

RALPH N. KLEPS AWARDS
2010 –2011
SUPERIOR COURT OF MONTEREY COUNTY
Civil Grand Jury Process

SPEAKER: Rebecca Hayes – Operations Manager, Monterey County

The Civil Grand Jury is a body of citizens from the county who are charged with looking into the operations of county and city government. In our county we empanel a grand jury comprised of nineteen jurors, sworn jurors, and as many alternates as there are available. Usually that's six or seven alternates.

SPEAKER: Hon. Tim Roberts – Presiding Judge, Monterey County

The grand jury is constituted once a year. It's mandated by law that we have them. Essentially what they are is sort of a public interest group that can investigate local government. Some people refer to them as sort-of a watch dog organization.

SPEAKER: Rebecca Hayes – Operations Manager, Monterey County

Our court would send about approximately ten thousand invitations to citizens. The names were taken from our annual jury load each year, inviting them to apply. It was a paper process; ten thousand letters went out in the mail. And on those applications, we asked for the certain demographic information that's required by California Rules of Court 10.625.

SPEAKER: Hon. Tim Roberts – Presiding Judge, Monterey County

With the civil grand jury, what we want is, obviously, a broad base of the people in the county. We not only want a fair representation ethnically and gender-wise, but demographically for the area they live in, as well as socioeconomic status. So we try to reach as many people in as many of the areas in the county as we can. So the idea was, this might be easier if we could just put this online because if we can get it online, we can gather even more information. We can collate the information easier; we can access it; and we can even use it for more things later than just what the Rule of Court is requiring of us.

SPEAKER: Darvin Monkmeier – IT, Monterey County

The juror commissioner's office actually approached IT with the idea of creating some kind of automated database where we could capture the demographic information that is required by the rule of court in a way that would allow us then to populate that information and also to be able to analyze that information, to look at trends that might assist us in our future recruitment processes.

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SPEAKER: Paras Gupta – Director IT, Monterey County

It has really significant impacts to the office of the jury commissioner because they have seen huge reductions in the hours spent in terms of compiling the data, collecting the data, maintaining this critical information and making it go through the systems. Right now, they have one system to look at and they have a robust set of tools that allow you to capture and maintain all of those different processes. The time savings is very significant.

SPEAKER: Hon. Tim Roberts – Presiding Judge, Monterey County

Now we have an online process as well as a written form process. We advertise in a variety of ways for the public to get involved. We send out mailers; we also do ads in various local media. We try to reach as broad a base of people as we can to get as much interest as we can from the public in being involved in the system.

SPEAKER: Paras Gupta – Director IT, Monterey County

The other key, or other huge advantage to the system is that any type of report that needs to be run on analytical in terms of the juror demographics, or the last so many years we have obtained the data for, we have that right at our fingertips. So they can run that report and provide that information in a matter of minutes.

SPEAKER: Rebecca Hayes – Operations Manager, Monterey County

The idea started as providing the demographic information. What it turned into for the court was a timesaving way to efficiently recruit, empanel and manage the civil grand jury process.

SPEAKER: Hon. Tim Roberts – Presiding Judge, Monterey County

It's worked out great. It has saved thousands and thousands of dollars in processing time. We think that it allows more people access to the application process.