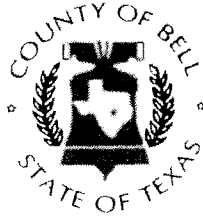


DISTRICT COURTS OF BELL COUNTY

1201 HUEY ROAD • P.O. BOX 747 • BELTON, TEXAS 76513-0747

JOE CARROLL, JUDGE
27TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
(254) 933-5261

RICK MORRIS, JUDGE
146TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
(254) 933-5247



GORDON ADAMS, JUDGE
169TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
(254) 933-5265

MARTHA J. TRUDO, JUDGE
264TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
(254) 933-5245

FANCY H. JEZEK, JUDGE
426TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
(254) 933-5246

November 2, 2010

Re: Collection of Court Costs

To the attorneys representing criminal defendants in Bell County:

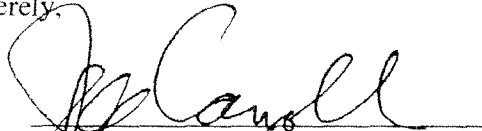
In 2005 the State Legislature enacted S. B. 1863. The bill created the Collection Improvement Program in Article 103.0033, Code of Criminal Procedure. This bill further provided that the implementation of this new program would be overseen by the Office of Court Administration and the State Comptroller's Office. As a result of this bill, Bell County, including its Justice Courts, County and District Clerks' Offices, and the Community Supervision and Corrections Department, was mandated to implement certain procedures for improving the collection of fines, fees and court costs by April 2007.

Bell County has made great efforts to comply with the guidelines and recommendations of these state agencies and the county has improved its overall collection of outstanding fines, fees and costs. However one recommendation that has been made is for all court costs to be paid by the defendant at the time of placement on community supervision. As such if a defendant is not being confined in the Bell County Jail at the time of sentencing and is placed on community supervision, then the person will be expected to pay all court costs in full on the day of sentencing. In addition, even if the defendant is being confined in jail but expects to be granted community supervision, then the defendant should be informed that s/he should make every reasonable effort to pay court costs on the day of sentencing. If the defendant does not have the means to pay all court costs on this day, then the defendant can petition the court for a 30 day period to fully pay all court costs.


This procedure is currently the manner in which court costs are collected in the county courts-at-law. As such it should not be too disruptive to the practice of defense counsels in district courts to instruct their clients to also follow this manner of paying court costs. Not only will this method improve county collection efforts but this will also enhance the supervision of offenders placed on community supervision. Defense counsels will be notified at the time that a presentence investigation report is prepared of the amount of court costs the defendant will be expected to pay on the date of sentencing.

One of the goals for the Bell/Lampasas Counties Community Supervision and Corrections Department for the next year, as well as other departments for this county, is to redouble its collection efforts. Such efforts are necessary not only to conform to State standards but also to avoid increasing the tax burden on the citizens of this county. As such defense attorneys should inform their clients that if they are placed on community supervision, they will be expected to not only pay court costs at the time of sentencing but also all monthly fees and fines ordered to be paid as a condition of community supervision over the duration of their term of community supervision.

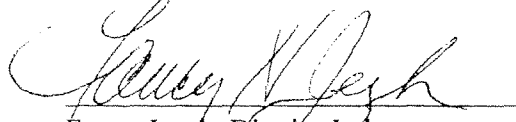
Sincerely,



Joe Carroll, District Judge
27th Judicial District Court
Bell County, Texas



Martha J. Trudo, District
264th Judicial District Court
Bell County, Texas



Fancy Jezek, District Judge
426th Judicial District Court
Bell County, Texas