

SETTLEMENT WEEK MEMORANDUM

TO: District Clerk's Office, County Clerk's Office and District Court Coordinator's Office, Members of the Bar

FROM: Austin Bar Association Settlement Week Committee

RE: *March 2010 - Settlement Week for Travis County*

WHEN: March 15-19, 2010

How to submit a case:

1. Obtain a settlement week package. Settlement week packages are available:
 - a. on the Dispute Resolution Center website at www.austindrc.org;
 - b. at the Dispute Resolution Center, 5407 North IH-35, Suite 410, Austin;
 - c. on the Austin Bar Association website at www.austinbar.org;
 - d. at the Austin Bar Association, 7th Floor, Suite 700, 816 Congress Avenue, Austin;
 - e. at the information desk on the first floor of the Courthouse;
 - f. from Jason Snell, Chair of Settlement Week Committee, The Snell Law Firm, 818 West 10th Street, Austin.
2. Fill out and submit the case submission sheet to the Dispute Resolution Center no later than **4:00 PM, Friday, February 26, 2010**. The forms must be received by 4:00 p.m. to be assigned.
3. There is a ***\$25.00 administrative fee***. Checks should be made payable to the Dispute Resolution Center and delivered to the Dispute Resolution Center with the case submission sheet, before 4:00 pm on Friday, February 26, 2010.

Full compliance with the settlement package instructions is required.

Should anyone have specific questions regarding settlement week, please call Kris Donley, Executive Director of the Dispute Resolution Center, at 512-279-1901, or Jason Snell, the Settlement Week Chair, at 512-477-5291. For administrative questions, please call Rita Rancken of the Dispute Resolution Center at 512-371-0033.

Mediation Assignments:

After the submission deadline passes, all cases properly submitted to the Dispute Resolution Center will be assigned to a mediator. **Mediations will be scheduled by agreement between the attorneys/parties and the mediator.** The attorneys/parties and mediator will also agree to a location for the mediation. If it is not possible for the attorneys/parties to mediate during the actual Settlement Week then the mediation may be conducted within 30 days from March 19, 2010. The submitting attorney must inform Rita Rancken of the DRC of the alternative, later date for the mediation. If there are any subsequent mediation date changes, then the submitting attorney must so inform Jason Snell in order to obtain approval for the change of date.

Volunteer Mediators:

Mediators wishing to volunteer can find the form online at the Dispute Resolution Center website, www.austindrc.org, or the Austin Bar website, www.austinbar.org. Qualified volunteer mediators are greatly appreciated.

**Office of the District Judges
Office of the County Judges
P. O. Box 1748
Austin, TX 78767**

**RE: SETTLEMENT WEEK, March 15, 2010 through March 19, 2010
*Your response is required no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 26, 2010***

Dear Member of the Bar:

As in past settlement weeks, this settlement week will result from a collaborative effort between the Travis County District Judges, the County Court at Law Judges, the Austin Bar Association, and the Dispute Resolution Center.

A \$25.00 ADMINISTRATIVE FEE IS REQUIRED FOR EACH CASE SUBMITTED. The fee is used to offset the administrative expenses incurred.

Enclosed are the forms for the upcoming Settlement Week. **Failure to comply strictly with the submission procedures and failure to pay the administrative fee will result in your case not being set for mediation.**

Participating attorneys are encouraged to exchange settlement demands and responses within a reasonable time before the mediation. The submitting attorneys will receive information notifying them of the mediator assigned to their case. Also, the mediator assigned to the case will be provided a copy of the submission sheet. The mediator assigned to the case may contact the attorneys to schedule the time and place of the mediation, or the attorneys may contact the mediator to arrange the time and place of the mediation. The Dispute Resolution Center will be available for mediations during Settlement Week (please contact Rita Rancken at 512-371-0033 to schedule a mediation at the Dispute Resolution Center), but parties and their assigned mediator may agree on a different location. The mediator may request a position paper outlining the issues in the case. You only need to prepare a position paper if one is requested.

If either attorney wishes to have an Order of Referral to Mediation, the attorney should submit the order to the court for signature.

During Settlement Week, attorneys in all selected cases are **ORDERED** to appear with their clients and/or representatives with **full authority** to settle and to conduct negotiations in the presence of a court-approved mediator. Agreements between the parties to excuse one or more parties are not permitted without a court order. In the event an order is obtained, **failure to comply FULLY with the mediation order will result in the mediation being determined invalid and/or Court Ordered sanctions.**

If you have any specific questions concerning our next Settlement Week, please contact Kris Donley, the Executive Director of the Dispute Resolution Center, at 512-279-1901, or Jason Snell, the Chair of Settlement Week, at 512-477-5291. For administrative questions, please call Rita Rancken of the Dispute Resolution Center at 512-371-0033. The Settlement Week Committee and the District and County Court Judges thank you for your participation.

Very truly yours,

John K. Dietz
Judge, 250th Judicial District Court
Local Administrative Judge

Enclosures