

SMALL PROBATE COURT CONSOLIDATION

A. SCALE

1. Sufficient revenues in a user fee system
2. Sufficient population in a service district
3. Sufficient territory to be a community (shared values) appropriately sized for travel and service

B. CAPACITY

1. Appropriate scale allows for competitive staffing including pay and benefits
2. Judge's time appropriate to the task with pay sufficient to attract qualified candidates
3. Availability to the user community, e.g. general public, attorneys, social service professionals, etc.

C. QUALITY SERVICE

1. Availability -open during business hours to serve the public and professionals
2. Efficiency - court has no backlog of paperwork -matters are moved forward within two business days and fully electronic
3. Financially - self-sustaining (even if healthcare were to be included) and still remit a surplus or assessment to the Probate Court Administration

SPECIAL ISSUES OF SMALL COURT CONSOLIDATION

1. Need for digitized probate records to facilitate consolidation
2. Secondary offices to mitigate travel difficulties
3. Professionalize support staff with job security

Submitted by:
Honorable Charles C. Vail
Northwest Corner Probate District
March 9, 2009