

Municipal Court Reporting System

Executive Summary

The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Municipal Court Reporting System is a reporting tool that allows municipal courts to communicate with the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety about all required information from any driver's class license conviction. This cross-boundary collaborative system is located at <http://www.ok.gov/dps/courts> and can only be accessed by authorized institutions who participate in the program.

The system provides efficiencies to the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety and Oklahoma's participating municipalities in many ways including (see Significance of the project to the improvement of the operation of government):

- Efficient reporting required for a federal mandate necessary by October 2008.
- Declining error ratios reported to DPS.
- Reduced paperwork for the agency and municipal court clerks.

"The technology now used to expediently receive accurate driver license convictions and suspensions has dramatically reduced the previous high error rate and allows these convictions to be entered on a driver's record in a timelier manner," said DPS's Commissioner Kevin Ward.

The system utilizes design templates, and administrative tools that provide a fully functional application. The bold and clean appearance of the state standard agency template was implemented into this application, providing a consistent header, footer and left navigation throughout the application. The template was produced to provide Oklahoma government Web sites and applications with a more cohesive look and navigation. With this common layout, the visitor always knows that they are viewing an official Oklahoma government Web site.

Municipal court users have the ability to:

- Enter all information and transmit to DPS electronically about the conviction of drivers that hold any type of driver's class license.
- Add citations to the system prior to a court date so that the system will generate a court docket for a particular date range of citations.
- Create and submit action forms for the suspension of licenses and for the withdrawal of suspension.

The application complies fully with the Oklahoma's Information Security Policy. The system also implements the information security standards set forth in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. These standards set forth a stringent security framework to protect the application and the users. Two other security features were added:

- Programmatic flow control is placed into the system, to prevent users from typing in specific URLs and bypassing normal program operation.
- If a user is inactive after a certain amount of time, the system will log the user out automatically in order to protect data.

In accordance with accessibility standards, all court clerks can access the Municipal Court Reporting System. All services developed for the application meet and/or exceed these standards, which are based on the Federal Section 508 standards. These standards provide all state government with criteria to comply with in order to be accessible to all citizens of Oklahoma.

Clearly stated title

Oklahoma Department of Public Safety's Municipal Court Reporting System

Concise description of the business problem and solution

Prior to January 2006, the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety was processing around 250,000 municipal convictions a year. The majority of those convictions were paper convictions with error rates at about 10-15%. The federal government has now mandated that by October 2008 all commercial driver's license (CDL) convictions be entered on a person's driving record within 10 days of conviction.

"Prior to the availability of this Web site, DPS Record Management personnel were processing around 250,000 municipal court convictions and 73,000 court ordered suspensions, the majority of which were being sent on paper. We were experiencing an alarmingly high rate of errors on these documents due to improper name, date of birth, or driver license number," said Commissioner Kevin Ward.

The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety's ultimate goals are to receive the citations electronically, be compliant with the federal law by reporting the convictions on the driver's record within the 10-day period and reduce the error rate. To achieve these goals DPS has developed an application which enables cross-boundary collaboration and partnerships with Oklahoma's municipal court clerks allowing them to enter all traffic citations and other traffic related convictions through a Web site to be sent to DPS electronically.

Significance of the project to the improvement of the operation of government

The innovative technology features built in to the system allow for effective reporting, declining error ratios and reduced paperwork.

Effective Reporting

All data sent by the court clerks is submitted via the Web site and can be accessed by the court clerk at any time. This allows clerks to utilize a report and search utility within the system for increased reporting efficiency. The court clerks can run different reports within any time frame they choose such as how many convictions they had processed during a specific time period. The application also checks other users of the system for convictions entered on a particular person in a different court. Finally, it can also be used as a mini traffic record within that municipal court.

Declining Error Ratio

There are special innovative features built into the system that are utilized when the court clerks are entering information. If the information is not filled in correctly the system alerts the user that errors have occurred. The details are not sent to DPS, and this feature has reduced the error ratio from 10-15% to 2-4%.

In addition, DPS receives approximately 73,000 suspension requests a year from the state's municipal courts, which in the past were submitted on a six-page paper form with an error ratio of approximately 15 to 20%. Many municipal courts were not sending in requests for suspension due to the difficulty in filling out the six-page form. In the final phase of the project, requests for suspension will be sent to DPS electronically on a one-page form with the same capabilities of populating information from either the docket page or conviction page. This will enable the processing of suspension requests in a timely manner and will decrease the number of errors

submitted. DPS also expects to see an increase in the number of suspension requests submitted due to the ease of this form.

Reduced Paperwork

In order to properly document a conviction, in the past municipal court clerks sent piles of paperwork to DPS. The system removes much of the paperwork, allowing for a more efficient process of reporting convictions to DPS.

In addition, the electronic suspension request forms/facsimile form was utilized to make any changes or corrections to a conviction that had already been sent to DPS. In the past the court clerk would fill in this form by hand and fax or mail to DPS. Now, however, the auto population of information from the docket or conviction pages will be utilized to fill in this form as well, resulting in less time spent filling out paperwork. The electronic suspension request forms/facsimile will be implemented into phase three of the project.

Public value of the project

User Benefit

After visiting with several court clerks, DPS learned that their needs for additional services to compliment the Municipal Court Reporting System would be beneficial to both municipality users and the state. The second phase of the project included the addition of a docket page. This is beneficial to court clerks as it gives them an information management tool that allows them to add all citations before a court date including municipal codes such as a barking dog or loud music, etc. This is not sent to DPS but is a permanent record for the court and will always appear on their docket page.

Taxpayer Benefit

Because DPS has chosen to move municipal court reporting to an online system, Oklahoma taxpayers directly benefit because of DPS and all participating municipal courts' ability to reallocate funds and time to other important projects within their agency and court systems.

Agency Benefit

Due to the built-in reporting system and innovative features developed for error elimination, additional time and money are gained by DPS. The system reduces paperwork, error ratios, and produces more efficient reporting processes associated with reporting convictions.

State Benefit

In addition to saving the agency money and time, the Municipal Court Reporting System allows the state to service Oklahoma's municipal courts 24/7/365. As mentioned above, this system has improved the efficiency of court proceedings and cross-boundary collaboration and partnerships by providing court clerks an electronic means of building court dockets. This improves service delivery for all of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety.

Return on Investment

Upon completion of the final phase, the system will cost an estimated \$33,000 for the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety. No formal return on investment analysis was completed for the application; however, DPS estimates an average savings of \$12,000 a year in printing, mailing and shipping. In addition, DPS is now processing about 600 citations a month through the system, which allows for an estimated 50 full time employee hours saved. This provides about a \$9,000 dollars savings each year in employee hours. In less than two years, the system will have paid for itself through the above benefits. Another significant benefit is that DPS is already compliant with the federal government's mandate of entering the CDL convictions within 10 days of conviction.

"The cost savings to our agency increases each day as more courts are added as users to the Web site thus eliminating the amount of personnel time spent processing paper work, printing and shipping of forms used by the municipal courts, and the necessity to return the paper convictions and suspensions to the courts for correction and resubmission. The dollars invested by DPS for OK.gov to design and implement the Municipal Court Clerks Web site will be less than 33,000 dollars after all phases are completed by the end of this year. I consider this to be a small amount to invest for DPS and the municipal courts to send and receive driver license convictions and suspensions electronically," stated Commissioner Ward.

Current Adoption Rate

Internet access, and a valid e-mail address are the only requirements in order for Oklahoma court clerks to use the new Web based application. Currently there are 139 municipal courts out of 425 using the system with new courts added as requested everyday. This brings the adoption rate to 33% of all Oklahoma municipal courts participating in the newest cross-boundary collaboration and partnerships system in Oklahoma.

This solution for DPS utilizes four administrators with three operating from the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety and a fourth administrator providing maintenance and support from OK.gov. The system was developed using PHP 5.1.2 and is supported by an Oracle 10g database. It runs on the Apache 2 Web server. The equipment used to house the application is an IBM Blade Center. Three phases were implemented into complete the system, with the final phase scheduled launch on June 1st, 2007. The descriptions of each phase's functionality are described below:

First Phase

The first phase delivered an administrative interface to DPS to allow for the entering of municipal court locations and users to the system. Forms were also added to allow all municipal courts to provide DPS with all of the required information from a conviction. The first phase launched in January 2006.

Add Citations	
* - Indicates Required Field	
City County Code:	0000
* Citation Number:	<input type="text"/> (C or Blank) <input type="text"/> (Ex. C 0123456)
* Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
* First Name:	<input type="text"/>
Middle Name:	<input type="text"/>
* Address:	<input type="text"/>
* City:	<input type="text"/>
* State:	Oklahoma <input type="button" value="v"/>
* Zip Code:	<input type="text"/>
* Birthdate: (Format: mmddyyyy)	<input type="text"/>
* Race:	U - Not Known <input type="button" value="v"/>
* Sex:	Male <input type="button" value="v"/>
* Driver License Number:	<input type="text"/>
* Driver License State:	Oklahoma <input type="button" value="v"/>
* Driver License Class:	<input type="button" value="v"/>
* Offense Date: (Format: mmddyyyy)	<input type="text"/>
* Select Violation:	<input type="button" value="v"/>

Second Phase

The second phase's objective, which became operational in January 2007, was to allow for the expansion of the system with three deliverables including:

- The court clerk has the ability to add citations to the system prior to a court date. This allows the system to generate a court docket for a particular date range of citations. All citations are entered with an arraignment date, which gives the system the ability to auto generate a report of citations that have not been heard in court to be used as a docket

for upcoming court dates. It can be amended at any time while they are creating it and as they add new citations. Court clerks can print the docket to be used in court and later to enter the convictions to be sent to DPS.

- The system has the ability to populate information already entered from one action page to another utilizing the citation number. To enter convictions from the docket page, the court clerk enters the citation number, which pulls up all personal and vehicle information previously entered on the docket page to populate to the conviction page, reducing the need to retype information.
- Users have the ability to mark records as dismissed so they are not transmitted to DPS as convictions.

Create Docket	
Create New Docket Get Printable Docket	
Court Docket for: 03/01/2007	
Citation:	4546546
Name:	FASDF, ASF
Address:	454235
City:	DFADF State: OK Zip: 73132
Date of Birth:	06/16/1997
Race:	B Sex: M
Driver's License Number:	54564546546 State: OK Class: D
Date of Offense:	01/01/2007
Violation:	A.P.C. OF MV UNDER INFLU OF ALCOHOL/INTOXICANTS Code: DI7
Fine:	\$4,545.00
Reappearance Date:	03/01/2007
Comments:	asdfaf
*****PROCESSED*****	
Citation:	0111222
Name:	SMITH, ROBERT
Address:	101 N MAIN STREET
City:	OKLAHOMA CIT State: OK Zip: 73003
Date of Birth:	02/05/1969
Race:	U Sex: M
Driver's License Number:	111222333 State: OK Class: C
Date of Offense:	01/01/2007
Violation:	DRIVING WHILE LICENSE DISQUALIFIED Code: DL8
Fine:	\$100.00
Reappearance Date:	03/01/2007
Comments:	Testing

Third Phase

The proposed final phase of the application will give the court clerks the ability to keep track of fines and costs. It will expand the system to include an action form which combines an electronic method of submitting the following information on the screen below to DPS.

OKLAHOMA www.ok.gov		Municipal Court Reporting
Welcome Test Tawt Court User <input type="button" value="Logout"/> Main Menu Contact Information Helpful Hints	Home > Main Menu > Municipal Court Reporting	
	Citation Number <input type="text"/>	
	Action Form Type <input type="radio"/> Failure to Appear (Title 22-1115.5a) <input type="radio"/> Failure to Pay (Title 47-6-206c) <input type="radio"/> Failure to Satisfy Sentence (Title 11-14-112) <input type="radio"/> Insurance FTA (Title 47-7-605) <input type="radio"/> Notice of Withdrawal of Suspension * <input type="radio"/> Receipt of Payment of Fine and Cost * <input type="radio"/> Satisfied Court Sentence * <input type="radio"/> Dismissed Insurance FTP Only *	
	* Date Required if Withdraw: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Continue"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	
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End-to-end, the Municipal Court Reporting System operates with easy-to-use functionality. This results in an application that provides money and time saving benefits for both the agency and the municipal courts who are currently participating in this cross-boundary collaboration and partnership system in Oklahoma.