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a tyler courts & justice solution

O'Fallon Municipal Court

At a Glance:

- O'Fallon Municipal Court
- Jeff Chapple, Court Administrator
- Population: 80,519

Challenges:

- Shorten customer service lines
- Reduce cash/check handling
- Produce real-time data
- Keep up with legislation
- Minimize data entry/mailing
- Back office efficiencies

Solutions:

- Incode Court Case Management Online

Benefits:

- Reduced ticket processing from 7-10 days to 2
- Reduced cash/check handling through online bill pay
- Integrated system yields real-time data, minimizes data entry/mailing
- On-demand report generation and searches
- Keep up with legislative demands through report development by Tyler

For many years they were able to manage a smaller court system with a case management system developed in-house. While adequate then, the city of O'Fallon has progressed into the seventh largest in Missouri with a growing population exceeding 80,000. They needed a system that could reduce long customer service lines, process credit cards online to reduce cash and check handling, keep up with changing legislative demands, produce real-time data and minimize manual entry and mailing. They found their answer in Tyler's Incode Court Case Management Online solution in May 2007.

Integrated Technology Reduces Ticket Processing by Week

Now they are experiencing efficacy and increased productivity previously unavailable. "Considering we are taking in approximately $32,000 per month in the form of 75-80 payments per week, the option to directly apply bonds to one or more cases has saved us a lot of administrative work," says Jeff Chapple, Court Administrator for the O'Fallon Municipal Court. Additionally, online information transmission has drastically affected reporting time as they can receive electronic transfer tickets from the local police department and process state electronic convictions quicker. Chapple says, "It previously took 7-10 working days to get tickets into the system because of processing time. Now with direct interface with Incode, tickets written yesterday are imported a day later. We reduced our ticket processing by a week. And now that it's online, people check for their tickets a lot faster. Some defendants see it one day and pay the fine online the next." That reduces future paperwork for the court.

Online Payment System Reduces Customer Service Traffic

Due to the online court option, the city has also seen a significant drop in office traffic. With court being held on Monday nights, they are now seeing weekend and Monday online traffic picking up due to offenders paying fines before their court date. Over time they have seen their percentage of online traffic continue to grow, and with each docket an increasing number of people are finding online services a viable and convenient option.

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Online Fee Processing Minimizes Cash and Check Handling

Having eliminated all credit card payments by phone, O'Fallon courts are now encouraging online fee processing to reduce cash and check handling, streamline processes and enforce regulatory compliance. "This made us feel that we were much more compliant with the credit card reporting law without having to deal directly with defendants," explains Chapple. "It also takes a lot of time to write down a credit card number, run it through, and then call someone back when the credit card is declined or written down incorrectly. We haven't processed a credit card since we started using Incode, so we've seen a huge difference in staff efficiencies."

Incode Aids in Report Generation and Statistical Searches

O'Fallon court staff members are also pleased with the amount of reporting options available and Tyler's response to current legislation. "With our old system, you had to wait until you posted your whole docket to generate one letter. With Incode, you can generate a single letter when you need to, and you can search about 50 different ways to find statistics," stated Chapple. Also, monthly reports to state and circuit court judges reflecting court costs, fines and ticket status (issued, convicted or dismissed) were set up by Tyler Technologies in 2007. Coming legislation in late August 2013 will mandate an added report that breaks down court revenues according to moving versus non-moving violations. Cities that fail to comply forfeit additional state funding for traffic grants. Tyler Technologies was aware of this new state requirement and helped them comply before the deadline.

Live Technical Support Keeps Court Operative at All Hours

Chapple added that technical support was also a major issue in building a relationship with Tyler Technologies. "You can get a live human that is responsive—even for night court. We had a problem at 6 or 7 p.m. one night. We got it fixed and were back online in minutes. That was a big selling point."

Incode Grows with O'Fallon Court System

Like other Tyler customers, O'Fallon is working to make a good product even better and more responsive to their needs. They are currently in partnership with Tyler to develop software that processes and submits fingerprints to the state. Their current system, while effective, is a bit slow due to data entry and mailing hard copies. As a result, manual entry will be greatly reduced, as will phone calls to their office by others conducting background checks. Law enforcement agencies will also be able to use the information to elevate punitive charges for repeat offenders. The City of O'Fallon hopes to be enjoying this new feature before the end of 2013.

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Chapple and his staff are satisfied with their decision to use Tyler's Incode online court solution, and continue to see the company as a progressive one that supports and satisfies its customers. "They listen to their users and are constantly upgrading and moving from idea to development. You don't have that opportunity without having a progressive company." And as pleased as they are with their decision, Chapple reiterates that part of that experience is a result of how personal and scalable the solution has been for them. "This technology is very user-driven. There are lots of features available, but you don't have to use them all. You can build it and operate it the way you want to, and can control which technology you want to take advantage of."

It's hard to deny that this court system is becoming leaner and more customer-driven. In taking advantage of the technology they need, they are, in effect, giving the public more control in how they interact with the court system and simultaneously making their back room operations more efficient. Operating in a time when jurisdictions are forced to do more with less, the O'Fallon court system is proud to leverage their technology to serve the public in such a responsive way and is glad to partner with Tyler Technologies to continue that mission in the years to come.