

**FILED**

JUN 25 2024

**Nancy A. Dowling  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
Crawford County, Wis.**

STATE OF WISCONSIN

CIRCUIT COURT

CRAWFORD COUNTY

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In the Matter of:

CRAWFORD COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT RULES

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**ORDER**

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WHEREAS, the Court finds that the just, efficient and orderly administration of the business of the Circuit Court requires the adoption of Rules supplementing the Rules of Civil Procedure and other statutory directives,

NOW, THEREFORE, the following Crawford County Circuit Court Rules are hereby promulgated and adopted for the Circuit Court of Crawford County, effective June 3, 2024.

All previous Crawford County Circuit Court Rules are repealed.

Dated this 25 day of June, 2024.

BY THE COURT:

*Scott L. Horne*

Hon. Scott Horne  
Chief Judge  
7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

*Lynn M. Rider*

Lynn M. Rider  
Circuit Judge  
Crawford County, Wisconsin

**Crawford County  
Circuit Court Rules  
(Seventh Judicial District)**

**Part 1: Publication and Revision of Circuit Court Rules**

**Part 2: Closure of Proceedings to the News Media**

**Part 3: Case Processing time Guidelines**

**Part 4: Rules of Decorum**

**Part 5: Civil Practice**

**Part 6: Criminal Law Practice**

**Part 7: The Use of Videoconferencing in Court**

**Part 8: Small Claims Practice**

**Part 9: Family Law Practice**

**Part 10: Court Commissioners**

**Part 11: Court Security**

**Part 12: Excusing Jurors From Jury Duty**

**Part 13: Submission of Documents by Third Parties**

**PART 1: PUBLICATION AND REVISION OF CIRCUIT COURT RULES**

**100** Effective May 1, 2022

**101** Proposed Crawford County Circuit Court rules shall be posted for public review in the County Courthouse by the Clerk of Circuit Court and a copy shall be forwarded to the President of the Crawford County Bar Association at least thirty days prior to formal adoption.

**102** The posting of proposed rules and dissemination to the President of the Crawford County Bar Association as described in Paragraph 101 shall constitute sufficient public notice.

**103** Crawford County Circuit Court rules shall be adopted by written order of the Crawford County Circuit Judge subject to approval by the Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial District. Upon adoption, the Clerk of Court shall send a copy of the adopted or amended rule to the

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President of the Crawford County Bar Association, the Seventh Judicial District Court Administrator, the State Bar of Wisconsin, the State Law Library and the Office of the Director of State Courts.

**104** Orders adopting rules shall specify an effective date.

## **PART 2: CLOSURE OF PROCEEDINGS TO THE NEWS MEDIA**

**200** Effective May 1, 2022

**201** Unless good cause for a shorter time period has been shown to the Judge, a party moving that any judicial proceedings, required by law to be public, be closed to the news media must notify the court and the media coordinator in writing, if possible, at least 72 hours prior to the time set to hear the motion. The purpose of this rule is to permit legal counsel to appear on behalf of the media and be heard. The burden shall be upon the moving party to show good cause why the proceedings should not be public as required by statute.

## **PART 3: CASE PROCESSING TIME GUIDELINES**

**300** Effective May 1, 2022

**301** The following case processing time guidelines are for the processing of cases and are designed to provide a guide to the judiciary and bar. Unless otherwise indicated, the guidelines represent the time period from filing to final disposition. It is the goal to dispose of 90% of the following case types in the time periods listed.

Misdemeanor	
(from Initial appearance if in custody)	3 months
(if not in custody)	6 months
Felony	
(from initial appearance)	9 months
Traffic & Ordinance	
(from initial appearance)	2 months
Personal Injury/Property Damage	18 months
Contract/Money Judgments	12 months
Divorce	12 months
Estates	18 months
Small Claims	3 months
Child Support	3 months
Paternity	3 months

**302** It will be the practice of the court to schedule every case for a next action or review date at every stage in the life of the case.

## **PART 4: RULES OF DECORUM**

**400** Effective May 1, 2022

**401** Court shall be formally opened each day in which court business is transacted either by the bailiff or the Clerk of Court.

**402** As the Judge enters the courtroom, the bailiff or Clerk of Court shall require all present to rise and shall say, "All rise, The Circuit Court for Crawford County is now in session." All shall be seated and the business of court shall proceed.

**403** In the recessing, the Judge shall announce: "The court is now in recess."

**404** The flag of the United States shall at all times while court is in session be displayed at, on, or in close proximity to the bench, or in a standard to the right of the Judge.

**405** When the trial is to a jury, the parties, their attorneys, court personnel and the judge shall take their places in the courtroom before the jury is returned to the jury box. All present in the courtroom shall stand until the jury is seated.

**406** Lawyers shall never lean upon the bench or appear to engage the court in a manner which would lessen the dignity of the proceedings in the eyes of the jury and public.

**407** Lawyers shall examine witnesses from a position at the lectern or counsel table except when handling exhibits. In no case shall a witness be crowded during examination.

**408** When a lawyer or party is addressing the jury, the lawyer shall not crowd the jury box.

**409** During the examination of jurors on voir dire, the lawyer or party conducting the examination shall, insofar as practical, use collective questions, avoid repetition and seek only material information.

**410** During court proceedings, no lawyer or party shall exhibit familiarity with witnesses, jurors or opposing counsel. In jury arguments, no juror shall be addressed individually or by name. Strict adherence to this rule is required.

**411** Lawyers and court officers shall, while in attendance upon the court, be attired in such a manner as not to lessen the dignity of the court or of proceedings in the eyes of the jury and public. Suits, dresses and dress jackets shall be appropriate for women. Men shall wear a suit or sport coat and tie. Judicial discretion may be exercised otherwise in extreme situations.

**412** Lawyers shall advise their clients and witnesses of the formalities of the court and seek their full cooperation therewith. It is expected that lawyers will guide clients and witnesses as to appropriate attire.

**413** Lawyers shall examine witnesses with courtesy and respect, and a witness' good faith should be presumed until the contrary is evident.

- 414** The swearing of witnesses shall be an impressive ceremony and not a mere formality.
- 415** In jury cases which are disposed or upon a motion for dismissal or directed verdict, the Judge in dismissing the jury shall briefly explain the procedure and why a verdict was unnecessary.
- 416** The Judge shall wear a robe while presiding on the bench, provided that judicial discretion may be exercised otherwise in proper situations.
- 417** There shall be no unnecessary conversation, loud whispering, or other distracting activity by anyone in the courtroom or in the hallways on the court floor(s) while court is in session. There shall be no newspaper or magazine reading in the courtroom. Tobacco in any form shall not be used in the courthouse. No beverage, other than water, shall be consumed or possessed in the courtroom while court is in session.
- 418** The Judge shall at all times safeguard the rights of the parties and the interests of the public. The Judge shall be dignified, courteous and considerate of the parties, attorneys, jurors and witnesses. The Judge shall control temper and emotions and avoid conduct which tends to demean the proceedings or to undermine judicial authority in the courtroom.
- 419** The Judge shall be punctual in convening court and prompt in the performance of judicial duties, recognizing the time of litigants, jurors and attorneys is valuable and that lack of punctuality creates dissatisfaction with the administration of justice.
- 420** Attorneys are officers of the court and should at all times uphold the honor and maintain the dignity of their profession and maintain a respectful attitude toward the court.
- 421** Attorney's conduct before the court and with other counsel should be characterized by candor and fairness. All personality conflicts between attorneys and colloquies between attorneys should be avoided.
- 422** Attorneys shall, insofar as possible, refrain from interrupting each other, speaking at the same time, or arguing between themselves, thus assisting in making a proper record. Attorneys should instruct their witnesses to testify slowly and clearly so that the court and the jury can hear their testimony, and should caution witnesses not to chew anything while testifying.
- 423** Attorneys may address the court in a seated position at the counsel table or in a standing position at the counsel table or lectern. If it is necessary to discuss some question out of the hearing of the jury at the bench, the attorney may so indicate to the court and if invited, approach the bench for that purpose.
- 424** Unless excused by the Judge, after the jury has retired to deliberate upon a verdict, the attorneys representing the defendant and the State or plaintiff shall remain in the immediate area of the courtroom so as to be available at all times during the deliberations of the jury and when the verdict is received.

**425** The Clerk of Court shall be in charge of all case records and files, and shall be responsible for courtroom administration, including the feeding, housing and transportation of the jury when required.

**426** The Clerk of Court shall have the duty to see that each witness is sworn separately and that the oath is administered in a manner calculated to impress the witness and with the importance and solemnity of the oath taken.

**427** Witnesses, when sworn, should stand near the bench or the witness stand. After the witness is sworn, the Clerk shall direct the witness to give the reporter his or her full name, and request the witness to spell his or her surname. The witness should then be seated.

**428** When a jury has been selected and is to be sworn, the Clerk of Court shall request the jurors to rise while the jurors' oath is being administered.

**429** It shall be the duty of the jury bailiff to maintain order at all times as litigants, witnesses and the public assemble in the courtroom, during the progress of the trial and during recess of the court. This includes the duty to admit persons to the courtroom and direct them to seats, and to refuse admittance to the courtroom in such trials where the courtroom is occupied to its full seating capacity.

**430** It shall be the duty of the jury bailiff to take charge of and supervise the jury during the course of a trial, during court recesses, and during time of jury deliberation, to assure that no unauthorized persons come into contact with members of the jury. If such an attempt is made, the bailiff shall notify the judge at once. During sequestered trials, the bailiffs shall take the foregoing precautions on a 24-hour basis.

**431** The jury bailiff shall assist jurors as necessary with personal problems if they arise, and shall inform the Judge of any unusual problems of jurors which should be called to his or her attention.

**432** The jury bailiff shall at no time discuss with the jurors, litigants, witnesses or attorneys any issues involved in the trial, nor make any effort to assist the jurors in their deliberations.

**433** Attorneys, clients, and witnesses shall remain quiet in the courtroom corridors, as loud talking and laughter disrupt court proceedings. Conference rooms shall be used for all discussions.

**434** Attorneys and clients are expected to be in the courtroom on the date and time scheduled. If they are not in the courtroom, the court in its discretion may allow the case to proceed, be dismissed or moved to the end of the calendar on the date and time scheduled. Attorneys with time conflicts in other courts are expected to notify the court of such conflicts at the earliest possible date.

**435** Attorneys are required to have access to their calendars in court so that dates can be set in the courtroom when possible. In the event that an attorney does not have his or her calendar available in court, a date will be set in accordance with the Judge's calendar.

**436** In order to preserve impartiality and fairness in all judicial proceedings, all email correspondence regarding cases before the court shall be addressed and sent to the appropriate Judge's judicial assistant, and not to the judge directly.

**437** All local Court rules shall apply to pro se litigants unless excused by the presiding Judge.

**438** In recognition of the use of electronic devices by the general public and in keeping with the court's desire to maintain the dignity and decorum of the court while permitting the use of this equipment at times when the use does not interfere with the operations of the court, electronic equipment, including, but not limited to cellular telephones, lap top computers and recording devices, may be used in the courtroom, provided their use does not interfere with courtroom decorum. These electronic devices may not be used in the jury room during deliberations.

## **PART 5: CIVIL PRACTICE**

**500** Effective May 1, 2022

**501** Motion practice:

No motion shall be filed without a date and time shown for hearing obtained from the court.

Motions, affidavits, briefs and supporting papers shall be filed with the Clerk of Court prior to the day of hearing.

Should counsel for any party fail to give timely notice, deliver supporting papers or serve a brief, the motion may be decided against his/her client for such cause or the motion hearing may be adjourned with costs and attorney's fees being awarded to the inconvenienced party.

**502** Unopposed Mortgage Foreclosures:

On motions for default judgment, summary judgment or confirmation of sale, a hearing will be scheduled. All counsel may be given permission to appear by telephone for these matters.

Notice of hearing must be given to all interested parties; proof of service must be filed prior to hearing date.

Affidavits of default or in support of summary judgment must clearly set forth period of default, amount of default and full amount of interest, principal, late charges, etc. due on hearing date. Any additions to principal must be fully supported by proof of appropriate affidavit.

A copy of the note and mortgage must be attached to affidavit of default or in support of summary judgment.

Pleadings and affidavits of default or support of summary judgment must clearly set forth the factual basis for the application of Sec. 846.101, 846.102 or 846.103 Wis. Stats. and set forth which statute section applies.

**503** In all pretrial matters, attorneys must have the authority to negotiate in the absence of their clients or, if authority is not granted, immediate telephonic access to the clients shall be required.

**504** Payments for foreclosures, warrants, suspensions, cash bonds, and non-sufficient fund checks may only be made by certified check, money order or cash.

**505** Continuances:

All requests for continuance shall be in writing with the signed consent of the parties or the attorneys, or on the record with the parties present and must be for good cause shown. All requests for continuance are subject to approval of the court.

If counsel or a party has good cause to request a continuance of any pretrial, trial, motion or other proceeding which has been scheduled by the court, he shall immediately notify the court and opposing counsel in the manner provided.

Unilateral phone calls or letters to the Clerk or Judge directly to avoid a time fixed for a pretrial, trial motion or other proceedings are attempts to secure the consideration of the court without reference to the rights of other parties in interest and their attorneys. Although phone messages and letters may be used from time to time when there exists just cause for a continuation without sufficient time for communication thereof by proper motion and notice, such emergency messages are provisional only and do not supersede a motion under §802.10.

Motions for continuance shall be made in accordance with §802.10

For adequate reason, the time limitations for hearing may be waived by the court.

As an alternative to a motion under §802.10, counsel for a party may, having and representing that he or she has the consent of all other parties, request a continuance by letter to the presiding Judge. The request for continuance is still subject to the approval of the court.

To avoid scheduling conflict as a reason for continuance, attorneys shall be prepared to immediately advise the court of such conflicts when the court sets dates from the bench or in conference.

**506** Service on Opposing Counsel:

Except as otherwise ordered by the court, before submission of any proposed findings, conclusions of law, judgment, brief, memorandum, affidavit, requested instructions or



verdict, a copy shall be served upon or mailed to opposing counsel with a letter or notation informing counsel that the original has been forwarded to the court.

Objections, if any, shall be filed with the court and a copy mailed to opposing counsel within five (5) business days after such service or mailing. In the event counsel does not file particularized objections to the form of said documents, the court may deem objections to form to be waived.

This rule does not apply to trial briefs.

## **PART 6: CRIMINAL LAW PRACTICE**

**600** Effective May 1, 2022

**601** Paragraph 505 above is adopted by reference.

**602** When an attorney is appointed, by the court, to represent a defendant, at the time of disposition, it will be the obligation of the attorney to advise the court he/she was appointed so that repayment of the fees can be addressed.

## **603 PLEA AGREEMENT**

This rule shall govern all plea negotiations and any plea agreements, in criminal cases, on or after the effective date of this rule.

- A. Both counsel are equally responsible for initiating plea discussions at the earliest practical time.
- B. Any plea agreement must be finalized at the criminal jury status hearing set by the court.
- C. If a plea agreement is reached, a plea to a criminal offense may not be taken at the status conference. The Judicial Assistant shall work with the attorneys to schedule a plea hearing.
- D. No plea agreement will be accepted on or after the deadline set out above except under extraordinary circumstances, and with specific permission of the Court.
- E. Violation of this rule may result in the Court imposing any and all sanctions authorized by law and by the inherent power of the Court. Those sanctions can include, but are not limited to, assessing the full costs of a jury panel, including mileage, against either or both parties, or their counsel.

## **PART 7: THE USE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING IN COURT**

**700** Effective May 1, 2022

**701** All video events and appearances are to be indicated on the court record.

**702** Any location where a remote appearance is being conducted with a Crawford County Circuit Judge or Court Commissioner is to be considered an extension of the courtroom in which the hearing is taking place.

**703** Any proceeding or appearance allowable by statute (see §885.60 re: criminal matter) or case law may be conducted by video either by request of a party or at the discretion of the presiding court official.

**704** Any party (including the court) requesting the use of video for an upcoming court event should attempt to do so within a reasonable amount of time prior to the hearing/trial and/or to the physical transport of the prisoner/patient/detainee, witness, etc.

**705** If any party objects to conducting a hearing via video, they shall orally (on the record) or in writing notify the court the reason why and all counsel of record and/or parties not represented by counsel of record of such objection within a reasonable time prior to the hearing. The Judge shall make a determination on the record, whether to proceed with the video proceeding or allow or require counsel/litigant to personally appear.

**706** Parties to a video proceeding authorized by the court may file by facsimile or eFiling any papers necessary for the completion of the proceeding. In addition, it is imperative that any documents requiring examination by other parties must be provided prior to the hearing so as to allow adequate time for review.

**707** During a video proceeding the court shall maintain full control of the remote camera and courtroom camera. No movement or adjustments of the video cameras or sound shall be made unless authorized by the court, except, however, counsel may mute the microphone to confer with her or his client.

**708** The circuit court shall have priority use of video units, notwithstanding any arrangements made with private entities.

## **PART 8: SMALL CLAIMS PRACTICE:**

**800** Effective May 1, 2022

**801** The plaintiff need not appear at the return date. The defendant must appear or file a written answer which is sufficiently detailed to inform the plaintiff as to the nature of the dispute. Failure of the defendant to answer or appear will result in the granting of a default judgment. The trial date may be set by the Court on the return date.

**802** In all small claims cases, those who may appear are as follows:

1. The person named as Plaintiff or Defendant.
2. An Attorney on behalf of the named Plaintiff or Defendant. (Paralegals or legal secretaries may not appear.)

3. One spouse may appear on behalf of another spouse as long as their interests are not adverse.
4. Guardians may appear for the ward.
5. If there is more than one Plaintiff/Defendant, all of them must appear.
6. A full-time authorized employee of a person may appear on that person's behalf.
7. A full-time authorized employee of a corporation may appear on the corporation's behalf.

**803** In all small claims cases, the parties or attorneys must have the authority to negotiate in good faith.

**804** Service on the resident defendants in all non-eviction and non-replevin actions may be made by US mail as set forth in §799.12 in lieu of personal or substituted service under §801.11, Wis. Stats. However, when the defendant is a nonresident, service must be personal. For purposes of this subsection, “nonresident” means an individual residing outside Crawford County. In eviction and replevin actions, service on all defendants must be personal.

**805** When it is necessary for the judgment creditor to obtain an order to show cause for failure of the debtor to file a financial disclosure statement, the Clerk shall add to the judgment the cost of serving this order to show cause.

## **PART 9: FAMILY LAW PRACTICE**

**900** Effective May 1, 2022

**901** When the pleadings or the parties indicate child custody or physical placement are at issue, the parties shall mediate the custody and placement issues with a mediator appointed by the Crawford County Department of Human Services. The first meeting of the parties with the mediator appointed by the Crawford County Department of Human Services shall be without charge. Subsequent meetings with the mediator shall be at a fee set by the Circuit Judge.

The fees for mediation are made payable directly to the Crawford County Clerk of Court, 220 N. Beaumont Road, Prairie du Chien, WI 53821, by mail or in person. The Clerk of Court will accept cashier checks, cash or money orders but no personal checks.

Individuals who are indigent may request to have their obligations reduced.

**902** In the event the parties are unable to mediate a resolution on child custody and placement issues, the mediator shall so advise the court who will then appoint a guardian ad litem for the minor child or children involved. Each parent shall then deposit the sum of \$1,000.00 with the Crawford County Clerk of Court within 30 days as an initial contribution to the guardian ad litem fees unless the court authorizes a different amount. Upon petition

to the court, the obligation of a parent to make such deposit may be waived in part or full provided, however, the court shall make such orders as are appropriate to require the parents of the minor children to pay the guardian ad litem fees in total which payments shall be allocated between the parents by the court.

**903** Attorneys wishing to be considered by the court for appointment as guardian ad litem for a minor must be eligible to accept an appointment under SCR 35.01. Acceptance of a guardian ad litem appointment under SCR 35.02 constitutes a representation to the court that the appointed attorney has complied with SCR 35.01.

**904** When the guardian ad litem in a family case petitions the court for approval of his/her bill, in addition to providing the necessary information regarding the number of hours and the types of activities, the guardian ad litem shall also submit an order in Word format for the Judge's signature providing for responsibility for the payment of the fees. It shall be the obligation of the guardian ad litem to ensure that the issue of responsibility for payment is addressed at or prior to the final hearing.

**905** Unrepresented parties in divorce proceedings shall use the pro se divorce forms available at [wicourts.gov](http://wicourts.gov) or forms that are identical in content.

## **PART 10: COURT COMMISSIONERS**

**1000** Effective date May 1, 2022

Court Commissioners, having been appointed by separate order, have the fullest extent of authority which statute authorizes for them. Commissioners shall wear suitable dress, excluding a robe. They may preside on the bench. Dignity and decorum, consistent with a courtroom, shall attend proceedings before a commissioner.

Initial appearances in criminal matters shall be on the record. Clerk's minutes shall constitute sufficient record in bail hearings when a court reporter is not available. All requests for hearings by a Court Commissioner shall be made to the Clerk of Court or Judge. Compensation to a Court Commissioner shall be paid by the county when authorized by the Judge at the rate established by SCR 81.02.

## **PART 11: COURT SECURITY**

**1100** Effective date May 1, 2022

**1101** Because of the need to protect litigants, attorneys, jurors and other visitors to the courthouse from the danger of violence, as a condition of entering the building, all persons, packages, purses, backpacks, bags, briefcases or any personal property brought into the courthouse may be searched. If possible, the searches shall be conducted using a metal detecting wand and all persons shall open their packages, purses and briefcase when directed by bailiff and/or sheriff.

**1101** Lawyers are to advise the Judge or the bailiff of any security threat, in any case in which they are involved. This information should include names, nature of the threat, times, and other pertinent information.

**1102** The Sheriff is responsible for courtroom security and may, when appropriate, with the approval of the presiding Judge, adopt specific safeguards or policies in addition to these rules.

**1103** The court may appoint and the Sheriff may deputize one or more bailiffs to attend upon the court as requested.

**1104** All prisoners shall be searched before being brought to court and shall be placed in handcuffs and leg irons unless there is a medical reason to waive this security requirement. The Sheriff shall make this determination.

**1105** At jury trials restraints shall be removed from prisoners before entering the courtroom unless the presiding Judge orders otherwise.

**1106** Security bailiffs shall be armed with a firearm and may also be armed with a Taser device. All uniformed police officers may wear their firearms while in the courtroom as part of their uniform. However, plain clothes officers who are armed shall report to the bailiffs before entering the courtroom. The bailiff shall then determine whether the plain clothes officer shall store his/her firearm in a safe place or continue to wear the firearm.

**1107** Jury bailiffs are not obligated to wear firearms or Taser units.

**1108** Searches of the courtroom and incoming spectators and witnesses shall be taken whenever the Sheriff or bailiff deems it necessary and advisable or whenever the Judge shall order.

**1109** Bailiffs shall ensure at least one door of the courthouse remains open to the public during all court proceedings whenever held.

## **PART 12: EXCUSING JURORS FROM JURY DUTY**

**1110** Effective date June 3, 2024

**1111** All requests to be excused from jury duty must be submitted in writing and forwarded to the Clerk of Court or to the Judge for approval or denial of the request.

**1112** If a juror is asking to be excused for a medical reason, a letter from a doctor is required in addition to their written request to be excused. The Clerk of Court has authority to approve/deny these requests.

**1113** Any juror who is 75 years of age or older may be permanently excused upon the juror's request. Either the Clerk of Court or the Judge may grant this request.

**PART 13: SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS BY THIRD PARTIES**

1114 Effective date June 3, 2024

1115 In all cases, a party or their attorney may file documents/correspondence in the case. However, third parties are not permitted to engage in ex parte communication with the Court by writing a letter to the Court or filing documents in a case.

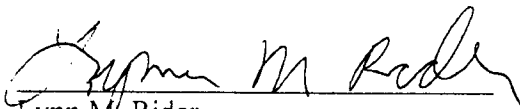
1116 Any third party wanting documents/correspondence submitted for the Court's consideration shall provide the document/correspondence to a party or attorney involved in the case who may file the document/correspondence at their discretion.

1117 Any documents/correspondence dropped off or sent to the Court by third parties without following the above procedure will be returned with a copy of this policy attached.

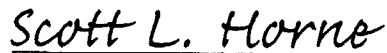
Dated this 25 day of June, 2024.

BY THE COURT:

APPROVED:



Lynn M. Rider  
Crawford County Circuit Judge



Hon. Scott Horne  
Chief Judge  
Seventh Judicial Administrative District