



VON NIDA AND GIBBONS COLLABORATE ON PROJECT

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EDWARDSVILLE, October 30, 2014 – In an era when the phrase “working together for a common goal” is often used but rarely fulfilled, Circuit Clerk Mark Von Nida has put the adage into practice throughout his more than 27 years of public service to the people of Madison County.

The latest example of Von Nida’s spirit of collaboration is a software integration project between the Circuit Clerk’s and States Attorney’s offices.

For years, the State’s Attorney’s office used a different software program with different entry codes than the Circuit Clerk’s office. As a result, substantial amounts of legal records and other data were entered into computers twice, once by each department. “It is a very inefficient system, both in terms of the manpower it takes to enter the same information twice, and in cost since we had to purchase and maintain two separate software programs,” Von Nida said.

The issue first came to Von Nida’s attention almost 20 years ago when he was serving as office manager for former State’s Attorney and current State Senator Bill Haine. “It was a problem then, just as it is today,” Von Nida commented. “I felt it was important that everyone in the criminal justice system have an effective way to share information. At the time I went so far as do some work trying to address resolving the software issue and discussed my ideas with Vasco Bridges, the CEO of the company that was providing the software to the clerk’s office in 1994.”

Von Nida’s career path took a change when he was appointed County Clerk following the untimely passing of Debbie Saltich. And for the next 17 years Von Nida devoted himself to effectively managing and modernizing the County Clerk’s office. But the Granite City native never stopped thinking about the software issue involving the State’s Attorney’s and Circuit Clerk’s office.

“One of my motivations for running for the position as Circuit Clerk was that I felt I had accomplished everything I could as County Clerk, but that I could have an impact on the Circuit Clerk’s office,” Von Nida said. “And I never forgot the ideas I had to take care of that computer issue.”

When Von Nida got back in touch with Vasco Bridges to address the problem, he discovered the software specialist had been working on the problem off-and-on since Von Nida brought it to his attention. And Von Nida was now in position to effectively work to resolve the problem. “It was an idea from 20 years ago that finally came to fruition.”

Recognizing the benefits of a computer network that was effectively integrated, Von Nida approached Madison County State’s Attorney Tom Gibbons. “Tom (Gibbons) was very much aware of the issue and was receptive to working together to find a solution,” Von Nida said. “And it has turned out to be a great example of what two elected officials, who run autonomous offices, can do when there is a spirit of cooperation and effective communication.”

With the software developed by Jano Justice Systems, Vasco Bridges’ company, the project was turned over to John Fischer of the State’s Attorney’s office and Crystal Hale of the Circuit Clerk’s office. Fischer and Hale worked with Jano Justice Systems on the implementation of the software programmed.

The end result of the collaborative effort involving two public officials, members of their respective staffs and Jano Justice Systems is a software program that enables the computer systems in the State’s Attorney’s and Circuit Clerk’s offices to communicate so effectively that on November 5, both offices will begin using the new integrated software.

One of the most important aspects of the integrated software project is the entire project, including software development, implementation and employee training, was completed without using taxpayer funds. The entire project was completed using revenue generated by court costs and fees collected by the Circuit Clerk’s office. “We are always looking for ways to increase efficiencies and save the taxpayers monies and with this project we were able to accomplish both objectives,” Von Nida said.

Although some of the benefits of the new integrated software will be evident the first day the program is utilized, Von Nida has recognized other Madison County offices that could benefit from the software. “With some slight changes, the software could be very beneficial to the Probation and Public Defender’s Offices, as well as the Sheriff’s Department. The efficiencies, and the net saving to Madison County taxpayers, could be substantial,” added Von Nida.

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