

RALPH N. KLEPS AWARDS
2010 –2011
SUPERIOR COURT OF SAN BERNADINO COUNTY
Automated Mail Payment Processing System
“Magic Money Machine”

SPEAKER: Christina Volkers – Assistant CEO, San Bernardino County

The technical term is it's an “Automated Mail Processing Information System” for mail payments that come into the court. We call it the “Magic Money Machine.” What the system does is it processes thousands of mail payments every day, through the system, versus clerks having to do it. There are four clerks that monitor and work the system. But it is one automatic mail system.

SPEAKER: Tressa Kentner – CEO (Ret.), San Bernardino County

The need for the project was because of the amount of mail payments that we processed. And our former Deputy Executive Officer and Court Financial Officer were aware of use of this machine in both private sector high-volume operations and public sector high-volume operations. So the whole goal was to process mail payments more efficiently and at less cost.

SPEAKER: Christina Volkers – Assistant CEO, San Bernardino County

We used to have eleven court locations with seventeen clerks processing these mail payments. Now they are all centralized in one location; four clerks monitoring it; one machine; one location.

SPEAKER: Pamela Nay – CFO, San Bernardino County

It's about one thousand payments a day that are being processed through the machine. I can tell you that on a yearly basis, in 2010 alone, it represented \$22.7 million dollars in receipts to the court.

SPEAKER: Christina Volkers – Assistant CEO, San Bernardino County

Before the “Magic Money Machine,” we used to have to . . . the clerks would get the mail and they would open it up; they would accept the checks; they would take out any correspondence that was there. They would look up on the system and try to match the payment. Everything would be manual. There'd be an audit person monitoring the payments and counting the checks and all of it. This machine does everything. It opens the envelope; it runs it through the machine; it tracks it; it counts it; it applies it to the case.

SPEAKER: Pamela Nay – CFO, San Bernardino County

There are two mail drops during the day. If mail comes in during the afternoon, it's put in the safe for processing the next day. At that time it goes through an OPEX letter opening machine and gets sorted, with the coupons that are enclosed in the letter and the checks. And then that batch is taken and imaged through the imaging machine and encoded with the check information on the bottom of the check for bank deposit purposes. There is also an option to image the checks at the same time for a Check 21 bank deposit. And the case management system is updated via batch that night.

SPEAKER: Christina Volkers – Assistant CEO, San Bernardino County

The clerks love it, especially the district clerks. Where they used to process thousands and thousands of mail payments at all the different court locations every single day; now everything is centralized here. It meets our audit concerns. There's a good audit trail. There's people that monitor the payments that go through the machines. Yet, they don't need to be done at all court locations. The timeliness and the money savings is substantial.

SPEAKER: Tressa Kentner – CEO (Ret.), San Bernardino County

By centralizing the mail payments our audit controls are better, so that we are able to make sure that we have all the fiscal operation controls in place. And that's easier to do when you have all the mailings going in to one place.

SPEAKER: Pamela Nay – CFO, San Bernardino County

It means that we can process fifteen percent of the total receipts of the court with just four people. It means that there is thirty two percent of the checks being processed through one location.

SPEAKER: Christina Volkers – Assistant CEO, San Bernardino County

We have been contacted by other courts, and they have asked if we would process some of their payments, some of the smaller courts.

SPEAKER: Tressa Kentner – CEO (Ret.), San Bernardino County

They could possibly have their payments sent to us, and have us process them. We will see how that works out.

SPEAKER: Christina Volkers – Assistant CEO, San Bernardino County

What has happened is the clerks have been reallocated and reassigned to provide better access to the courts. They process the work outside the mail. They do the courtroom work; they do the filings; they serve the public. So we have been able to reallocate resources towards that end.