

Grand Rapids LEGAL NEWS

Posted February 9, 2011
[Tweet This](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

 **DOWNLOAD**
 Download a PDF of this paper!



SBM Judicial Crossroads Task Force press conference: Left to right: Janet Welch, executive director State Bar of Michigan; Barry Howard, former chief judge of the Oakland County Circuit Court; Alton Davis, former justice of the Michigan Supreme Court; and Ed Pappas, former State Bar president and attorney at Dickinson Wright.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

by Cynthia Price
 Legal News

Tasked with addressing “delivering justice in the face of diminishing resources,” the Judicial Crossroads Task Force (JCTF) appointed in 2009 is making recommendations for profound change with far-reaching consequences.

The JCTF released its report and recommendations at the end of January.

Probably the most controversial come under JCTF’s first recommendation: “Streamline Our Trial Courts and Foster Cost-Saving Collaboration.”

- [Advocates urge inspections of single-family rental homes](#)
- [Duly Noted](#)
- [Task force releases recommendations on challenges facing Michigan courts](#)
- [Brew pubs: upscale bar hopping for the discerning professional](#)
- [Michigan's township officials convene in Grand Rapids](#)

- [Ex-Maricopa Co. Attorney Intends to Sue Former Bar President and Ethics Investigators](#)
- [NFL Sweetens Offer to Jilted Super Bowl Fans as Lawyer Sues and Lawsuit Websites Proliferate](#)
- [Wednesday round-up](#)
- [Tuesday round-up](#)

The task force recommends redesigning the entire trial court system, using principles of collaboration and streamlining, guided by a newly-constituted council. Noting that, “Among circuit courts, for example, a judge on a court with the highest average caseload now has a workload more than four times greater than a judge on a court with the lowest caseload,” the report does not address the reorganization in detail, but calls for the Michigan Supreme Court to appoint a council of trial court leaders to flesh that out.

The report points to nearby Barry County as a model of consolidated courts, which decreased court operational costs to the county by 5-15%.

An additional recommendation finds it “fortunate,” though fraught with potential pitfalls, that a great number of baby-boomer judges will be retiring in the next ten years, and recommends using these retirements to right-size the court system.

However, the task force acknowledges that comprehensive planning for this eventuality is critical.

The second broad recommendation, to “Harness Technology to Meet Urgent and Emerging Needs More Cost-Effectively,” is dependent on making courts consistent statewide, in order to create computer-based information systems that are functional statewide.

Finally, the task force recommended that the state “Fix Fundamental Problems Before They Grow Worse.” Some of these problems include indigent criminal defense, the increasing numbers of individuals appearing without legal representation, child welfare, and addressing business cases.

The JCTF was chaired by Hon. Barry Howard, former Oakland County judge, and Ed Pappas of Dickinson Wright, former State Bar president.

Two individuals from West Michigan served on the main task force, James Brady of Dykema and Dirk Hoffius from Varnum, but several others contributed to the four committees designated by the broader JCTF. Each of these committees released its own recommendations, some of which were not included in the broader report. For more, visit <http://www.michbar.org/judicialcrossroads/>

No comments

[Sign in to post a comment »](#)

published by **DETROIT LEGAL NEWS PUBLISHING LLC**

You are here: [Home](#)

[GRAND RAPIDS](#) > [TASK FORCE RELEASES RECOMMENDATIONS ON CHALLENGES FACING MICHIGAN COURTS](#)

[Detroit](#)

[Current Issue](#)

[Advertise With Us](#)

[Detroit Legal News](#)

Flint-Genesee County
Grand Rapids
Ingham County
Jackson County
Macomb
Muskegon
Oakland County
Washtenaw County


Photo Albums
Blogs
Events
Classifieds
Videos

Subscriptions
Forms
About Us
Contact Us
Newstands
Vade Mecum

1409 Allen Rd, Suite B
Troy, Michigan 48083

Phone: (248) 577-6100
Toll Free: (800) 875-5275
Fax: (248) 577-6111

[PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [TERMS OF USE](#) | [FEEDBACK](#)

FOLLOW US ON 

BECOME A FAN 