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**IMPLEMENTING A CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
" IN  
BOULDER CITY MUNICIPAL COURT  
BOULDER CITY, NEVADA  
/**

Institute for Court Management  
Court Executive Development Program  
Phase III Project  
May 1999

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Problem Identification**

This project encompasses the implementation of a case management system (CMS) for Boulder City Municipal Court. In conjunction with this execution will be the installation of compatible software programs for the police department and prosecutor. The functionality of the Boulder City municipal court is not a stand-alone operation. The law enforcement agency and prosecutor play an integral part. The objective in implementing an integrated justice system (IJS) is to allow the municipal court, law enforcement agency and prosecutor to more effectively function as one unit while still allowing autonomy within each department.

The Information Systems Manager wrote the main component of the present court management system in-house approximately ten years ago. It permits the court to enter information with the capability of tracking cases filed and adjudicated by the court. Limitations of the present system are realized when an attempt is made to retrieve information from the system in a format other than viewing. There are no statistical reporting capabilities; daily financial procedures are done by hand.

### **Program Identification**

The vendor of the application software to be installed is HTE, Inc. This vendor was chosen for several reasons:

- it is AS-400 based;
- the CMS is part of an IJS thereby allowing the court, law enforcement agency and prosecutor to be linked;
- the program permits statistical reporting;
- electronic connectivity with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is possible; and
- the City was able to add the additional software applications as an addendum to an existing contract with HTE thereby eliminating the Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

### **Court Background**

Boulder City Municipal Court is a limited jurisdiction court handling criminal misdemeanor and traffic violations occurring within its city limits. The court processes approximately 6,000 citations and 700 complaints annually. The approximate annual gross income from fines, fees and forfeitures is \$550,000. Boulder City Municipal Court is composed of one judge who is considered part-time, one court administrator, two clerks and one office assistant. Four bailiffs are engaged on a contract basis.

Arraignment and status check sessions are held twice each week consisting of one afternoon and one morning session. Trial sessions are held twice each month. The court is not a court of record.

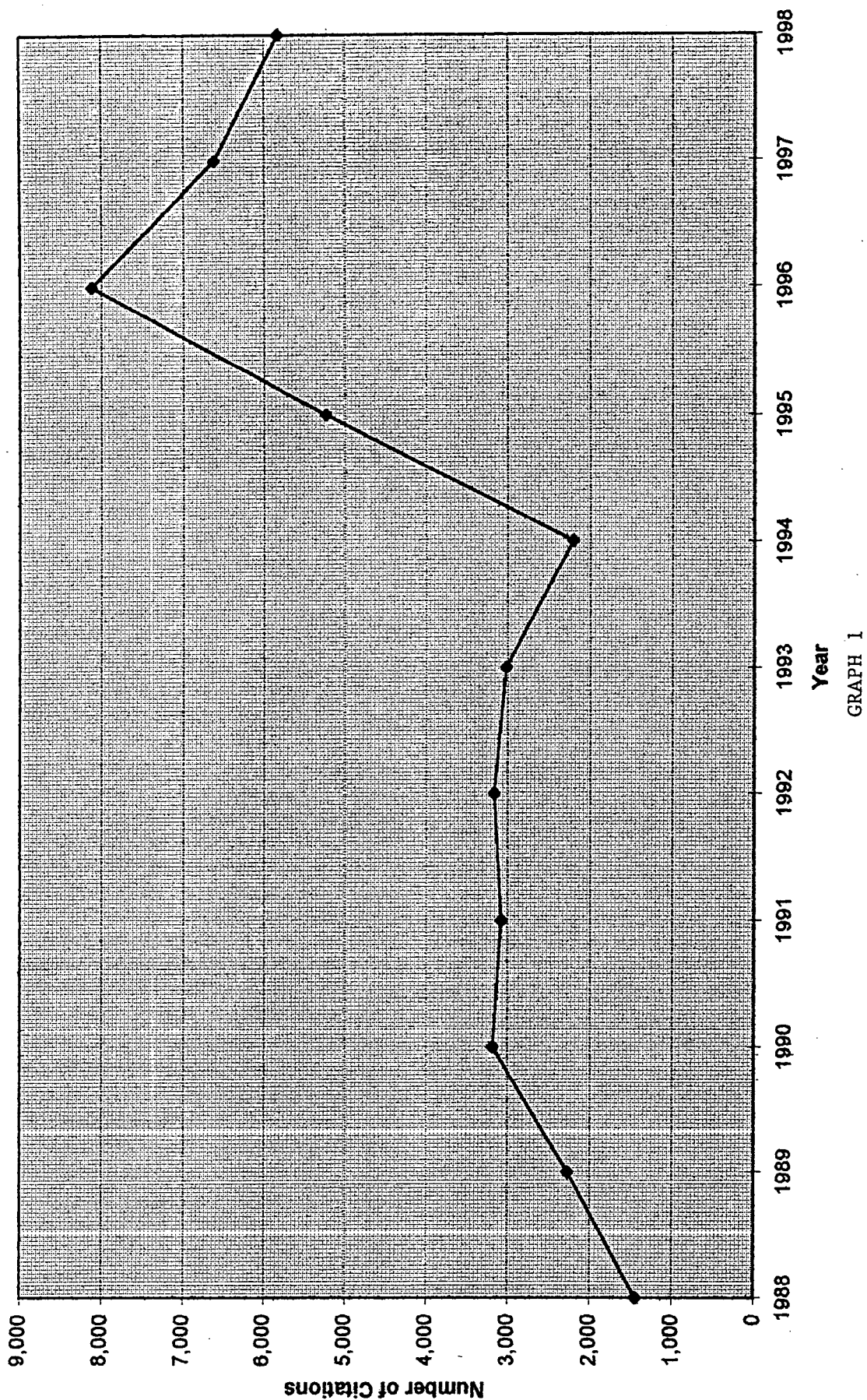
The Court experienced a tremendous growth in the latter part of 1995. Up to that time, the annual rise in business was steady but small. From 1988 to 1995, the annual income gradually increased from \$83,372 to \$137,461 - a 65% increase over the seven year period. The same trend could be seen in citations issued and DWI arrests made.

However, in September of 1995 the City annexed additional acreage. In doing so, the City acquired an additional 25 miles of highway area that was the patrol responsibility of the law enforcement agency. Consequently, citation issuance and incidents of arrest increased (see Charts 1 and 2). The Court went from processing 2,205 citations and 119 DWI arrests in 1994 to a high of 8,126 citations and 177 DWI arrests in 1996, an increase of 268% and 49% respectively. It has since tapered off to 5,828 citations and 124 DWI arrests in 1998. Annual income went from \$137,461 in 1995 to \$586,218 in 1988 (see Chart 3).

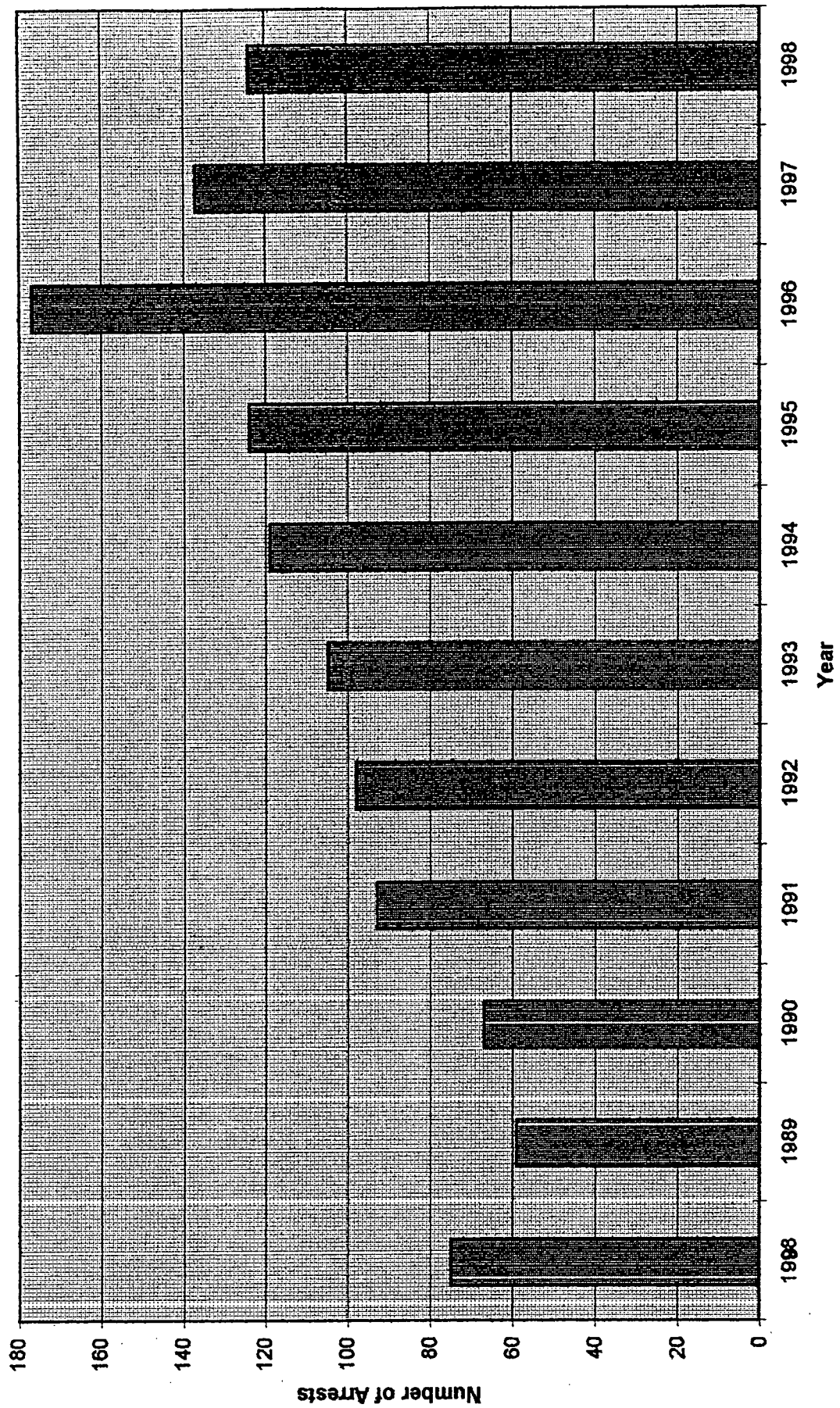
It is the responsibility of the law enforcement agency to enter all citations and arrests into the present computer system. The entry of data is done manually. As information is being entered into the law enforcement system, it is simultaneously being entered into the court system thereby eliminating duplicate entry processes. The court is then able to build upon the initial information entry by inputting data as a case or citation progresses.

The present system functions as an excellent tool for tracking the progress of a case. Beyond that, its usefulness is very limited. The ability to retrieve and transform the vast amount of inputted information into usable data relative to financial and statistical report generation is non-existent. The practicality of having such information accessible as a management tool is invaluable. The knowledge gleaned would result in better overall management of the day-to-day operations of the court. It would also play an important role in determining and setting the potential direction of the court and assisting in identifying future funding needs.

# CITATIONS



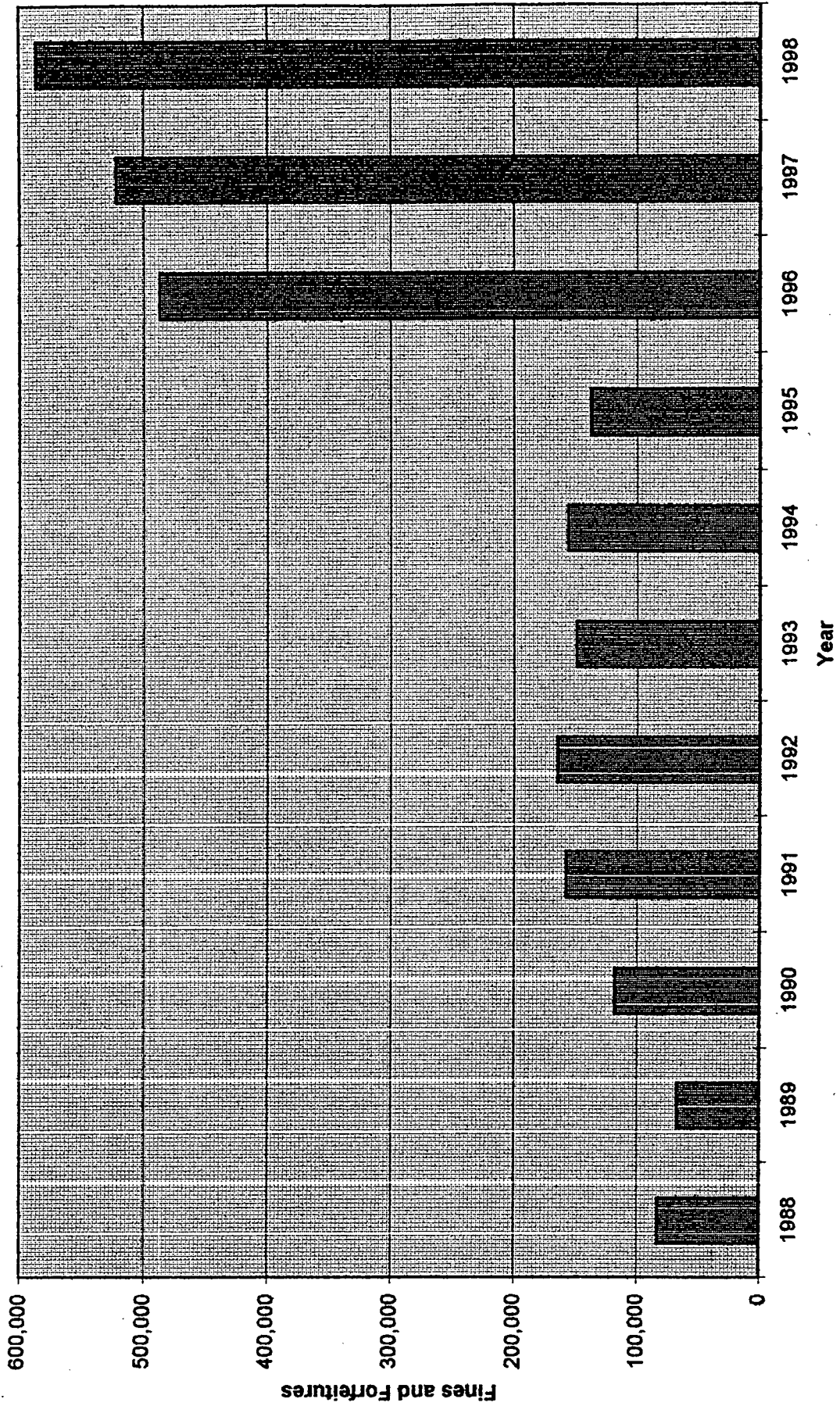
# DWI Arrests



GRAPH 2



# ANNUAL INCOME



GRAPH 3



By instituting an IJS, the following benefits will be achieved:

#### Municipal Court

- Ability to maintain and track all citations and cases through proceedings to final disposition;
- Provide full audit trail with automatic money tracking and distribution;
- Centralize case maintenance and payment collection procedures;
- Automate generation of documents and notices;
- Provide statistical reports;
- Create management reports to monitor case and citation activities, as well as accounts receivable and delinquency status.

#### Law Enforcement Agency

- Record maximum incident information;
- Provide on-line citation and arrest entry with validation;
- Provide accurate crime statistic's reports;
- Allow tracking of evidence and chain of custody;
- Provide investigative analysis report capabilities.

#### Prosecutor

- Allow tracking of all aspects of a case or citation;
- Automate the generation of documents and notices;
- Provide statistical reports;
- Integrate law enforcement and the court activities to eliminate duplicate entry of information;
- Provide tools to manage workload.

#### **Program Significance**

##### A. City Organizational Study

The City Council of Boulder City recently directed the City Manager to conduct an organizational management study. In relationship to the municipal court, several recommendations were cited in the organizational study. They are as follows:

1. Provide the resources necessary for the purchase and implementation of a court management system; ensure that the process includes and considers the needs of all affected departments.
2. Establish a specific policy and related procedures for the treatment of aging accounts with the objective of maximizing revenue potential.
3. Ensure that court policies and procedures are updated and incorporated into a written manual form.
4. Provide information necessary for upcoming audit of court operations; evaluate results for improvement actions.
5. Survey court customers regarding evening court sessions; evaluate the costs and benefits of conducting court after regular business hours.

#### B. Legislative Mandates

Recent legislative mandates concerning the creation of a Uniform System of Judicial Records (USJR) and compliance with Minimum Accounting Standards (MAS) has compelled the Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to take action. To that end, the AOC has taken a lead role in effectuating a plan that will assist the courts in the utilization of at least a minimum application of technology.

#### Uniform System of Judicial Records (USJR)

The USJR Court Statistical Reporting Project was initiated to assist the AOC in fulfilling its responsibility under state statute, i.e., to develop “a uniform system for collecting and compiling statistics and other data regarding the operation of the state court system.” Two of the key components of the USJR are 1) the ability to have in place a statewide statistical reporting capability and 2) case management systems that would be used by the courts to maintain information concerning cases filed and adjudicated by each court.

In order to determine what the statistical reporting requirements should be, the Nevada AOC turned to the National Center for State Court's (NCSC) publication entitled *State Court Model Statistical Dictionary* (Model). This Model was able to provide a blueprint identifying what statistics to collect in a USJR. Five workgroups, consisting of judicial officers, court administrators/ representatives and county clerks/representatives, were formed to develop the components of the Model. From these workgroups, the Nevada Courts Statistical Reporting Model (Nevada Model) evolved. The Nevada Model identified four areas of concern in the collection of statistical data:

- Caseload Inventory: The statistics that capture the number of cases filed and disposed during a specified period, as well as the number of cases pending at the beginning and end of the period. Caseload inventory is broken out by case types and sub-types.
- Manners of Disposition: Statistics indicating the number of cases disposed during a specified period, broken out by the various ways cases can be disposed within each case type.
- Events in Court Case Processing: Statistics indicating the number of cases that incurred significant events in the processing of the case during a specific period, broken out by the various significant events within each case type.
- Status of Pending Cases: Summary statistics indicating the number of cases that have reached the important processing events between their filing and disposition, broken out by the various statuses within each case type.

At this time, only *caseload inventory* and *manners of disposition* have been defined.

*Caseload inventory* specifies the unit of count and when to count filings and dispositions. Additionally, this segment encompasses the case type/sub-type listings and the associated definitions. *Manners of disposition* chronicles the procedural manner in which cases are disposed. It also provides definitions for each manner of disposition.

The Nevada AOC anticipates having the new reporting requirements set forth in the Nevada Model in place by July 1999. All 91 trial courts in Nevada will be required to participate in the statistical reporting requirements set forth in the Nevada Model. The inauguration of a CMS will make it possible for this court to compile the information concerning the filing and resolution of cases. Currently, collecting this information must be done manually. Because the manual collection of information is time and expense prohibitive, it is rarely done.

#### Minimum Accounting Standards (MAS)

In 1995, the Legislative Auditor as authorized by the Legislative Commission conducted an audit of the judicial branch of government for the State of Nevada. The audit centered on the procedures relating to the processing, collecting, recording and remittance of state fines and administrative assessments in Nevada's courts. The audit report contained four recommendations for improving the financial and administrative controls in use by Nevada's courts. Specifically, it indicated the AOC should:

- (1) establish minimum control standards,
- (2) develop uniform procedures to classify, record and distribute fines and assessments,
- (3) develop collection procedures, and
- ( 4 ) perform periodic monitoring to ensure control objectives are achieved.

The Nevada Supreme Court accepted the auditor's recommendations and as a result directed the AOC to develop standards for justice and municipal courts. Accordingly, the Minimum Accounting Standards for Justice and Municipal Courts (MAS) were developed and thus adopted by the Nevada Supreme Court in February 1997.

The MAS is divided into two parts. Part One consists of the procedures to be followed by justice and municipal courts to standardize accounting practices and procedures. The establishment of these procedures ensures that the financial operation of the court is in compliance with statute and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Part Two consists of the Compliance Checklist and is designed as an assessment tool to determine and document whether or not a court is in compliance with the MAS.

Because of the limitations associated with the present court system, the court does not have the ability to comply thoroughly with the MAS. The inauguration of the new CMS will allow the court to have a fully automated accounting system that complies with the MAS. The system will have the ability to render a full audit trail as well as allow for the creation of reports reference accounts receivable and delinquency status.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives to be achieved by implementing a CMS in Boulder City Municipal Court are delineated as follows:

- to assure accuracy, timeliness and security of court data,
- to have in place tools for managing data and caseflow,
- to implement mechanisms for accountability,
- to expand organizational integration,
- to increase overall effectiveness,
- to meet the recommended ABA case processing time standards, i.e., completion of 90% criminal misdemeanor matters within 30 days and 100% within 90 days.

### **Measurement of Objectives**

In order for the Court to realize whether it has reached its goals, the following measurements have been established:

- Ability to participate fully in the USJR project;
- Ability to respond favorably to all categories of the MAS;
- Ability to provide an audit trail for all financial transactions and adhere to GAAP;
- Ability to enhance judicial operations, planning and policy making;
- Ability to know if ABA standards are being met via event tracking.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

On behalf of the Judicial Council of California, a Court Technology Committee conducted a survey of the status of court technology in all 58 counties of California. The Court Technology Committee sponsored an evaluation of CMS products, vendors and services. A CMS Technology Review Task Force (Task Force) was formed with the Task Force evaluating 15 CMS vendors and products. Subsequently, a report entitled *Evaluation of Case Management Systems* was published. The publication is a complete compilation of evaluation impressions and a summary of their findings.

Review teams were formed with the goal of evaluating each vendor and its product's appropriateness or effectiveness toward meeting both general and specific needs. The Task Force solicited all vendors of software/services listed with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).

Four CMS product functionalities that were considered critical to all courts are identified as follows:

- a) connectivity with other justice agency members;
- b) strong accounting and financial features;
- c) ad hoc querying and reporting;
- d) use of software in the courtroom setting.

The review teams evaluated the software programs relative to these functionalities and summarized their impressions for all fifteen products. In order to conduct a consistent evaluation of all products and vendors, the following evaluation methodology was established:



- the primary source of information about a product and vendor will be the vendor;
- each vendor is required to complete an identical set of survey instruments designed to collect detailed information about the vendor and its products;
- each vendor is required to host a one day product demonstration followed by a question/answer session;
- each vendor will respond to questions posed by the review teams to help clarify information provided in the survey responses;
- each review team will use an identical three-part set of impression recording materials and evaluation criteria to record their impressions of each product.

Three parts of the impression recording materials are:

- Main impressions - These addressed core questions about the product and the vendor's overall viability for meeting the needs of the courts;
- Functionality impressions - These addressed the product's ability to meet the needs of the courts relative to the four functionalities addressed early on;
- Printed sample impressions - These addressed the product's capacity to generate reports and forms.

In the three impression areas, the following ratings were received by JALAN (the software program purchased by HTE in 1998):

Main Impressions - An average of good relative to balance, intuitiveness and technology.

Functionality Impressions - Thirty-four out of the 37 solicited functions for demonstration were performed by JALAN. The review teams gave the following ratings:

Excellent: 18%  
 Very good: 26%  
 Good: 50%  
 Fair: 6%

Printed Sample Impressions - JALAN received excellent in all categories.

Boulder City Municipal Court had already determined a CMS program would need to meet the same four functionality criteria as determined by the California review

teams. The two most compelling items of need dealt with a strong accounting and financial feature, and the need for an ad hoc querying and reporting capability. Both features must provide data that meets the statistical reporting requirements set in place by the Nevada AOC. Another requirement set in place by the City's Information Systems department was the necessity that the programs run from an AS-400 platform. HTE's product is able to meet these criteria.

There is one court in Nevada that utilizes the HTE program. An on-site visit was made to that court in Elko, Nevada. Additionally, telephone interviews were made to three courts in Texas that utilize the HTE program.

After reviewing promotional literature and gathering information regarding HTE via the phone and personal observation, a demonstration was set up for the court, law enforcement and prosecutor departments. During the demonstration, two main concerns of the Court were discussed. The first concentrated on the program's ability to produce a financial breakdown of all moneys owed to and received by the Court. It was explained to HTE the Court's priorities reference distribution of fines, fees and various other revenues and costs. HTE demonstrated how the Court's prerequisites could be met by capturing the breakout and distribution of funds and by also performing the various financial accounting functions required.

The second concern encompassed the program's ability to capture statistical data required by the USJR program being implemented by Nevada's AOC. Again, it was demonstrated by HTE how the program categorizes charges by type and sub-type classifications as assigned by the court. Additionally, each action taken by the court is assigned an event code. By classifying each charge at time of entrance and by assigning

each transaction an event code, the court will be able to create a caseload inventory that is broken out by case types and sub-types and also track the disposition of each charge thereby allowing the court to participate in the USJR project. Additionally, HTE has made a commitment to meet all reporting requirements set forth by our state's AOC.

The system was found to be a comprehensive case management system that would enable the court to track the progress of all cases through various proceedings to final disposition. Functionality is enhanced by event tracking and calendaring by individual case or for multiple cases for one person.

A large deficiency in the present system is in the area of financial tracking. The HTE system software provides an excellent tracking and distribution component for moneys collected and also provides a comprehensive audit trail.

In discussions on how HTE's program works, it was realized procedures would be done differently from the way they are done now. The court has become accustomed to a program that is simple to use; however, for that simplicity we sacrifice the ability to retrieve information from the present system. The new program will be far more complicated and complex but the tradeoff is the ability to retrieve information in report format. As with anything new, it will take time to adjust.

## TASKS/METHODOLOGY

Task	Target Completion Date
Detail plan	02/01/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The detail plan will be created by representatives from the City staff (court, police, finance, data processing, prosecutor) and HTE. HTE will utilize information supplied by the court to assist in determining system configuration requirements. The detail plan will outline the tasks to be performed, the resources to be utilized and the estimated schedule.</li></ul>	
Conversion	08/15/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Data conversion will start in April with final validation in August. Court, data processing and HTE will be involved in testing and evaluating during the entire conversion process.</li></ul>	
Lead person training	06/15/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>HTE and data processing will conduct training with all members of the staff. The Court Administrator will be designated as the lead person for training and will provide additional training to support staff on an as-needed basis.</li></ul>	
Provide and enter user profiles on AS/400	02/15/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Entry of user profiles will be done by data processing.</li></ul>	
Customization set-up (Create/modify tables)	05/01/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The court will work closely with the police department and prosecutor's office during the customization set-up phase. HTE will meet with court representatives to fully explain all system table set-up requirements. Specific training will be given regarding the functionality contained in each of the table programs.</li></ul>	
Print table lists and pre-printed forms	06/01/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Printing requirements will be determined.</li></ul>	
Document preparation	07/01/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creating shell documents that are tied to event codes will develop document preparation. Testing will be conducted on the generated documents.</li></ul>	
Application training	07/15/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Training will be on going throughout the various phases.</li></ul>	
Develop and document operational procedures	08/01/99
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Users of the program will participate in developing the instructions for utilizing the CMS and the training guides. The training guide will be written at a basic level and will focus on providing illustrations, exercises and samples of various operations.</li></ul>	

Test connectivity

08/15/99

- The timeframe to test connectivity depends upon completion of ticket/arrest interface through the police department.

Go live

09/01/99

- Reinstall copies of the program if modifications have occurred during testing and training. Data should be cleared from entering practice cases. All information should have been converted at this point with testing completed.

Tasks to be accomplished after program installation:

Determine DMV requirements

Install and test DMV communication

## **FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS**

In 1993, the Nevada Supreme Court assembled a Judicial Assessment Commission. The objective of the task force was to research various topics relating to urban court efficiency and competence. The culmination of its work resulted in the publication of two reports. Both reports emphasized the role that technology can and should play in addressing court business and operational needs. The courts of today are looking toward technology to enhance their services and manage their operations. Technology applications within the court that previously were mission supportive have now become mission critical to provide effective and efficient court services.

With the many technological advancements available today, it is important for courts to give careful consideration to how technology can be applied to court operations in order to obtain the maximum amount of benefit. The ability of the computer to receive, process, store, retrieve and distribute huge volumes of information, combined with current telecommunications abilities, makes technology an essential tool for the administration of justice.

Implementing an automated case management system will assist in caseflow management by coordinating the court processes and resources so cases can progress in a timely fashion from filing to disposition. It is difficult to manage caseflow progress without timely and accurate data that gives a good picture of the overall court and courtroom operation as well as the individual case status and progress. The availability of caseflow and data management information are critical tools that provide judges and court administrators with means of measuring progress, achieving goals and managing caseloads.

Some of the benefits achieved from an automated CMS are:

- Reduction of repetitive tasks,
- Enhanced data quality,
- Increased information accessibility,
- Increased organizational integration,
- Enhanced statistics and monitoring,
- Increased effectiveness.

The implementation of a CMS will allow Boulder City Municipal Court to thoroughly meet its goals and objectives by having tools in place that permit better overall management of the day-to-day operations of the court. The new CMS will empower the Court to break away from conducting business the old-fashioned way and permit the Court to enter the new millennium with fresh technology that will allow it to focus its direction toward the future by providing quality, fiscally-responsible data management. With clear goals in place and with a system that provides accurate information on performance in relation to the goals, the court has the key ingredients of a viable system of accountability.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A court's mission is to dispense justice fairly and efficiently. To do that, it needs information technology for managing caseloads and running trials. However, knowing how to use technology in what has become a demanding environment for information management is an awesome task faced by the court of today. In order to manage the growing number of cases, courts are expanding their use of technology -- both in the courtroom and in administrative offices.

Case management systems (CMS) allow the work of the court to be accelerated. Its technology is used to collect, organize, process, store and distribute essential case information not only within the court environment but also to external agencies. A good CMS can reduce case processing time, improve staff productivity, and compress records storage.

Boulder City Municipal Court has recently initiated the task of updating its use of technology with the implementation of a CMS which will integrate the operations of the court, law enforcement agency and prosecutor's office. By installing such a system, the court has set for achievement the following goals and objectives:

- assure accuracy, timeliness and security of court data,
- have in place tools for managing data and caseflow,
- implement mechanisms for accountability,
- expand organizational integration,
- increase overall effectiveness,
- meet the recommended ABA case processing time standards, i.e., completion of 90% criminal misdemeanor matters within thirty days and 100% within ninety days.

The court is presently operating under a CMS designed ten years ago in-house by the Information Systems Manager which allows the court and law enforcement agency to work together but excludes the prosecutor's office.

The present system functions as an excellent tool for tracking the progress of a case from filing to adjudication. Beyond that, its usefulness is very limited. The ability to retrieve and transform inputted information into usable data relative to financial and statistical report generation is non-existent.

Events have recently taken place which will have a significant impact on how the courts of Nevada will function in the future. The Nevada Legislature has issued mandates that concern the creation of a Uniform System of Judicial Records (USJR) and compliance with Minimum Accounting Standards (MAS). These mandates have compelled the Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to take action. The Nevada AOC has taken a lead role in effectuating a plan that will assist the courts in the utilization of at least a minimum application of technology. Additionally, Boulder City Municipal Court is also dealing with local mandates. Last year an organizational study was conducted of City operations as directed by the City Council. The organizational study contained recommendations that not only dealt with the court's ability to manage its operations thereby allowing it to make sound judicial decisions but also discussed the court's ability to provide a full audit trail showing collection, tracking and distribution of funds.

In order to know if the implementation of a CMS has allowed a court to reach its goals and objectives, measurements should be established. Boulder City Municipal Court instituted the following:

- Ability to participate fully in the USJR project by being able to compile the needed information concerning the filing and resolution of cases;
- Ability to respond favorably to all categories of the MAS by having a fully automated accounting system;
- Ability to provide an audit trail for all financial transactions and adhere to GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles);
- Ability to enhance judicial operations, planning and policy making which will play an important role in determining and setting the potential direction of the court and assisting in identifying future funding needs;
- Ability to know if ABA standards are being met via event tracking.

To assist in choosing a vendor that will be the most appropriate for the court's needs, the following criteria was determined:

- AS-400 based;
- the CMS is part of an integrated justice system allowing the court, law enforcement agency and prosecutor to be linked;
- the program permits statistical reporting;
- electronic connectivity with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Additionally, four CMS product functionalities considered critical were identified:

- connectivity with other justice agency members;
- strong accounting and financial features;
- ad hoc querying and reporting;
- use of software in the courtroom setting.

Literature was reviewed, site visits were made and demonstrations were conducted. A vendor was chosen whose system was found to be a comprehensive CMS that met the aforementioned criteria and product functionalities. The system would enable the court to track the progress of all cases through various proceedings to final

disposition. Functionality is further enhanced by event tracking and calendaring by individual case or by multiple cases for one person.

Good technology assists good justice. The courts of today are looking toward technology to enhance their services and manage their operations. Technology applications within the court that previously were mission supportive have now become mission critical to provide effective and efficient court services. Case management systems encompass technologies that permit the organizing of massive amounts of data and documents quickly and efficiently. They supply complete information about the overall status of the caseload, making it possible to identify significant problems as they develop. The availability of caseflow and data management information are critical tools that provide judges and court administrators with means of measuring progress, achieving goals and managing caseloads. With clear goals in place and with a system that provides accurate information on performance in relationship to its goals, a court has the key ingredients of a viable system of accountability.