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Article published Aug 12, 2003

Clerks to undergo training on new laws

Lance Coleman

It may look like a ghost town in the court clerk's offices at Blount County Justice Center next week because only a skeleton crew will be on duty.

The others aren't quitting, they're training.

Thirty-four clerks will be in classes Aug. 18-22 to learn what new laws the legislature has enacted, said Blount County Circuit Court Clerk Tom Hatcher.

They'll also cross-train to learn the procedures and policies in other offices.

It's an effort to have clerks who are better trained and better prepared to explain laws and policies to individuals the office serves, Hatcher said.

This could save time because clerks no longer should have to ask customers to wait while a supervisor is called to explain a policy or law.

Normally, circuit court clerks across the state send one or two of their employees for training in Nashville. By having in-service training on site, the cost to tax-payers for the trip to Nashville is eliminated.

Portia Abbott and Betsy Foxx, are leading the classes, and other supervisors will also teach. By doing this, there won't be an additional expense for a speaker.

Hatcher said one of the goals is for each clerk to have an understanding of what new laws will affect citizens they serve.

Previously, the state would disseminate changes in laws and the memos on those changes sometimes weren't explained to all the clerks.

"The other goal is to cross train them so they'll know what the other person's job is," he said of the personnel in both the Circuit Juvenile and General Sessions court clerk's offices.

"They'll have an overall understanding of what takes place," he said.

The clerks also will learn about policies and procedures in the Civil Process Division and Corrections Division of the Sheriff's Office.

"We're always having misunderstandings about procedures. This will help my people learn what civil process and jail procedures are," Hatcher said.
