



FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMON PLEAS- GENERAL DIVISION

Court News Page

Thursday, November 6, 2008

PRESS RELEASE

November 6, 2008

FRANKLIN COUNTY JUDGES SELECTED FOR BUSINESS COURT

Franklin County Common Pleas Court Judges John P. Bessey and Richard A. Frye have been designated by Ohio Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer as the first judges for the new commercial or business court docket in Columbus.

Effective January 2, 2009, Franklin County will participate with courts in Cincinnati, Toledo and Cleveland in a pilot project to streamline civil lawsuits between businesses, among shareholders or partners within a business, or addressing insurance coverage for such cases. Newly filed commercial cases falling into those categories will be transferred to the dockets of Judges Frye and Bessey; other civil cases in which businesses are involved, such as consumer claims, product liability disputes, or cases in which a government entity is involved will continue to be assigned through the normal fashion by random draw to all 17 Common Pleas judges. All 17 Common Pleas judges will also continue to hear criminal felony cases.

Franklin County judges voted several months ago to join the state's pilot project in the hope that it will expedite handling of commercial cases in what is now the busiest common pleas court in Ohio in per-judge filings. The larger goal of local judges and state officials is to aid business development efforts, as Ohio competes with other states that already offer comparable business courts.

Judge Bessey has served on the Common Pleas Court since 1994, following experience in private law practice, as a private business owner, and as a government lawyer. He is a member of the American College of Business Court Judges, and co-chaired the statewide task force that developed the commercial docket program at the request of the Ohio Supreme Court. Judge Bessey has also served as a member of the faculty at the National Judicial College.

Judge Frye was elected to the Common Pleas bench in 2004. Prior to that, he was a partner in the Chester, Willcox & Saxbe law firm. While in practice Judge Frye was selected as a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers and as a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, named in *Best Lawyers in America*, and was among the top 50 vote-getters in the 2004 *Ohio Super Lawyers* survey.