

LONG RANGE PLAN

CASE MANAGEMENT		
#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATUS
1	Expand site-based <i>pro bono</i> assistance program.	With the opening of the <i>Pro Se</i> Clinic at the Riverside Division in 2011, all five divisions now have onsite self-help desks to provide <i>pro se</i> parties with free legal information, reference material, and <i>pro bono</i> support.
2	Encourage increased use of telephonic and video appearances where appropriate.	Judges Clarkson and Wallace hear Riverside Division cases assigned to them from their Santa Ana Division courtrooms by video conference. Chief Judge Peter H. Carroll hears Northern Division cases from his Los Angeles Division courtroom. In past years, Judges Bluebond, Bufford, E. Carroll, Donovan, and Neiter were assigned a portion of the Riverside Division case filings that they heard by video conference from their Los Angeles Division courtrooms.
3	Encourage judges to serve in a different division at least once a year.	No updates to report.
4	Facilitate the judges' ability to prepare more orders.	The mobile version of Lodged Order Upload (LOU-e), which allows judges to remotely access and approve orders, was implemented in August 2011. The Lodged Order Upload (LOU) program was launched in September 2007. Multiple enhancements were implemented in CIAO!
5	Reduce Clerk's Office labor component for all case processing and case management functions.	<p>The Clerk's Office began using an automatic discharge feature that substantially reduces labor involved in this manual process. Lodged Order Upload (LOU) program launched in September 2007 and is widely used. ECF usage became mandatory on April 1, 2007. High volume claim filers registered to use ECF. Quality control tracking program developed to identify common errors and users with high error rates to target training/remedial action. Online training modules developed to replace CM/ECF classroom training. Clerk's Office also performs automatic dismissal of deficient cases to reduce referrals to the judges. Adopted district-wide procedures for the electronic service of adequate protection orders and relief from stay orders. The Clerk's Office is currently developing case closing automation.</p> <p>Headers no longer need to be inserted for the Proof of Service (POS) and Notice of Entry (NOE), greatly reducing staff labor. Orders are now much easier for attorneys to prepare, reducing time spent by Court staff answering questions, such as how to add POS and NOE pages, and also time spent by staff fixing orders where the formatting was unacceptable due to the way in which the POS and NOE were imported into the order.</p> <p>In 2010, commenced program to acknowledge staff who propose ideas for improving the Court's efficiency.</p>

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6	Standardize docket entries.	Trained registered ECF attorneys to use correct docket codes. Discontinued routine docketing of unused orders. Quality control tracking program developed to identify common errors and users with high error rates to target training/remedial action. Online training modules developed to target common errors/inconsistencies.
7	Explore the ability to process documents while working at an alternate location. (See also Human Resources Objective #1)	Telework program in place. Clerk's Office staff at divisions also use electronic systems to assist each other as needed.
8	Facilitate, as appropriate, the administration of small cases.	Individual Chapter 11 Task Force developed forms that were approved for individual chapter 11 cases.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH		
#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATUS
1	Expand relations with minority bar associations.	The Court has regular interaction with local bar associations in the district that have diverse memberships.
2	Obtain funding for foreign language interpretation and translation services.	The Court's FAQs were translated into Spanish and posted on the Court's website in a project coordinated by the Debtor Assistance Project and funded by the Attorney Admissions Fund.
3	Encourage effective cross-cultural communication in the courtroom.	<p>The Court's FAQs were translated into Spanish and posted on the Court's website in a project coordinated by the Debtor Assistance Project and funded by the Attorney Admissions Fund.</p> <p>In January 2010, the Court and Public Counsel initiated steps to partner with local colleges to have volunteer Spanish translation services available at reaffirmation hearings. The project, now spearheaded by Public Counsel, has students from CSULA and the Northridge Institute volunteering their translation services in the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley Divisions.</p>
4	Create bankruptcy education programs.	<p>In 2011, the Clerk's Office initiated its "Raising the Bar" series of bankruptcy education programs conducted for Court staff by subject matter experts from the local bar. Raising the Bar programs were videoconferenced to all five divisions and the series was taped for future use. The Education Committee continues to arrange bankruptcy education programs for the off-site BOJ Seminar, other quarterly BOJ meetings, and extern/law clerk orientation.</p> <p>Sponsored by the chambers of Judge Saltzman in Riverside, the Court continues to offer three training sessions annually to incoming law clerks and externs, in the spring, summer, and fall. The one-day session is conducted by bankruptcy judges and guest speakers.</p> <p>In 2012, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court provided training to 156 Law Clerks and Externs, with 71 percent coming from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court (110 participants) and the remainder from the U.S. District/Magistrate Court (46 participants). This represented a 9 percent increase in attendance over 2011, and a 50 percent increase since 2010. This might be attributable to the "popularity" of bankruptcy in recent years, in addition to ongoing program enhancements which have increased the reputation and popularity of the training program itself.</p> <p>The Court continued to expand its programs, holding the nation's first Federal Court Power Lunch in June 2012, where high school students were able to meet judges from state and federal court, attorneys, and Court staff. The second Federal Court Power Lunch was held with cadets from the Los Angeles Police Academy in October 2012.</p>
5	Create pamphlets in Spanish available for the public on the nature of chapters 7, 11, and 13.	Since 2011, pamphlets explaining the purpose of chapters 7 and 13 in English and Spanish have been stocked in the Intake lobby at all divisions and are available on the Court's website. The pamphlets are provided by the California State Bar and are entitled <i>What Can I Do If I Can't Pay My Debts?</i> Additionally, a Spanish translation of the Court's FAQs was posted on the Court's website in 2009, which explains the differences between chapters 7, 11, and 13.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH		
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6	Review all information available to the public and revise it to accord with changes in the law.	The Court's website was redesigned in 2012 with input from the bar and general public. The website now has a more relevant and user-friendly format, as well as a powerful search feature. Since 2011, the Court has also updated all material provided in Intake lobbies at all five divisions, including state bar pamphlets, Keep Your Home California pamphlets, 341(a) locations, and a flyer emphasizing each of the two credit counseling certificates required from debtors in chapter 7.
7	Provide public education on issues such as separation of powers, judicial independence, rule of law, and <i>stare decisis</i> .	Judges frequently participate in panel discussions and programs sponsored by universities, law schools, bar associations, etc.
8	Update the Court's website periodically to keep it current and user-friendly.	The Court launched its new website in October 2012. The website offers users a better experience because the information is well organized, includes better navigation, and is easily searched. For those with visual impairments and literacy difficulties, the new website offers a read-aloud service via BrowseAloud. The Court has also incorporated a translation service on the website that provides translations between English and dozens of different languages. During 2012, most Court forms were overhauled and are now fillable and savable without the need to purchase expensive applications. The Court's website is updated regularly to reflect current court information and processes, public notices, judges' practices, etc.
9	Encourage legal assistance from <i>pro bono</i> attorneys for parties who cannot afford an attorney. (See also Facilities and Security Objective #7)	The Court collaborates with the local bar to provide free and low cost legal assistance to unrepresented parties through the Debtor Assistance Project. The Court now has onsite self-help clinics at all five divisions that provide legal information, reference material, and <i>pro bono</i> support.
10	Make electronic filing more accessible to the public.	The Court began extensive testing of <i>Pro Se Pathfinder</i> , a national CM/ECF program for self-represented filers to electronically file petitions. The Court will make it available at its self-help clinic in Los Angeles in 2013. Completed numerous ECF training sessions for members of the local and national bar. Online training modules replaced CM/ECF classroom training for new attorneys, as well as targeted error prone areas and LOU. Filing Agent was made available in 2012 to enable select attorney staff members to use CM/ECF simultaneously with their own IDs/passwords.
11	Publicize appropriate means to communicate suggestions for Court rules and procedures.	In 2009, the Court initiated the Bar Advisory Board. This board, comprised of representatives from local bar associations that provide feedback and suggestions to the Court, is a useful vehicle for communication between the Court and the bar. In 2011, the Bar Advisory Board provided extensive feedback on the Court's new website. Two members of the board volunteered to be on the IT Committee and made valuable recommendations on operational and procedural matters. Judges and executive management attend local bar functions to maintain open communication. The Court continues to seek input from the public on local rules, requesting comments through public notices and the <i>Court News</i> publication.

FACILITIES AND SECURITY

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATUS
1	Review divisional organization of the Court.	On April 1, 2011, the Ninth Circuit approved a five-year extension on the Court's lease on the Northern Division. Following consideration of a combined Northern Division and San Fernando Valley Division to be located in Ventura County, the Court has decided not to revise its five-division structure and negotiated a new lease for the San Fernando Valley Division, effective November 13, 2011.
2	Create a plan for court operation in the event of a natural disaster or other catastrophe that affects all or substantially portions of the district.	<p>In 2012, the Court began evaluating the current state of the telework program and how best to integrate it into the Court's COOP plan. Teleworking has the potential to allow certain Court personnel to work from home during times when physical relocation is dangerous or not possible.</p> <p>Also in 2012, the Court continued the evaluation of how to best utilize the emergency notification system. To further ensure that information is shared between agencies in a timely manner, the Court is planning to merge emergency notification system capabilities with District Court in FY 14.</p> <p>Finally, COOP personnel assisted the Federal Executive Board during the annual table top exercise at the Los Angeles Cathedral. The session was focused on a number of scenarios, that would severely affect the Court's ability to provide essential services to the public.</p>
3	Determine the amount of space used by the Court that is necessary to serve the public.	The Clerk's Office released 9,725 square feet at the San Fernando Valley Division and 14,000 square feet at the Santa Ana Division.
4	Establish a "virtual" courtroom system.	Santa Ana Division Judges Clarkson and Wallace hear Riverside Division cases assigned to them by video conference between the Riverside and Santa Ana divisions on a routine basis. Chief Judge Peter H. Carroll began hearing Northern Division matters by video from his Los Angeles Division courtroom. In past years, Judges Bluebond, Bufford, E. Carroll, Donovan, and Neiter were assigned a portion of the Riverside Division case filings that they heard by video conference from their Los Angeles Division courtrooms.
5	Establish or create technology to enable litigants to appear from wherever they are.	Santa Ana Division Judges Clarkson and Wallace hear Riverside Division cases assigned to them by video conference between the Riverside and Santa Ana divisions on a routine basis. Chief Judge Peter H. Carroll began hearing Northern Division matters by video from his Los Angeles Division courtroom. In past years, Judges Bluebond, Bufford, E. Carroll, Donovan, and Neiter held routine hearings on Riverside Division cases by video conference from their Los Angeles Division courtrooms.
6	Validate efficacy of Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) on a continuing basis.	<p>The Court's COOP plan is constantly being updated to ensure that it adheres to the latest available version/template, and that it reflects the Court's current organizational structure and performance goals.</p> <p>In 2012, the Court continued the COOP revision process, further bolstering the document's relevance to current Court functions and operations. This process is slated to continue, as the Court moves to new systems and begins to increase collaboration with other federal agencies.</p> <p>In addition, new training courses were developed to ensure pertinent aspects of COOP are understood by all personnel involved in the Court's COOP program.</p>

FACILITIES AND SECURITY		
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7	Explore providing space in the courthouses for providing <i>pro bono</i> legal assistance. (See also Community Outreach Objective #9)	With the opening of the <i>Pro Se</i> Clinic at the Riverside Division in 2011, all five divisions now have onsite self-help desks to provide <i>pro se</i> parties with free legal information, reference material, and <i>pro bono</i> support. The Court also makes rooms available for <i>pro bono</i> attorneys to provide legal advice to <i>pro se</i> debtors prior to Reaffirmation Agreement hearings at the Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Northern and San Fernando Valley Divisions.
8	Make electronic locks and access to doors, elevators, and locations more universal, and limit physical keys and cipher locks.	<p>Judge Mund's office space in the San Fernando Valley was outfitted with a full security package consisting of a monitor, an intercom, and a door release. This package, funded by the U.S. Marshals and installed by UDT, eliminates the need for visitors to use Judge Tighe's chambers entrance.</p> <p>In the Los Angeles Division, the Clerk's Office completed installing card readers at the rear door of every bankruptcy courtroom as a security measure. Judges can unlock the rear door to their chambers by using keycard readers.</p> <p>Keycard readers throughout the district are being upgraded for compatibility with smartcards. This upgrade has been completed at the Riverside Division, is nearly completed at the Santa Ana Division, and is on hold at the Los Angeles Division.</p>

HUMAN RESOURCES

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATUS
1	Evaluate and modify, if necessary, the use of the telework program. (See also Case Management Objective #7).	The Clerk's Office revised its telework program to include additional positions eligible to telework and increased the number of days select operations positions can telework up to three days per week.
2	Ensure a smooth transition as senior staff members retire.	<p>The Court facilitated the 2012 Workforce Planning training and workshops for its managerial staff in April through August. While Workforce Planning is an ongoing process, this project has enabled court management to address staffing levels in a proactive manner, particularly around re-engineering department structures, competencies, human resources metrics, and succession planning.</p> <p>In addition, educational programs were developed for future leaders and current members of management. The programs focused on leadership, communication, and technical skills. A total of 74 staff members completed these programs.</p>
3	Recruit and retain a workforce consistent with the court's technology.	Due to workforce planning efforts throughout the year, the Court did not actively recruit staff. However, training and development efforts continued to enhance workforce skills while strengthening the Court's succession planning program.
4	Enhance training for all staff.	<p>In 2012, training participant hours increased by almost 80 percent over 2011, from 8,544 hours to 15,293 hours.</p> <p>The Raising the Bar on Bankruptcy lecture series concluded, with over 100 staff members completing all 12 sessions. Over 50 employees also completed the 40-hour Interactive Bankruptcy Online Tutorial. A one-day training session was provided to 156 law clerks and externs, with 71 percent coming from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and the remainder from the U.S. District/Magistrate Court, representing a 9 percent increase in attendance over 2011, and a 50 percent increase since 2010. For the first time, the Ninth Circuit Law Library offered a Bankruptcy Showcase for chambers at all divisions, featuring the new Lexis Advance and WestLawNext databases.</p> <p>The major upgrade to CM/ECF v4 involved a significant training effort across the Central District. Information Technology staff received specialized training in Java, Windows 7, and Drupal.</p> <p>The nine-month Gateway program graduated 49 Clerk's Office team leaders, supervisors, and managers. A total of 21 aspiring leaders completed the 18-month Paths to Success program. Three supervisors from the Central District applied to and were selected to attend the New Supervisors' Development Program in Washington, D.C. Two members of the Staff Development Department also participated in the program as faculty coaches.</p> <p>Additional training available to all court staff included the AO BeneFit for Life retirement training; desktop automation, including IT Security tips, plus Microsoft and Adobe programs; emergency preparedness training, including the 40-hour Community Emergency Response Team certification by the City of Los Angeles; and the annual 2011 Winter Education Seminar, "Communicating for Success."</p>

HUMAN RESOURCES		
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5	Develop a new employee recognition program consistent with national guidelines.	<p>The Court implemented a new employee recognition program called Spot-on-Award for Recognition (SOAR). During 2012, the second year that the SOAR program was in place, a total of 273 awards were given to 157 employees district-wide.</p> <p>SOAR gives the opportunity for the Clerk's Office to recognize an employee's contribution to the performance of a team, division, or the entire district. Awards are given based on contributions to the Court in the areas of Customer Service, Outstanding Performance, Teamwork, Suggestions, Special Acts, and Special Service. Awards are divided into three categories: monetary, non-monetary, and time-off.</p> <p>The program also includes custom minted coins that are awarded by the Chief Judge or Clerk of Court for significant contributions.</p>
6	Establish a mechanism for line staff to provide feedback to management staff.	<p>In 2011, the Court announced the formation of three Centers of Excellence: Process Improvement, Communication, and Employee Engagement. These groups consist of Court staff members who discuss methods for improving various aspects of our Court, and creating a high-performing organization. The three centers have made several accomplishments since their initial meetings in January 2012, including the following:</p> <p>Process Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating standardized operations manual. • Updating of various forms for clarity and effective use. • Identify and implement cost-saving measures. <p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize and publicize best practices for communication (out-of-office email/voicemail, email etiquette). • HELP articles in monthly court newsletter • Court style guide <p>Employee Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of High Five Board for employee recognition • Organized several volunteering/donation initiatives (school supplies, food drive, etc.) • Creation of iBOT training plans <p>The Court participated in two surveys in 2011 designed to improve management and organizational excellence. As a result of these surveys, a suggestion box has been added to the internal website to provide employees an opportunity to provide feedback, ideas, or other suggestions.</p> <p>Also, a "work smarter" email account was created to provide an opportunity for staff to make online suggestions to conserve costs throughout the Court.</p>
7	Explore alternative work schedules for staff.	No update.
8	Implement digital time card and leave tracking/management systems.	The Court adopted the Judiciary's HRMIS electronic time card and leave tracking system in December 2012.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT		
#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATUS
1	Expand CM/ECF to all constituents.	The Court began testing <i>Pro Se Pathfinder</i> , a national CM/ECF program for <i>pro se</i> filers to electronically file petitions, and will make it available at its self-help clinic in Los Angeles in 2013. The Court now provides online CM/ECF training modules to improve access for those interested in obtaining access to CM/ECF or improve their skills. By the end of 2012, a total of 3,661 users had been registered to electronically file documents via CM/ECF. The Court introduced Filing Agent on June 21, 2012 to enable attorneys to assign logins for their office staff that use CM/ECF. All those using Filing Agent can do so simultaneously.
2	Reduce paper/printer costs.	<p>Among bankruptcy courts nationwide, the Central District had the lowest Bankruptcy Noticing Center (BNC) costs per case in 2012, at approximately \$11.60 per case. By comparison with the national average of BNC costs per case (about \$26.60), the Court saved the Judiciary nearly \$4 million in 2011 and 2012. The Court also has the highest percentage of creditors who receive electronic notices instead of paper notices (41 percent).</p> <p>Networked copiers throughout the Court enable duplex printing and eliminate the need for separate scanners and fax machines while reducing toner expense. The use of PDF files that can be viewed, either from e-mails or from the Court's website, continues to increase (e.g., judicial committee minutes, procedural manuals, reports, newsletters, etc.). The Court studied printing practices and costs to help the Court make business decisions on how to acquire supplies and services more effectively and efficiently reduce expenses.</p>
3	Enable <i>pro se</i> e-filing safely and in accordance with applicable laws.	The Court began testing <i>Pro Se Pathfinder</i> , a national CM/ECF program for <i>pro se</i> filers to electronically file petitions, and will make it available at its self-help clinic in Los Angeles in 2013.
4	Educate other bankruptcy courts regarding the benefits and advantages of the calendaring program CIAO! and other software developed by the Court.	<p>Judge Peter H. Carroll and members of the Clerk's Office provided an overview of CIAO! to a national panel from the AO and other courts in 2008. In 2009, a member of the Clerk's Office demonstrated CIAO! to the CM/ECF Next Generation task force.</p> <p>The AO ultimately decided to go with a competing calendaring program, and the Court has ceased promoting CIAO! to other courts, but continues to enhance features in CIAO! to serve the Court's own purposes.</p>
5	Provide computer terminals in Clerk's Offices for <i>pro se</i> litigants to use for filing court documents electronically.	The Court began testing <i>Pro Se Pathfinder</i> , a national CM/ECF program for <i>pro se</i> filers to electronically file petitions, and will make it available at its self-help clinic in Los Angeles in 2013.
6	Enable e-filing of proofs of claim by high volume claim filers such as the IRS.	<p>Objective completed.</p> <p>The Court registered the IRS and other high-volume claim filers to electronically file claims through CM/ECF.</p>

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOMPLISHMENTS/STATUS
7	Modify CIAO! so tentative rulings are easily included in the docket as findings of fact and conclusions of law in support of court findings.	Not feasible as tentative rulings may be modified.
8	Implement digital time card and leave tracking/management systems.	The Court adopted the Judiciary's HRMIS electronic time card and leave tracking system in December 2012.