

Posting names of defendants in the local paper.

Objective: Get defendants to turn themselves in to avoid embarrassment or have someone turn them in (embarrassed family member, an ex-wife or past friend, etc).

Process:

1. Run a computer report of wanted persons in a community (run it by zip code).
2. Provide warning to the citizens (via a newspaper article) that you will post the names of wanted persons in the local paper.
3. Do not print personal identifying information to prevent identity theft (only print the name, year of birth, and city of residence).
4. Audit names just before file is sent to the local paper.
5. Schedule a judge and staff on a given day for mass arraignments.
6. Depending on your costs you may want to divide the list of wanted persons into several lists. Print one list every two weeks. This may entice some people who don't read their names the first time, to contact the court to avoid having their names listed in a second printing.

A copy of the different newspaper notices and articles from the 46th Circuit Trial Court are attached.

Printing your report by zip code can reduce costs. You may only want to print the local names in local papers.

Courts try something new

By James Martinez, Staff Writer · Posted: Saturday, June 30, 2007 10:09 AM EDT

Approved: ROAD		Original document - Court Placed - Court		2nd Document copy - Prosecutor 2nd Document copy - Defendant	
STATE OF MICHIGAN JUDICIAL DISTRICT		COMPLAINT MISDEMEANOR		CASE NO.	
JURY		Court address		Court telephone no.	
BY THE PEOPLE OF <input type="checkbox"/> The State of Michigan		Defendant's name and address		Nature of complaint	
Complainant's address		Complainant's address		Complainant's address	
City/Town/Village		County in Michigan		Defendant's DOB	
Police agency report no.		Charge		Defendant's DOB	
Defendant's address		Vehicle type		Defendant's DOB	

STATE OF MICHIGAN, COUNTY OF _____

The complaining witness says that on the date and at the location described, the defendant, contrary to law,

ADVERTISING WARRANTS

OTSEGO COUNTY – Persons with open arrest warrants may find something startling as they flip through local newspapers this summer – their names.

The Otsego County Judicial System (OCJS), in coordination with local law enforcement officers, will publish the names and associated case information of people who have open arrest warrants beginning in late July.

“The number of warrants continue to increase. The court is looking for innovative ways to reduce the number of arrest warrants by handling cases in a timely manner,” said 46th Circuit Trial Court administrator Rudi Edel, who estimated there are more than 1,000 outstanding arrest warrants issued by Otsego County.

“This is phase one. To avoid an embarrassing arrest we’re giving people the opportunity to turn themselves in. Phase two is to publish their names so they might turn themselves in or somebody might tell us where they are,” Edel added.

The initiative is “loosely” related to the jail overcrowding issue as it is spurring the court to continue to look for ways to resolve outstanding cases, according to Edel.

The Otsego County Jail has been in a declared state of emergency for overcrowding since March.

In addition, “wanted” persons with open warrants will be posted on the Internet via the court’s Web site (www.circuit46.org) and will appear there indefinitely. Once the case is closed it will be removed from the court’s Web site after 90 days from the case closure date. Edel said posting pictures of the individuals online is a possibility, but the decision has yet to be made. As previously reported in the Herald Times, the OCJS also recently mailed wanted posters to addresses of those with arrest warrants for failure to pay child support. Edel said they received responses on four of the 10 posters sent out with the first phase.

People with outstanding warrants can resolve the matter and may avoid publication of their names by contacting:

- 731-0201 for criminal and traffic court arrest warrants
- 731-7450 for Friend of the Court arrest warrants

Otsego County arrest warrants published Saturday

By James Martinez, Staff Writer · Posted: Wednesday, July 25, 2007 12:07 AM EDT

OTSEGO COUNTY – The names of people with outstanding arrest warrants from the Otsego County Court System will be listed in the Gaylord Herald Times starting Saturday as part of an effort by the judicial system to resolve as many open cases as possible.

“We’re hoping people will see their name and, to end the embarrassment, will turn themselves into court to resolve the case,” said magistrate and court administrator Rudi Edel.

He also encouraged residents who know the whereabouts of those listed to call a newly established tip line. If you know the whereabouts of a person on the arrest warrant list published in Saturday editions of the Herald Times, leave a tip at: courtline@otsegocountymi.gov or call 731-0206.

According to Edel, the Otsego County Division of the 46th Circuit Trial Court hopes to run one list a week for about a month, which will only appear in the Herald Times on Saturdays. These initial postings are expected to be warrants from the court for residents from Grayling to Wolverine and the Otsego County lines from east to west.

The lists will fall under several different categories ranging from original warrants, or people who were never physically arrested, to those who were arrested but violated a court order or skipped bond following that arrest, Edel explained.

To accommodate those people wishing to turn themselves in, the court is holding a special session on Aug. 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

A judge and court staff will be on hand at the J. Richard Yuill Alpine Center across from Gaylord High School to handle the matter. “We try to give people every opportunity to resolve whatever their situation is,” Edel said of the program, which lists the defendant’s name, year of birth and city of residence in the paper.

As stated in a draft notice from Edel, making an effort to comply with the court before Aug. 22 will be taken into consideration at the time of the arraignment and those turning themselves in should be prepared to pay their bond if appropriate.

After Aug. 22, Edel said warrants “will be actively pursued” by local law enforcement.

If the warrant was issued for nonpayment of child support, the defendant may contact the Friend of the Court to discuss the case at 731-7450.

In the future, Edel hopes to target other areas and publish similar lists in newspapers in the state that have a significant number of warrants from Otsego County.

ARREST WARRANT NOTICE

Published August 4, 2007

NOTICE – If your name appears on the list below, the Otsego County Court System has issued a warrant for your arrest.

If you know the whereabouts of a person on this list, leave a tip at: courtline@otsegocountymi.gov or call 989.731.0206.

On August 22, 2007, from 8:30 AM until 7:00 PM, the court will be in session to handle any case where the defendant wishes to surrender to the court. At that time a judge and court staff will be available to handle your matter at the courtroom located at the Alpine Center across from the Gaylord High School. A law enforcement officer will also be at the court to handle any finger printing procedures should Michigan law require you to be printed.

If the warrant was issued for failure to comply with a previous court order, making every effort to comply with that court order before August 22, 2007, will be considered at the time of your arraignment. If the warrant was issued for nonpayment of child support you can contact the Friend of the Court to discuss your case (989.731.7450).

You should be prepared to pay your bond if appropriate.

Failure to turn yourself in at the court by August 22, 2007 will result in your eventual arrest in an embarrassing circumstance at home, at work or in a public place.

(An alphabetized list of defendant's names, year of birth, and city of residence followed.)

:Otsego County: Published warrants resolve 50-plus cases

By James Martinez, Staff Writer

OTSEGO COUNTY — After publishing the names of nearly 300 residents with outstanding arrest warrants in the county, the Otsego County Court System was able to resolve more than 50 cases heading into today's scheduled court date for those people with warrants to turn in themselves.

The court is holding an open session to handle any case where a defendant wishes to turn himself or herself in today from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the courtroom in the J. Richard Yuill Alpine Center, across from Gaylord High School.

The court system launched a campaign in July running lists of names of people with outstanding arrest warrants in the Herald Times as an effort to get those people to turn themselves in or for someone else to provide a tip to that person's whereabouts. Different lists ran consecutively in the July 28, Aug. 4 and Aug. 11 editions.

"We've had an excellent response. We're very pleased with what happened," said court administrator and magistrate Rudi Edel. According to Edel more than 50 cases already have been resolved heading into Wednesday's court date.

"We've had people call to turn themselves in. People called saying 'I didn't know I had a warrant.' We had a grandmother call and turn in her grandson because she was embarrassed," said Edel.

As result of the effort, the prosecutor's office was able to collect approximately \$5,000 in restitution for area businesses to which bad checks were written by people who then had outstanding warrants for those checks, prosecutor Kyle Legel said.

"To me it was the fact that we had all those check warrants out there not coming in and by publishing the names it got those people to come in and pay some money to those businesses," said Legel. "I was very pleased. To me it was a great project."

Following those results, Edel said the court would now select another city with numerous residents who have outstanding warrants in Otsego County and publish those names in a local newspaper in hopes of achieving a similar result.

Coming Saturday: What happens when the jail is overcrowded and law enforcement officers encounter someone with an outstanding warrant?

— Contact James Martinez at 748-4522 or james@gaylordheraldtimes.com.