



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
District of New Mexico  
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MARTHA VÁZQUEZ  
Chief Judge

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September 20, 2005

Dear Members of the Federal Bar:

Since 1997, the U.S. District Court has taken great pride in providing the ACE electronic filing system to its practitioners. ACE has given the Bar the opportunity to electronically file documents anytime of the day or night, access pleadings online, check the calendar, and perform a variety of other functions, all from the convenience of their desk top. Electronic filing, signatures, and document retrieval were all new to the Bar.

The Federal Bar in New Mexico has kept stride with each change and has responded with alacrity. In June 2004, electronically-filed pleadings in the Court exceeded manually filed pleadings for the first time. Today, roughly 60% of the Court's filings are done electronically, and, on average, more than 250 filings are handled per day.

It is against this backdrop that we are proud to announce our latest progression in case management and electronic filing. CM/ECF ("Case Management/Electronic Case Files"), the nationally-supported case management program developed by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, will soon replace ACE and all other internal case management applications. CM/ECF has many similarities to ACE. These similarities will make the transition quite manageable for internal and external users alike. Additionally, new benefits will include enhanced report and querying capabilities, online payment options, access to any federal court docket in the country, and the flexibility to add other enhancements as needed. In the coming weeks, the Clerk's office will be posting information about CM/ECF on its website and through the Bar Bulletin.

This important change was necessitated by decreasing federal funding in general and, specifically, for locally-supported projects such as ACE. As such, the Court will no longer be able to offer some services free of charge. In 1990, Congress directed the Judicial Conference to prescribe reasonable fees for public access to electronic information for the funding of information technology projects. Fees are set at lowest possible level sufficient to fund such costs. A reasonable per-page fee, currently \$0.08 per page, will be assessed for viewing and retrieving documents and other docket-related information; however, filers will receive one "free look" at documents in their cases. Users wishing to download a document will never pay more the \$2.40 per document, regardless of document size, and no fee is owed until an account holder accrues charges of \$10.00 or more in a calendar year. In order to access documents and other docket-related information from outside the court, users will be required to obtain a PACER account. Details of the fee schedule and the PACER system can be viewed at our website. We believe that the fees will broaden the Court's ability to continually refine and improve the services that we bring to the Bar and the public. Other services, such as the Court calendar, will continue to be provided for free. Additionally, anyone may still come to the court and view the information at no charge.

The Court has reassigned key personnel to carry out this transition. Training will be provided by the Court through a variety of channels including classroom instruction, computer based training tutorials, and more. The Court is committed to bringing about this change as smoothly and painlessly as possible.

"Fear not the future, weep not for the Past."  
---Shelley

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Martha Vázquez, Chief Judge