



# Rob StafSholt

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## Local Legislators Secure New Judgeship for Dunn County

Madison, WI – Newly enacted legislation, 2019 Wisconsin Act 184, allows for a third circuit court branch in Dunn County, effective [August 1, 2021](#). Representative Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond) initiated this legislation with a request for this judgeship in the [2019-2021](#) biennial budget.

“Due to its rural character and freeway presence Dunn County is one of the hardest impacted areas of the state from methamphetamines and other illegal drugs, and an additional branch will certainly offset the judicial backlogs in dealing with the additional crime that is connected to this epidemic,” said Rep. Stafsholt. “This judgeship is crucial to keep the wheels of the justice system turning smoothly for the benefit of our community as a whole.”

Other advocates for this bill are Representative Warren Petryk (R-Town of Washington) and Representative Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer). As Rep. Petryk notes, “Earlier this session I met with my colleagues to talk about the importance of people having timely access to our court systems, and this announcement is the reality of our hard work. Thank you again to the leadership of Judges Smeltzer and Peterson for working to inform us about how this additional resource will help address the increased demand on Dunn County because of the methamphetamine crisis and CHIPS cases.”

“I am glad to see that after working with my colleagues on this issue, Dunn County will be receiving an additional judge,” added Rep. Summerfield, “The meth and opioid epidemics have taken a toll on our communities and justice system; leading to Dunn County having one of the highest caseloads in the state. This additional judge will be a great asset in combating this problem moving forward.”

The latest figures show Dunn County has the second highest judicial need in all of Wisconsin. The County already has the facilities in place for a third branch. According to Dunn County Circuit Court Judge, Rod Smeltzer, when the courthouse was originally build over 20 years ago, it was constructed with four courtrooms.

“I would like to thank both Judge Smeltzer for his tireless advocacy for an additional circuit court branch through his many phone calls, emails, and trips to Madison, as well as Judge Peterson for allowing me to

sit beside him on the bench and experience just how busy they really are so I could relay that to my colleagues through this process," Rep. Stafsholt added.

Other counties receiving a new branch in addition to Dunn include Calumet, Jackson and Marathon. Twelve new branches will be created in total, with an additional four added both in 2022 and 2023.

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