 years of service at the Clerk of District Court Office in September of this year. She is a Senior Deputy clerk with special expertise in docketing, jury pool management, adoption cases, and coordinating Title 25 hearings.

Caryl Williamson. Caryl has worked at the Clerk of District Court Office for over 14 years. Her first job in Jackson was in 1980 at Lost Creek Ranch. Caryl is a Senior Deputy Clerk with special expertise in docketing, case financials and restitution, child support cases, and coordinating Title 25 hearings.

Jill Smith. Jill is in her second year as a Deputy Clerk here at the Clerk of District Court Office. Her prior local jobs included FedEx, Teton County Fire/EMS and Prestige Brands. She has quickly developed special expertise in child support cases and passport processing and has been training on case docketing for the past few months.

Natalie Wight. Natalie will complete her first year in May. Her undergraduate studies included a criminal justice emphasis as well as a minor in Spanish and she recently worked in the mortgage industry. Her full time work as a part-time Deputy Clerk focuses on records searches, case status inquires, and passports and as a part-time Court Interpreter includes court interpretation, planning, and outreach.

Have You Checked Out Our Website Recently?

www.tetonwyo.org/codc

Child Support * Clerk of Court Fees * Jury Service * Forms

NEW: CONVENIENT WAY TO INQUIRE ABOUT CASE STATUS AND PLEADINGS

Email us at clerkofdistrictcourt@tetonwyo.org

We have created a new general email inbox to make it easier to communicate with our office about case status questions and records requests. This email is monitored regardless of who is out of the office at any given time. If you have the case number, it is easy for us to answer questions about a hearing date, if a filing occurred, provide a docket sheet, or email a specific pleading if it has already been scanned (up to three attachments if file sizes permit and they are not sealed/confidential). **We are also able to email you a credit card link you can use for any required fees for case searches, mailing certified copies, filing fees, etc.** (You cannot use a credit card for fees that we forward to the U.S. Dept. of State for passports or to the WY Supreme Court for appeals).

You may also pay most fees by credit card at our office or by requesting an online link.

NAVIGATING CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT PROCESSING

The SDU offers more electronic and automated payments options than our small office was able to provide.

As many of you know, we transferred child support payment processing to the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). With the larger volume of payments the SDU processes, they are able to offer more electronic and automated payment options for parents paying support and more distribution options for parents receiving support. Our office was limited to personal visits to our office between 8am and 5pm or mail processing. **SDU PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR PARENTS PAYING SUPPORT** include electronic recurring payments through E-Pay, online credit card payments, and payment by check through the mail. **PARENTS RECEIVING FUNDS** can receive a check via the mail, an electronic deposit to a

Reliacard, or an electronic deposit to their bank account. **REMINDER, electronic transfers take a couple of days to post at each step and approx. 5-6 business days total to be available to receiving parent.** The paying parent initiates a payment and then it is received and receipted by the SDU (1-2 business days later), sent on to the paying parent (1-2 business days later) and then posted as available in the receiving parent's account (1-2 business days later). **First time payment transfers take extra business days to confirm account setup on both sides.** Our office continues to record all Teton County child support orders and provide payment records and customer service in person, by email, or over the phone to parties that would like assistance with payment options or payment histories. We ask that any party facing challenges paying or receiving funds through the SDU contact us for assistance.

UNDERSTANDING THE COURT INTERPRETER'S ROLE

A court interpreter likely plays a different role than you may have experienced with other community interpreters. In other settings, Interpreter summarization, simplification, and "on the fly" vocabulary and grammar polishing may be common and consistent with the goals of the situation and setting. Court Interpreters are restricted from these independent adjustments. They are tasked with matching the registry (sophistication) and word choice and phrasing of the speaker. If one party is speaking in a way that the receiving party does not understand, the clarification request must go back to the original speaker to make it. The Interpreter is restricted from interpreting before or after court between attorneys and parties and other court partners and parties. We have been working to schedule a second qualified interpreter for hearings that include multiple Spanish speaking parties. This model is expected to be most common in protection order hearings.

Thinking of the Court Interpreter as the Judge's Neutral Interpreter (used only when the judge is on the bench) helps clarify expectations about use and where conflicts would result if used without the Judge present and listening.

A QUICK QUALITY REVIEW CHECKLIST FROM THE CLERKS. . .
... IF IT IS HELPFUL FOR BEFORE YOU FILE YOUR PLEADING:

- ◇ **Correctly Captioned in the Ninth Judicial District, Teton County.**
 - Divorce filed in correct jurisdiction. We have seen a few dismissals based on residency/jurisdiction.
 - New filing fees are required if case is dismissed and you need to re-file in a different court.

- ◇ **Correct Case Number.** (To avoid it being misfiled in wrong case).

- ◇ **Pleading Signed and Dated and Certificate of Service also Signed and Dated.**

- ◇ **Required Payments Included and Correct.** (Jury Demand / Filing-Appraisal-Appeal-Fax Filing Fees.)

- ◇ **A Proposed Order Included if Appropriate.**

- ◇ **Civil Cover Sheet (when required) with Attorney Signature.**
 - Only one case type can be checked.
 - Does it fall under a PATERNITY case category?
 - (Paternity case types are restricted access until an Order establishes paternity.)

- ◇ **Vital Statistic Sheet if Required.**
 - Please make sure maiden name, date last lived together, and attorney/pro se address are all included.

- ◇ **Redactions Before Presenting the Filing (the Clerk's Office does not redact).**
 - Pleadings are scanned and if public, are available to view on public access terminals across the state.
 - Per Rules Governing Redactions: Minors names not a party to case, SS#s, Dates of Birth, Bank Acct #s.
 - For example: If you do not want DOBs and/or SS#s shown on birth / death certificates you must provide a redacted copy for the public file.
 - Remember to provide corresponding un-redacted versions where needed (kept in our Confidential file).

- ◇ **Special Note: Redacted and Un-redacted Proposed Divorce Decrees w/kids.**
 - As a heads up, we see some situations where the parties need an un-redacted Decree of Divorce with full kids name for one reason or another down the road.

- ◇ **Guardianships / Conservatorships of a Minor.**
 - The minor's name is added to our public records index (as they are a party to the case).
 - In general, clerks need a Motion/Court Order to place public access restrictions on Guardianship / Conservatorship case information and pleadings.

- ◇ **Courtesy Copy of Notice of Appeal to the Appellate Clerk of Court.** (Required by Rule).

Teton County Clerk of District Court Office

www.tetonwyo.org/codc

Clerk of District Court

Anne C. Sutton

Staff:

Debbie Hassler, Senior Deputy Clerk

Caryl Williamson, Senior Deputy Clerk

Jill Smith, Deputy Clerk

Natalie Wight, Deputy Clerk and

Court Interpreter

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK ON TITLE 25 CASES

We are extremely grateful for the dedication and assistance of the attorneys listed below. We have seen a continued increase in the number of Title 25 cases we open and hearings we hold.

Commissioners:

Kate Mead, Denny Moffett, Joe Moore and Melissa Owens

Patient Attorneys:

Len Carlman, Austin Dunlap, Alex Freeburg, Katherine Mannen Chad Marlowe, Doug Schultz and Dick Stout

Please call us if you are interested in being on the Patient Attorney list.

FROM JUDGE DAY'S CHAMBERS

Read Judge Day's Six Suggestions to Help Your Judge, Your Client and Yourself published in the December 2016 edition of the *Wyoming Lawyer*. The December 2016 issue is available free on the Wyoming State Bar website.

Please do not provide paper courtesy copies of your briefs, jury instructions, or any other filings. We merely recycle them. Paper courtesy copies were helpful in the past, prior to case files becoming electronic. We now read most documents electronically. The only exception to this suggestion is in the extremely rare instance that you file something the minutes before a hearing, in which case the Judge has not read your filing and would appreciate the paper copy to review en route to the courtroom for your hearing.

Many financial affidavits in family law matters arrive incomplete. Financial affidavits must be completely filled out to the extent reasonably possible. Attachments such as tax returns, W-2s, pay stubs, etc. must be provided as indicated in the form affidavit. Information requested should also be completely filled out. For example, taxes and other deductions should be identified in the spaces provided. If the answer to a question is \$0, please include a \$0. The Court may begin to issue correction letters regarding financial affidavits. Incomplete affidavits can delay resolution of otherwise simple family law matters for the litigants.

The Rules Governing Access to Court Records apply to motions to keep documents in a case file confidential. Prior to the adoption of those Rules, parties used a more informal process to request confidential treatment of court documents. The Rules provide more requirements and strike a balance between the presumption of open access to court records by the public and certain privacy interests. Parties are directed to refer to the Rules before filing. The Court has developed a correction letter for requests that do not comply with the Rules.

CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT CUSTOMER SERVICE STATEMENT:

We are thorough, trustworthy, respectful, and committed to learning and continuous improvement.

(Developed during our annual staff workshop)