

## Chapter 5

### 2002/03 Corporate Initiatives

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#### Modernizing Service Delivery

##### Model Electronic Courtroom

In 2002/03, CSD established a model electronic courtroom at the 393 University Avenue Superior Court of Justice in Toronto. The courtroom will test the use of in-court technology in commercial and other non-jury civil matters. The technology will support:

- Digital evidence and argument presentation
- Remote video and teleconferencing appearances by counsel, witnesses and interpreters
- Simultaneous cross-border hearings

Testing of the facility will continue over the spring of 2003.

In February 2002, CSD also became an affiliate with Courtroom 21, an advanced technology testing court developed by the U.S. National Centre for State

Courts and the College of William and Mary. Affiliate status will help CSD access knowledge and experience gained by other jurisdictions regarding the use of advanced technology in the court environment.

##### Display Boards Project

Visitors to the courts often require assistance to locate the proceeding they wish to attend. The Display Boards Project will foster user self-service by displaying courtroom schedules on large display boards in courthouse lobbies.

Display boards will be installed in 18 courthouses across the province, in the cities of Barrie, Brampton, Cornwall, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Milton, Newmarket, North Bay, Oshawa, Ottawa, Owen Sound, Sarnia, Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto. As of March 31, 2003, development and testing is complete. Implementation is scheduled for spring 2003.



Photos: (left) Model electronic courtroom at 393 University Avenue, Toronto; (right) Electronic evidence presentation by counsel

### **New Court Case Tracking System**

To modernize the management of Superior Court criminal, civil, family and small claims cases, Divisional Court cases and Ontario Court family cases, CSD has recently developed a new electronic court case tracking system. The system tracks timelines, allows staff to electronically schedule judicial officials and courtrooms, creates an electronic information database and improves reporting.

As of spring 2003, CSD is piloting the new system in Brantford, Sudbury and Oshawa/Whitby. Province-wide training and phased implementation will continue in 2003/04.

### **Video Remand**

A high proportion of preliminary criminal court appearances are remands; the accused is "remanded" (sent back) to custody to await trial. The Video Remand Project allows an accused person to appear in court by video conferencing from a police station or correctional institution. Video remand reduces the number of prisoners transported to court and results in cost savings for police services and reduced pressure in court holding cells.

The Video Remand Project has completed the third year of its rollout. As of March 31, 2003, 96 installations have been completed in courthouses, correctional facilities and Ontario Provincial Police detachments. Six installations are scheduled for 2003/04. The project is continuing to work with Ontario Provincial Police and First Nations Police Services to coordinate POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service) videophone installations, with the goal of providing video services in Ontario's remote locations.

### **Telecom Modernization**

The Ministry of the Attorney General Telecom Modernization Project was initiated to address the need to upgrade antiquated telephone infrastructure throughout the province, in order to improve Ministry adherence to Ontario's Quality Service Strategy.

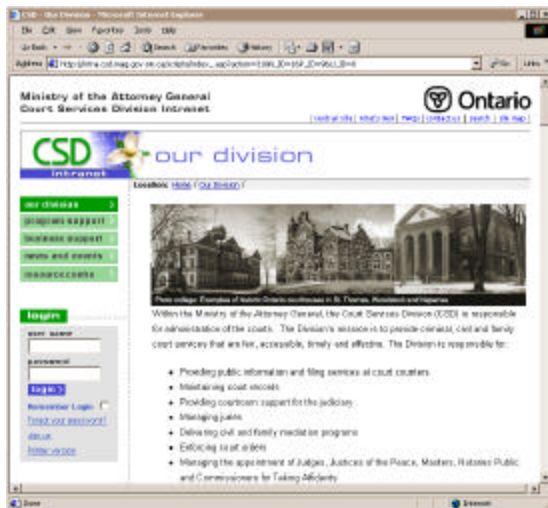
During 2002/03, telecom enhancement work continued at the Barrie, Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie, St. Catharines, Peterborough, L'Orignal, Dryden, and Sioux Lookout courthouses.

*“The government is committed to modernizing the justice system with up-to-date technology to better serve the public and to enable appropriate information-sharing among key justice partners.”*

## Improving Staff Support and Internal Communications

### The Court Services Division Intranet

In 2001/02, the Corporate Planning Branch developed and launched a new CSD intranet. This site is the primary means of communication between the CSD corporate head office and the regions. The site consists of over 1,800 web pages, including Divisional directives, up-to-date manuals, electronic forms, and other CSD communications. The site receives over 25,000 hits per day.



### Procedural Manuals

The Corporate Planning Branch began the Manual Writing Project in 2001/02 to address deficiencies in resources for staff in the field, deterioration of common service standards and variances in court procedures across the province. The project is undertaking to rewrite or create over 30 court procedural manuals.

Distributed to staff on the CSD intranet site, the new manuals:

- Present information in a clear and readable format
- Provide electronic links to forms and legislation required for legal authority
- Incorporate all CSD directives
- Remain current, by allowing for updates on a real-time basis as policies and procedures change
- Illustrate step-by-step instructions in diagrams

The manuals are being developed through collaboration between professional writers, designers, business line experts, focus groups and review committees.

### Electronic Forms

The Corporate Planning Branch is also in the process of making available over 1,500 court forms in electronic format. The forms will allow court staff to:

- Use the most current version of forms
- Fill out the forms electronically
- Save the contents of the forms for future reference
- Produce the forms in-house, on an as-needed basis, with considerable cost savings

The forms are linked to the procedural manuals on the CSD intranet site, to allow for easy access by court staff.

## Working with Our Justice Partners

### Improving Public Legal Education

In 2002, the Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN) was established with Chief Justice McMurtry, Chief Justice LeSage and Chief Justice Lennox as its founding directors. Arising from the activity of the Public Legal Education Task Force, OJEN is a collaborative venture with the objective of fostering public understanding of the justice system.

Members of CSD have been key in moving this justice outreach initiative forward. Local committees have been established in many Ontario courthouses to facilitate and improve public education and outreach by justice system volunteers. Through the "Courtrooms and Classrooms" program, over 30,000 students across Ontario have had an opportunity to engage in interactive sessions with various justice system participants.

In August 2002, OJEN presented the first Summer Law Institute for high school teachers. Conducted in Osgoode Hall, the successful two-day program included in-court sessions and provided teachers with materials to convey the values underlying the justice system to grade 10 civics students.

### Ontario Justice International

Ontario Justice International (OJI) is the Ministry of the Attorney General's international consulting service. By drawing upon the Ontario government's experience operating one of the largest justice systems in North America, OJI helps client governments design and operate fair, impartial, accessible and efficient justice systems.

As part of OJI, CSD has begun preparing customized international training programs on courts administration. The modular programs will build sequentially from the fundamentals of legislation and policy to the practical skills of records management, case management, financial management, audit practices, labour relations and courtroom support.

### Management Information

CSD statistics, collected by court staff across the province, comprise the largest source of statistical data used by the Ministry of the Attorney General. CSD is continuously developing its management information systems to:

- Improve the accuracy, scope and accessibility of court statistics
- Present court statistics online
- Generate standard statistical reports
- Permit the production of customized reports
- Provide the basis for informed and strategic decision-making across the Ministry
- Provide data to assist courts in managing their caseloads

*“OJEN is an ongoing forum for justice system participants, educators, community representatives and others to promote public understanding, education and dialogue in support of a responsive and inclusive justice system”*

Chief Justice Smith, Opening of Courts Speech, January 2003

## Managing Court Facilities

### Investing in Court Facilities

Since 1996, Ontario has committed \$269M to the Courts Construction Program, which focuses on the consolidation of Superior and Ontario Courts of Justice. Court construction projects have been completed in Brampton, Cornwall, Hamilton, Owen Sound, Toronto (Civil/Family), Welland and Windsor, and are underway in Chatham, Brockville and Pembroke.

The Ministry's other capital investments have been smaller in scope and have focused on the rehabilitation and repair of existing court facilities to manage health, safety and security issues.

Square Footage of Ontario's Courts by Region			
	Leased Space (sq. ft.)	Government-Owned Space (sq. ft.)	Total Space (sq. ft.)
Central East	267,915	325,214	593,129
Central West	244,177	735,578	979,755
East	293,649	332,266	625,915
North	102,588	450,684	553,272
Toronto	1,207,683	626,213	1,833,896
West	363,128	555,944	919,072
<b>Provincial Total</b>	<b>2,479,140</b>	<b>3,025,899</b>	<b>5,505,039</b>

### 2002/03 Courts Construction Projects

*Brockville:* Consolidation of the Ontario and Superior Courts of Justice into a renovated five-courtroom heritage courthouse with an estimated cost of \$14.1M. Costs of \$5.3M were incurred in 2002-03.

*Chatham:* Consolidation of the Ontario and Superior Courts of Justice into a renovated six-courtroom facility with an estimated cost of \$12.9M. Costs of \$6.7M were incurred in 2002-03. Construction is scheduled for completion in spring 2003, with occupancy planned for summer 2003.

*Owen Sound:* Consolidation of the Ontario and Superior Courts of Justice into a newly constructed five-courtroom facility with an estimated cost of \$16.5M. Costs of \$5.6M were incurred in 2002-03. The new consolidated courthouse opened February 3, 2003.

*Pembroke:* Planned consolidation of the Ontario and Superior Courts of Justice into the existing historic courthouse at 297 Pembroke Street East. The anticipated cost of renovating this five-courtroom facility is expected to be over \$15 million.

*Toronto:* Closure of 80 The East Mall and opening of a new courthouse at 2201 Finch Avenue West. The new, 11-courtroom facility opened July 29, 2002, with improved in-custody security services added March 3, 2003. The total cost of construction was \$29M, with \$14.3M invested in 2002-03.



Photo collage of Ontario Courts: (top row) Ottawa, Gore Bay, Napanee; (middle row) Barrie, Thunder Bay, Brampton; (bottom row) Picton, Sarnia, L'Orignal