

# **62-B DISTRICT COURT**

**2004**



**CARING FOR AND SERVING THE  
COMMUNITY WITH JUSTICE**



April 15, 2005

Dear Mayor Root, City Commissioners, and Citizens of Kentwood,

It is my pleasure to present to you the Annual Report for the year 2004 for the 62-B District Court. We continue to meet the challenges before the court. Cases are heard promptly and fairly.

The court turned over to the City of Kentwood \$1,029,502.10 in revenue for fiscal year 2003-04. We appreciate the financial support of the City of Kentwood during these difficult economic times.

In October 2003, the state implemented a new fee, the Driver Responsibility Fee. This fee is assessed by the state on people convicted of drunk driving, driving while license suspended, no insurance, and several other driving offenses. This fee was implemented to balance the state budget. It is a regressive flat tax. These fees make it more difficult for the court to collect fines and costs which were imposed by the court taking into account the severity of the offense and the resources of the defendant.

We are in the process of implementing electronic traffic tickets. Later this year, we hope to be able to accept electronically filed civil cases. We also hope to update our web page so that the public will be able to access our records and will be able to pay tickets over the Internet.

Our dedicated staff makes all of this possible.

Very truly yours,

William G. Kelly  
District Judge

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## **MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE 62-B DISTRICT COURT**

“The 62-B District Court will strive to earn the public’s trust and confidence by serving the community with the highest standards of justice. The court will do this by:

- providing a fair and just forum for the resolution of civil and criminal disputes;
- providing these services in a professional, timely and efficient manner with respect and courtesy;
- educating and providing these services in an understandable and user-friendly fashion;
- being accountable for the resources invested in the court; and
- recognizing the changing needs of the judicial system and the people it serves.”

## **MEET THE COURT STAFF**

### **LEO ALBERTS**

Leo is one of the seven part-time bailiffs. He comes to us from the Department of Aeronautics where he worked for 26 years before retiring. He is married to Denise who works in the Kentwood Police Department. They have five children and five grandchildren. Leo enjoys spending time at their cottage on Diamond Lake and playing basketball.

### **PATRICIA BAKER**

Patricia is a part-time Deputy Clerk working as a cashier since August 2004. She has an Associates Degree from Davenport College of Business. She worked for five years, at the U.S. Attorney’s Office, as a legal secretary for the Criminal Division. She has been married to Scott for 12 years. They have two children Ashten (10) and Travis (8). She enjoys volunteering at her children’s schools, scrapbooking and reading.

### **GLENN BARR**

Glenn is one of the seven part-time bailiffs, he corrects MEAP tests, he works as a private investigator, and he works at the Ottawa County Jail when he is not working here. Glenn is single.

### **JAMES BASTIAANSE**

Jim is a Probation Officer. He is married to Missi. They have a son named Elliott. He is a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a major in Criminal Justice. Before joining the court in March 2000, he worked as a Correctional Probation Officer in Fort Myers, FL. He and his wife own the Sweet Bean Coffee shop in Zeeland. He enjoys computers, sports, and spending time with his wife and his son.

### **LINDA CASTILLO**

Linda is a Probation Officer. She has a B. A. from GVSU in Criminal Justice. Before joining the staff in August 1998, she interned at the Grand Rapids Police Department and the Kent County Juvenile Court. She enjoys working out, photography, cake decorating, and spending time with her family.

## **DEBORAH CLANTON**

Deborah is the Magistrate and the Director of the Probation Department. Deborah is married to Richard, a Kentwood City Commissioner. She has 2 children. She received a BS in Criminal Justice from Grand Valley State University and Masters in Public Administration at Western Michigan University. Deborah has been with the Court since August, 1984. She is a Magistrate Trainer for new Magistrates and an adjunct instructor in the Criminal Justice Department at GRCC. Deborah is a Sunday School teacher at Messiah Missionary Baptist Church and the current president of The Grand Rapids Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Deborah serves on various non-profit boards and she enjoys spending time with her family, working in her yard and traveling. Deborah and her husband were recognized as Giants in the Community in January 2005 by Grand Rapids Community College.

## **LORRAINE DAVIS**

Lorraine is the Secretary for the Probation Department. She has been married to Norman for more than 25 years. She worked for Lear Siegler/Smiths Industries for 16 years. She enjoys spending quality time with her husband, Norman, attending Bible Study Fellowship, and working with the African American AIDS Coalition.

## **TERRY DINGMAN**

Terry is the Administrator/Clerk of the Court. She is married to Lew and has 4 children and 3 grandchildren. She is a graduate of Western Michigan University and has been with the Court since 1980. She is a Past President of the Michigan Court Administrators Association. She has served as a faculty and committee member for the Michigan Judicial Institute. Terry is active with her church and enjoys walking, reading a good book, and spending time with her family.

## **TED HARRINGTON**

Ted is one of the seven part-time bailiffs working for the court. He

retired after 27 years with the Kentwood Police Department. He has been married close to 40 years to Sue. They have four children and seven grandchildren. He enjoys sports and daily walks with his dog.

## **BETH HORTON**

Beth is the Deputy Clerk working primarily with General Civil files since July 1999. She is also a Certified Electronic Court Recorder. She is married to Yancy and has two children. She has an Associates Degree from Muskegon Business College. She enjoys spending time with her family, baking, and sewing.

## **WILLIAM G. KELLY**

Judge Kelly is the District Judge. He is married to Sharon and has 5 children. He is a graduate of the University of Detroit and the University of Detroit School of Law. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1970 to 1972 in Ghana, West Africa. He is a member of the faculty of the Michigan Judicial Institute New Judges School and of the National Judicial College. He has also served as faculty at a number of other programs including a conference in London, England in 2001.

He is a past chair of the National Conference of the Special Court Judges of the American Bar Association, a past chair of the Judicial Conference of the State Bar of Michigan, and a past president of the Michigan District Judges Association. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts from 1994 until 2000. He is serving in his fifth term as 62-B District Court judge.

#### **SUZANNE McCUNE**

Suzanne is a Volunteer Probation Officer. She started in May 2003. She is a retired Social Worker from the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Her hobbies are sewing and gardening.

#### **NANCY MORFORD**

Nancy is the Court Recorder and Secretary for Judge Kelly. She is married to Wayne and has 6 children and 14 grandchildren. Nancy has been with the court since October, 1984. Nancy enjoys working with computers and spending time with her family.

#### **BARBARA OLMSTED**

Barb is a Deputy Clerk with the court working primarily with the traffic files. She is a certified Court Electronic Operator and also a Certified LEIN operator. She is married to Gary and has two children and four grandchildren. She is a graduate of Michigan State University and enjoys spending time with her family and grandchildren, cooking, crafting, shopping, and living at the lake. Barb has been with the court since 1989.

#### **ROBERT PARCHER**

Bob is one of the seven part-time bailiffs. He and his wife, Kay, live in Byron Center. He was born and raised in Grand Rapids. He served in the Military Police for the U. S. Army. Bob obtained an Associates Degree from Grand Rapids Junior College and studied General Business at Davenport. He retired from the Wyoming Police Department in 2001 after 27 years with the department. Bob started with the court in March 2004. Bob enjoys working in the yard and spending time with their chocolate lab, Cinnamon.

#### **JENNIFER PETRYK**

Jennifer is deputy clerk with the court working primarily with Summary Proceedings. She is a Certified Court Electronic Operator. Jennifer has two children. She attended Grand Rapids Community College. She enjoys spending free time with her children. Jennifer has been a part of the court since 1993.

#### **STEPHEN RADOSEVICH**

Stephen is a Volunteer Probation Officer. He started in September 2003. He has a Masters Degree in Special Education for Emotionally Impaired. He retired in 2000. He is married to Marlee, an art consultant. He has been a pilot since 1975 and is a student of Classical Guitar.

#### **C. LYNN SMITH**

Lynn is a Probation Officer. She is married to Tony and has 4 children. She has a B. S. degree from Grand Valley State University in Criminal Justice. Lynn started working with the 62-B District Court in July, 1991.

**PAUL SPETOSKEY**

Paul is one of the seven part-time bailiffs and works for Ottawa County Sheriff Department full-time. He has been married to Roxanne for 10 years and they have a 5 year old daughter, Marisa. Paul enjoys spending time with family and friends and playing golf and working out.

**ESTHER STRICKLAND**

Esther is our backup cashier and civil filing clerk. She is married to Brian and has three children. She graduated from Godwin Heights High School and attended Davenport College. She joined the court in January 2002. She enjoys movies, spending her weekends with her family and watching her 14 year old race go-carts.

**CHRIS VAN HOUTEN**

Chris is one of the seven part-time bailiffs. He also works part-time DK Security and for MC Sports. He is seeking a full-time law enforcement position. Chris is single.

**DENNIS VAN TASSEL**

Dennis is one of the seven part-time bailiffs and works for Cascade Fire Department full-time. Dennis is married to Wendy and they have three children.

**KATHY WALL**

Kathy is a Deputy Clerk working primarily in Small Claims. Kathy has been married to Joe for 30 years and has two children. She enjoys traveling with her husband, photography, music, reading, and many outdoor activities. Kathy has been with the court since 1999.

**JOHN WEBER**

John is a Volunteer Probation Officer. He started in June 2003. He is retired from the Marine Corps and is active in the American Legion, Post 208. He and his wife Mary have three children. He enjoys golfing and bowling.

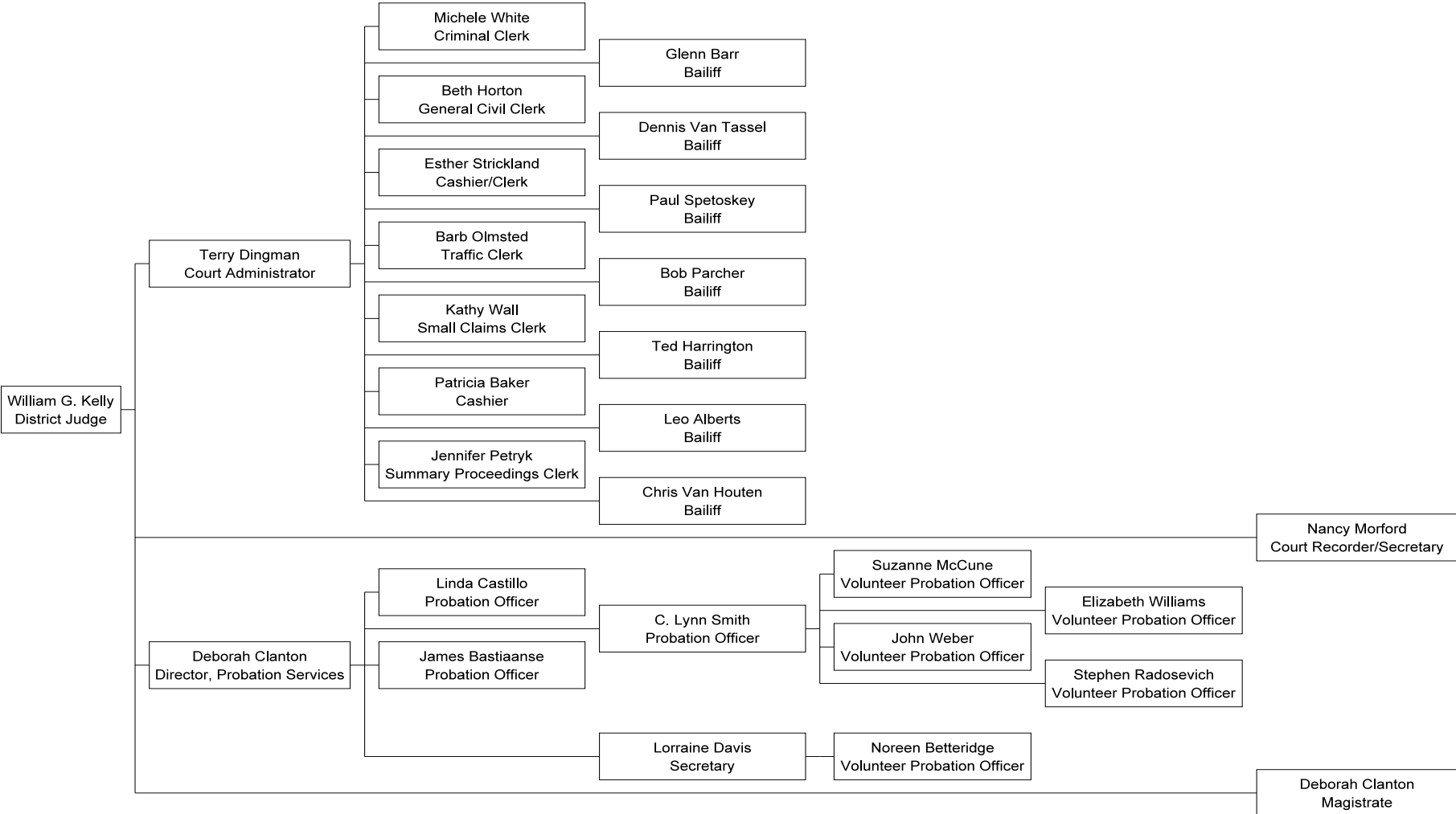
**ELIZABETH WILLIAMS**

Elizabeth is a Volunteer Probation Officer. She started in May 2003. She is retired from General Motors. She also volunteers at Kelloggsville Elementary and Messiah Baptist Church. She plans to enroll in GRCC for Interior Design or Criminal Justice. She is single with two children and four grandchildren.

**MICHELE WHITE**

Michele is the Deputy Clerk with the court working primarily with criminal files since December 1998. She is married to David and has two children. She is a graduate of Davenport Career Center. She enjoys spending time with her family, camping, sports, and music.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE 62-B DISTRICT COURT



## 62-B DISTRICT COURT CASELOAD FOR 2004

	Non-Traffic			Traffic		Civil			Parking	Total
	Felony	Misd.	Civ Inf	Misd and CI	OUIL/ OWI	General Civil	Small Claims	Summary Proceed		
Beginning	37	238	25	1,341	38	417	200	128	1,090	3,514
New Filings	241	784	4	9,960	154	1,373	1,172	1,728	1,124	16,540
Reopened	137	194	0	184	3	1	1	0	0	520
Total Caseload	415	1,216	29	11,485	195	1,791	1,373	1,856	2,214	20,574
Jury Verdict	0	12	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	14
Bench Verdict	2	6	7	1,274	0	17	109	10	139	1,564
Guilty Plea/Admission/Waiver	64	756	6	6,495	170	0	0	0	769	8,260
Uncontested	0	0	0	0	0	972	584	1,016	0	2,572
Bindover/Transfer	189	0	0	0	8	5	29	0	0	231
Dismissed by Party	10	69	0	418	2	168	261	582	22	1,532
Dismissed by Court	0	4	0	185	0	256	215	143	19	822
Default	0	0	5	1,537	0	0	0	0	0	1,542
Inactive Status	136	214	0	232	5	23	13	1	0	624
Local Diversion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other disposition	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Case Type Change	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	22
Total Dispositions	401	1,061	18	10,163	186	1,442	1,211	1,753	949	17,184
Ending	14	155	11	1,322	9	349	162	103	1,265	3,390

In 2004, we conducted 14 jury trials. This is the highest number of jury trials in several years. Jurors have to report to court only one day.

The judge held 163 non-jury trials.

Most cases are disposed of by plea or default or by consent.

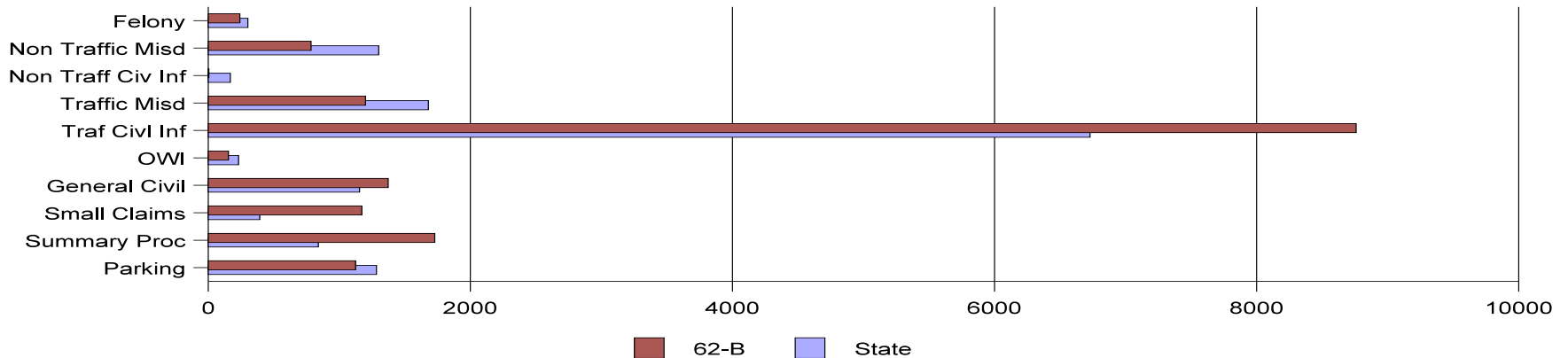
## COMPARISON WITH STATE AVERAGE

The caseload for the 62-B District Court judge is 20% greater than the average judge's caseload. Our criminal caseload is lower than the average judge but the traffic civil infractions and civil caseload is higher than the state average. Criminal cases take more judicial time than traffic civil infractions.

The 62-B District Court uses a non-attorney magistrate who presides over informal hearings and conducts arraignments, signs arrest warrants, and search warrants. Many District Courts have an attorney magistrate who can preside over Small Claims cases in addition to the functions performed by a non-attorney magistrate.

The Court may need to hire an attorney magistrate after our current magistrate retires if our caseload continues to grow. The current magistrate has played a very important role in allowing us to keep up with the increase in the caseload and still provide due process to each person.

	Felony	Non-Traf Misd	Non-Traf Civ Inf	Traffic Misd	Traffic Civ Inf	OWI	General Civil	Small Claims	Summary Proceedings	Parking	Total	Total Minus Parking
62-B	241	784	4	1,200	8,760	154	1,373	1,172	1,728	1,124	16,540	15,416
Average for Judge in State	302	1,300	169	1,680	6,729	231	1,154	393	840	1,283	14,081	12,797
Percentage	79.8%	60.3%	2.4%	71.4%	130.2%	66.7%	119.0%	298.2%	205.7%	87.6%	117.5%	120.5%



## FIVE YEAR TRENDS

### New Filings by Case Type 2000-2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Felonies	232	246	236	248	241
OUIL Felonies	6	14	8	8	12
OUIL Misdemeanors	173	170	131	188	142
Non Traffic Civil Infractions			88	30	4
Criminal Misdemeanors	2,401	1,612	826	743	784
Traffic Misdemeanors	701	2,469	2,706	2,067	1,200
Traffic Civil Infractions	5,580	8,702	7,987	7,374	8,760
General Civil	864	1,000	1,069	1,367	1,373
Small Claims	993	1,113	1,039	994	1,172
Summary Proceedings	1,138	1,688	1,806	1,716	1,728
Parking	1,422	1,214	1,013	1,405	1,124
Totals including Parking	13,510	18,228	16,909	16,140	16,540
Totals without Parking	12,088	17,014	15,896	14,735	15,416

Our caseload increased from about 8,500 cases in 1985 to about 11,000 cases in 2000. In 2000, when we were planning the courthouse, we anticipated that we would end up with about 15,000 to 17,000 in 2020 when the City of Kentwood was built out. As you can see, we reached that number of cases in 2001 and have reached it every year since then.

In the last five years:

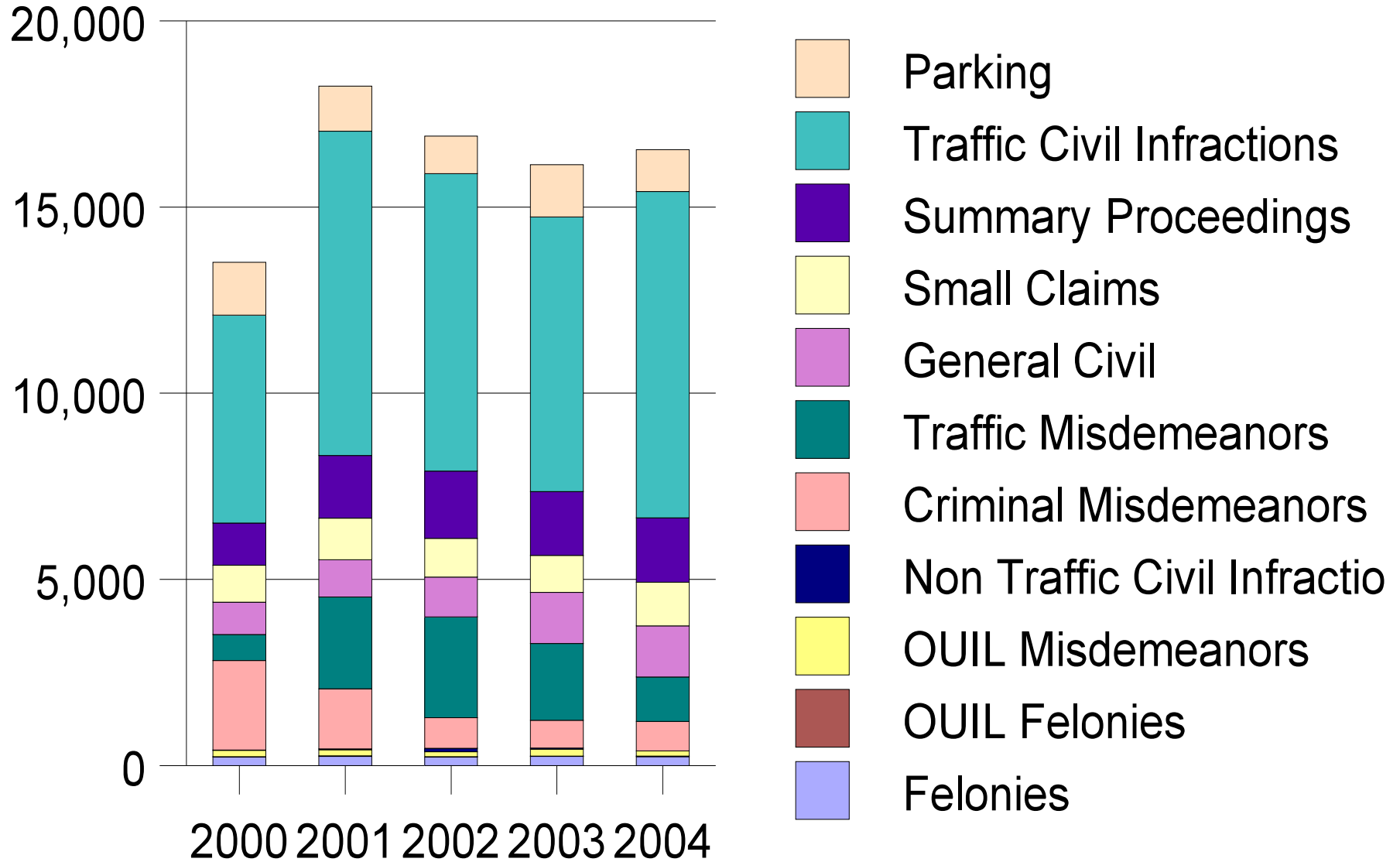
our overall caseload, not counting parking tickets, has increased 27.5%,

General Civil cases have increased 59%,

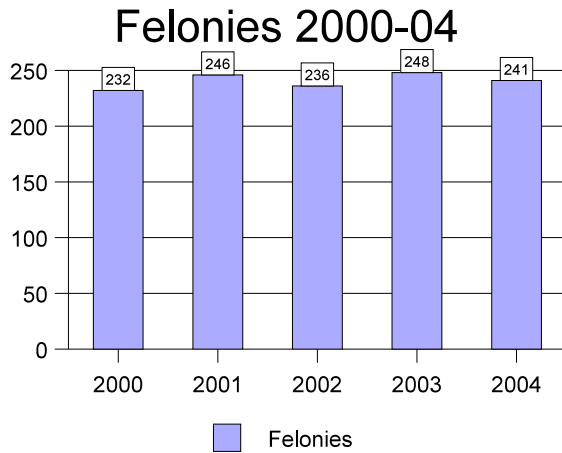
Traffic Civil Infractions have increased 57%,

Summary Proceedings have increased 52%.

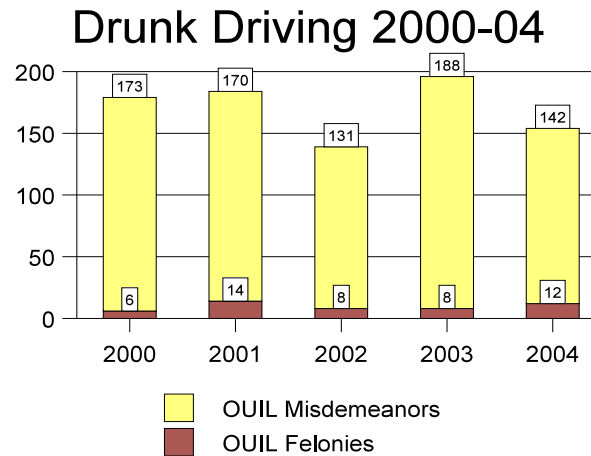
# Trend of New Filings 2000-2004



## CRIMINAL CASES 2000-2004

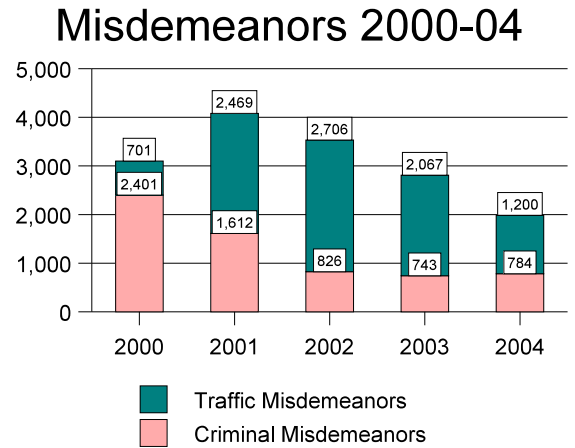


Felonies are offenses punishable by more than one year in prison. All felonies begin in the District Court with the signing of the complaint, an arraignment, and a preliminary examination to establish probable cause that a felony was committed and probable cause that the defendant committed the offense. The preliminary examination is to be held within 14 days of the arraignment. The trial and the sentencing for a felony are conducted in the Circuit Court. The District Court judge is authorized by the Supreme Court to take a plea in a felony case and last year took 26 felony pleas. This saves the number of jail bed days and saves time for the Circuit Court judges and for the parties.



Drunk drivers kill 17,000 Americans per year. This court treats these cases very seriously. The court places most of the people convicted of drunk driving in the 62-B District Court on probation with a requirement to obtain counseling and abstain from alcohol and drugs unless prescribed by a physician.

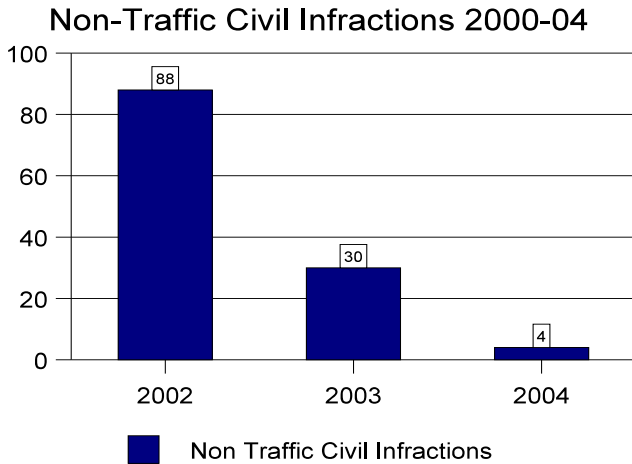
The maximum fine for Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) is \$500 plus costs. In 2003, the state started imposing a “Driver Responsibility Fee” on all people convicted of OWI of \$1,000.00 per year for two years in order to balance the state budget. This “Driver Responsibility Fee” turns the Criminal Justice system into a tax gathering scheme for the state government rather than a system to punish and rehabilitate and deter offenders.



The number of misdemeanors has declined from previous years. In 2004, 12 of these cases ended with a jury trial.

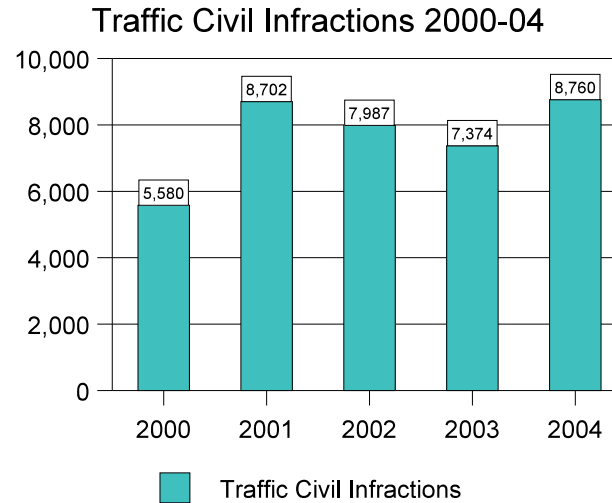
Many of these offenses carry a “Driver Responsibility Fee” for which the defendants must pay \$500 or \$1,000 per year for two years to the State of Michigan in order to balance the state budget. This makes it more difficult for the court to collect the fines and costs for the offense which the person has been convicted of. The “Driver Responsibility Fee” is a regressive flat tax imposed on the young and poor people who come before the court for offenses such as Driving on a Suspended License. In many cases, the license was suspended for failure to pay a \$100 traffic ticket.

## CIVIL INFRACTIONS



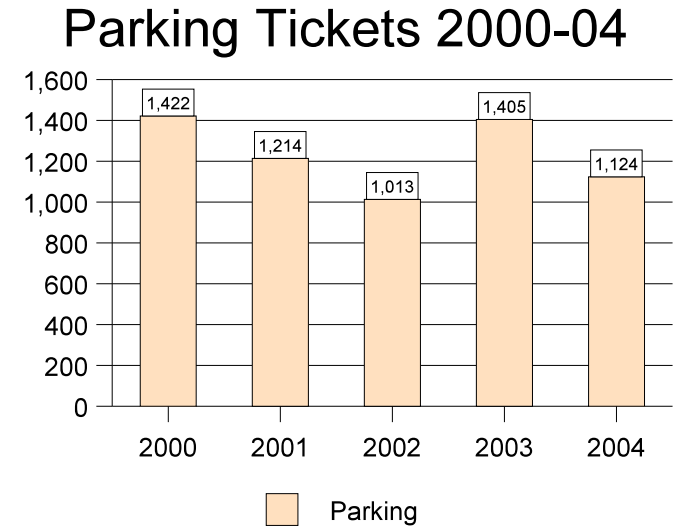
Very few Non-Traffic Civil Infractions were issued last year. These are generally for code compliance. They were used extensively in 2002 to bring the 750 apartments owned and managed by the Brookline Company up to code.

The advantage of using a civil infraction is that the burden of proof at the hearing is by a preponderance of the evidence and there is no right to a trial by jury. The disadvantage is that because an offender can't be sentenced to jail, one might consider a civil fine as the cost of doing business without complying with Kentwood's ordinances.



In 2004, more Traffic Civil Infractions were started than in prior year. Traffic tickets are the means of enforcing compliance with traffic rules designed to keep our community safe. As a by-product of the enforcement of traffic tickets, revenue is generated for the City, the State, and County Libraries.

These cases make up over half of our caseload. Soon, the Kentwood police department will start issuing the citations electronically which will eliminate the need for us to type in all of the information on the tickets. This should be a significant time-saver.

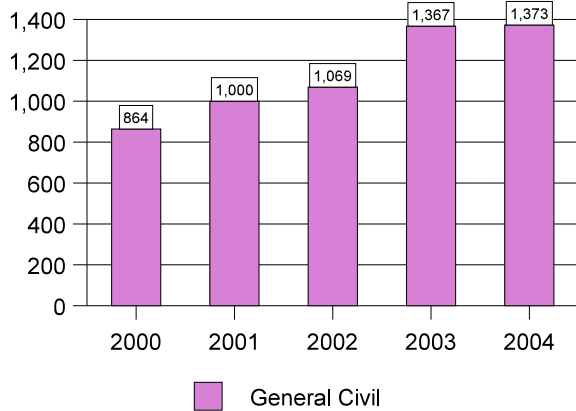


The City of Kentwood has set up a bureau of senior citizens to patrol the city for parking violations. Most of the parking tickets are for handicapped parking violations or fire lane violations or parking on the street during snow removal times.

The City of Kentwood has recently adopted a new parking ordinance which may require additional enforcement efforts.

## CIVIL CASES

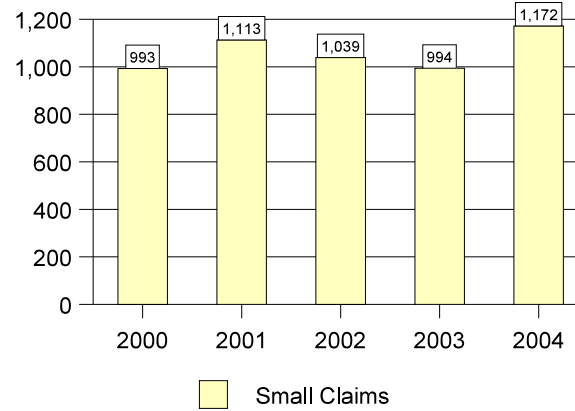
### General Civil 2000-04



We started more General Civil cases in 2004 than in any prior year. The district court's jurisdiction is any case up to \$25,000.00. The Supreme Court guidelines state that all General Civil cases are to be disposed of within two years. At this point, we have only one case which has been pending more than one year. That case has been adjourned while we wait for a decision from Social Security.

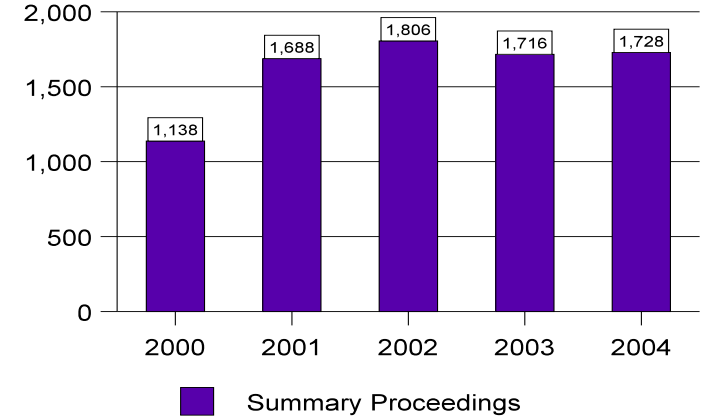
If a defendant files an answer, the matter is scheduled for a pretrial about three weeks after the answer. In 2004 we held 151 pretrial conferences. At the pretrial conference, discovery time guidelines are set and that matter is scheduled for trial in about three or four months.

### Small Claims 2000-04



We started more Small Claims cases in 2004 than in any prior year. On most days that Small Claims cases are scheduled, the Dispute Resolution Center is available to mediate with the parties. A number of cases have been successfully mediated.

### Summary Proceedings 2000-04



These are landlord-tenant matters. In 2004, 445, 25.75%, of the landlord-tenant matters were started by Brookline Management which owns and manages Breton East, Breton Court, Walnut Hills, and Hunters Ridge. By comparison, in 2001, they started 667 cases, 39.5% of that year's caseload.

## CASEFLOW MANAGEMENT

In 2003, the Michigan Supreme Court provided time guidelines for case processing as goals for administration of court caseloads. Administrative Order 2003-7. The guidelines for District Courts provide, as follows:

### 1. Civil Proceedings

#### A. General Civil

From filing	Pct to be closed
Within 273 days	90%
Within 364 days	98%
Within 455 days	100%

#### B. Small Claims, Landlord-Tenant

100% of all small claims, landlord-tenant, and land contract actions should be adjudicated within 126 days from the date of case filing.

### 2. Criminal

From Arraignment	Pct. to be closed
63 days	90%
91 days	98%
126 days	100%

The 62-B District Court has been following these guidelines since the original guidelines were published in 1991. This year, we can report the following concerning our

### 1. Civil Proceeding

#### A. General Civil

As of March 1, 2005, only 19 General Civil cases had been pending more than 6 months, including only 2 pending more than 12 months.

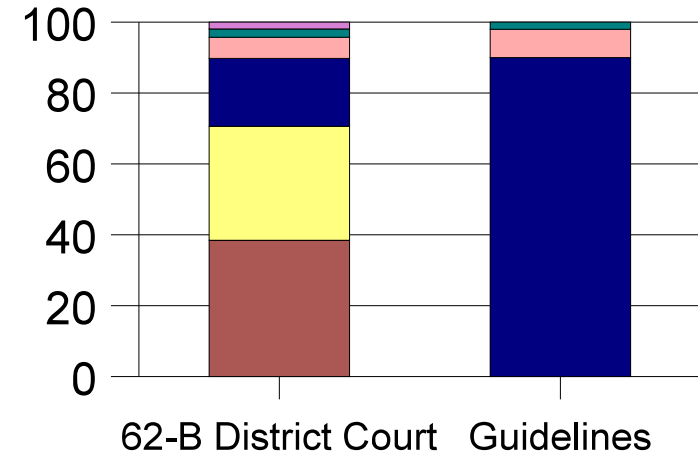
#### B. Small Claims, Landlord-Tenant

All small claims and landlord tenant actions last year were adjudicated within 60 days if there was service.

### 2. Criminal

From Arraignment	Pct closed
60 days	89.75%
90 days	95.74%
126 days	98.07%

## Caseflow



## PROBATION

Jane was sentenced to probation after pleading guilty to Exposing a Child under 21 to Injury and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. She was addicted to crack cocaine. She has three young children. When the police arrived at her home, it was extremely dirty, the children were unfed, and she was asleep in bed. The oldest child, who was 7, could not attend school because he had to care for the younger two children, ages 3 and 1 years old. Jane was sentenced to probation and referred to residential treatment. Family members cared for her children. After residential treatment, she began to care for her two youngest children while her parents kept the 7-year old. She then moved into a one year residential home for recovering mothers with children. This allowed her to bring all of her children under one roof. A condition of residency was that she continue in outpatient substance abuse treatment, attends NA and bible study. To date, Jane is in compliance with all requirements of her residency and she is a part time college student. She has severed emotional ties with the father of two of her children who introduced her to crack. He was recently discharged from prison and has married another woman. She was discharged with improvement.

Jim was sentenced to 12 months of probation for Operating While Intoxicated, 2<sup>nd</sup> offense, and Refusal of a Preliminary Breath Test. Jim completed Intensive Outpatient Treatment and attended AA twice weekly. He paid over \$1,200 in fines and costs. Jim stated that his probation sentence “changed my life”. He acknowledges that although his arrest was a negative life event, his subsequent probation requirements helped him turn his life around. Jim has since obtained his drivers license and started his own business.

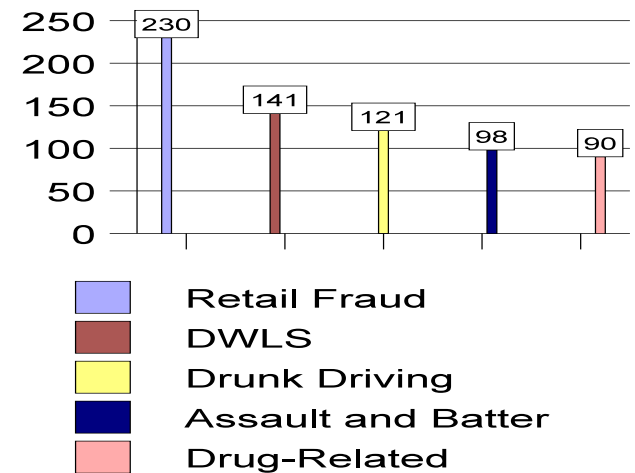
Bob was placed on probation for 12 months in June for domestic assault. He was 78 when placed on probation with a no contact clause. He moved into an apartment and has gone to AA meetings twice a week during his probation and he has completed counseling. When he was placed on probation, he did not realize that he had an alcohol problem and that he had abused his spouse for a number of years. Since being on probation he has been sober, and has realized that his drinking was a problem and feels that AA has brought awareness to his abuse of alcohol in his life. From counseling, he has learned that he had been abusive to his wife. He continues in AA.

These are just three of the 771 people placed on probation in this court who have made significant positive changes in their lives due to the intervention of the probation officers.

Last year, the probation department started 817 new cases. The biggest category of probationers was for Retail Fraud. About 55% completed probation in a satisfactory manner while 11% were discharged less than satisfactory and 34% were discharged unsatisfactory or were revoked.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Types of Cases



The judge and magistrate signed 49 search warrants, including 25 for blood tests in drunk driving cases in which the defendant refused to take a breath test. The judge and the magistrate alternate being on call 24/7. Many of the search warrants are issued by facsimile machines to expedite the process.

The judge solemnized 125 weddings and the magistrate solemnized 17 weddings. All couples seeking to be married in the 62-B District Court must attend a four hour Marriage Preparation class. Other courts in Kent County are now requiring attendance at the Marriage Preparation classes.

The Probation Department conducted 591 breath tests and 2,002 urine tests to enforce the Court's orders for probationers to abstain from alcohol and drugs. The drug test room that was built in the Probation Department has facilitated the drug tests immensely. Overall, 210 tests were positive, about 8%. We determined that 115 tests for Marijuana were positive, about 18%. The test for Marijuana can determine usage for about 30 days.

## IMPROVEMENTS

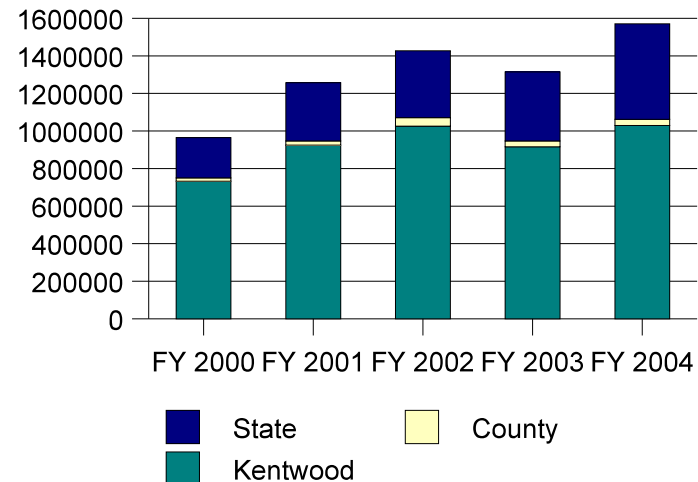
## REVENUES

In FY 2003-2004 the court spent \$1,187,164.00. The court turned over \$1,029,502.10 in revenues to the City of Kentwood plus JSSP and other funds. This was the most the court has turned over to the City, slightly more than in FY 2001-2002. The state has increased its fees and so its percentage of the revenues is growing.

Revenue is a by-product of the punishment imposed by the court. The court is concerned that its orders are complied with and that convicted offenders are held accountable.

Unfortunately, the State of Michigan in order to balance its budget has added a Driver Responsibility Fee ranging between \$150 and \$1,000 per year for two years. This has turned the Traffic Justice System into a tax gathering system for the state government. It is a flat tax imposed on some of the poorest citizens in the community, people whose license was suspended because they could not pay a traffic fine. This fee makes it more difficult for the court to collect the fines and costs which it assesses.

## Revenue



## **E-Citations**

The court and the Police Department have been working together to implement “E-Citations”. Soon, the Kentwood police officers will issue tickets through a computer and printer in their car. Hopefully, this will save the officer time in issuing the citation. At the end of the officer’s shift, the officer will electronically submit the tickets that he or she issued that day into the police department computer. That data will then be sent to the court computer. Nobody in the police department or in the court will have to enter the information that the officer input at the time the ticket was issued.

This system has been used in Saginaw County for two years. This will be the first installation in Kent County.

Since more than 50% of the cases filed in the 62-B District Court last year were traffic civil infractions, we are anticipating that we will have a tremendous time savings in that we will no longer have to input thousands of tickets.

## **Enforcement Efforts**

One of the principal methods of punishment in a court is the assessment of fines and costs. Hopefully, if someone is hit in the pocketbook, the punishment will be sufficient to deter future illegal conduct. If one does not pay the fine, the opportunity for accountability is lost.

The court has taken several steps to increase accountability. When a defendant asks for a payment plan, the defendant fills out a sheet with his or her place of employment, income, and assets and then fills out a wage assignment. This information is used to determine a payment plan. If the defendant does not comply with the payment plan, the wage assignment is sent to the defendant’s employer.

The court is promptly issuing suspending the drivers license and issuing bench warrants to arrest those who have not been keeping their payment plans. Every other month, the court is sending out a letter to all people whose licenses have been suspended for failure to pay a ticket in this court. As a result, a number of people have paid the ticket and cleared the suspension.

## **E-Filing and Website Enhancements**

The State is testing a website which will allow attorneys and citizens to electronically file their cases from their computers directly into the courts of the state. We have been in contact with the State Court Administrative Office in the planning and testing of this website. We hope to be able to implement this capability when the State Court Administrative Office has finished testing the system. This would save our clerks the time necessary to enter the information into the computer as it will fill in the fields in our case management system.

Several courts put their records on the Internet to allow the public to access the court records. Some courts allow the public to pay fines and costs over the Internet and to allow low supervision probationers to report monthly over the Internet. We hope to enhance our website with these functions.