Municipal Court Process for eCite

The process described below is for a true municipal court. Some small municipalities use district court and it works differently for them. These are referred to as opted-in municipalities. These opted-in munis may or may not have their own adopting codes.

The municipal court does not have to buy any software or special equipment. You can begin by treating these tickets just like a paper ticket basically. But it will still be an improvement because you will have a nice, printed, legible ticket. The ticket will be more accurate and complete because of the edit checks built into the software. For example, you can't print the ticket if you omitted critical fields. The officers will still take a printed copy of the court version of the ticket, sign it and swear to the ticket in front of the clerk. The only difference is that once the judge adjudicates the ticket, the clerk will have to make a copy to send to DPS.

The officers will need to transmit (transfer) their tickets. This puts them in the overall eCite database and causes them to show up in LETS. This is helpful when other officers stop the same driver and see that the driver has already received eCitations before. The transfer has to be done over an internet connection. If the officers do not have an aircard to provide connectivity in the cars, then they can drive up to any wireless hotspot. Most every courthouse has a hotspot in the parking lot or one could be set up. There are probably other hotspots in your town also. The new laptops have Wi-Fi and will automatically detect wireless networks and connect to them. If you can't find a hotspot, you can take the laptop inside and connect to the internet over a wireless network or a hardline. These tickets are transferred by simply clicking a button. All tickets need to be transmitted and they all go to the eCite server. From the server, the district court tickets are uploaded to the AOC mainframe and then sent out to the appropriate district courthouse. For the municipal tickets, the tickets sit on the server until your municipal court "pulls" them down and into their local RMS. Whether or not your court can pull down the tickets depends on who your vendor is for the court Records Management System (RMS). We provide a free web service that allows vendors to integrate with our eCite system and go and "grab" the data. Some court vendors are integrated currently and some are working toward that goal. The SJIS system that AOC provides is integrated. Since all municipal courts are independent and there are a lot of different systems out there, **court integration depends on who the vendor is for your court RMS.** Your court vendor may charge you to build the interface to integrate their system with eCite. We have no control over this. This will be between you and your vendor. But we do not charge anything to provide the data and the web service to them. The vendor can contact Rhonda Stricklin at CAPS at UA to obtain the XML schema of the data if they are interested and have not already done so. But many of them have already asked for it and are working toward integration. Some have already achieved it.

There is one more thing to mention for the benefit of the court clerk or magistrate. They can be given access to a web site CAPS has developed called eSearch. This will allow them to look at the tickets for their ORI and even print tickets if they needed to. There are search fields to search for a particular ticket, date ranges if you want to look at tickets for a certain date range, etc. They must be set up with a username and a password for this site.

If you have other questions, contact Rhonda Stricklin at:
rstricklin@cs.ua.edu or 1-866-349-2273.