

# Public Record Update

## March 2016

### Civil and Domestic Relations Record Access Site in Georgia

Per an agreement between the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia and PeachCourt.com, electronic filing and document access for civil and domestic relations cases is available from a number of Superior and State Courts. 59 courts now offer document access via this service and 119 courts offer e-filing.

Record access is quite easy. Registration is free. One may search by name or case number (you can also use a partial name or case number) at a single court or statewide. Results include the entire up-to-the-minute case docket where one can view the attorney name, judge and case initiation date. Personal identifiers are not displayed. Case document images may be purchased for \$.50 per page. In general, case documents are available instantly from 2014 forward. Depending on the court, older documents from 2005 to 2013 are supplied via email within a short time frame.

To view the current list of courts available and to sign-up, visit <https://www.peachcourt.com>.

### News About the Oregon Judicial Case Information Network

Online fee-based access to Oregon court data is via OJCIN, the Oregon Judicial Case Information Network. OJCIN includes three systems: OJIN (Oregon Judicial Information Network), OECI (Oregon eCourt Case Information Network), and ACMS (Appellate Case Management System).

The OJIN system has been in place for many years for Circuit Court record access. OECI is the new system (vendor is Odyssey) that courts are now converting to and will eventually house the Circuit Courts records statewide. Currently 28 counties are on OSCI and 8 are on OJIN. Both systems are fee-based. Only one log-in is required. The access point services that serves both the old and the new systems is <http://courts.oregon.gov/OJD/OnlineServices/OJIN/Pages/index.aspx>.

The latest court to convert from OJIN to OECI is the Oregon Tax Court. As of March 2, 2016, data entry is using the OECI. Data entered before the March 2 date will remain accessible on OJIN until April 23, 2016. Public access to the

new OECl system will be available beginning March 21, 2016 when all data, included previously on OJIN, will be available on OECl.

### **Comments on Equivalency at the County Level**

Both systems provide data in real time from the Oregon Judicial Department database and display the same data as displayed on public access terminals at the courts. In other words, the courts' onsite public terminals use OJIN or OECl, depending on which system the county currently uses.

### **Feedback**

There has been pushback regarding the new system. According to local record researchers:

1. The new system is cumbersome; more time is needed to perform a search.
2. The initial docket data displayed on OECl does not provide as many details as OJIN, so additional screens often must be viewed to see docket status or final disposition.
3. Also there are inconsistent data elements displayed on OECl dockets. In these instances, researchers must pull case files to correctly ascertain case information.

Reportedly there is a committee of attorneys working with Odyssey to overcome these problems. The ultimate purpose is to create a more modern, user-friendly environment for record access when compared to the OJIN command line based system. But there are still some issues to overcome.

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## **Possible Motor Vehicle Record Fee Increase in Michigan**

The proposed 2017 budget submitted by Michigan Governor Snyder includes a provision (Section 703) to increase the fee for a motor vehicle record look-up from \$8.00 to \$11.00 effective October 1, 2017. The bill is currently in committee stage.

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## **Recent Trend Among Texas County Clerks**

BRB Publication processes thousands of surveys monthly for updating its profiles of government agency record access procedures. This past month we received a number of similar comments on surveys from Texas County Clerks who handle **court records and recorded documents**.

Quite a few informed us that their office and staff will no longer conduct property or judicial record searches and would require a specific information like cause number before providing data. They stated the reason is because

they are not authorized by statute. We called and spoke to some of the clerks and asked if there was a document being circulated from the state judiciary about this issue. Although they all denied any memos or mandates, they all mentioned this new procedure was statute related per the state attorney general's office. Hunt County specifically referred to an Attorney General Opinion, [WW-607](#) from 1959, which states: *The County Clerk has no duty to search the records under his control and guarantee the correctness thereof.* Also, several clerks also mentioned another reason is because they do not have errors and omissions insurance for searching records.

Of course throughout the country there have always been a number of courts and recorder's office that will not perform name searches for those reasons. **The message here is to be prepared to possibly hire a record searcher in Texas counties that formerly provided clerk searches.**

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## ■ Update on Diploma Mills and LinkedIn Profiles

A diploma mill is a school that issues degrees with substandard or no academic studies and is not accredited - meaning it is not recognized as an accredited degree-granting school by the U.S. Dept. of Education or by other accredited accrediting organizations.

Finally, well-know diploma mill Alameda University is defunct. Alameda sold undergraduate and graduate degrees based on life experiences. See the detailed write-up at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alameda\\_University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alameda_University).

But the legacy still lives on. Do a search on LinkedIn and you will see that 4,297 people in the U.S. report they hold a "degree" from Alameda on their LinkedIn profile. You can sort by industry. For example 137 in Human Resources tout they have a diploma mill degree from Alameda, 468 from Information Technology, 247 from Hospital & Health Care, and 136 from Financial Services, and even 86 from Security and Investigations.

If this article is of interest to you, check out the widespread use of LinkedIn users touting their degrees from these mills as well: Euclid University, Columbia Pacific University, Golden State University, Stanford University (includes six people associated with NBC News).

Makes you wonder who did the background checks on these people when they were hired.

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## ■ Door Prizes for State Trade Association Events

If you are involved with an upcoming event for an investigative or legal state organization and would like a donation of products as door prizes, please contact Michael Sankey at [mike@brbpublications.com](mailto:mike@brbpublications.com). Please identify yourself, the group, the date, and the number of attendees.

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