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For immediate release: July 27, 2010  
For further information contact:  
Winnie Comfort or Tammy Kendig  
609-292-9580

### **Significant Reduction in Criminal Backlog Highlighted in Judiciary Report**

A 13 percent decrease in backlogged criminal cases during the past court year is only part of the good news to be found in the [Judiciary's annual statistical report](#), Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts, announced today. The report, available at njcourts.com, shows an overall 1 percent reduction in backlog.

“This report demonstrates how hard our judges and staff have worked to maintain high-quality justice in a very difficult economy,” said Judge Grant. “That we have been able to reduce our backlog even as we operate with 450 fewer staff members reflects the commitment of Judiciary employees to do their jobs well. We have also capitalized on the expansion of information technology and on our relationships with other agencies to deliver justice that is not only fair, but also efficient and timely.”

The number of criminal cases in backlog was reduced from 7,252 on June 30, 2009 to 6,289 on June 30, 2010, a 13 percent decline. The time goal for the resolution of all criminal cases, from first degree to fourth degree, is four months.

The special civil part also achieved significant backlog reduction. By far the largest caseload in Superior Court, the special civil part resolves small claims and cases worth \$15,000 or less. The special civil courts received 609,648 filings in court year 2010, a 1 percent increase from court year 2009. In spite of the increase in filings, the backlog of special civil cases declined by 31 percent during court year 2010. On June 30, 99 percent of the special civil caseload was considered current.

Much of the reduction in special civil backlog can be attributed to the expansion of JEFIS, the Judiciary's Electronic Filing and Imaging System, which enables streamlined case management processes that can speed the resolution of those cases. The percentage of special civil cases filed with JEFIS rose from 59 percent of the eligible special civil caseload in 2009 to 95 percent of the eligible special civil caseload by June 2010.

Backlog is an important case management tool for measuring the Judiciary's effectiveness and efficiency. By adopting self-imposed time goals for resolving different types of cases, the Judiciary can assess how well it is responding to the needs of the public. Cases that remain open beyond the expected time goal are considered to be in backlog. Judges and court staff strive to reduce the number of backlogged cases as part of their overall effort to ensure high-quality justice in every case.

Backlog dropped significantly in several family division cases types. The backlog of non-dissolution cases, involving mostly child support and custody matters, was reduced by 64 percent, with 97 percent of all non-dissolution matters considered current. The courts achieved a 52 percent reduction in backlogged domestic violence cases, and 97 percent of all domestic violence cases are considered current. The backlog of juvenile delinquency cases is down by 35 percent, with 95 percent of those cases considered current. The backlog of divorce cases is down by 10 percent, and 94 percent of those cases are current.

The family division has only a small percentage of cases in backlog, with 96 percent of all family cases within time goals for resolution. Many case types resolved in the family division involve children, juveniles and other family members most vulnerable to the upheaval and disruption that involvement in a court case might entail. Many case types in the family division have the shortest time goals for resolution. The courts work diligently to resolve those cases as quickly as possible.

In the general equity part, contested foreclosure filings rose from 2,066 in court year 2009 to 4,075 in 2010, a 97 percent increase. As a result, backlog has increased dramatically, from 155 in court year 2009 to 408 in 2010, a 163 percent increase. The recent implementation of JEFIS for foreclosure filings has positioned the Judiciary to address the dramatic growth of the foreclosure caseload.

A 5 percent increase in civil case filings, also a reflection of the difficult economy, helped to drive the backlog of civil cases up by 10 percent. Nonetheless, 83 percent of all civil cases are current, from Track 1 cases, which are the least complex, to Track 4 cases, which include mass torts and other complex commercial matters.

“Our aspiration of continuous improvement drives us to assess and analyze our progress in resolving cases expeditiously for attorneys and litigants whose lives and livelihoods are directly affected by any unnecessary delay,” said Judge Grant. “We will continue to monitor our caseload, including our backlog, as we seek to maximize our efficiency with the resources available to us. I have no doubt that, thanks to the dedication and commitment of our Judiciary workforce, we will continue to maintain our high-quality service to a public that deserves nothing less.”

In court year 2010 the courts received 1,127,763 filings, a 1 percent decrease from the 1,134,943 cases filed during court year 2009. The courts resolved 1,133,872 cases during court year 2010, slightly more than the 1,132,760 cases resolved during court year 2009. On June 30, 225,839 cases were pending in Superior Court, 2 percent less than in court year 2009. Of those, 198,642 cases were current and 27,197 cases were in backlog, which is 1 percent less than the backlog figure of 27,501 in backlog on June 30, 2009. Overall, 12 percent of the courts’ cases are in backlog.