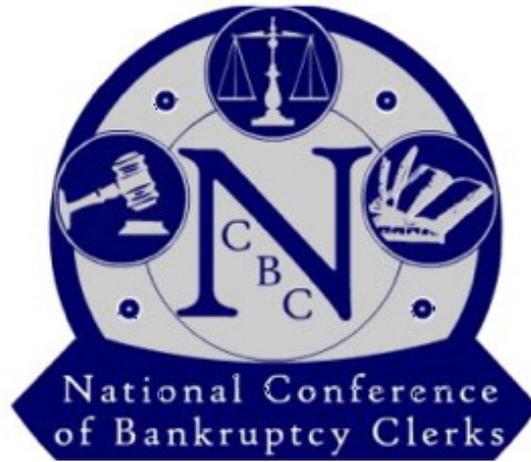


NCBC Impact

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Can you feel the excitement? The NCBC national conference is less than a week away!

And just in the nick of time, we've got some last minute info for the conference in the *2006 Newport Conference* article. By the way, I'll be the roving reporter at the conference, so don't be surprised if I ask you for a comment or a picture.

Also in this edition, a new podcast has all sorts of goodies and is available in *IMPACT On The Air*; Kathy G. gives us another great *Court Snapshot* featuring another great court- Nebraska; and a smorgasbord of benefits news awaits you in the *Benefits Update*.

Safe travels and see you in Rhode Island.

Thanks-
Sandy

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President's Message

by *Barry Lander*



Welcome to Newport!

(O.K. it is a couple of days away but I wanted to be the first to tell you that.)

With Newport comes a unique opportunity for Clerks and Deputy Clerks to get together, away from the office, and learn. We'll learn from the many experts that the NCBC has brought together in Newport and we'll learn from each other. It doesn't get any better than that!

Now, I recognize not everyone can be in Newport with us this year. As a matter of fact it is a sell-out so we stopped taking reservations weeks ago. But we will be offering extensive coverage both in the Impact and through IMPACT on the Air, (our podcast) and we'll try very hard to bring you the sights, sounds and insights from the Conference. If you couldn't join us this year, we hope you'll make plans for next year in Seattle (same week, different coast).

Sandy really wants me to get her this article so she can publish the Impact today. I think I will leave any parting thoughts for the next Impact. That is if Ken Gardner will let me. You see next week closes my chapter as NCBC President. Ken takes over and I move to the elder statesman role as Immediate Past President. Not a bad place to be. Anyway, I'll offer my closing thoughts next time. I have too much to do to get ready for next week. I'll see 432 of you there.

Barry

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Conference Update

The website and your conference materials will cover the main stuff, but what about the little things? Hot off the presses, here's some info you need to know for the conference:

Shuttle to/from airport:

Important Airport Shuttle News! Extra Cozy Cab airport shuttles have been added on Monday 8/28 at 4PM, 5PM, 6PM, 7PM and 8PM. On Tuesday, there will be extra shuttles at 2PM, 3PM, 4PM and 5PM. These are in addition to the regular schedule. ATTENDEES MUST CALL AND MAKE RESERVATIONS! Call Dolores at Cozy Cab (800) 846-1502. You must give the date/time of your arrival and your airline/flight number. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance. Do make your return reservation when you call. These are shuttle vans, not cabs. Cabs will cost you about \$75-80, while the Cozy Cab vans are \$20 each way.

Getting from your hotel to the conference:

If you're at the Hyatt, just walk! From the Newport Harbor or Marriott, again walking is the best, only 5-10 minutes to the Hyatt. For those with mobility concerns, there will be a van looping between the hotels Wednesday-Friday, 7am-9am. Times for the afternoon vans vary, see the info at the registration table for each day. The vans will pick up at each hotel entrance.

Hotel Taxes:

You will be charged for hotel taxes, sorry.

Dress:

Is casual. Weather is 70-80 degrees during the day and 55-65 in the evening. Bring a sweater/sweatshirt/jacket for the evening and the air-conditioned conference rooms. Some rain is not unusual, although we've asked Mother Nature to hold off for the week.

Conference Registration:

Begins Tuesday at 7:30 am throughout the day. You will get tickets for each event you signed up for. Be sure and bring your ticket for each event! If you still owe for one of the events you signed up for (I wonder who asked that question?!), you can pay when you register.

Raffles and other fun stuff:

If you pre-purchased a towel or visor, you will have a ticket in your registration materials. If not, plenty are still available in every color and can be purchased at the registration table. There will also be a raffle for a very nice, very right-coast L.L. Bean bag filled with goodies from Maine. Raffle tickets are \$1 each. You can also get a free raffle ticket if you renew your dues at the conference.

Continental breakfast:

Wednesday through Friday 7 am - 8am

Tuesday:

Walking Tour: 4pm - 5pm is free! Be ready at your hotel's entrance at 3:45. Great way to get introduced to the Newport area.

President's reception: In the Outside Pavilion at the Hyatt - 6pm-9pm - Bring your ticket!

Wednesday:

Opening Ceremony: 8am - BE PROMPT, there's a lot going on right away, so be early! Continental breakfast is in the Grand Ballroom this morning 7-8am.

Mansion Tour: Trolleys leave at 3:30 pm from each hotel.

Sailing Excursion: Meet at the Hyatt entrance at 3:45 pm. The boat is short walk from the Hyatt and leaves at 4pm.

*For both of these events, you can leave your conference materials at the registration tables so you don't have to go back to your hotel. Dress casual for the day, ready to go!

Thursday:

Group Picture: 6:20 pm in front of the Clam Bake at the Outside Pavilion.

Friday:

Discovery Cove: 9:45 - 11:15 Great turnout with 17 exhibits. Decorating is from 7 am - 8 am. (but don't bother, CASB has this one nailed)

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IMPACT On The Air

This episode completes the series on life for the Gulf courts after hurricane Katrina, we speak with Celia Strickler and Susan Thurston about the Newport Conference, and we have a winner and a new contest.

All episodes can be listened to by clicking [here](#) or on the Impact link in the [NCBC website](#). There you can choose the appropriate file to play or download for later listening or to move to your mp3 player.

Barry Lander and Patrick Breen are your hosts for *IMPACT On The Air* with some special guests from around the Bankruptcy Court community. It's a new way to supplement written articles in the *IMPACT*, bring you new topics and interviews or just have some fun.

IMPACT On The Air is produced as a podcast. For those new to the podcasting world, a podcast is an audio broadcast similar to a news or entertainment radio show. Podcasts can be listened to on your computer or downloaded to a personal audio players such as an iPod.

We want your feedback! Please let us know what you think of *IMPACT On The Air* and what you'd like to hear in future episodes. Email can be sent to onthear@ncbcimpact.org

Bandwidth on the DCN is a precious commodity. The NCBC On The Air files are similar in size to other files on the JNET. That said, NCBC recommends that you download and listen to these at home or on a portable player. _

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Court Snapshot by Kathy Grzybowski



Community outreach, 398 years of court experience, and a proactive culture are all descriptors into the heart and soul of the **U.S. Bankruptcy Court, District of Nebraska** (NEB). Clerk, Diane Zech and her court managers provided unique and interesting facts about this eighth circuit bankruptcy court.

The district, which encompasses the entire state of Nebraska - that is, almost 77,000 square miles, has a clerk's staff comprised of just 23 employees. The bankruptcy court is headquartered at the Roman L. Hruska Courthouse in Omaha with a divisional office located at the Robert V. Denney Courthouse in Lincoln. Diane noted that since the clerk's offices are both located in the eastern part of the state, most of their correspondence with attorneys and the public takes place by telephone. She said, "With such a demand, we are able to provide excellent customer service while staffed at only 69% of formula."

A close bond exists among the Nebraska staff as they care for one another and respect the knowledge that each individual brings to the court and to its mission. This is due in part to the longevity of this court family. Among the 23 employees, there is a total of 398 years of bankruptcy court experience, which averages about 17 years per person. And, 18 of these employees have spent over 15 years working together.

The court implemented CM/ECF on January 2, 2002. During the first 16 days of October 2005, NEB filings increased by a whopping 930%! Over 3,500 new petitions were filed with the court on those days as compared to 344 filings during the same time period in 2004. Their total filings for 2005 were 12,110 new cases.

When asked how her staff weathered the massive filings, Diane simply stated, "Teamwork." She went on to explain that the employees are willing to do work beyond their comfort zones and their position descriptions to stay ahead of the game and to meet deadlines. Within this proactive culture, they work together and they are mindful of the workloads of other employees. Everyone pitched in to help

wherever needed. IT staff scanned in documents. Employees who normally do not perform quality control tasks, stepped into this function. Several teleworkers logged into the system throughout the weekend to quality control cases. By the following Tuesday, the Nebraska bankruptcy court had its systems in place, massive filings under control, and was ready to operate under the new law.

Encouraging growth both professionally and personally is another key to effectively supporting a proactive culture, according to Diane. Her staff embraces training opportunities as a means to enhancing their skills and growing with the court. During 2005, NEB employees averaged 67 training hours. Diane views this outcome as a direct benefit to the court as it promotes a positive, highly motivated workplace that works together toward the court vision.

The Nebraska bankruptcy court took a very active role within its district to develop a comprehensive Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). For the past three years, they have conducted orientation sessions and tabletop exercises to train and test their plan. Staff from other federal agencies were invited to participate in the tabletop exercises. This year, the exercise focused on Avian Flu Pandemic Planning. Presentations were delivered by the State Toxicologist and the Chief of the Health Data and Planning Division for the local county health department for informational and planning purposes.

Each year, the clerk's office sponsors an annual retreat that is usually held at a state park. This experience provides a very relaxing atmosphere to train and to collaborate. It also provides a rare opportunity for the staff from both offices to spend time together; to share their thoughts; and to get to know coworkers they normally do not see on a daily basis.



This close-knit group is very proud of their community outreach efforts. Diane stated that about half of the staff has participated in the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program and some are active members of local CERT committees. The attached pictures are from a recent training session.

Diane has been a member of the Local Federal Coordinating Committee (LFCC) for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for more than 10 years. NEB is known throughout the Nebraska court family for sponsoring some of the best CFC fund raisers around, such as golf tournaments, movie/book sales, and chili cook off competitions.



A hundred years from now, Diane would like the current staff to be remembered as excellent public servants. She said that the staff takes great pride in the level of customer service they provide to the public - no matter how short-staffed the court may be at times. This takes tremendous personal dedication and commitment from her staff who thrive on excellence in public service.

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Benefits Update

Update on the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)

On July 11, 2006, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) sent federal agency benefit program managers an email updating them on the status of the new FEDVIP program. While many federal employees have been asking OPM for details about the new program, there has been little new information to report during recent months; however, OPM reports that everything is still on schedule to hold the first FEDVIP open season this year during the same dates as the FEHBP open season – November 13 through December 11, 2006.

OPM explains in the email that no further details are available because they have not yet signed contracts with any carriers. Although OPM had announced awards to many carriers in late spring, they have decided to review the award process again. Even after awards are finally made, there will be time required to negotiate program details and rates with the awardees. Because these details have not yet been decided, the educational campaign has not started, brochures and guides are not available, and no rate information is available.

OPM also warns that any firms approaching agency personnel now about the new program are not part of FEDVIP.

OPM assures agencies that all the necessary information about FEDVIP will become available in the months to come, and there will be an extensive informational campaign prior to and during the open season. OPM plans to set up a website with frequently asked questions and they welcome questions and inquiries at FEDVIP@opm.gov

How to File a Claim for the Flexible Benefit and Commuter Benefit Programs

Do you want those claims for Flex and Commuter processed quickly? They will be – in most cases, within 5 days – if you sign the claim form each time, *and* provide the proper documentation when you submit your claim. If a claim lacks documentation or a signature, the SHPS plan administrator will try to contact you by phone to request the missing items. The best way to avoid delaying claims is to send SHPS proper substantiation as soon as it is requested.

For the Health Care Reimbursement Account, participants can submit either an itemized bill or an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) along with the claim form. Either form of documentation must include the date of service, the type of service, the

name of the person who received the service, the name of the service provider, the cost of the service, and the amount paid out-of-pocket.

For the Dependent Care Reimbursement Account, you must either attach a bill or receipt, or have the provider complete Part IV of the claim form, the Affidavit of Day Care Services Rendered. In either case, you must also provide the Tax Identification Number of the provider for SHPS to process the claim.

For the Commuter Reimbursement Accounts, the claim form must be accompanied by either an invoice or receipt, or you must complete Part IV of the claim form. There is no annual deadline for incurring expenses for Commuter, or for filing claims.

You can fax your signed claim form and documentation to SHPS at 1-800-778-0045. If you provide your e-mail address, you will receive an e-mail acknowledging receipt of the claim, and another e-mail when the claim has been processed. Questions about the reimbursement account programs or how to file a claim should be directed to SHPS on the Flex line at 1-888-442-FLEX (3539).

What Happens If You Need Long-Term Care Services?

Nearly 6,000 judiciary employees and their relatives have coverage under the Federal Judiciary Group Long-Term Care Program, insured by CNA. We hope you never need long term care services, but if you do, there is a simple claim process.

In order to qualify for benefits under this program, the claimant must be *chronically ill*. This means that they cannot accomplish at least two *activities of daily living* without substantial assistance, or that they need substantial supervision to protect their safety because of a cognitive impairment, like Alzheimer's Disease.

The activities of daily living (ADLs) are six common activities that most people accomplish without assistance: bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring (i.e., moving into or out of bed, chair, or wheelchair), continence, and eating. When a licensed health care practitioner (such as your doctor) certifies that you cannot perform two or more of these ADLs without substantial assistance for a period of at least ninety days, CNA considers you to be chronically ill.

If you have coverage with CNA and think that you (or an insured relative) may be chronically ill and need long-term care services, the first thing to do is to call CNA's Customer Service Department toll-free at 1-877-512-4007. If you call between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm (Eastern) Monday through Friday, you can speak directly to a CNA Customer Service Representative, who will guide you through the process.

CNA has also streamlined the claims process by combining claims and care management. This makes it easier to file a claim, and it shortens the time it takes to get benefits, because the same CNA healthcare professional who verifies benefit

eligibility also serves as your care manager, should you decide to make use of the optional care management program.

When you call the toll-free number, a CNA Customer Service Representative will ask for basic information about your situation, and then schedule a telephone assessment interview with a Care Manager. This telephone interview normally takes thirty to sixty minutes. After the interview, the Care Manager requests records from your physician and other health care providers.

Working with you, your family, and your doctors, the Care Manager will design a personalized plan of care that is effective and maximizes long-term care benefits. In addition, the Care Manager will help identify appropriate care providers, negotiate charges and monitor the care plan, if requested. The goal is to allow you to remain as independent as possible in the least intensive setting, ideally at home or in a community-based living arrangement. The Federal Judiciary Group Long-Term Care Program includes this type of voluntary consulting service, and it costs you nothing to use it.

The decision to use Care Management services is yours; the Care Management program is not "managed care." You are not required to receive care from specific providers or a "network." Instead, the Care Manager works with each claimant to find the providers who best meet that claimant's needs.

And Care Management is not just for you. If you are covered by the the Federal Judiciary Group Long-Term Care Program, but one of your parents (for example) is not covered, you can still make use of the expertise of CNA's care managers. They can give you advice about the range of long-term care service options available for your parent.

And remember: all you need to do to get a claim started is to call CNA toll-free at 1-877-512-4007.