



Attorney Laird A. Lile travels the state to make sure lawyers are aware of the e-filing changes coming.

Running on E

Laird Lile wants to make sure attorneys have no excuse for missing e-filing deadlines.

Since 2010, Laird A. Lile has given nearly 50 speeches statewide, reminding Florida attorneys that they'll have to start filing their cases electronically in state courts later this year. Traveling mostly on his own dime, Lile also tells them how they can make the transition from paper to computer as easily as possible. He shows them PowerPoint presentations he created himself. He has led "webinars" that have reached 2,000 attorneys at a time.

Lile, a Naples attorney, didn't have to do any of this. The Florida Bar has been educating its 93,000 members about e-filing, but Lile feels compelled to help. He's a member of the Florida Court Technology Commission, which is overseeing the technological overhaul of the state's courts, and he wants

everything to go well when e-filing becomes mandatory.


"It's a responsibility I believe I have to give back to my profession," he says. "This is pretty important stuff. We're on the cusp of changing the way we practice law, so if I can help get the information out there, and have things go more smoothly, then I'm honored to do it."

Lisa Goodner, the state courts administrator, is optimistic the deadlines will come and go without any major glitches. The court system's e-portal site, where cases will be filed from each of the state's 67 counties, is online, and some attorneys, such as Lile, have already started using it.

The precise benefits of e-filing are unclear because the costs of implementing e-filing are unknown. Goodner says that

while there hasn't been a "central accounting" for what has been spent, the Legislature hasn't allocated any money specifically toward e-filing. The Florida Court Clerks and Comptrollers Association covered the cost of creating the e-portal site. Courts and county clerks are absorbing other costs.

While the setup costs are not clear, Goodner says she's sure e-filing will save time, labor and money once it's implemented and everyone starts using it.

"We know there will be gains in efficiency and expenditures for paper and paper storage," Goodner says. "And ultimately the ease and convenience to the users of the court system will improve. That's a primary goal. It's going to result in a vast improvement overall of the court system." 

E-Deadlines

- > **Feb. 27:** Florida Supreme Court

- > **April 1:** State trial court and civil divisions

- > **July 22:** 2nd District Court of Appeal

- > **Sept. 27:** 3rd District Court of Appeal

- > **Oct. 1:** State criminal court

- > **Oct. 31:** 4th District Court of Appeal

- > **Nov. 27:** 5th District Court of Appeal

- > **Dec. 27:** 1st District Court of Appeal

Note: Dates are subject to change.