



# Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

## News

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### **Statewide e-filing project expands to E. Panhandle**

For immediate release

CHARLES TOWN, W.Va. – Justice Brent D. Benjamin will attend a press conference at 10 a.m. on Monday, April 20, in the Circuit Courtroom in the Jefferson County Courthouse to announce the West Virginia Judiciary’s Unified Electronic Filing System’s expansion to the Eastern Panhandle.

The e-filing system was established through amendments to the West Virginia Trial Court Rules, effective May 1, 2014. The rules incorporated a pilot project that began in August 2013 when Marion County became the first county to have electronic filing of circuit court records.

Jefferson County is the second county to go online and attorney Stephen Skinner of the Skinner Law Firm will file the first electronic document there.

Anyone who wants to file a case in a circuit court in those two counties – or eventually in any circuit clerk’s office when the project is expanded statewide – will be able to file documents electronically themselves. If they so choose, self-represented litigants may give paper documents to clerk’s office staff member to scan and file. Confidential documents will be electronic but will remain confidential.

Public documents that have been scanned from previous years (more than a million documents dating from the 1930s to the present in Jefferson County alone) as well as those filed every day at circuit clerks’ offices will be available online in a PDF format. Any file available to the public in circuit clerks’ offices eventually will be available from any computer anywhere.

A committee is studying the cost of the new system and will determine what a reasonable filing fee and user fee should be once the system is expanded statewide. The system will be paid for by the users, not by taxpayers.

The Supreme Court is paying for the upgrade in technology in all circuit clerks’ offices.

E-filing is used in circuit courts only. The unified judicial application (UJA) serves magistrate courts. The two systems currently are running parallel. Once both are operational in every county, the systems will communicate and will make the transition of case information between magistrate and circuit clerks offices seamless.

Currently, the UJA is operating in 35 magistrate courts and new locations are converted every six weeks. The UJA LEO (Case Search & Active Warrant Search) is

already operational statewide and provides law enforcement and 911 dispatch centers instant access to magistrate court records and outstanding warrants.

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