

# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT: 51<sup>st</sup> DISTRICT COURT

## Mission Statement of the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court

The goal of the Judges and staff at the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court is to provide a fair and impartial forum for the resolution of disputes. All parties entering the courthouse will be treated with courtesy and respect. Every individual is entitled to their day in court, and it is the court's obligation to ensure due process is afforded to all. We will strive to run our operation in a manner which is accessible, efficient and timely for those we serve.

## Organizational Cornerstones

1. Fair and Impartial
2. Courtesy and Respect
3. Due Process
4. Accessible, Efficient and Timely

## Jurisdiction

The 51<sup>st</sup> District Court has jurisdiction over the following case types arising within the Township of Waterford:

- ❖ Criminal Felonies (through preliminary exam)
- ❖ Criminal Misdemeanors
- ❖ Traffic and Zoning Infractions
- ❖ General Civil Lawsuits (up to \$25,000)
- ❖ Landlord-Tenant Disputes
- ❖ Small Claims Lawsuits



## DIVISIONS OF THE COURT

**Traffic Department:** The traffic department processes civil infraction citations written by Waterford Township Police Department, Oakland County Sheriff's Department, Michigan State Police, Department of Natural Resources and municipal code ordinance violations within the Township of Waterford.

- ❖ The Court disposed of 4,682 civil infractions during the year
- ❖ Code violation cases were up 23% from 2017 filings
- ❖ The civil infraction caseload of 4,891 was down 2% from 2017

**Criminal Department:** The Criminal department is responsible for processing misdemeanor and felony criminal law violations. They work closely with local law enforcement to manage search warrants, swear-to's and arraignments, and are the point of contact for prosecutor and defense counsel during the legal progression of each case.

- ❖ The Court disposed of 278 felony cases during the year
- ❖ Felony filings were down by 25% from 2017 filings
- ❖ The Court disposed of 1,681 misdemeanors during the year
- ❖ The misdemeanor caseload of 1,901 was up 2% from 2017

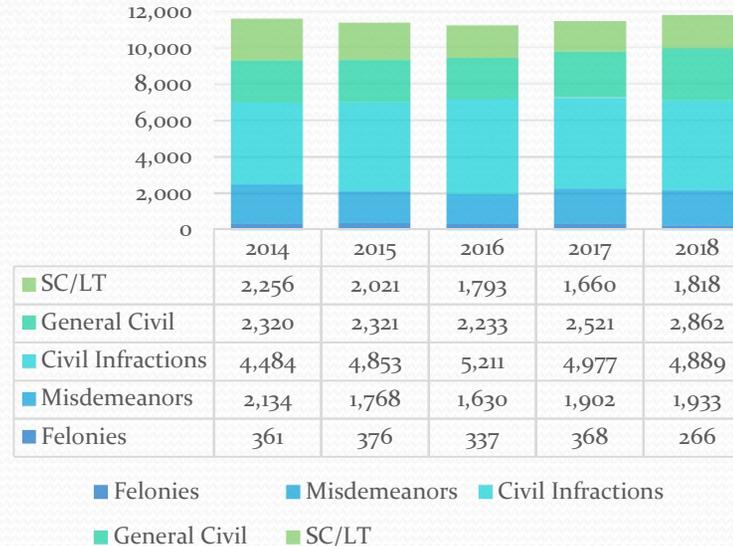
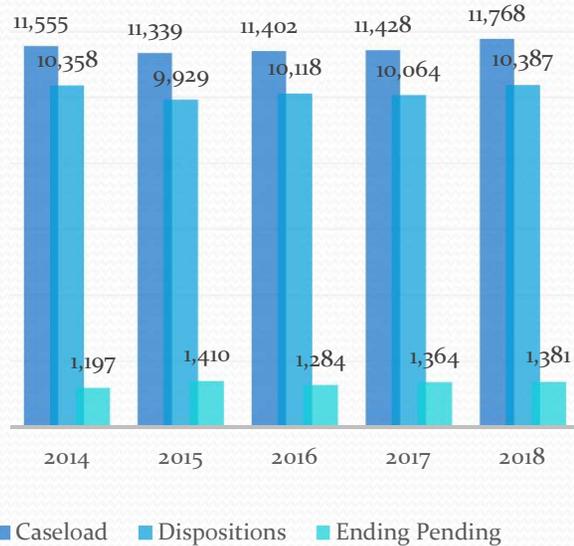
**Civil Department:** The Civil Department manages the legal progression of landlord-tenant cases, small claims cases involving financial or damage claims up to \$6,000 with self-representing individuals, and General Civil lawsuits where attorney involvement is permitted and the claim or monetary damage filing does not exceed \$25,000. Additionally, the civil department also oversees and schedules marriage ceremonies.

- ❖ The Court disposed of 2,131 general civil cases during the year
- ❖ General Civil filings were up 12% from 2017, and almost 30% since 2016
- ❖ The Court disposed of 1,615 small claims/landlord-tenant cases during the year
- ❖ Small-claims and landlord-tenant filings jumped to 1,818, up 9% from 2017

**Probation Department:** The Probation Department is responsible for the screening, assessment and oversight of all individuals being considered for probation. The department performs pre-sentence investigations and prepares recommendations for judges, and is responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with probation terms and requirements.

- ❖ The average probation caseload was up 2% from 2017's averaged caseload
- ❖ The watermark high for specialty court cases transferred from neighboring jurisdictions was 29, the Court's highest on record

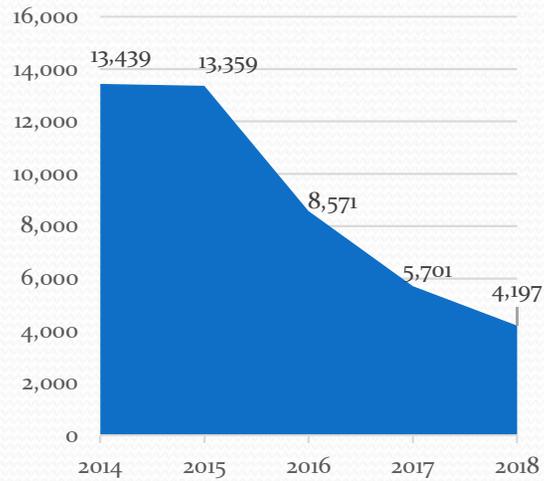
# OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Performance measures are operational standards implemented by the Michigan Supreme Court. Each court has uniform operational reporting requirements which are summarized annually for the courts to use as a comparative benchmark and management tool. Case Age is one of those operational standards. Pursuant to time guidelines, cases must be disposed of in a timely manner. Below is where the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court ranked and compared to the statewide averages for 2018.

	<u>TIME GUIDELINE</u>	<u>D<sub>51</sub> PERCENT DISPOSED</u>	<u>STATEWIDE AVERAGE</u>
Felonies	75% within 28 days	62%	72%
Misdemeanors	95% within 126 days	98%	96%
Civil Infractions	98% within 84 days	98%	98%
General Civil	98% within 455 days	100%	99%
Summary Civil	95% within 126 days	99%	96%

# OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURERS



**JURY MANAGEMENT:** Effective jury management reduces costs and inconvenience to the public while meeting the court's need for jurors.

- ❖ In 2014 the Court began reviewing its Jury selection and summons procedures.
- ❖ We introduced practices to increase trial date certainty and implemented a system for calling off jurors prior to jury selection, saving costs without compromising timeliness or efficiency.
- ❖ Since the project's onset jury spending has been reduced by close to 70%

**PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS:** Treatment Courts seek to break the cycle of addiction and crime through treatment and behavioral based intervention.

- ❖ In 2018 the 51<sup>st</sup>'s problem solving courts successfully graduated 41 participants
- ❖ On graduation day, 31 graduates reported an improvement in employment, and 7 reported an improvement in mental health
- ❖ SCAO's most recent recidivism study revealed 92% of Sobriety Court graduates avoided subsequent alcohol/drug convictions four years post admission



# 2018 PUBLIC SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Using a survey administered in courts statewide, users were questioned about their feeling towards the court's accessibility, timeliness and overall public service. According to Public Satisfaction Survey results tabulated by the State Court Administrative Office, the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court received high marks from the public regarding their personal experiences with our court. Below are a summary of the results.

## 2018 Survey Results

- ❖ 95% of court users said they were treated with courtesy and respect by court staff
- ❖ 88% of court patrons felt the Judges handled their case fairly
- ❖ 94% of respondents reported that the judge/magistrate treated everyone with courtesy and respect
- ❖ 91% of court users reported completing their business in a reasonable amount of time
- ❖ 68% of court patrons reported an outcome which was favorable to them
- ❖ 90% reported as they left the court, that they understood what happened in their case

## Survey Demographics

- ❖ 221 survey respondents
- ❖ 52% party to the case, 15% attorney/prosecutor, 14% other
- ❖ 32% criminal/probation, 16% other, 15% civil matter
- ❖ 57% male, 42% female, 1 other
- ❖ 78% white/Caucasian, 12% Black/African American, 4% Hispanic/Latino

- Please note, only the top 3 demographical response groups were included in summary

How Are We Doing?



# MONETARY COLLECTION & DISTRIBUTION

The funds collected by the District Court are Agency Funds. In other words, the court is essentially a non-profit organization as its monetary activities are limited to the collection of funds which are subsequently returned or paid to third parties pursuant to statute.

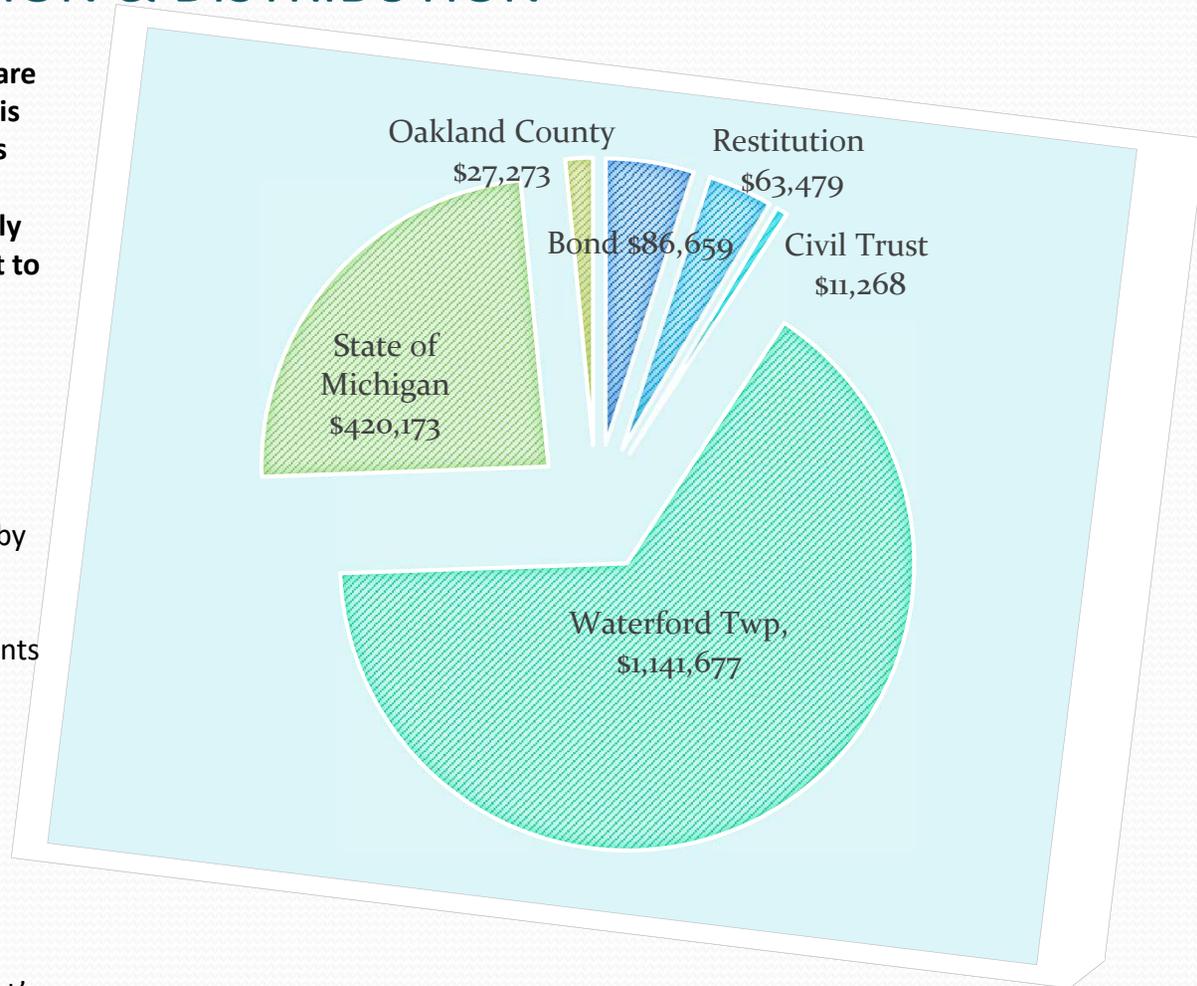
**2018 Sum of all Receipts: \$1,741,215**

## COURT COLLECTIONS

The 51<sup>st</sup> meets all 7 of the required court collection compliance standards set forth by the State Court Administrative Office

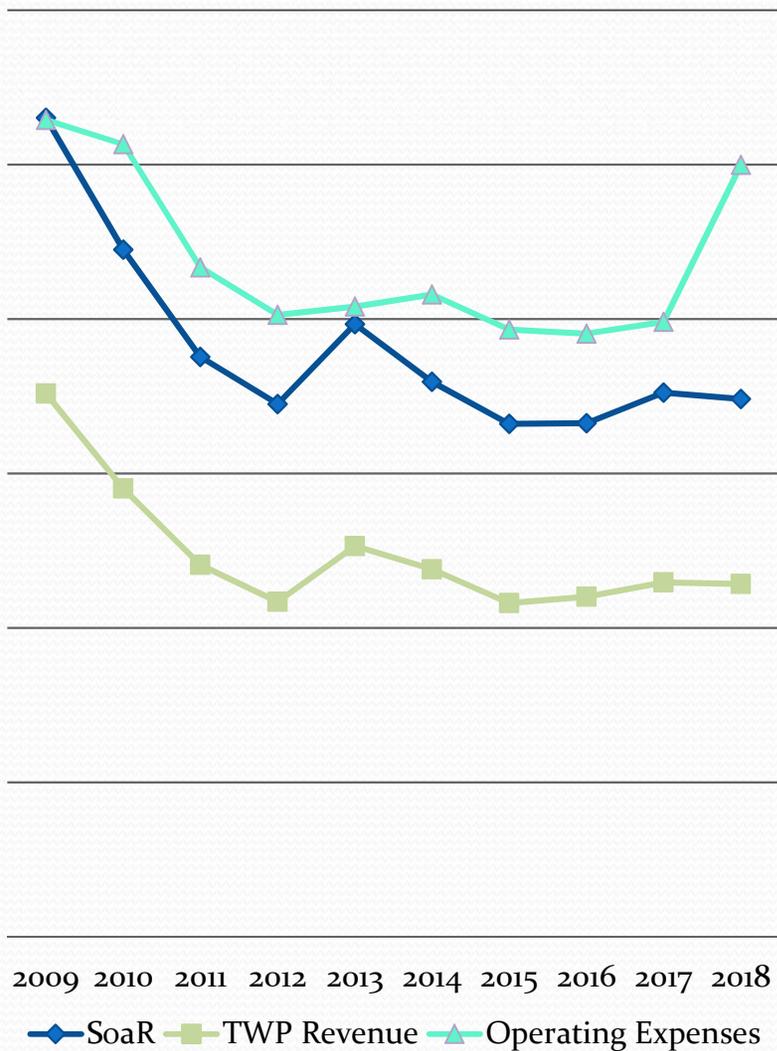
In 2018 the Court filed 523 Tax Garnishments on outstanding receivables, as of mid-February the project has yielded \$4,744

Misdemeanor and drunk driving cases continue to pose the biggest collections challenge for the Court. Payment plans must be afforded based upon individual ability to pay. Although payments are received in incremental amounts, the Court's probation payment plan compliance program yields a 65% payment compliance rate.



**Enforcing financial orders of the court ensures crime victims are made whole and provides funds to support law enforcement, libraries and local governments**

# COST OF JUSTICE



The State of Michigan contributes to the Court budget as follows:

- ❖ Judges Salaries: \$45,724 per judge outlaid by the local funding unit and reimbursed by the State throughout the year. The remaining \$98,120 is paid to each Judge directly by the State.
- ❖ Drug Case Information Management Fund (MCL 257.323d) & Drunk Driving Caseflow Assistance Fund (MCL 257.625h) funds help offset case processing costs (Received FY 2018 total: \$8,482.43).
- ❖ Juror Compensation Reimbursement Fund (MCL600.151d & e) jury fee reimbursement for local funding unit outlay exceeding \$15per juror, per day.

All other Court funding is sponsored by Waterford Township

- ❖ 2018 Operating Costs exceeded sum of all receipts by 757K
- ❖ Sum of all receipts were down by 20K from 2017
- ❖ Township revenue was down by \$5,058 from 2017

# OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## SHELLY BOOTH WATERFORD TOWNSHIP'S EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

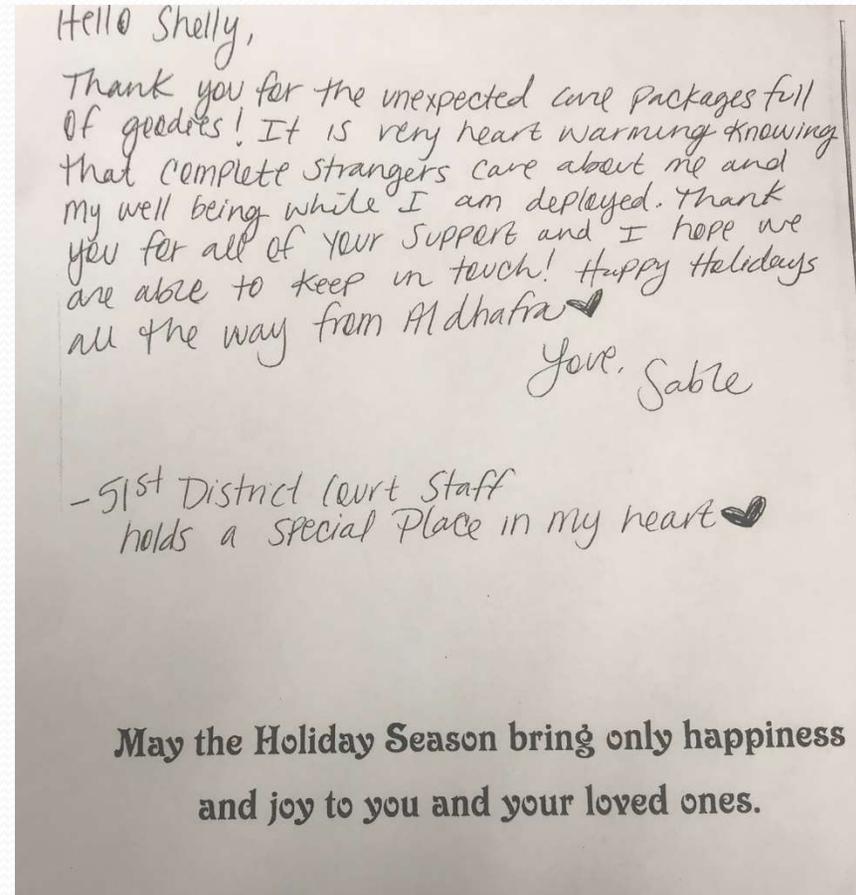
### NOMINATION:

The Court adopted 2 platoons and a couple of individual soldiers as part of its Christmas give back. The project was the brainchild of our resident golden heart, Shelly Booth. Shelly organized and spearheaded the project.

Perhaps most thoughtful and noteworthy, was that Shelly purchased Christmas cards and started a Christmas card campaign though out the court which provided a unique opportunity for patrons and court staff alike to fill out the Christmas cards sharing their gratitude and season's greetings with our service people stationed overseas.

Attached is a thank you note from Sable, one of the individually adopted soldiers.

I know it's a little outside the traditional nomination, but it's certainly a reflection of an employee's community involvement, hard work and willingness to go above and beyond.



# OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## EDUCATIONAL TRAININGS



CPR/FIRST AID

STOP THE BLEED

MICHIGAN JUDICIAL INSTITUTE

- MICHIGAN DISTRICT COURT JUDGES CONFERENCE
- MICHIGAN COURT MANAGERS CONFERENCE
- COURT SUPPORT STAFF CERTIFICATION TRAINING
- COLLECTIONS TRAINING



MICHIGAN & NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TREATMENT COURT PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCES

VETERAN AND MILITARY RELATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE CRIMINAL COURT RESPONSE CONFERENCE

BISC-MI BATTERERS INTERVENTION TRAINING

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COURT MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

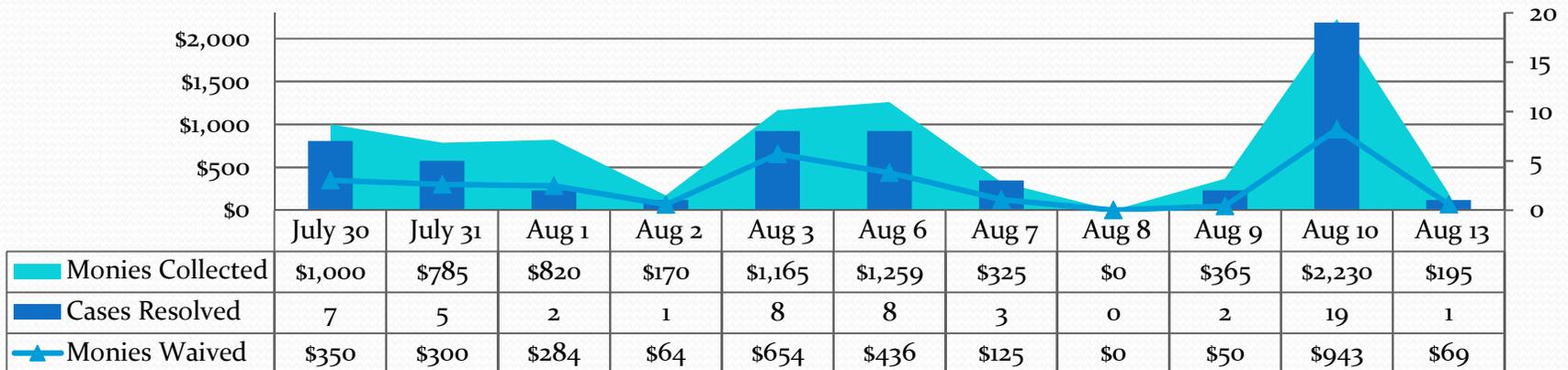
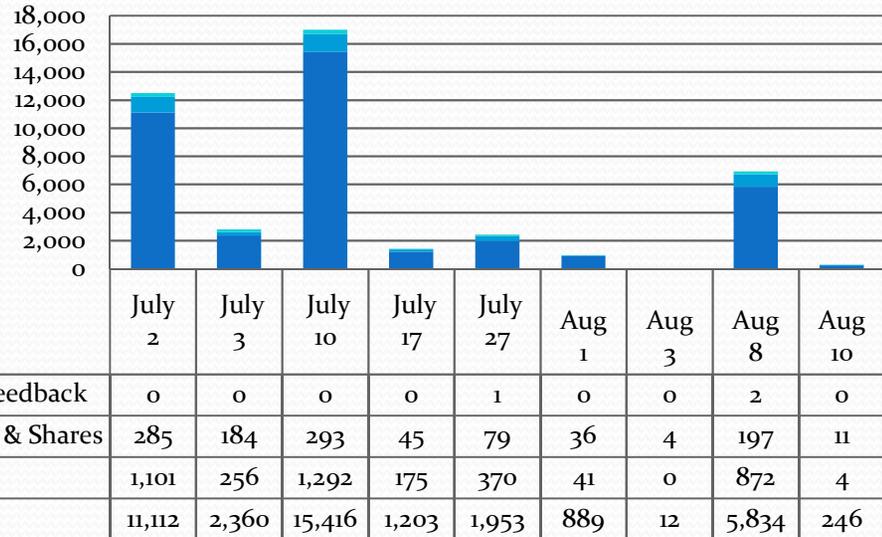
COUNTY LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



# OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## AMNESTY PROGRAM

The 51<sup>st</sup> District Court held its first ever Amnesty Program in 2018 and piloted the first Social Media campaign of its kind to advertise. The program successfully closed a total of 56 cases.



# OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## TREATMENT COURTS

During 2018, the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court's drug treatment programs accepted 70 new cases, and saw 31 Sobriety Court and 10 Veterans Treatment Court participants graduate successfully.



In November our Veterans Treatment Court held a special ceremony to honor three local World War II Veterans, all named Joe.



# OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

The philosophy of therapeutic justice was the starting point for the Court's Community Service Program. What started over a decade ago with our Community Service Garden at Hess Hathaway farm has since expanded to partnerships with Parks & Rec, DPW, and the CAI.

The Judges and court appreciate the collaborative partnership as it provides offenders the opportunity to give back directly to the benefit of Waterford Township.

In 2018, in excess of 1,725 hours were completed within the program. The community garden's harvest reaped close to 2 tons of produce which was donated to local seniors and food resource centers.



## OTHER NOTABLE ENDEAVORS

### Collaborative scheduling and resource sharing

- The Court routinely schedules and adjusts its schedule for the benefit of Township departments, and our specialty court programs routinely accept transfer cases from neighboring jurisdictions

### Court in Schools

- For more than a decade the Judges of the 51<sup>st</sup> District Court have taken Court to Waterford's Middle Schools when the students are given a first hand look at the legal process and courtroom in action.

### Teen Court

- Teen court is a juvenile diversion program aimed at keeping juveniles out of the court system. In this program, an individual teen defendant is informally charged with crime and brought to court to be tried by his or her peers who serve as the prosecutor, defense and jury in the case.

### OakVideo

- Our Court utilizes OakVideo for arraignments, writs and presentence investigations which reduces costs and hazards associated with prisoner transport.

### Oakland University & High School Internships

- This partnership has proved to be a pipeline for developing talent and a launching pad for young professionals in the criminal justice field.



Interning at the 51st District Court in Waterford has been amazing. I've gotten to observe a multitude of different cases and none of them ever begin or end the same way. This job comes with many surprises that I would've never gotten to experience, had I not been able to intern here. I've grown to know the amazing staff at the courthouse and gotten a close look at a possible future profession of mine. Seeing a courthouse so close to its residents and so adamant about helping them has been truly outstanding.



Leah DeYoung  
(Intern with Judge Richard D. Kuhn Jr. at  
Waterford's 51st District Court)

# HUGE THANKS TO OUR INCREDIBLE STAFF WHO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN



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