

NEWS RELEASE: April 6, 2009

### **Civil court cases to be heard in Greene County Historic Courthouse**

For the first time since 1996, court will be in session today in the Greene County Historic Courthouse. Starting this morning, visiting judges from around the state will take turns presiding over Greene County's 31<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit, Division 25, in the Historic Courthouse, Room 212.

Greene County Presiding Judge Dan Conklin established Division 25 by administrative order March 11 to accommodate visiting judges supplied by the Missouri Supreme Court through the Judicial Partnership Program. The program was established in response to the Supreme Court's October, 2007, Weighted Workload Study, which showed Greene County's 31<sup>st</sup> Circuit needed seven additional judges to manage the court's annual caseload.

Division 25 will be staffed with a rotating roster of visiting judges from Missouri's 8<sup>th</sup> (Carroll and Ray counties,) 15<sup>th</sup> (Lafayette and Saline counties) and 44<sup>th</sup> (Douglas, Ozark and Wright counties) Judicial Circuits, as well as retired and senior judges from other circuits.

Jerry Moyer, Greene County Courts Administrator, said the visiting judges would help alleviate the caseload for the county's Circuit and Associate Circuit judges.

"Division 25 frees up Associate Circuit judges, who currently hear civil cases, to devote more time to larger, more complex cases," said Moyer. "They, in turn, can help Circuit judges work through the county's backlog of felony criminal cases."

Cases heard in Division 25 will be limited to associate civil suits for less than \$25,000, such as lawsuits, landlord-tenant disputes and small claims. No criminal cases or jury trials will be heard in Division 25. Moyer said judges in Division 25 would hear an estimated 100 civil cases a day.

The Historic Courthouse is expected to be home to Division 25 until July, when a new courtroom under construction in the Greene County Judicial Courts Facility will be complete. The new courtroom is being built in the former Title IV office space.

Civil cases filed after March 11 will be heard in Division 25, in the Greene County Historic Courthouse, 940 Boonville Ave., Springfield. Civil cases filed before March 11, and all other court cases, continue to be heard in the Greene County Judicial Courts Facility, 1010 Boonville Ave. Parties will be notified of the location upon filing.

Division 25 will be in session Monday through Thursday, starting at 9 a.m., except on the first and third Mondays of each month, when court opens at 10 a.m., after the conclusion of the Greene County Commission sessions held in Room 212. Court security will screen visitors for weapons at the door of the courtroom.

For more information, call Greene County Presiding Judge Dan Conklin at 417-868-4080, Greene County Courts Administrator Jerry Moyer at 417-868-4899, or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-379-5713.

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