

# Public Record Update

## May 2015

### Court News

#### **Washington State**

The state legislature recently increased the **civil jurisdictional limit** for **District Courts** from \$75,000 to \$100,000. The effective date is July 24, 2015.

Senate Bill 5125, which amends RCW 3.66.020, can be viewed at:

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/DLR/billsummary/default.aspx?Bill=5125&year=2015>

Superior Court is the court of general jurisdiction with jurisdiction for felony matters, real property rights, domestic relations, estate, mental illness, juvenile, and civil cases over \$75,000 but soon to be \$100,000. District Courts have jurisdiction over misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor violations, and civil cases under \$75,000, but soon to be \$100,000 on July 24, 2015.

This law will actually affect Municipal courts as well since per RCW 3.66.020: "... (10) Proceedings to civilly enforce any money judgment entered in any municipal court or municipal department of a district court organized under the laws of this state; ..."

#### **Niagara Falls City Court, Niagara County, New York**

Effective June 12, 2015, the primary phone number will change from 716-278-9800 to 716-371-4100. Callers will be prompted to choose different Departments. The fax numbers of 716-278-9809 for criminal and 716-278-9869 for civil remain the same.

#### **Mitchell County District Court, Iowa**

The U.S.P.S. will no longer deliver mail to 508 State Street and the court is in a temporary location until August. At that time the court will move into a new facility at 212 South Fifth Street. Until then, send all mail to PO Box 209, Osage IA 50461. If questions, call 641-732-3726.

### Motor Vehicle News

#### **Pennsylvania Driving Record Fee**

Effective July 1, 2015 the fee charged to obtain a Pennsylvania driving record will increase from \$8.00 to \$9.00. The increase, mandated by Act 89 of 2013, affects both manual and online requests.

#### **Utah - Driver Monitoring**

Through the online service provider Utah.gov, a notification program is offered that enables insurance companies and insurance support firms to track activity of submitted drivers. Effective July 1, 2015 this program is now also available to employers. The subscriber submits a monthly list of drivers. If there has been activity in the preceding calendar month, a driving record is automatically

issued. If there was no activity, the subscriber is also notified. The cost for the service is \$.12 per driver and the driving record fee if a records is issued. Eligible organizations may subscribe by visiting [www.utah.gov/registration](http://www.utah.gov/registration).

### **Nova Scotia Driving Record Fee**

Effective July 1, 2015 the fee charged to obtain a driver abstract from Nova Scotia will increase 3% from \$18.10 to \$18.65. The fee to obtain a certified letter regarding specific information on a driver abstract increases from \$12.80 to \$13.20. Of course these fees are quoted in Canadian currency.

Driver Abstracts contain a five-year history of collision and MVA conviction events, Criminal Code Convictions, departmental postings and processes, and a ten-year history of alcohol related convictions and revocations. For more about Nova Scotia records, see <http://novascotia.ca/sns/rmv/licence/abstracts.asp>

### **Oklahoma New Online Site for OK Drivers to Obtain Their Own Record**

In April 2015, the OK DPS introduced the ability for drivers to obtain their own record online for \$27.50. The user may print a PDF version. If an email address is provided, the DPS will send a link so the record can be downloaded again within a 30 day period. See <https://www.ok.gov/dps/mvr/app/index.php>.

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(The Motor Vehicle News is from [The MVR Access and Decoder Digest](#))

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## **LinkedIn and Fake Degrees**

Have you ever used the Advanced Search feature on Linked to spot people touting a fake degree from a diploma mill? If not, this is how to do so:

1. After you log-in, click on the "Advanced" tab shown on the top bar.
2. The list on the left side of the next page shows Search categories.
3. Under the section labeled School, type in the name of a known diploma mill.

The example below is using Almeda, a well known, unaccredited learning institution registered on the Island of Nevis in the Caribbean with an office in Boise. One can purchase a Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degree based on life experiences. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almeda\\_University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almeda_University).

Per a search on May 28, 2015, there are now 4,937 people (4,243 from the U.S.) touting their degree from Almeda. Of course you can view names, pictures, and current employers. Below are figures showing some of the industries where people holding a "degree" from Almeda are currently working.

- Information Technology - 458
- Hospital & Health Care - 240
- Financial Services - 132
- Human Resources - 129
- Security and Investigations - 91

Try this yourself, perhaps using a different diploma mill like Belford or California Pacifica.

LinkedIn is perhaps the most widely used social media resource for business and professional information about people. But how accurate is this information? A general rule of thumb is 30% of all resumes have enhancements or falsehoods. I suspect that LinkedIn has a similar percentage on the profile pages. Whether you consider a degree from a diploma mill as merely being an enhancement or a novelty, or as a falsehood credential, the fact remains that spotting a purchased degree requiring little or no work should be a component on every background check.

By the way, The following statement appears at the Almeda web page at <http://almedauniversity.org/certification-accreditation.html>:

"None of the accrediting agencies that recognize Almeda University are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the seven official regional accrediting agencies. This non-recognition may have some implications to include, but not limited to: 1. Almeda University is unable to participate in the Federal Student Loan/Financial Aid program. 2. Almeda University is not authorized to accept the GI Bill. 3. Almeda University is unable to guarantee acceptance of its degree programs in other postsecondary institutions. 4. Public sector employers will not recognize a degree accredited by a private accreditor. 5. Private sector employers have no obligation to accept degrees from Almeda University."



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