

# 86TH DISTRICT COURT – 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To ensure justice for all those involved in cases that come before the 86th District Court.



Leelanau County  
8527 E. Government  
Center Dr.  
Suttons Bay MI 49682

Grand Traverse County  
280 Washington Street  
Traverse City MI 49684

Antrim County  
205 E. Cayuga  
Bellaire MI 49615

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## FOREWORD

Michael S. Stepka, Chief District Court Judge

The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court continues to be a high volume court in 2019. The court serves Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Antrim Counties. Two Judges serve the three counties. The Court has jurisdiction over misdemeanor criminal matters, felonies through the preliminary exam, civil infractions, small claims, landlord/tenant cases and general civil cases where the amount in controversy is \$25,000 or less. The Court's website, [www.86thdistrictcourt.org](http://www.86thdistrictcourt.org) provides a variety of additional information about the Court's services.

The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court experienced additions to the court in 2019. Judge Cooney settled into his role as a judge very well. The court also formally began planning for an additional specialty court for veterans. Veteran's Court will operate in a similar fashion as the sobriety/drug court programs and will offer therapy along with other services as conditions of probation to veterans who are in the criminal justice system charged with crimes related to their service. We are excited about offering this resource to those that have served our country. Planning for a veteran's court began in 2019 and a three day training was provided by a team from the National Bureau - Justice for Vet's. We plan to formally begin the Veteran's Court in 2020.

The court participated in a strategic planning conference sponsored by the State Court Administrators Office in the fall of 2019. The conference included determining actions that the court will take to make court operations more efficient and accessible, and more "user friendly" for the public. Included will be quicker processing of civil infractions, electronic file storage in Antrim and Leelanau Counties, and new bond setting practices in pre-trial cases as suggested by the Governor's Task Force.

The sobriety court continues to successfully treat and supervise offenders convicted of multiple drunk driving offenses, and the drug court continues to treat defendants convicted of felony controlled substance offenses. Both courts closely monitor participants, conduct frequent review hearings in court, and require frequent counseling and drug and alcohol testing. These actions have been proven to treat the participant's substance use issues, protect the public and reduce recidivism.

Our community outreach court continues to assist individuals experiencing homelessness or who are on the verge of homelessness. If the participants work successfully with an advocate from various community partners and make improvements in their lives through counselling and substance use treatment, obtaining job training skills and other positive changes in their lives, the Court cancels any bench warrants and fees and any accrued fines and costs that have been preventing them from being able to afford housing and otherwise succeeding in their lives.

We are very fortunate to have many local agencies, therapists, probation and community corrections agents, attorneys, court staff and volunteers who provide support and assistance to participants in these problem solving courts.

In 2019 the court's criminal case files continue to be stored and accessed using the On Base electronic filing system which has been used by the civil division for several years. Eventually, the court will employ a complete electronic filing system. In 2019, criminal cases in Antrim and Leelanau Counties are now filed in the On Base system. On Base electronic storage allows the court to eliminate paper files, thus enhancing efficiency and saving funds. We are fortunate to have a hardworking and efficient staff in all divisions of the District Court.

In closing, I want to thank Court Administrator Carol Stocking, Deputy Court Administrator Dawn Wagoner, Chief Magistrate Tammi Rodgers and Judge Cooney for all of their support, professionalism and abilities as administrators and leaders in the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court.

## JUDGE BIOGRAPHIES



### **Chief Judge Michael S. Stepka**

Judge Michael Stepka was elected to the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court in November 2010 and reelected in November 2016. He grew up in Traverse City and graduated from Traverse City Central High School. After attending Northwestern Michigan College, he went on to receive his bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University where he graduated Cum Laude. He received his law degree from the University Of Detroit School Of Law.

After graduating from law school, Judge Stepka returned to Traverse City to practice law until he was elected to the bench. Judge Stepka served as a Grand Traverse County Commissioner from 2009-2010. For many years he served on the boards of the Women's Resource Center, and Third Level Legal Aid volunteer clinic. Judge Stepka served as the Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Antrim County Bar Association President, and was the Annual Law Day Chair for many years. Judge Stepka currently presides over the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court Sobriety Court. His interests include road and mountain biking, running and downhill skiing. Judge Stepka has two children, Michael and Betsie.



### **Judge Robert A. Cooney**

Judge Robert Cooney was elected to the bench in 2018 after serving as the elected Prosecuting Attorney for Grand Traverse County from 2012 to 2018. Judge Cooney is a 1986 graduate of Michigan Technological University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, and a 1992 graduate of Michigan State University School of Law where he received his Juris Doctorate Degree and served as Managing Editor of the Law Review. He earned his law degree as an evening student while employed full time as an Engineer for the United States Army.

After graduating from Law School, Judge Cooney served as a Pre-hearing Attorney for the Michigan Court of Appeals. In 1993, he was appointed Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Grand Traverse County where he served for 19 years prior to being elected Prosecuting Attorney. Judge Cooney presides over the Drug Treatment and Domestic Violence Courts. He is currently President of the Grand Traverse Area Chapter of Families against Narcotics, an organization whose mission is to save lives by empowering individuals and communities to prevent and eradicate addiction. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals (MATCP), whose mission is to provide leadership and education to treatment courts throughout the State, and the Board of Directors of Generations Ahead, an organization that empowers young parents to build positive relationships, strengthen family resilience, and raise healthy children. Judge Cooney lives on Old Mission Peninsula with his wife Karin, their three children, Katie, Jack, and Maggie, and dogs Bondar and Yosemite. The Cooney's are members of Central United Methodist Church of Traverse City.

## JUDGE THOMAS J PHILLIPS

~RETIRED~



This year we said goodbye to Judge Thomas J Phillips. Judge Phillips served the citizens of Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties as a District Court Judge from 2000 until 2019. Judge Phillips handled our Domestic Violence cases for a number of years and when the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court instituted a Drug Court, he presided over that as well.

Prior to being elected to the bench, Judge Phillips was the managing partner for Running, Wise, Ford and Phillips. He joined the firm in 1975 and became a partner in 1977. Judge Phillips grew up in the Detroit area and graduated from the University of Detroit High School. After graduating cum laude from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelors in Business Administration, he went on to complete his law degree at the University of Michigan Law School.

After law school, Judge Phillips served in the Naval Judge Advocate's General Corps as a lieutenant during the Vietnam War. While a Navy Jag, he was awarded the Freedom Award from the NAACP for his work with black sailors.

Judge Phillips was known as a fair and thoughtful Judge and his presence will definitely be missed.

## **COURT ADMINISTRATION**

**Carol Stocking**  
District Court Administrator

Carol attended Central Michigan University and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 1982 and her Master's degree in General Administration in 1999. She began her career with Grand Traverse County as a clerk in the Human Resources Department. She was ultimately promoted to the position of Deputy Director of Human Resources.

In February 2001, Carol was hired by the 86th District Court to fill the newly created Court Administrator position and has served the citizens of all three counties in this capacity since. She has served on the board of the Michigan Court Administrators Association and has also served on the State Court Administrator's Office Task Force for Collections. Carol is a graduate of Leadership Grand Traverse, class of 1997-98 and was an adjunct professor teaching Human Resources at NMC from 2000-2013.

**Dawn Wagoner**  
Deputy District Court Administrator

Dawn is a 1993 graduate of Ferris State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement. She was hired by the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office in 1994 and spent the majority of her career at the Sheriff's Office in the Investigative Services Division where she specialized in child abuse and sexual assault crimes. In 2012, she was hired by the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court as a Probation Officer. Dawn was promoted to the position of Deputy District Court Administrator in 2017. She received her magistrate appointment in 2017. Dawn is a 2019 graduate of the National Center for State Courts, Institute for Court Management - Certified Court Managers program.

Dawn has served as a board member of the Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center and as the chairperson of the Tri-County Coalition for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. She was also a member of the Grand Traverse County Child Death Review team and served as the Region 5 representative of the Michigan Association of District Court Probation Officers. She currently serves as a board member of the Michigan Court Administrators Association and is the Chair of the MCAA Awards Committee.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court is part of the judicial branch of government as provided for by the Michigan Constitution in 1963 and created by the Michigan Legislature in Public Act 154 of 1968.

The purpose of the District Court is to provide a system of justice for the citizens of Grand Traverse, Antrim and Leelanau Counties. The District Court has jurisdiction over all civil cases where the amount in controversy is \$25,000 or less and all criminal misdemeanors. The District Court also handles all arraignments and preliminary examinations in felony matters.

Judges hold court in Traverse City five days per week. In Leelanau County, Court is held every Friday. In Antrim County, our District Court Judges hold Court every Wednesday. Judges travel to Antrim and Leelanau on a rotating schedule. In Antrim County, the Probate Judge assists by handling a third of the caseload every week on Thursday mornings. While the Probate Judge in Leelanau graciously assists on an as needed basis.

Our Court has three divisions: criminal/traffic, civil and probation.

## NOTES FROM 2019

To say that 2019 was a busy year would be an understatement. We started out our 2019 welcoming newly elected District Court Judge Robert A. Cooney to the bench. Judge Cooney was previously the elected Grand Traverse County Prosecutor and before that worked in that office as an Assistant Prosecutor for many years. Judge Cooney now presides over Drug Court and our Domestic Violence Court and we are happy to have him with us.

In 2018, the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court was approached by a committee of people whose goal was to get a Veteran's Treatment Court started in our area. After many meetings to discuss this issue, the committee received a training grant through the Veteran's Treatment Court Planning Initiative and in September of 2019 our Court hosted a three day training put on by trainers from Justice for Vets. This training focused on planning and implementing a Veteran's Treatment Court. While we don't have an official Veteran's Treatment Court started at this time, we did decide to handle veteran involved cases much like our Domestic Violence cases. We are assigning all defendants who identify as either a veteran or having been in the military, to a single probation officer. These cases are also being assigned to one judge. At this time, Judge Cooney is the presiding Judge over this docket of cases. We plan to continue on with the implementation phase in the hopes of eventually having a SCAO certified Veteran's Treatment Court.



We have also been diligently working with staff from the Sheriff's Office and Administration from the other courts in our building to assist in the planning and presentation of the court bailiff program to the Grand Traverse County Board. The Board of Commissioners approved this program and on November 8<sup>th</sup>, the new court bailiff's were sworn in by Sheriff Bensley. We are very happy to have been a part of this endeavor as we feel this will add a needed level of security for the patrons of our court and our court employees.

Our Court has been moving towards full implementation of our electronic data management using the On Base platform. One of the last divisions for us and quite frankly the largest, was getting our criminal division to go paperless. This has been a long process that we began in earnest in 2018. We are happy to report that this year, the criminal division in Grand Traverse County is now electronic. As we work out the bugs in Grand Traverse County, we will move this process to Antrim and Leelanau Counties.

In October of 2019, our Deputy Court Administrator completed the National Center for State Courts Institute for Court Management – Certified Court Managers Program and obtained her certification in court management.

2019 was a rough year for our court in regards to staff turnover. We had some long standing employees retire and/or leave for other career opportunities and we had some newly hired employees that decided that the high volume workload of the court just wasn't for them. As with anything, there is opportunity in adversity. We were able to promote some very qualified people from within and at the end of 2019, we felt that we had been able to hire some really good employees. This sets us up nicely going into 2020.

Recognizing that courts need to change in order to keep up with not only societal cultural changes but changes within our own internal court culture, the administrative team requested assistance from the State Court Administrators Office and we have started the strategic planning process. It is our hope that through this process we can change the mission and culture of our court in a positive way.

## STAFFING PLAN

### ADMINISTRATION

Carol Stocking – Court Administrator  
Dawn Wagoner – Deputy Court Administrator

### ANTRIM COUNTY STAFF –

Ashley Justice – Magistrate  
Shirley Dewitt – Office Coordinator  
Jerri White – Traffic Clerk  
Cynthia Visnaw – Civil Clerk  
Elizabeth Stanichuk – Probation Officer  
Jennifer Rashleigh-Houser – Compliance Officer

### GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY STAFF –

#### CRIMINAL/TRAFFIC DIVISION

Tammi Rodgers – Magistrate  
Sue Schaub – Office Coordinator  
Sara Deschler  
Stacy Donaldson-Patton  
Christy Milarch  
Sara Brown  
Katie Schrotenboer\*

#### PROBATION DIVISION

Pam Blue – Chief Probation Officer/Sobriety Court  
Heidi Gilde – Sobriety Court Probation Officer\*  
Kristy Helmreich – Compliance Officer\*  
Beth Lajko – Probation Officer  
Trisha Moore – Probation Officer\*  
Jana Morton – Probation Officer  
Gwen Taylor – Probation Officer  
Kelsie Williams – Probation Clerk  
Monica Crain – Probation Clerk

#### COLLECTIONS

Dawn Rector

### LEELANAU COUNTY STAFF –

Norene Kastys – Magistrate / Office Coordinator  
Cindy Schaub – Criminal / Civil Clerk  
Sarah Lorigan – Probation Officer

#### CIVIL DIVISION

Ella Dreves – General Civil  
Susan Womack – Landlord/Tenant  
Claudette Tarr – Small Claims  
Tammie McLain\*

#### ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN

Debra Stevens

#### COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Sherise Shively – Community Corrections Manager  
Maryanne Bratcher – Drug Court Probation Officer  
Margaret Drury – Community Corrections Officer  
Lynn Hildebrand – CC/Pre-Trial Services Officer  
Pat Prevo – Community Corrections Officer  
Courtney Smus – Compliance Officer

#### COURT RECORDERS

Tammy Odom  
Amanda Webster  
Mary Wenger-Townsend

Part-time employee (\*)

## MAGISTRATES AND ACTIVITY

All Magistrates are appointed by the Chief Judge of the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court and with approval of the County Board of Commission that they will be assigned to work in. Magistrates are required to reside in the county that they are appointed to work in, serve at the pleasure of the judges of the District Court, take a constitutional oath of office, file a performance bond with the county treasurer and complete a training course in traffic law adjudication and sanctions as well as a New Magistrate Seminar given by the State Court Administrative Office.

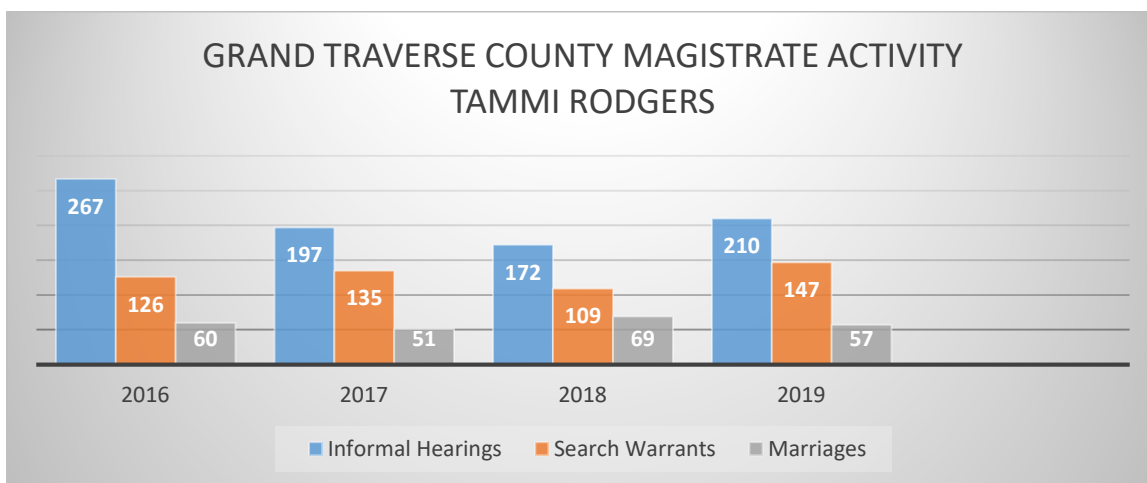
The Chief District Court Judge authorizes the duties that our Magistrates are allowed to perform. These duties are set forth in a Local Administrative Order. Magistrates conduct informal hearings on traffic tickets, perform weddings, issue arrest warrants and sign search warrants, conduct arraignments and probable cause conferences, set bonds and accept pleas for misdemeanors and sentence cases that have a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and approve and grant petitions for appointment of attorney’s to represent indigent defendants.

The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court has 4 magistrates that are appointed by the Chief Judge. Though the magistrates have assigned counties that they work in, all magistrates of the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court work together to serve the residents of all three of the counties within the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court jurisdiction.

**DAWN WAGONER – MAGISTRATE – GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY** – Is the Deputy Court Administrator and serves in a backup capacity only. Dawn was appointed in 2017.

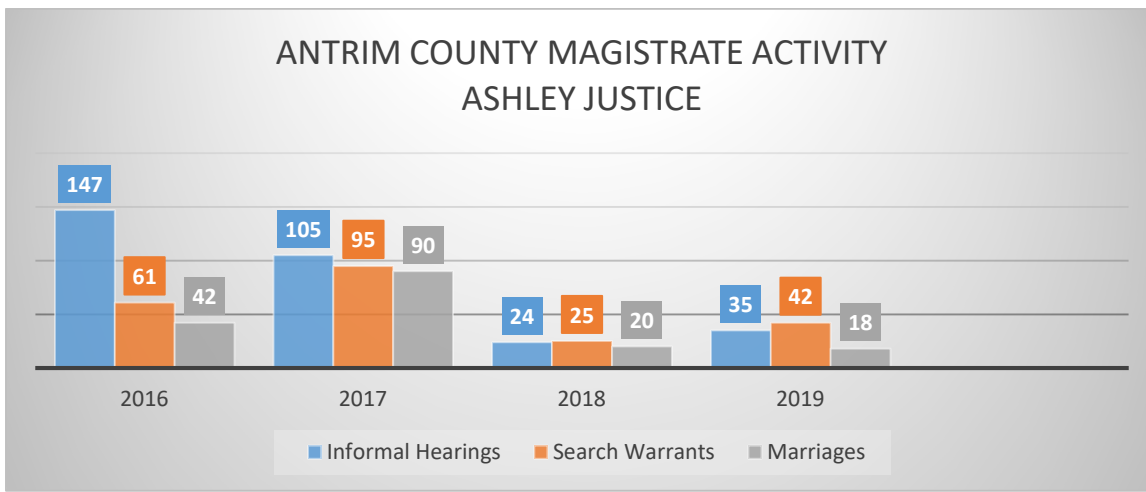
**TAMMI RODGERS – CHIEF MAGISTRATE – GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY – 1.0 FTE**

Magistrate Rodgers was appointed as a full time magistrate in Grand Traverse County in February of 1992. Magistrate Rodgers is a 1980 graduate of Michigan State University - James Madison College. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Justice, Morality and Constitutional Democracy. She also attended the National Judicial College and earned her Limited Jurisdiction Certification. Magistrate Rodgers was the chairperson for the Northwest Michigan Traffic Safety Association and is a longtime member of the Michigan District Court Magistrates Association. She is currently a training magistrate, mentoring newly appointed magistrates and has assisted with the editing of the magistrates traffic manual.



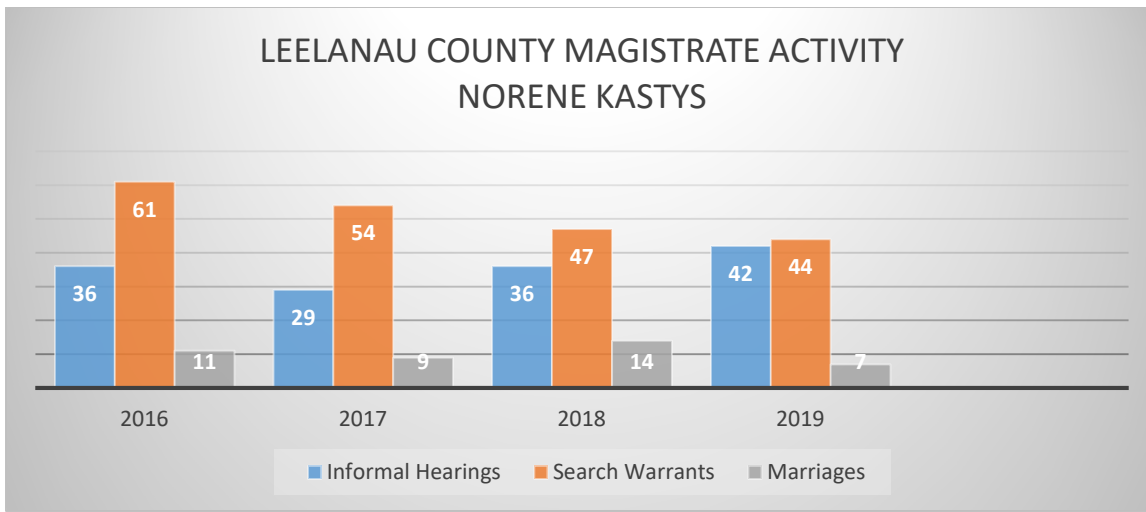
**ASHLEY JUSTICE – ATTORNEY MAGISTRATE – ANTRIM COUNTY – .6 FTE**

Magistrate Justice was appointed as a Magistrate for the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court in Antrim County in March 2015. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science in May of 2009 and she received her Juris Doctor from Detroit Mercy School of Law in July 2012.



**NORENE KASTYS – MAGISTRATE – LEELANAU COUNTY – .5 FTE**

Magistrate Kastys was hired by the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court in October of 1998 and assigned to Leelanau County. She was appointed as a Magistrate for Leelanau County in August of 2000. She attended Michigan State University where she obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Business and Education. She was a past President, Vice President, Secretary and current member of the Michigan Association of District Court Magistrates. In 2014 she received the MADCM Distinguished Service Award. Magistrate Kastys is a current board member of the Suttons Bay Art Festival, the M-22art2art Tour and a retired 4-H Leader from Barry County.



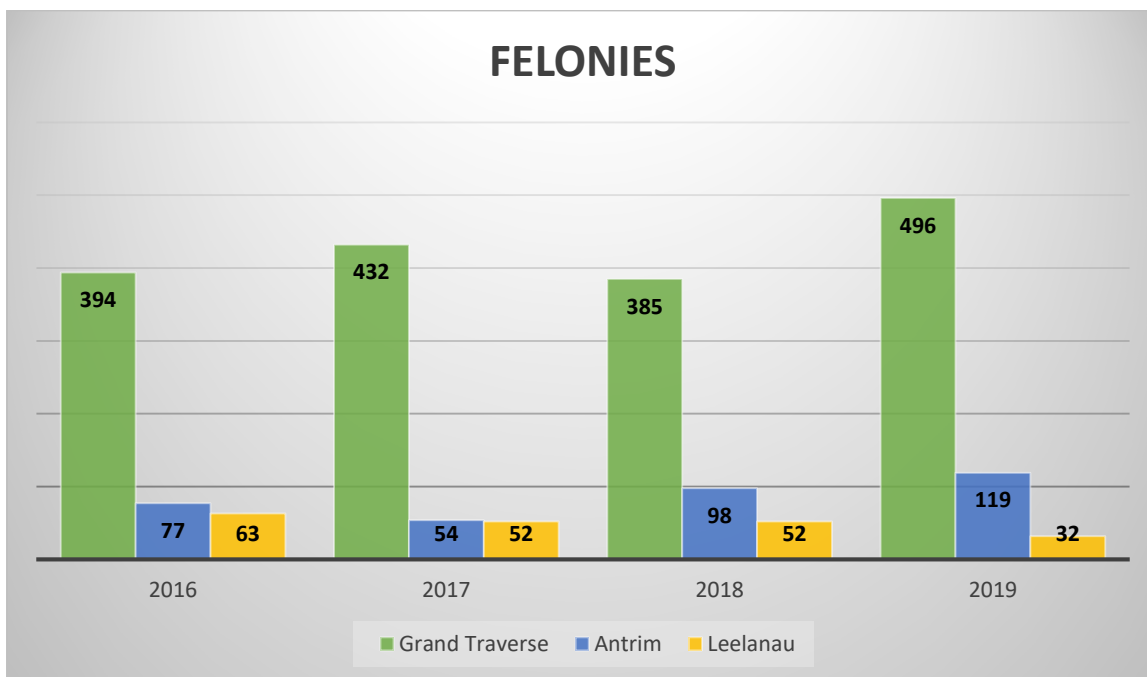
## CRIMINAL/TRAFFIC DIVISION

Our criminal/traffic division clerks in all three counties are tasked with processing all of the criminal/traffic cases in the district court. Their tasks involve tracking every case filed with the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court from beginning to end. This job requires a thorough understanding of the court system, knowledge of hundreds of codes, and the ability to perform a large amount of data entry with accuracy and attention to detail. They schedule all matters, open and close cases, communicate with the jails in all three counties regarding inmates that are court involved, and notifying the Department of State Police Records Division of case dispositions. In addition, they are responsible for entering traffic tickets into the computer system, taking payments for both traffic and criminal cases, receiving and disbursing bonds and notifying the Secretary of State of case dispositions. This division also handles weddings that are performed by the Court. Customer service is a big part of these positions as they have constant interaction with defendants, attorneys, law enforcement and the public, both face-to-face and on the telephone. Our court is proud of the fact that we consistently meet the required time guidelines for case disposition.

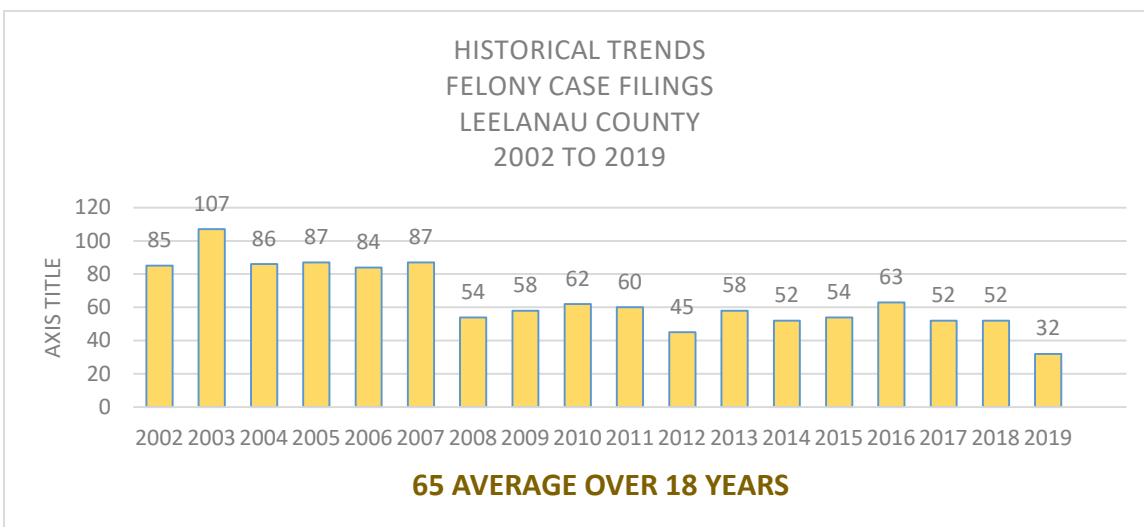
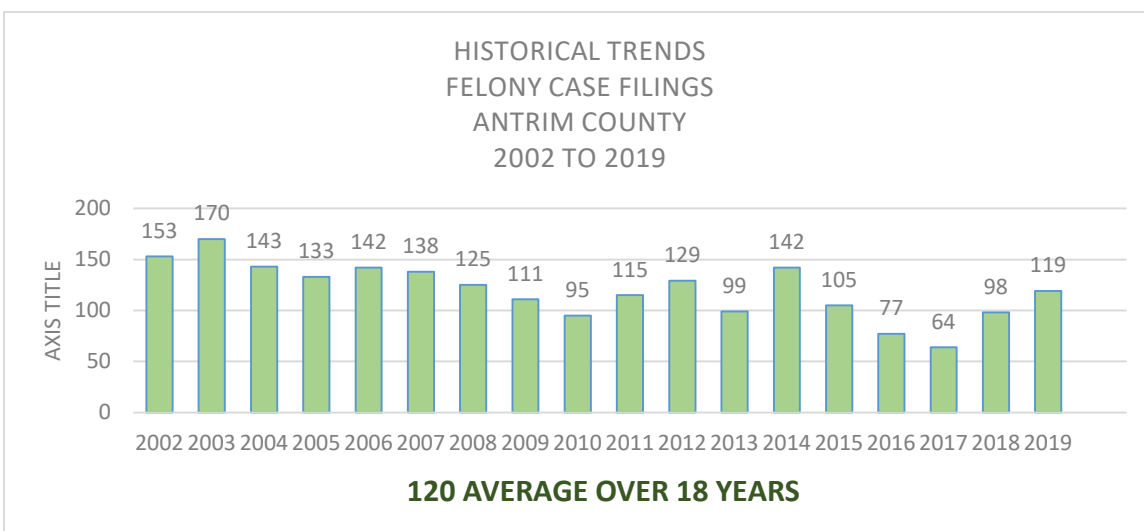
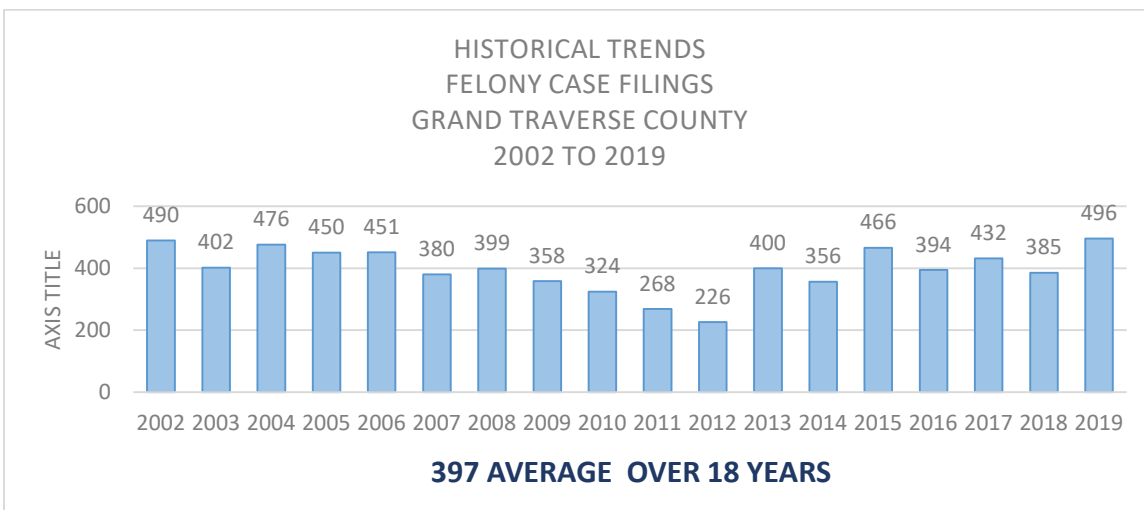
In Grand Traverse County, we have four full time clerks and a full time office coordinator assigned to these tasks. This year we also made some staffing changes which allowed us to create a part time criminal/traffic clerk position to assist with this tremendous workload.

In Antrim County we have one full time clerk and a full time Office Coordinator to process this workload. In Leelanau County we have a part time Office Coordinator and a full time clerk to handle the workload.

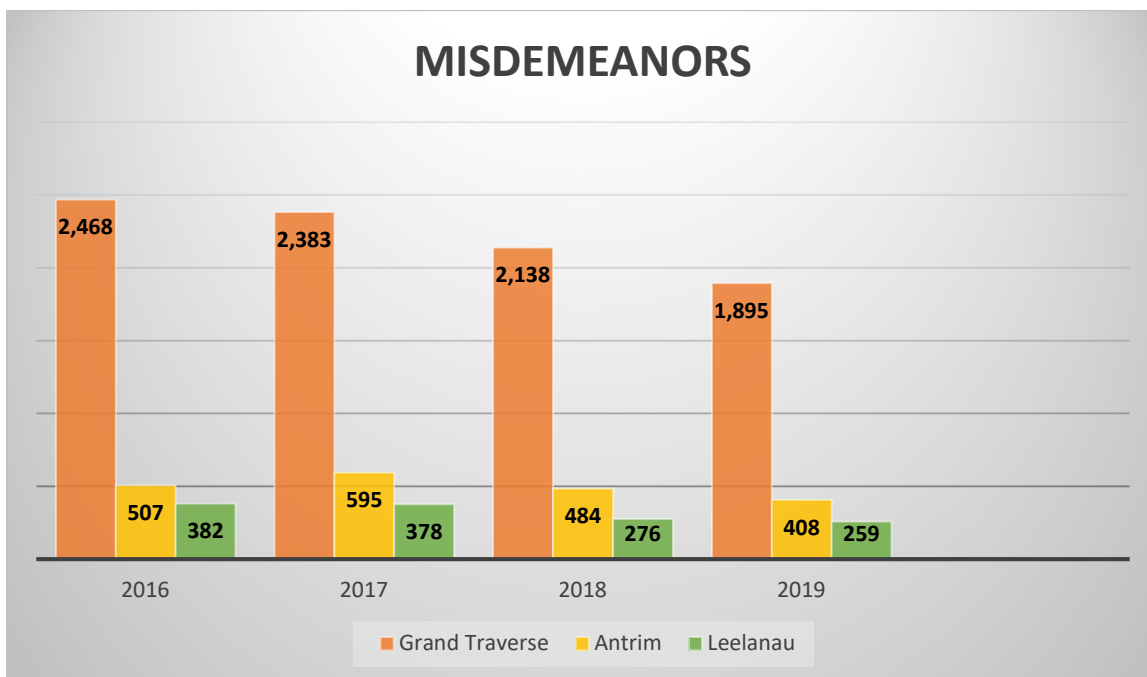
**Felonies** - The first court appearance for each defendant charged with a felony is the arraignment that is held in the District Court. The preliminary exam that follows must be held within 21 days after the arraignment and is also held in the District Court. If probable cause is established then the defendant is bound over for further proceedings to the Circuit Court.



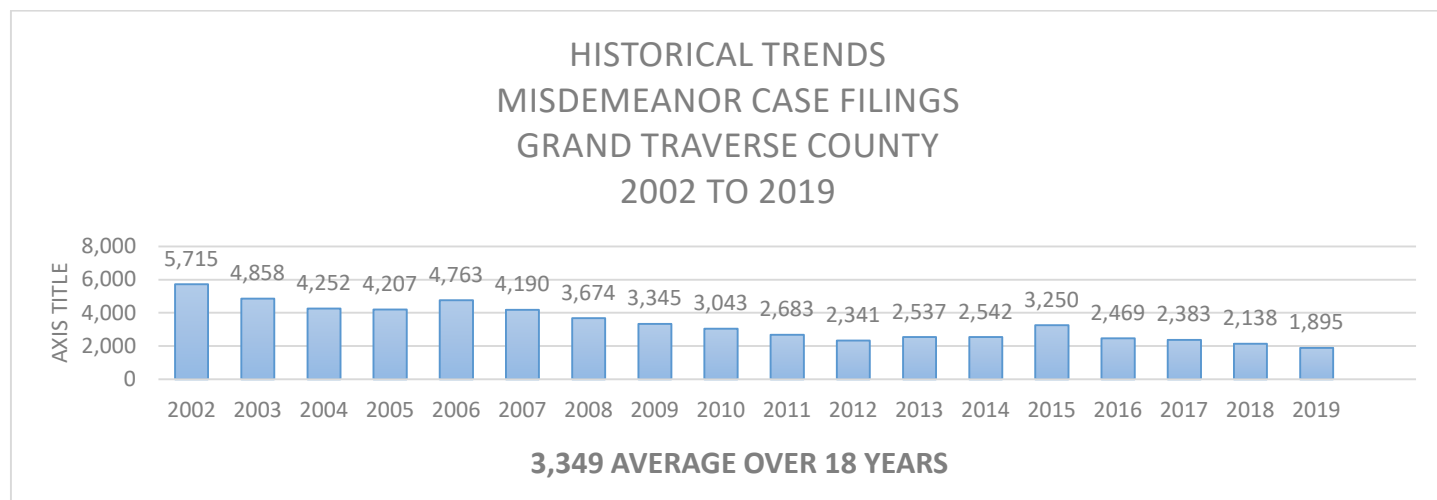
The following graphs allow us to compare an 18 year average of cases filed versus the current years filing.



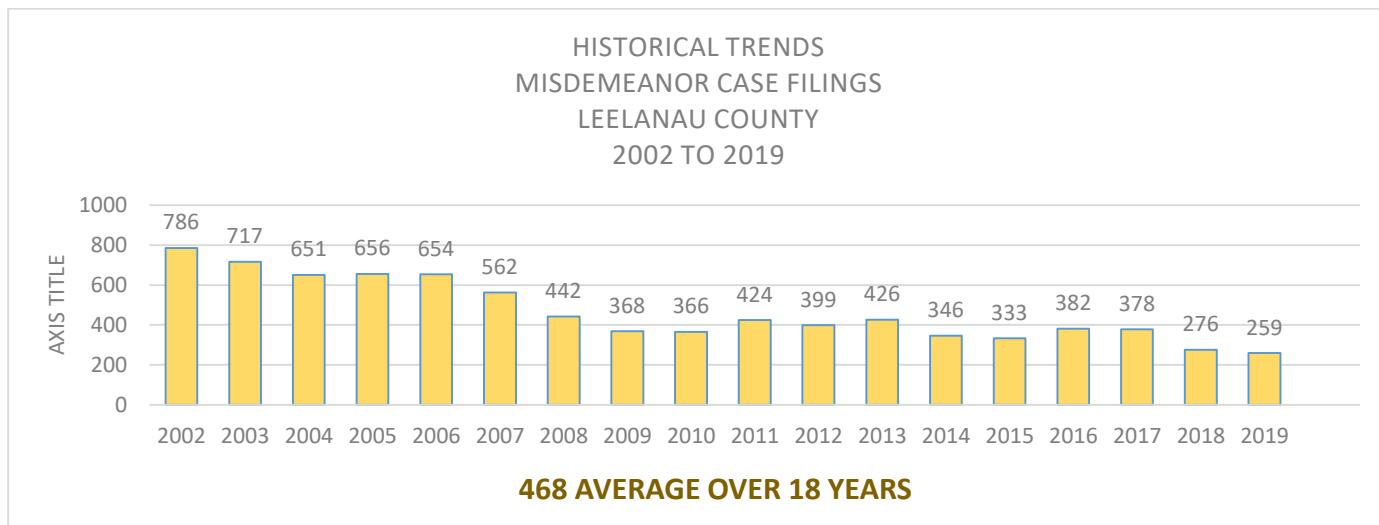
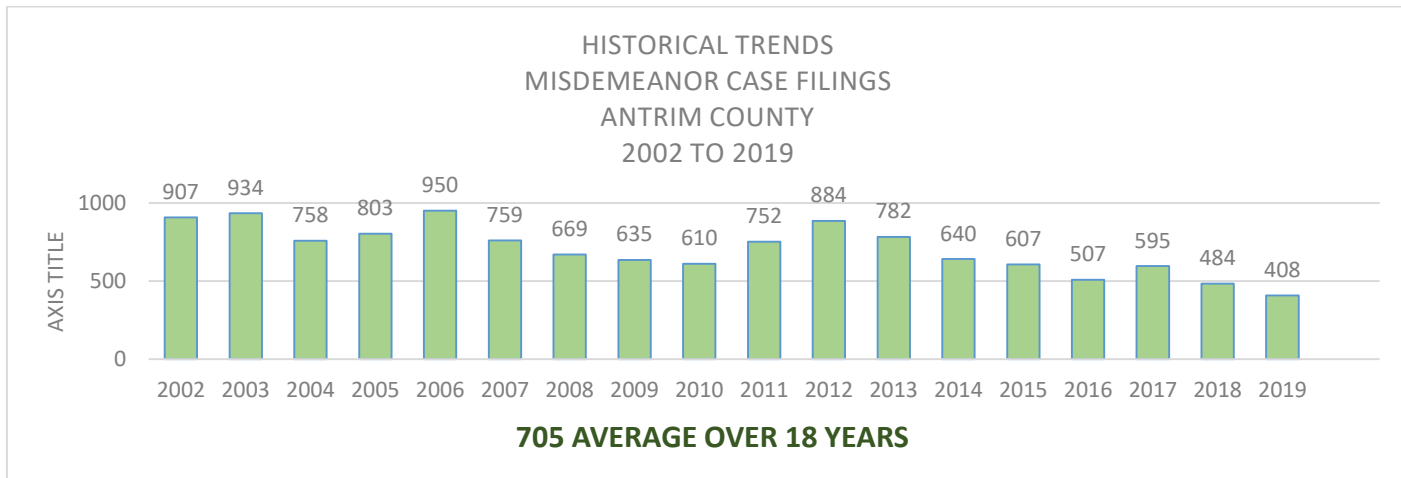
**Misdemeanors** - The District Court has jurisdiction over all crimes that are punishable by not more than one year in jail. The following statistics include all misdemeanor offenses; traffic and criminal, including Operating While Intoxicated. Indigent defendants are entitled to a court appointed attorney if their crime could result in a jail sentence.



The graphs depicted demonstrate the trends in each county for the last four years as well as an 18 year historical average. Of note are the 18 year average numbers in all three counties. All three counties show a significant decrease in the number of misdemeanor cases filed between the 18 year average and the 2019 numbers.



Historical trends of misdemeanor case filings continued.





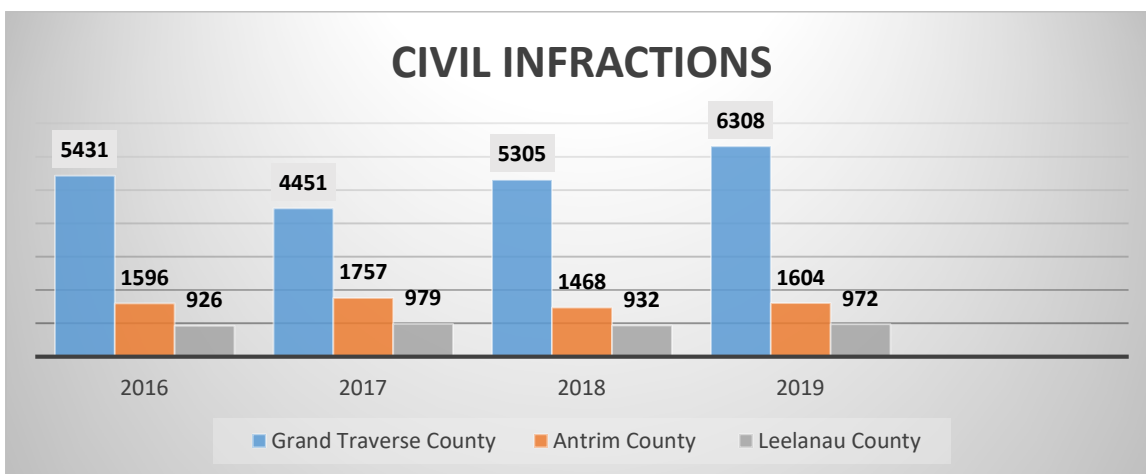
**Traffic - Civil Infractions** - The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court receives violations of the motor vehicle code, township or city ordinances, and DNR laws by way of tickets issued to citizens, from law enforcement agencies. These tickets come to us either electronically or in handwritten ticket form. Our court clerks then verify and enter the ticket information in order to begin the process.

Most violations of the Michigan Vehicle Code are civil infractions. Probably the most common civil infraction is the speeding ticket.

A person receiving a civil infraction ticket can do one of three things:

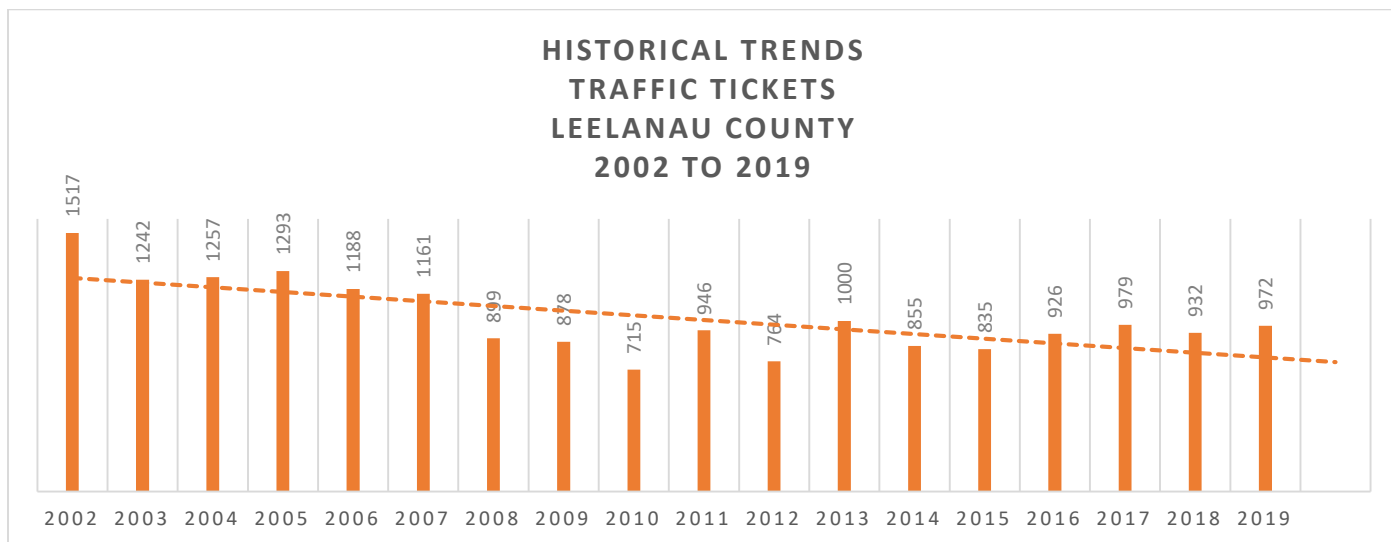
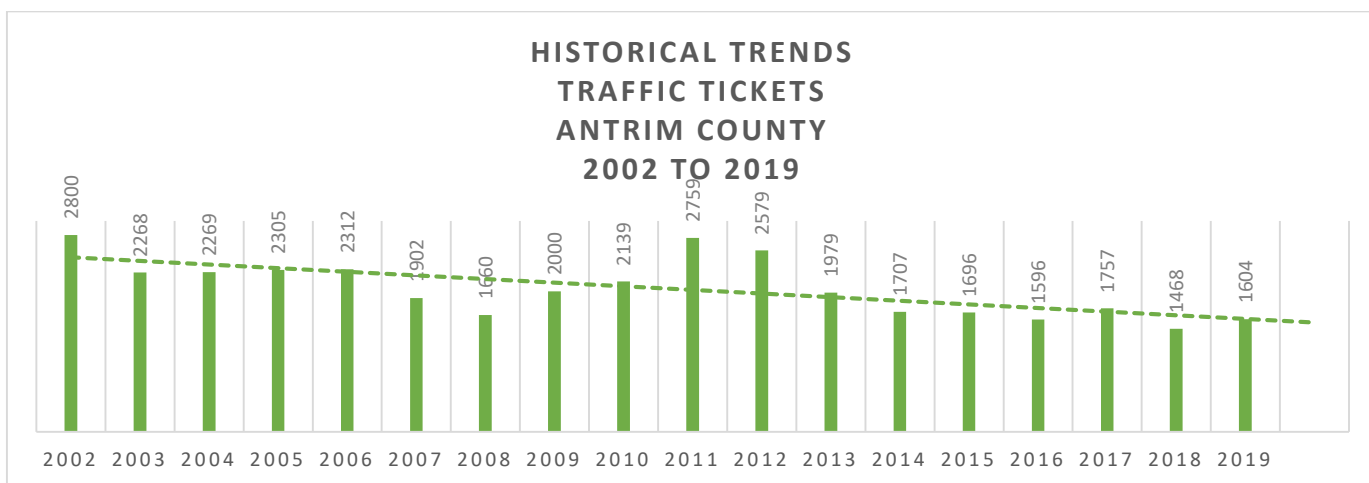
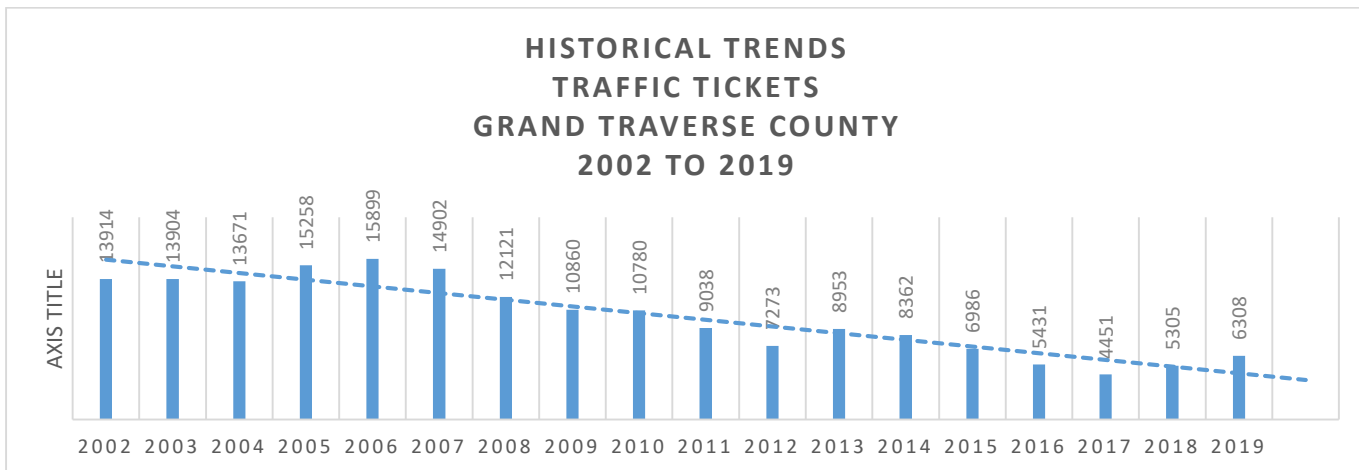
1. Admit responsibility
2. Admit responsibility with an explanation
3. Deny responsibility and request an informal hearing in front of a Magistrate.

The decision of the magistrate may be appealed to the District Court Judge with a Formal Hearing.



This chart is a four year comparison between the three counties of civil infractions that were filed with the district court.

As we review the historical data of civil infractions filed with the court, we notice a downward trend in all three counties.



## CIVIL DIVISION

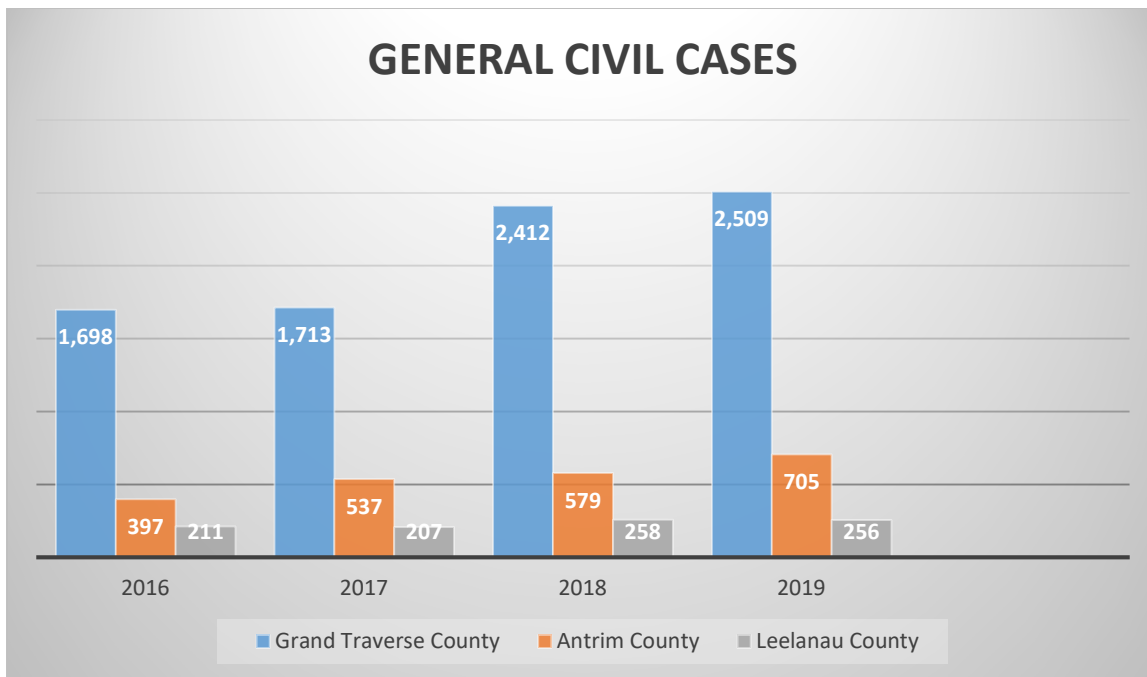
In Grand Traverse County we have three full time and a part time clerk assigned to process the civil case filings. In Antrim County we have one full time clerk assigned and in Leelanau we have one full time clerk assigned that also assists with the criminal/traffic clerk duties.

Each of the full time clerks in the civil division in Grand Traverse County are assigned to a specific civil specialty and the part time clerk assists the full time clerks with case entry and processing. In Antrim and Leelanau Counties, the clerks handle all of the different types of civil cases. These positions require a thorough knowledge of civil court process and the ability to process a large amount of cases and information.

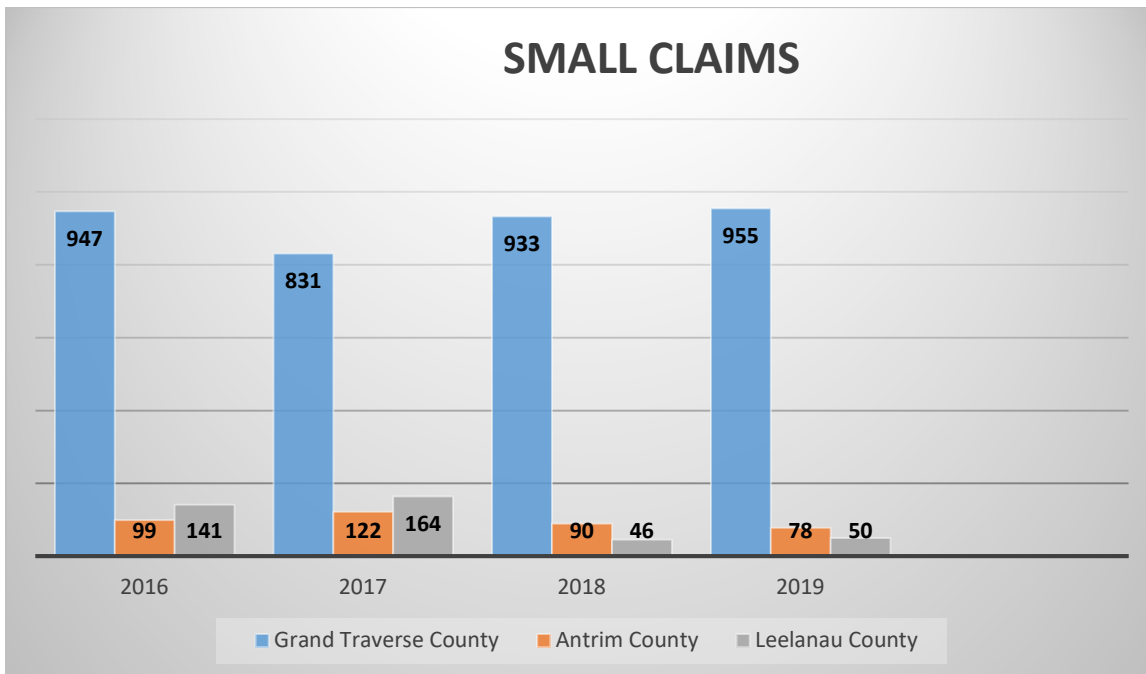
The civil division processes all general civil, small claims and summary proceeding (landlord-tenant) cases. They schedule civil hearings and trials, process civil writs, garnishments and they receive filing fees for cases filed. The clerks in this division have a thorough knowledge of their specific civil specialties and process a large number of cases each year.

The three charts below are a four year comparison between the three counties of all General Civil, Small Claims and Landlord/Tenant case filings.

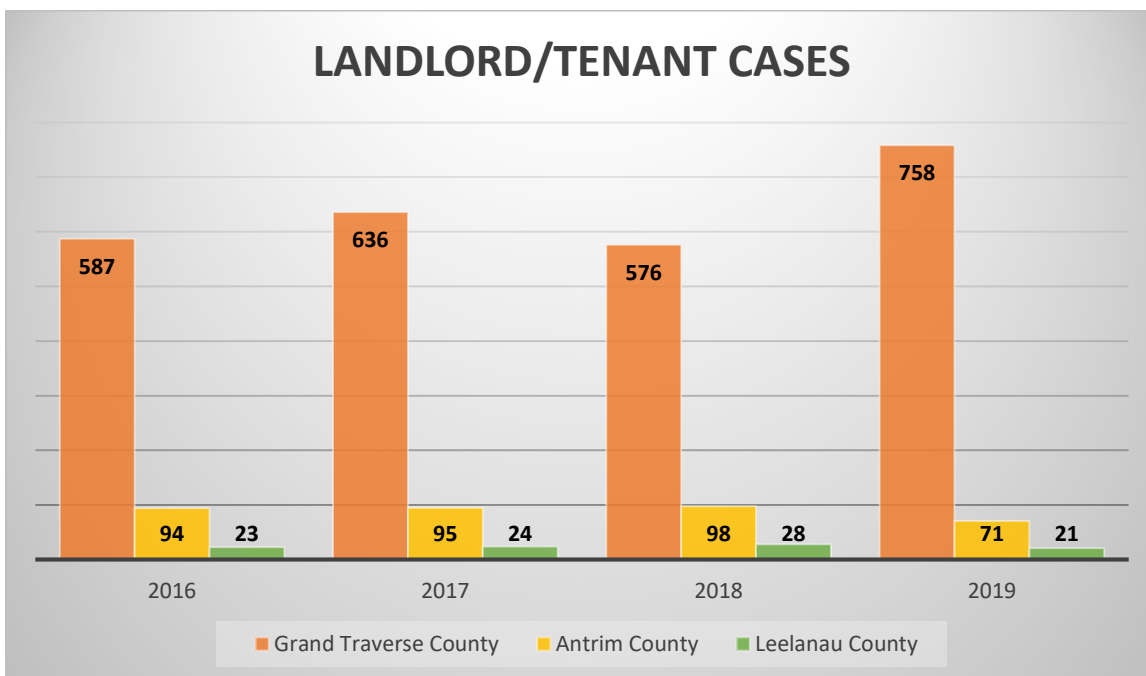
**General Civil** - The District Court has jurisdiction over disputes involving individuals and businesses where the amount in controversy is \$25,000 or less.



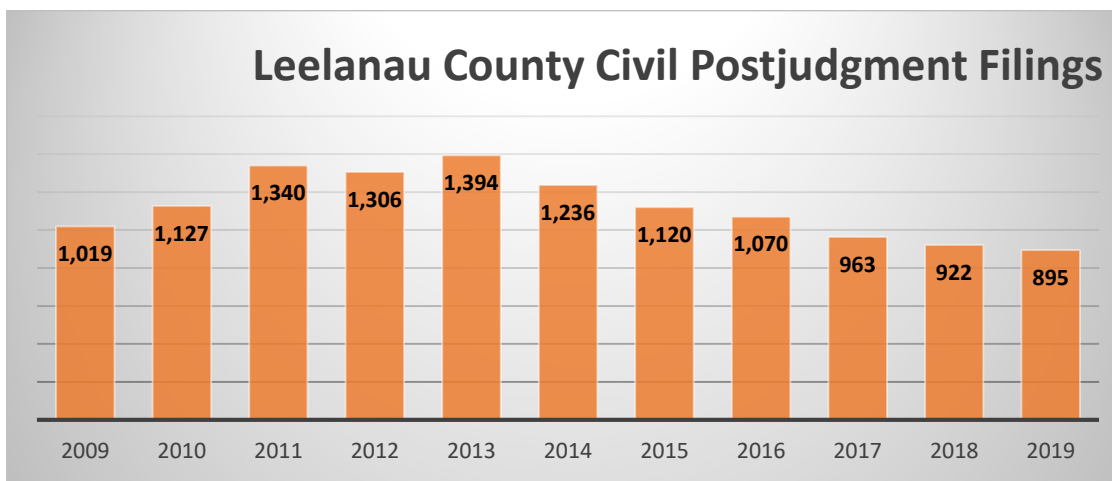
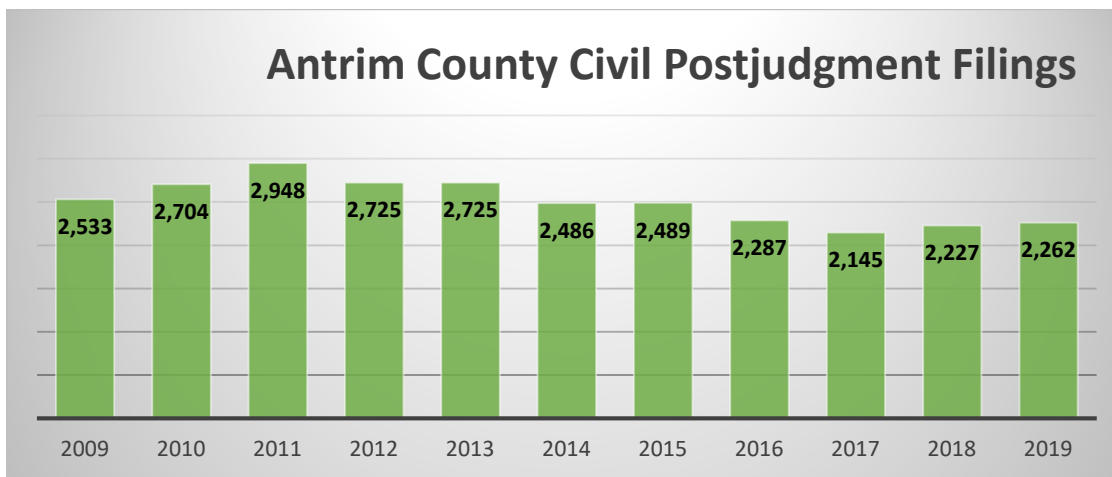
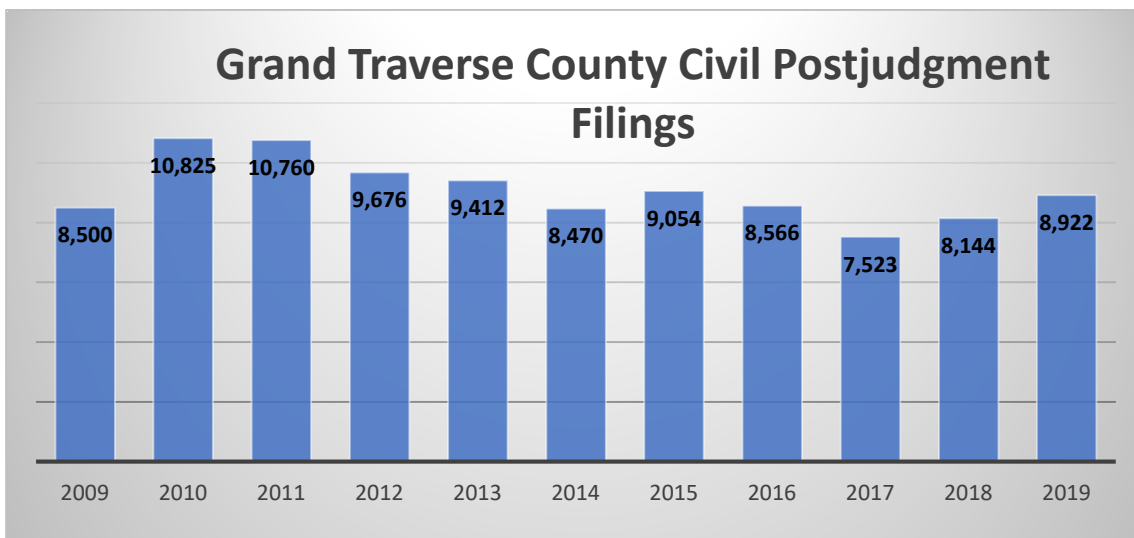
**Small Claims** - The plaintiff in a case that has an amount in controversy of not more than \$5,000 can elect to file in small claims. Lawyers cannot represent either party in a small claims case and the rules of evidence during a small claims trial are much less formal than in a general civil case trial. The attorney magistrate hears small claims cases in Antrim and Grand Traverse counties.



**Landlord/Tenant** (Summary Proceedings) - Landlord/Tenant cases were created to provide real property owners a quick method to recover their property from a tenant or land contract vendee that is not complying with the terms of the lease or contract. These cases are usually originated by apartment owners, land contract holders, mobile home park operators and even boat slip owners.



**Post Judgment Filings** – These filings mean that plaintiffs are filing garnishments, motions, writs of execution or writs of restitution in cases after obtaining a judgment in an effort to collect what is due to them. All of these filings require a fee be paid, a portion which stays local and a portion that goes to the state.



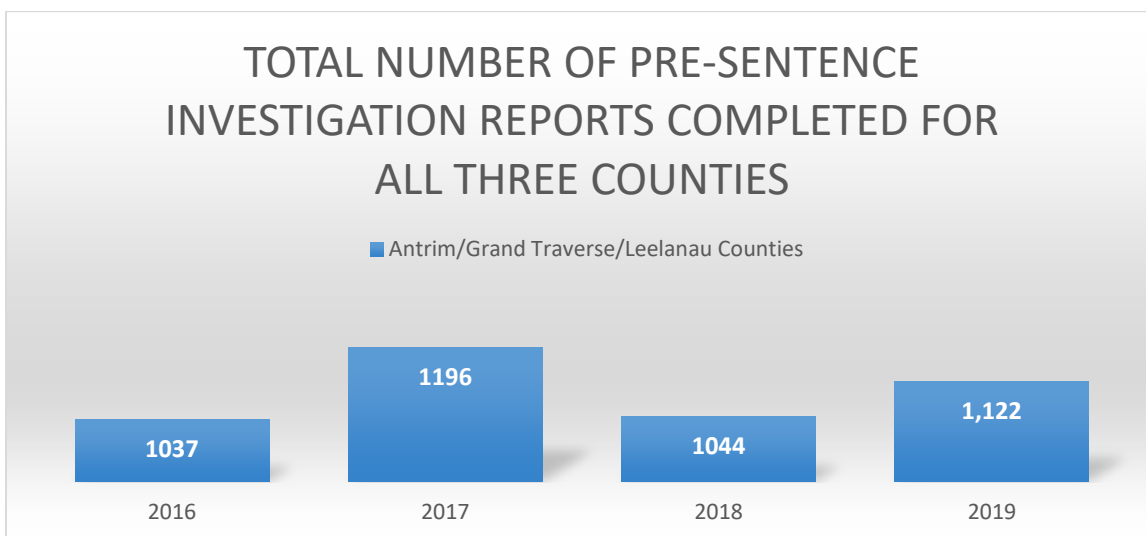
## PROBATION DIVISION

The mission of the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court Probation Division is to provide quality services to judges, victims, probationers and the communities of Grand Traverse, Antrim and Leelanau counties. The probation department performs two main functions:

1. Pre-sentence investigation reports (also known as PSI’s)
2. Supervises defendants who were sentenced to a probation term.

In Grand Traverse County our probation department is staffed by 4 full time and 2 part time probation officers and 1 part time compliance officer. In Antrim County, we have a full time probation officer and compliance officer. In Leelanau County, we have a full time probation officer. We also have 2 full time probation clerks that work in Grand Traverse County. They also assist in processing paperwork for Leelanau.

Prior to sentencing, the Judge may request a Pre-Sentence Investigation to be done by a probation officer in our Probation Department. The PSI is completed by interviewing the defendant and compiling information into one report with recommendations made by the probation officer on what should happen to the defendant in the case. The purpose of this report is to assist the Judge in sentencing a defendant.



Once a criminal defendant is sentenced to probation, the probation department takes over supervision of the case. This includes monitoring a defendant to ensure compliance with Court ordered requirements, scheduling any court dates related to defendants on probation, entering and processing any paperwork and entering any required LEIN information. The services that the probation department provides are necessary to restore victims and communities, protect the public, promote probationer accountability and create a climate for probationer behavioral change.

The following chart shows the Annual Probation Survey Report between the dates of January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> each listed year. The number used is the total number of adults on probation as of December 31<sup>st</sup>.

PROBATION CASELOAD	2016	2017	2018	2019
Grand Traverse	1076	1080	1083	925
Antrim	165	168	169	154
Leelanau	219	219	220	158

On December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, the number of Probationers and their **MOST** serious offense:

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Grand Traverse County</b>				
Felony	11	18	24	42
Misdemeanor	1061	1050	953	874
Other	4	12	8	9
<b>Antrim County</b>				
Felony	1	1	2	1
Misdemeanor	163	165	136	153
Other	1	2	2	0
<b>Leelanau County</b>				
Felony	3	1	1	1
Misdemeanor	214	215	191	157
Other	2	3	0	0

On December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, the **TYPE** of most serious offense:

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Grand Traverse County</b>				
Drug law violation	83	110	71	46
Driving under the influence	266	300	242	247
Other	727	670	672	632
<b>Antrim County</b>				
Drug law violation	25	20	13	3
Driving under the influence	54	72	48	57
Other	86	76	79	94
<b>Leelanau County</b>				
Drug law violation	16	25	8	3
Driving under the influence	110	116	104	93
Other	93	78	80	62

## SPECIALTY COURTS

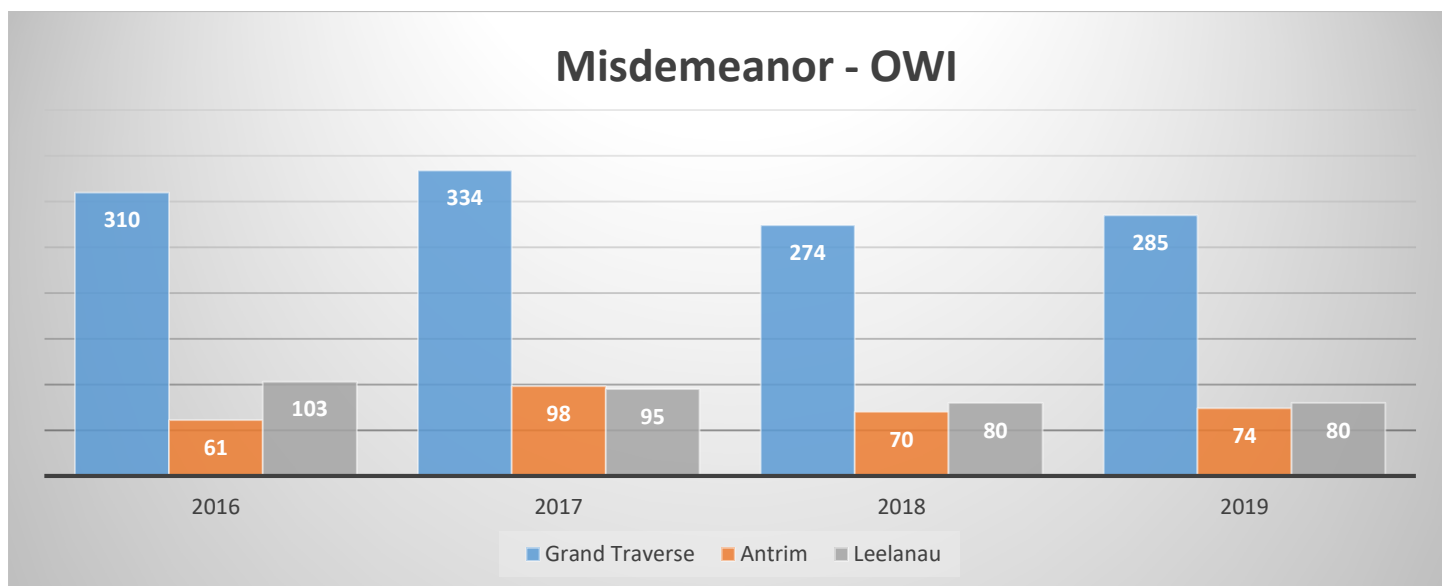
This caseload follows a nationally developed model of Drug Treatment Courts and is designed to provide treatment alternatives to repeat drunk drivers and those charged with felony drug offenses in order to promote rehabilitation and recovery in lieu of jail. With intensive supervision by a case manager and judicial monitoring throughout probation, these chemically dependent offenders may avoid incarceration by pleading guilty and successfully completing probation. Those with felony charges are sentenced to a 36 month probation. While those with misdemeanor charges complete a 24 month probation.

In 2019 both our Sobriety and Drug Treatment Courts went through the State’s Certification process and are now certified treatment courts. This certification allows our courts to be eligible for grant money through the State of Michigan.

**Sobriety Court** – Since 2001, the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court has had a successful Sobriety Court. The main focus of the program is 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> offense drunk drivers. Currently, 67% of the cases in Sobriety Court are felony 3<sup>rd</sup> offense drunk drivers. All Sobriety Court cases are heard in front of Judge Michael S. Stepka.

One of the many successes of a Recovery Court can be shown in the recidivism rates. The following chart shows a comparison of our program participants and graduates compared to matched pairs according to age, race, gender, geographic location, etc.

Conviction Within 3 Years of Admission	Any New Conviction	New Alcohol or Drug Conviction	Number of Matched Pairs
All Program Participants	13%	10%	581
Matched Comparison Members	27%	25%	
Graduates Only	4%	2%	358
Matched Comparison Members	27%	25%	





2019 – Sobriety Court - Jail Alternative	GRAND TRAVERSE	ANTRIM	LEELANAU
<b>Admissions in 2019</b>			
Felony admissions	26	1	2
Misdemeanor admissions	13	1	3
<b>Active Cases</b>			
Felony	68	6	12
Misdemeanor	31	3	6
<b>Successful Discharges</b>			
Felony	15	3	5
Misdemeanor	6	2	3
<b>Unsuccessful Discharges</b>			
Felony	16	1	1
Misdemeanor	6	0	1

**Drug Court** – We started our Drug Treatment Court in the fall of 2016. The main focus of the program are those defendants with felony drug convictions. Since this program is relatively new, we do not have the comparison data at this time. All Drug Treatment Court cases are heard in front of Judge Robert A. Cooney.

2019 – Drug Court - Jail Alternative	GRAND TRAVERSE	ANTRIM	LEELANAU
<b>Admissions in 2019</b>			
Felony admissions	25	0	0
<b>Active Cases</b>			
Felony	48	0	0
<b>Successful Discharges</b>			
Felony	3	0	0
<b>Unsuccessful Discharges</b>			
Felony	13	0	0

**Domestic Violence Court** – Our criminal division has a separate docket referred to as our Domestic Violence Court. All misdemeanor charges of domestic violence filed in Antrim and Grand Traverse Counties are scheduled to be heard in front of Judge Robert A. Cooney. Having a specialized docket allows cases to come to trial quickly so that those cases are not only decided fairly, but also swiftly. Prompt court action enhances the safety of domestic violence victims and leads to prompt punishment and treatment of convicted offenders. Due to the nuances of these type of offenders, we have a probation officer specifically assigned to this caseload.

**Community Outreach Court** – The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court – Grand Traverse County has established a Community Outreach Court. The mission of this court is to provide constructive, alternative sentencing options to individuals whose homelessness or risk of homelessness is contributing to unlawful conduct. The objective is to offer participants an opportunity to resolve outstanding criminal and civil infraction cases when they successfully complete an individualized action plan designed to address the root causes of their homelessness, or risk of homelessness, and criminal history. Successful program completion may result in the reduction or dismissal of fines, fees, court costs, bench warrants or open cases. All Community Outreach Court cases are heard in front of Judge Michael S. Stepka.

## 13<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT COURT COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

### **SHERISE SHIVELY - COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS MANAGER**

Sherise has worked for Community Corrections since 2006. She has Bachelor degrees in Criminal Justice and Psychology and is completing her Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health with an emphasis in Substance Use Disorder. She is currently a board member for Northern Lakes Community Mental Health and serves as the secretary for the Michigan Association of Community Corrections Managers.

She is a team member of both the Sobriety and Drug Court programs and participates in the Grand Traverse County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council as well as several substance use coalitions in the region. She participated in the Governor's Task Force for Pretrial and Jail incarceration and is active in the Pretrial Reform Initiative in Michigan.

**Community Corrections Staff** – Our Community Corrections division employs 2 full time community corrections officers, 1 full time community corrections/drug court probation officer, 1 full time community corrections/pre-trial services officer and 1 full time compliance officer.

**Community Corrections** – The Office of Community Corrections (OCC) within Field Operations Administration of the MDOC administers Public Act 511 passed in 1988. The goal of the Act is to reduce prison commitments through a State grant programs for community-based sanctions and services. OCC works in cooperation with local governments to reduce admissions to prison, improve local jail utilization, improve rehabilitative services to offenders and strengthen offender accountability.

Local governments apply for grants by establishing community corrections advisory boards (CCAB's) which develop comprehensive corrections plans. The plans identify local policies and practices, as well as programs and services which will help achieve their goals. OCC requires each CCAB to identify linkages with Michigan Works! agencies, the local Substance Abuse Coordinating Agency, the local community health departments, local school districts and other agencies to help provide cost-effective and non-duplicated services to offenders.

Grants are awarded to help support services such as substance-abuse treatment, and provide residential programs for certain types of offenders. Cognitive restructuring is often a part of treatment in the community.

Most of the offenders enrolled in treatment-type programs are sentenced felons. Offenders with higher sentencing guideline scores, probation violators and those who have convictions for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol account for increasing proportions of new enrollees in residential programs. Misdemeanants account for the majority of enrollments in Community Service Work and House Arrest Programs. By supporting appropriate use of non-prison sanctions for felony offenders who might otherwise come to prison, the department has helped reduce the state prison commitment rate.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Community Corrections Department has served Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties since 1991. Services are provided to both the Circuit Court and District Court offenders. The Community Corrections Department is a recognized leader in providing valuable information to Judges, Probation Agents and Offenders of available programming to assist the offender in addressing their problems that bring them into the Criminal Justice environment. The available programs and services they provide enable the offender to become a healthy and productive member of society.

### **Programs offered by 13<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Community Corrections include the following:**

**Pre-Trial Services** – The process has three primary functions: to collect and analyze defendant information for use in determining risk, to make recommendations to the court concerning conditions of release, and to supervise defendants who are released from secure custody during the pretrial phase.

**Probation Residential Services** – Comprehensive chemical dependency treatment services offered in a structured treatment environment. Services often include individual and group counseling, structured physical activities, vocational training, relapse prevention support, social skills training, educational services and 12-step recovery programs.

**Recovery Home Supervision** – Recovery homes (sometimes known as transition houses or T-houses) offer individuals with substance abuse issues a safe and sober living environment and provide a structured opportunity to work toward positive change in their lives. The recovery homes are supervised by Case Managers who offer residents educational, employment and life skills assistance to guide them on their path to getting and staying clean.

**House Arrest Services** – 24/7 GPS monitoring of offenders in lieu of jail. They must participate in outpatient counseling, drug/alcohol testing when required, 12 step recovery meetings, employed full time and provide proof of their whereabouts at all times.

**Community Service Work** – In lieu of a jail sentence, offenders are ordered and agree to complete community service work at area non-profit agencies. This provides valuable work to the community and relieves jail overcrowding and allows an offender to give back to the community in which they committed their crime.

**In Home Alcohol Monitoring** – Rental of portable Breathalyzer units and continuous alcohol ankle monitors allow an offender the option to test at home or work in lieu of traveling to an agency to test. This reduces their need to miss work in order to test, and relieves the cost of travel and time associated with getting to testing.

**ANNUAL STATISTICS**

<b>2019</b>	<b>Grand Traverse</b>	<b>Antrim</b>	<b>Leelanau</b>
<b>Jail Alternative programs</b>			
Assessed	150	21	8
Approved & Enrolled	141	19	8
Positive Completion	118	12	7
Failed and returned to jail	19	2	0
Successful Completion %	79	85	95
Average Daily Jail beds saved	39	5.5	3.5
Jail Bed Days saved annually	9078	1022	627
<b>Community Service Work</b>			
Enrolled	230	45	33
Successful	214	34	19
Failures	45	2	2
Jail Bed Days Saved Annually	1544	199	166
Hours of work provided to nonprofit agencies annually	12,352	1592	1328

**COURT RECORDERS**

Court Recorders have the responsibility of making a permanent record of court proceedings and providing a transcript of these proceedings upon request. Along with the efforts of other clerical staff, a probation officer and a court officer, they assist the judge in providing efficient docket movement. They are also responsible for filling out court disposition sheets as each case is heard, which provides for a written record of what transpires during a case from time of arraignment to final conclusion.

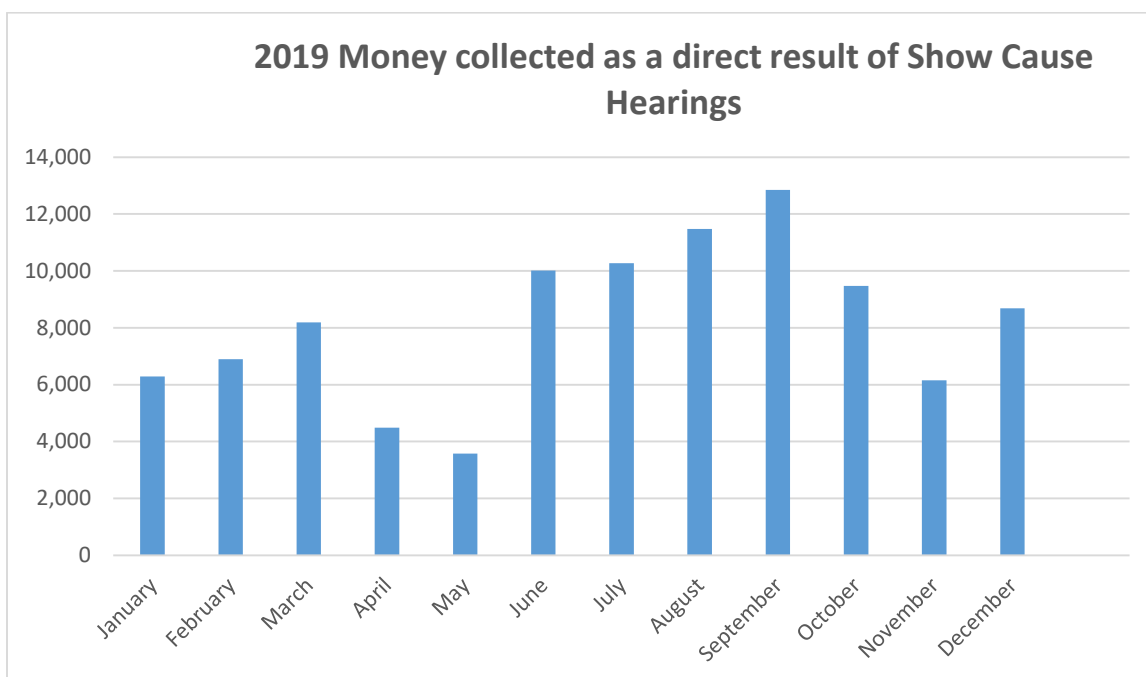
All three counties are equipped with technology that allows for court proceedings to be captured on video. Each courtroom is also equipped with a Polycom system allowing our magistrates and judges to perform video arraignments and other hearings on defendants who are incarcerated without the defendant having to be physically transported to the courthouse. Since most jails around the state have this type of system, it also allows our judges to conduct these hearings on defendants around our state, without our jail staff having to provide a transport. This makes the process more efficient, safe and provides a cost savings for our counties.

## COLLECTIONS

The court has a formal Collections policy and collection efforts have been implemented in all three counties. Staff members actively work to set up payment agreements and time is spent working delinquent cases. For those cases where the defendant is on probation, the probation officer plays a more active role in ensuring the probationer makes their agreed upon payments.

In Grand Traverse County, between 180 – 185 collections show cause hearings are set each month on cases where payments are past due. In 2019, Grand Traverse County issued 575 State Income Tax Garnishments. For the 2018 tax year, our court collected approximately \$42,086 from the tax garnishments.

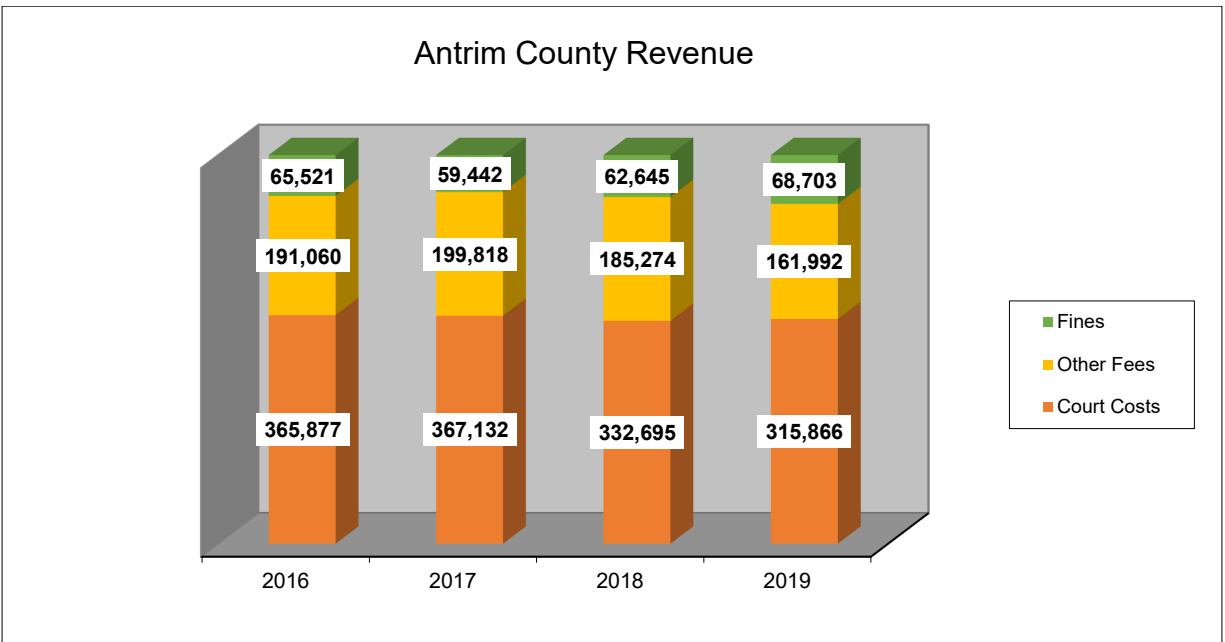
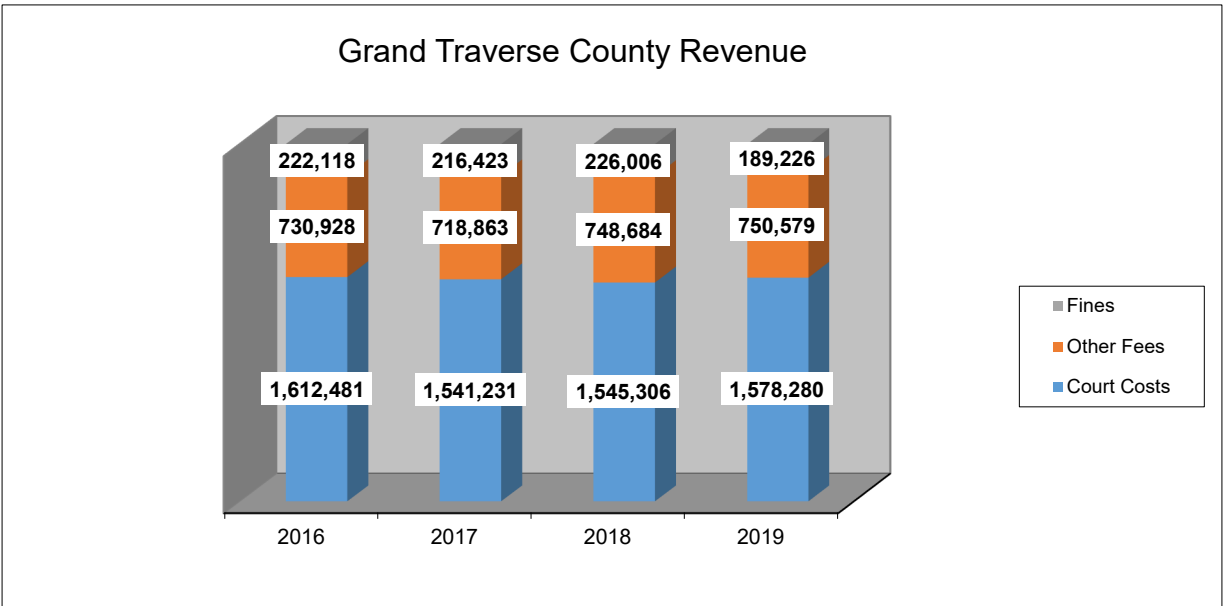
Mid-year in 2019, our collections specialist implemented a new process and began to target more recent cases that were in arrears and she began to really focus her attention on making sure the court held those defendants accountable to the payment agreement that they made. As a result we can see a noticeable difference in the amount of money the court was able to collect.

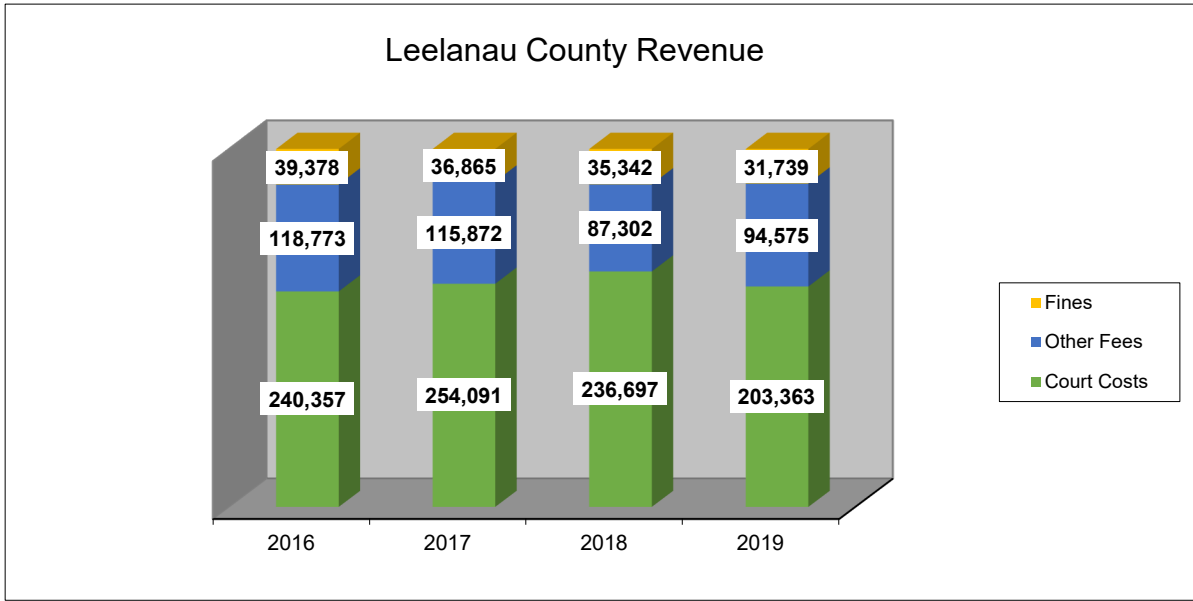


All money collected is deposited with the County Treasurer and dispersed monthly according to state guidelines. Some of the collected money stays with the local county, the fines collected go to the local libraries, and other monies are distributed to the State of Michigan, local townships and the victim’s fund.

In 2016 the Michigan Supreme Court announced the adoption of amendments to court rules that codify existing case law regarding determining a defendant’s ability to pay fines, fees and costs. This has made the court review our collections procedures and has ultimately had a negative impact on the amount of money

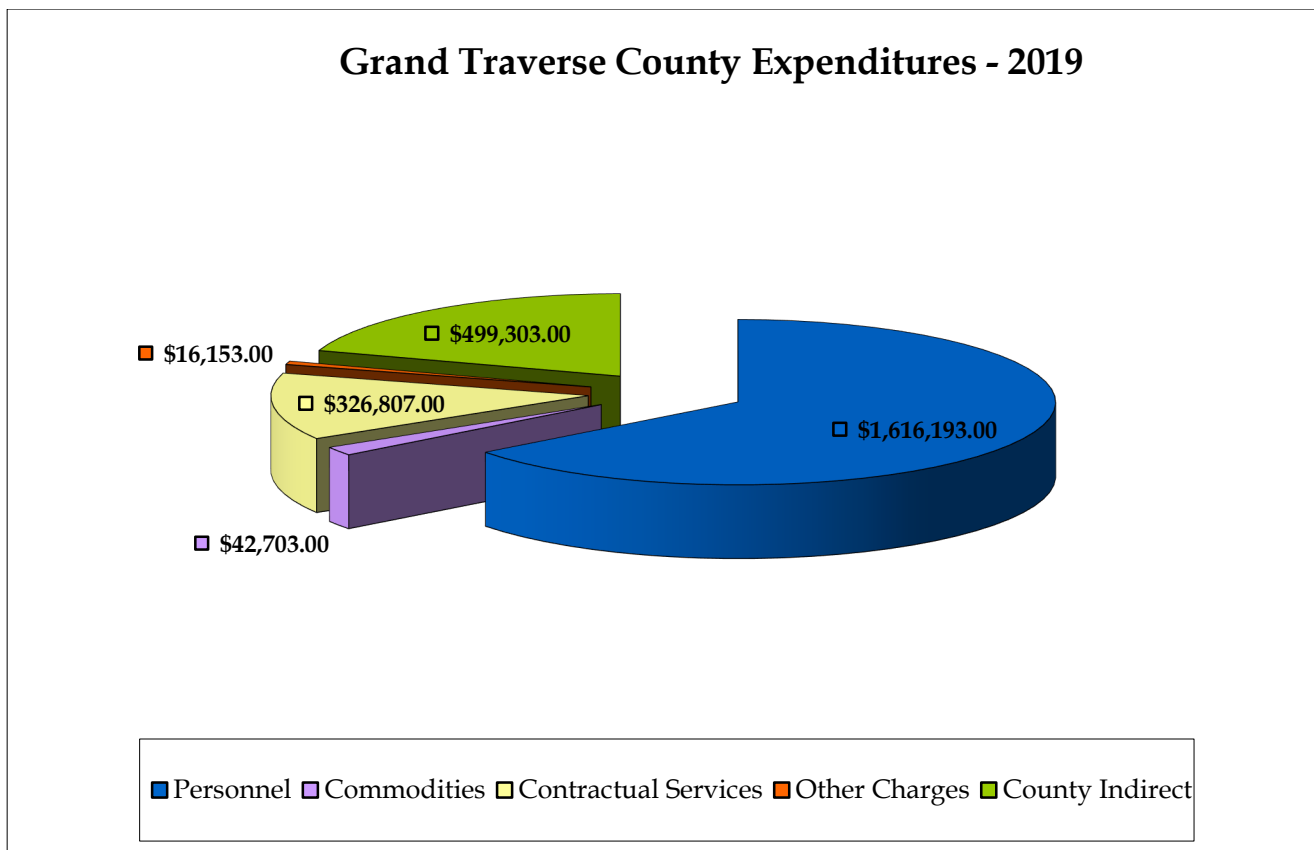
the court is able to collect. However, it is important to point out that the courts are not revenue generating entities.





## FINANCES

Grand Traverse County is the fiscal agent for the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court. Grand Traverse County is responsible for the processing, audit, verification, and payment of all operating expenses. The District Court maintains three separate budgets for each of the counties and one shared-cost budget. Separate budgets are also maintained for Community Corrections and for the grants associated with the Treatment Courts.



**Commodities** include office supplies, printing, postage and similar expenses

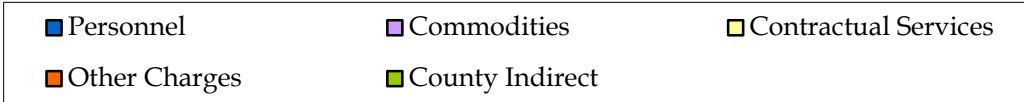
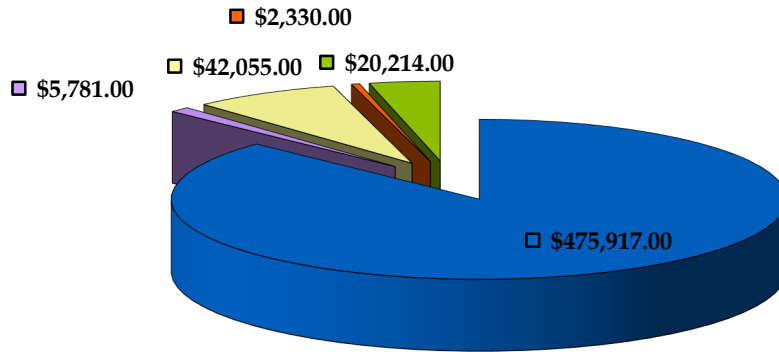
**Contract Services** include transcript fees, jury and witness fees, court appointed attorney, interpreter, and IT expenses

**Other Charges** include office equipment repair and maintenance, books, tuition reimbursement and employee training

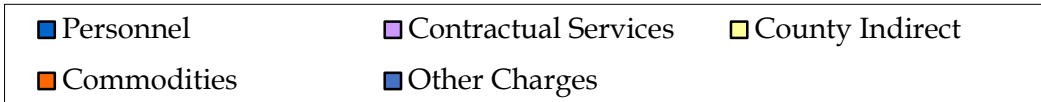
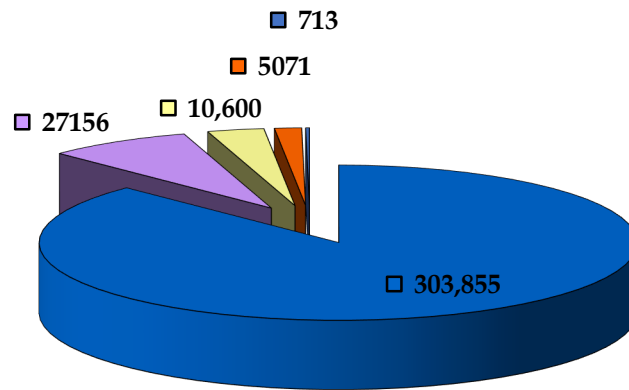
**County Indirect** is the amount charged by Grand Traverse County for indirect costs such as space, heat, electric, facilities maintenance, finance, human resources, etc.



### Antrim County Expenditures - 2019



### Leelanau County Expenditures - 2019



## STAFF RETIREMENTS



Mike Cochran

Mike Cochran was hired by the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court in November of 2006. Mike was assigned as a probation officer and worked primarily out of our court in Leelanau County. He retired on July 5, 2019. Mike's experience, common sense and sense of humor will be missed.



Marissa Switalski and Tina Lehn

Marissa Switalski began working for the court on May 5, 2004 and on August 28, 2019, she left the court to pursue another career. Her attention to detail, and her willingness to help others will be missed.

Tina Lehn was hired on March 14, 1984. After working with our court for over 35 years, on November 15, 2019, she left in order to pursue a career with the Grand Traverse County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Her knowledge and her commitment to the court will be missed.

## PROMOTIONS

Sarah Lorigan started working with the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court on June 26, 2018 as a compliance officer assigned to Antrim County. In July of 2019 she was promoted and is now a probation officer assigned to Leelanau County. Sarah's common sense, communication skills and professionalism are a huge asset to our court.

Sue Schaub began working with Grand Traverse County on December 15, 1989. On November 17, 2003, Sue was hired by the 86<sup>th</sup> District Court as an office specialist. In October of 2019, Sue was promoted to the position of Office Coordinator. Her work ethic and customer service is second to none and she is a great mentor to new hires.

Debra Stevens was hired in to our court on November 13, 2018. She came to us with a wide variety of court experience after having been working in a district court in the southern area of the state. She started off in the probation department as an office specialist and on September 2, 2019, Deb was promoted to the Account Technician position. Deb's prior experience, her work ethic and her continuously positive personality make her a joy to work with.

Maryann Bratcher started working with the court on March 13, 2017 as an office specialist. On November 13, 2017 she was promoted to the position of part time compliance officer and still worked as a part time office specialist all while earning her Master's degree in Social Work. On February 25, 2019, Maryann was promoted to the position of full time community corrections/probation officer overseeing our drug court defendants. Her background/education in social work make her the perfect fit for this position.