

LaSalle County Circuit Court

August 18, 2008

PRESS CLIPPING

County hires collection agency

I am proud to announce that, in conjunction with LaSalle County State's Attorney Brian Towne, we have approved a contract with a top collection agency that will be assigned to collect past-due court fines and fees. We have entered into a contract with Harris and Harris Ltd. and the law offices of Arnold Scott Harris to collect past-due court debts.

This contract will enable Harris & Harris to begin collecting debts owed by thousands of people who, for whatever reason, have chosen not to pay their court-ordered fines or fees.

I am constantly looking for sources of revenue to lessen the burden on the taxpayers of LaSalle County and I feel this initiative will result in considerable amounts of money for the County of LaSalle, local municipalities and the State of Illinois.

It is estimated that defendants in the last few decades have ignored over \$5 million in fines and fees. Collecting even a small portion of these past-due debts will assist the county and other municipalities as they grapple with tight budgets.

A number of potential collection options and companies have been researched in the last twelve months. Harris & Harris, Ltd. was chosen for numerous reasons:

The company currently provides this service for circuit clerks around the state of Illinois (e.g., Will, McLean, DuPage & Cook) and comes highly recommended by officials from both counties.

The collections business is affiliated with a respected Chicago legal firm, thereby ensuring a legal and ethical approach to retrieving past-due debts.

The contract allows for the monitoring of collections activities over the Internet in real time, allowing LaSalle County officials to make certain the county is being professionally represented and that those who are contacted about past-due debts are treated respectfully.

There is no cost to the county or the taxpayer for the collection agencies' efforts. However, Illinois Public Act 93-0693 allows the agencies to impose a collection fee up to 30 percent. For example, a fine of \$100 that has gone unpaid could turn into \$130.

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– Joseph M. Carey
Clerk of the Circuit Court



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

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