



KEN BURKE

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT - PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Clerk of the County Court • Recorder of Deeds • Clerk and Accountant of the Board of County Commissioners
Custodian of County Funds • County Auditor • Clerk of the Water and Navigation Control Authority

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

***Pinellas County Clerk leads the way for juror benefits
Among other "comforts," the Clerk is the first in the state to add same-day cash
compensation for eligible jurors.***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 2, 2007 - Pinellas County, Florida - Upon receiving a summons to report for jury service, some people may react with a pained groan while others look forward to this call to civic service. Whatever the reaction, the Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court, Ken Burke, has taken steps to improve the jury duty experience. In an effort to both improve jury turn out and make potential jurors as comfortable as possible, the Pinellas County Clerk's Office has added some modern perks, Burke announced today.

Eligible jurors now have the option of receiving their jury payment in cash the same day. Jurors, who are eligible for compensation, are paid \$15 a day for their service. Compensation eligibility requires that the juror's employer does not pay them for time missed from work to report for jury duty. Prior to Burke adding this "same-day pay" option, jurors had to wait a week to ten days to receive a check in the mail.

"We are the first county in the State of Florida to offer same-day juror payment," said Burke. "This is a real convenience as eligible jurors can receive compensation before they leave the courthouse steps and not have to make a trip to the bank just to either deposit or cash the check."

The new same-day, cash payment service has already received a warm welcome with 50 to 75% of the daily jury pool opting for it, according to Burke.

"It benefits our bottom line too. With nearly 20,000 people reporting for jury duty each year, if half that many no longer require us to mail a check to them, that is nearly \$4,000 in postage we will save."

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Jurors are also given the option to donate their day's pay. They may donate their juror compensation to one of three nonprofit agencies in Pinellas County: the Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA) shelter, the Haven or the county's Guardian Ad Litem program.

In addition, Burke has changed the times that jurors report for duty in order to shorten the amount of time prospective jurors must wait in the juror assembly rooms before being sent to the courtrooms. Some comfort features added to make those waiting periods easier include free WIFI (wireless internet access for laptop computers) and coffee in the jury assembly rooms at each of the three reporting locations in Pinellas County. At the Criminal Justice Center location, a cyber-café is in the works and soon, jurors will have lockers, in which, to store their personal items while they are in the courtroom, according to Burke.

Using the Clerk's website, <http://www.pinellasclerk.org>, prospective jurors can now update their name and address information, reschedule their reporting date (one time) and/or request an excusal from duty online. Once jury duty has been completed, jurors can also visit the website to complete a comment card.

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ABOUT THE CLERK'S OFFICE

The Clerk of the Circuit Court was established as a public trustee by the Florida Constitution in 1838. The Clerk of the Circuit Court serves as the Clerk of Courts, the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, Auditor, Recorder and Custodian of all County Funds.