



LEGAL BEAGLE



January
2007

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Friday January 19, 2007 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Luncheon at Lakewood Cost TBA Topic: Area Legislators
Friday February 16, 2007 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Luncheon at Garozzo's (Lee's Summit) Cost TBA Speaker: Gary Robb to discuss "Maximizing
Friday March 16, 2007	Speaker and location TBA
Monday April 2, 2007	Royals Opener
Friday May 11, 2007	Steak Fry at Mike Onka Hall 6:00 p.m.



As many of you know, in late December 2006, in an attempt to help equalize an overcrowded family law docket, outgoing Presiding Judge J. D. Williamson transferred approximately 350 domestic and family law cases from Independence to be redistributed to circuit judges at the Kansas City Courthouse. This should not come as a surprise to anyone. During his tenure as presiding judge, Judge Williamson repeatedly discussed the disparity of caseloads in Eastern Jackson County and the need to balance the inventory of cases. Although many of you are not happy with having to try your Eastern Jack case in Kansas City, Judge Williamson has really done us a favor by drawing attention to this ongoing problem.

It is absolutely no secret that dockets in Eastern Jackson County are huge. Due to changing demographics, caseloads in Eastern Jackson County are growing faster than in Kansas City. Before Judge Williamson's order, circuit judges in Eastern Jack carry on average 150 contested family court cases compared to about 50 for the Kansas City circuit judges. Of course of the 19 circuit judge positions in Jackson County, Missouri, 15 are located downtown with only 4 in Eastern Jackson County. Even a casual observer realizes the overcrowded conditions at the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse.

It's a no brainer that the long-term solution is a new courthouse with more judges to handle the volume of cases that are filed in Eastern Jackson County. Though this issue was unsuccessful when presented to the voters about five years ago, the problem continues to grow larger. I believe the issue of a new courthouse should be revisited. If your clients complain about traveling to the Kansas City Courthouse, take the opportunity to point out the need to build a new courthouse in Eastern Jackson County. Instead of complaining, let's take this opportunity to begin building support among litigants, lawyers, the judiciary, law enforcement, business leaders and chambers of commerce by pointing out the need for a new courthouse in Eastern Jackson County. With long-term interest rates remaining relatively low, the project could be financed with a bond offering without the need to raise taxes. A new courthouse is the obvious and preferred solution. However, there are temporary alternatives.

Instead of a new courthouse, another option would be to move real estate records and the County Tax Collection offices located on the ground floor of the annex building to an off-site premises. That space could then be remodeled to create one or perhaps two new courtrooms to accommodate more judges. Rather than creating and funding two new circuit judge positions, perhaps two existing Kansas City judges could be transferred to Independence. However, creating two additional courtrooms in the current building is costly and is not a long-term solution. It is estimated to cost \$450,000 to construct each courtroom. Add to that the cost of paying rent for the relocated county offices to another building and the cost escalates rapidly. A case is easily made that this temporary fix is merely a band-aid and not a viable long-term solution.

A new courthouse appears to be the obvious answer. It is an investment into the future of Eastern Jackson County. The time has come for the new courthouse issue to be placed back on the front burner. Thank you, Judge Williamson, for providing this opportunity.



Register Online

Did you know that you can now register for an event online? This month at the bar website, www.ejcba.com, you may register for upcoming events. As you utilize this site, please give us feedback about the site and its effectiveness. We appreciate your input to help make our site informative and functional.

If you would like to receive the Legal Beagle by e-mail please forward your e-mail address to:

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To send information to EJCBA, mail to:

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LEAP Luncheon

Lawyers Encouraging Academic Performance (LEAP) is proud to announce the 13th Anniversary Mardi Gras Luncheon on February 20, 2007 beginning at 12:00 noon at the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association offices at 1125 Grand Boulevard, Suite 400. LEAP is a not-for-profit foundation established in 1994 to provide needy children with mentoring services. It is the local legal profession's designated beneficiary and unique, joint professional effort comprised of:

- Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association
- Eastern Jackson County Bar Association
- Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City
- Lawyers Association of Kansas City
- Jackson County Bar Association
- Hispanic Bar Association
- Association of Corporate Counsel, Mid-America Chapter

Since its inception, LEAP has raised more than \$525,000 for various Kansas City charities.

Operation Breakthrough is currently LEAP's primary recipient. In addition to cash donations, lawyers and judges serve as mentors, reading to children and simply spending some time with these kids. Founded in 1971, Operation Breakthrough successfully helps children who are living in poverty develop to their fullest potential by providing them a safe, loving and educational environment. The center supports and empowers the children's families through advocacy, referral services and emergency aid. Services to the inner-city children and their families include day care, meals, Children's Mercy clinic, dental services, speech therapy, play therapy, housing assistance, food, clothing and social services. Currently, Operation Breakthrough serves over 600 children and their families with another 600 on the waiting list. It employs 114 staff members. Although it receives federal and state aid, Operation Breakthrough relies on private donations from more than 25% of their operating budget.

Please consider attending the LEAP Luncheon and generously donating to this worthwhile cause. A LEAP Mardi Gras Luncheon form is attached to this month's Beagle for your convenience to make a reservation and/or give a donation. Additional information about LEAP is also attached.

Community Services League Report

I'm proud to announce that we raised \$375.00 from our members at the Christmas Party to support the Community Services League Holiday Christmas Store. Our Association contributed a matching \$375.00 for a total contribution of \$750.00.

Notice to all attorney's residing in Kansas City, Missouri

The Kansas City Missouri Municipal Judicial Nominating Commission of the 16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri announces the solicitation of nominees for Municipal Judge, Division 206, of the Kansas City Municipal Division, 16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri. Any attorney residing in Kansas City, Missouri may indicate his/her willingness to serve and be considered for nomination to fill this position or may otherwise be nominated. Potential nominees must meet the following qualifications as set forth in Section 395.1 of the Charter of Kansas City, Missouri:

Municipal court judges shall be citizens of the United States and of the State of Missouri for five (5) years, residents of the City of Kansas City, Missouri for one (1) year, licensed to practice law in the state for at least five (5) years, members of the Missouri Bar in good standing and possess any additional qualifications prescribed by law.

Attorneys who wish to indicate their willingness to serve in this position or to propose a nominee shall complete a questionnaire, which must be returned to the Commission on or before **2:00 pm Friday, February 23, 2007**. The questionnaire form and other information may be obtained from Teresa L. York, Court Administrator, Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri, 415 East 12th Street, 3rd Floor, Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Kansas City, Missouri Municipal Judicial Nominating Commission, 16th Judicial Circuit of Missouri
Peggy Stevens McGraw, Presiding Judge Chair.

EJCBA Financial Report		January 11, 2007
Assets		
Bank of Grain Valley Money Market Account		\$7,729.39
Bank of Grain Valley Operating Account		\$9,991.00
Total Assets		\$17,691.00
Liabilities		-0-

Lee's Summit Municipal Court Press Release

As an added service, the Lee's Summit Municipal Court has recently made an addition to their web-page that allows attorneys to enter appearance online or download an entry form that may be completed and faxed to the Court. Instructions are available on our website at: <http://lees-summit.mo.us/>

The Foundation for Lawyers
Encouraging Academic Performance, Inc.
Celebrates it's 13th Anniversary at the

LEAP Mardi Gras Luncheon

February 20, 2007 at noon
Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association
1125 Grand Boulevard, Suite 400

To Support LEAP and it's 13th Anniversary you can:

- Make reservations to attend the LEAP Luncheon
- Make a contribution to LEAP
- Enter the drawing to win fabulous prizes. Tickets are \$10 each.

All proceeds to Operation Breakthrough, Inc.

 ___ guests will attend the LEAP Mardi Gras Luncheon (\$50 per person)

My check for \$____, payable to LEAP, is enclosed.
or Charge my (___) Mastercard or (___) VISA

Credit card# _____

Signature _____

Expiration date ____ / ____

Enclosed please find my contribution to EAP in the amount of \$ _____

Please enter me in the drawing, my check for \$___ is enclosed

*Please send your response to the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association at
1125 Grand Boulevard, Suite 400, Kansas City, Mo 64106*