

The Herald News

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PRESS CLIPPING

Circuit court debts to increase by 30 percent

Anyone with an outstanding bill for Will County Circuit Court costs and fines has one week to pay up before the amount they owe jumps by 30 percent and their credit rating takes a hit.

Starting in April, unpaid court debts will be referred to Harris & Harris, Ltd., a Chicago-based collection agency, Circuit Clerk Pam McGuire said.

The collection agency will tack 30 percent on top of the initial court fee or fine.

Will County officials, including McGuire and Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow, decided last year to hire a collection agency because the county currently is out millions of dollars in outstanding fees and fines, according to information from McGuire's office.

"We're tightening up on it a lot," McGuire said.

The county redistributes the money to different places including the arresting agency, the county's general fund or the state based on the offense generating the fine or court cost, McGuire said.

A collection agency normally can take its fee out of the original debt owed by a person; however, state law prohibits the agency from taking the money out of court costs, McGuire said.

Therefore, the fee is added to the debt.

Officials will send the oldest outstanding balances, some of which are delinquent by several years, to the collection agency first and then regularly will refer balances at least 90 days old.

New legislation also will allow the court system to start adding 5 percent for every 30 days a payment is late. Someone with a court bill over 90 days late that is referred to the collection agency eventually could owe the original fine plus 15 percent added by the courts plus the 30 percent collection fee.

Residents who think they owe money can review their record at public terminals in one of three circuit clerk locations in Joliet:

- Will County Courthouse, second floor, 14 W. Jefferson St.
- River Valley Juvenile Justice Center, second floor, 3210 W. McDonough St.
- Will County Court Annex building, second floor, 57 N. Ottawa St.

Payments also can be made in three ways:

- In person from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays at the Will County Courthouse.
- Online anytime at www.willcountycircuitcourt.com (service fee applies)
- By calling (888) 604-7888 anytime (service fee applies)



REVENUE RECOVERY | ANALYTICS | ATTORNEYS

Harris & Harris, Ltd., 222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Suite 1900, Chicago, IL 60654 P: 312.423.7421 or 866.781.4538 HarrisCollect.com

By
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– Pam McGuire
Circuit Clerk