Administrative Office of the Courts

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SANTA FE _ State courts have launched a new system allowing online payments of traffic tickets as well as fines and fees owed in criminal cases in magistrate courts and the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court.

Payments can be made from the following court web site using a credit card or debit card. https://publicaccess.nmcourts.gov/

"Our courts are providing a secure, convenient method for paying fines and fees," said Artie Pepin, director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. "The electronic payment system saves time and money for the public. A trip to the courthouse is no longer necessary to make payments in cash, by check or with a money order."

To pay electronically, individuals need to find their case by searching on the web site using their name (party), case number or citation number. Once a case register is displayed and if some amount is owed, there is a payment button on the upper or lower right hand portion of the screen.

There is an immediate credit card receipt providing confirmation of electronic payments. Unlike when someone mails a check for fines and fees, the e-pay system eliminates any uncertainty of whether payments arrived in court by the due date.

"E-payments are part of a continuing effort to improve public access to the courts," said Pepin.

The online system also will improve court efficiency by allowing staff to direct their assistance to people who must come to the courthouse.

The credit card processing vendor will charge a 3.28 percent fee on the amount of an electronic payment. New Mexico courts do not receive any portion of that credit card fee.

The e-payment system is for violations of the state motor vehicle code and criminal cases handled by the Metropolitan and magistrate courts. The system does not accept payments for municipal traffic violations.

More than $70,000 in fees and fees have been paid electronically since the new system was launched across the state on Feb. 15. Before the statewide implementation, an e-payment pilot program was conducted in courts in Doña Ana and Torrance counties.

The magistrate and Metropolitan courts collected $17.8 million in criminal case fines and fees in the 2014 fiscal year. Of that, $5.3 million went into the state's main budget account, which finances public education and other government programs. About $5.6 million helped fund court programs and $6.9 million was earmarked for specific purposes within other state agencies and local governments.

The Metropolitan Court in Bernalillo County and the magistrate courts in other counties have limited jurisdiction and handle DWI cases, misdemeanors, traffic violations, civil actions up to $10,000 and hold preliminary hearings to determine probable cause on felony charges.

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