

East Lake BlisterSM

Pinellas County Clerk of Court Implements Programs to Benefit Public, State Funds

By East Lake Blister Staff
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TALLAHASSEE – In all 67 Florida counties, diligent work by Clerks of Court's offices has resulted in improved collection rates contributing to the nearly \$2 billion in court-related fines, filing fees and service charges passed on to the State in 2009.

Funds collected by Clerks are used to support local governments and state trust funds, including the General Revenue fund and a court-dedicated trust fund. Clerks' initiatives ranging from providing automated online services to implementing new traffic citation payment options improved collections as well as customer service.

Ken Burke, Pinellas County Clerk of the Court, has played an important role in these statewide efforts. Clerk Burke has continually updated his website to provide 24-hour access to services. In recent years, Burke began providing online access to Probate case file images to attorneys and recently added enhanced functions to the public records search.

Many Clerks have adopted convenient payment methods accessible after office hours. The majority of Florida Clerks' offices accept online or telephonic debit or credit card payments including Pinellas, which has also installed payment kiosks in public locations.

To add more than 170 extra traffic payment locations throughout Central Florida, the Pinellas Clerk partnered with AMSCOT. Such check cashing businesses have more locations and longer hours of operation including nights and weekends making them far more accessible to the public.

"Despite the state budget cuts that forced Clerks statewide to restructure their offices, one of our goals is to continue working efficiently to serve our customers," said Burke. "Unfortunately, if further cuts proposed by a Senate amendment to HB 5401 go into effect, our staff reductions will be so severe that customer service levels will certainly suffer in Clerks Offices throughout the state."

For more information about services provided by your Pinellas County Clerk's office, please visit www.mypinellasclerk.org.
