

# More county agency files go digital

■ Saving time and paper are some of the benefits of Laserfiche, officials said.

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For years, York County agencies such as the district attorney's office and adult probation would send couriers to the clerk of courts office to get copies of legal documents, several times a day.

That practice has been done away with, now that a program called Laserfiche is in place, Clerk of Courts Don O'Shell said.

The program, which first went live in the county with the clerk of courts office in 2006, makes court documents available to judges, prosecutors and public defenders by computers in the county courthouse, O'Shell said.

"The benefit to the court — and ultimately to the public — is it makes our files instantly available," he said. Also, "they have access to a complete digital library that dates back to 2000."

And with Laserfiche, now that files are digitized, they are preserved far better than simply placing them in a manila file.

"If this building would burn to the ground, because our images are mirrored off-site, we could instantly start court at another location," O'Shell said.

There are even terminals in the clerk of courts office for the public to use, he said.

As news of Laserfiche's success spread around county agencies, others have asked for training, including children and youth services, the sheriff's office and divorce masters.

A move O'Shell is now considering is installing Laserfiche-equipped terminals in all of the county's district justice offices.

Mary Jane McCluskey, senior project manager for the county's Information Technology department, said the possible move would be beneficial.

"If someone's in Dillsburg or Delta, rather than drive down to York city to get a document ... that's customer service," she said.

## Popularity rises

O'Shell said that, before his election as clerk of courts, the county received a congressional grant to purchase the initial hardware for Laserfiche and hired local company DocuScan USA to implement it.

Now that the program is set up, when his office receives a document, it is time-stamped, scanned and then placed in a queue of similar documents, based on a barcode that is put on it.

Although Laserfiche eventually grew in popularity around the county, McCluskey said that, initially, there was some resistance from some on staff and from some users in the courthouse.

Information technology staff found the way to win them over was to hold hands-on training, limited to small classes, and offering one-on-one help when needed, she said.

McCluskey said that, within the last year, clerk of court's Laserfiche files have been made available to outside attorneys, who can access it from their office computers.

She added that Laserfiche was also a great boon for York County Prison and county court's Central Booking, where defendants are arraigned at night and then transported to the prison.

In the past, paperwork for inmates — which would indicate whether they were to be held or released — would get to the prison from the courthouse by fax far slower than the inmate, who was being transported, would get there. So, sometimes, the inmate's family would be waiting at the prison, not knowing what was going on with their family member.

"With this Laserfiche system, we now send information out to the prison" in a timely manner, McCluskey said.

She expects other county agencies to get on board in the coming years.

"It was Al's idea all along to have this system grow as the county grew," McCluskey said of Al Raniero, Information Technology's executive director. "I see pretty much every department having a need for imaging."