

**SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
STATE OF COLORADO
January 2018**

The 7th Judicial District is made up of six (6) counties in west-central Colorado. The counties of the district include: Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel. There are combined court clerk's offices (district court and county court) in the county seat of each of these counties and an associate county court for Montrose County located in Nucla in the western part of Montrose County. The geographical area of the district is approximately 10,000 square miles of mostly high mountain valleys. This area is about the same size as the state of Vermont or Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware combined. The distance between Lake City in the eastern part of the district and Nucla in the west is approximately 200 miles one-way. The County seats of Gunnison (Gunnison County), Lake City (Hinsdale) Ouray (Ouray County) and Telluride (San Miguel County) have elevations of over 7700 feet. The population of the district as estimated by Colorado Department of Local Affairs for 2014 is 100,297.

The 7th Judicial District has five (5) District Court Judges who handle diversified dockets. The current district judges have offices located in Delta, Gunnison, Montrose and San Miguel. The average traveling distance for district judges is 74 miles one way to the other court locations from their home office. The District Judges cases include domestic relations, criminal, juvenile, mental health, probate, and civil filings that exceed the county court jurisdictional amount of \$15,000. There are seven (7) County Judges who are responsible for handling traffic, misdemeanor, and civil cases under the jurisdictional limit of \$15,000. In addition to the Judges, the Seventh Judicial District has a District Court Magistrate. The Magistrate handles Dependency/Neglect, Domestic Relations and emergency Protective Orders cases in Delta and Montrose counties generally.

E-filing became mandatory for various District Court and County civil cases in the 7th Judicial District in 2009. The 7th Judicial District has averaged 10,263 county court cases and 3,712 district court cases filed for FY 2015-FY 2017. The district has 65 full or part-time employees as judicial officers, in the clerk's offices, in collections or in administrative positions in support of court operations. The probation department has 24 employees in four (4) locations in the district. The district's payroll and operating budget is approximately \$6.3 million.

The largest towns in the district are Delta, Gunnison and Montrose. Delta County is the location for a Department of Corrections facility just outside the City of Delta. Gunnison is home to Western State Colorado University. Gunnison County (Crested Butte Ski Area) and San Miguel County (Telluride Ski Area) each boast one of the largest ski resorts in western Colorado. Montrose is in the center of the district, and region, and is the location of many state and federal government offices. Montrose is the site of Colorado Mesa University – Montrose Campus. It is also a center of retail business for the region with large retailers like Target, J. C. Penney, WalMart, Home Depot, PetsMart, and Office Depot. Gunnison County and Montrose County also boasts the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. This former National Monument was designated a National Park in October 1999. This National Park is a large tourist attraction thus promoting retail and service related business growth in the area. Hinsdale, Ouray and San Miguel Counties are within national historic districts and have many recreational sites popular with tourist and sportsmen alike. Tourism/recreation, agri-business, retail and government are the main employers of the area. Some new light industry and retail businesses have filed intention to put stores in the area which could affect population, employment and the need for government services including courts.

The Seventh Judicial District is continually striving to respond to changing concerns and circumstances of the courts. This requires the continued evaluation of staff resources and the

implementation of changes to meet the needs of the general public accessing the system. The Seventh Judicial District has instituted a number of measures to process our cases and manage the workloads. These include a centralized Jury Commissioner who manages the jury operations for all courts; a centralized Account Clerk who takes care of the regular reporting and management processes for all the courts in the district; a collections department; and centralized records management personnel who are striving to reduce the paper by scanning appropriate records to be held electronically in response to public requests for review and copies of records. A .5 FTE Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator (SRLC) was hired in October 2012 and increased to full time in July 2013; a full time Family Court Facilitator and a .5 FTE dedicated clerk are on staff in the district's effort to assist all litigants who are not represented by an attorney navigate and understand the judicial system and the rules and procedures. We have implemented the operation of specialty courts (drug/alcohol abuse) in Delta, Gunnison, Montrose and San Miguel Counties to specifically deal with this seemingly ever increasing problem in our district. Other innovative programs to meet the every changing needs and efficiency of the courts and probation Department are being considered for implementation in the future