



THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT JUDICIAL LEARNING CENTER THOMAS F. EAGLETON UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

The Judicial Learning Center is a unique space featured in the Thomas F. Eagleton United States Courthouse in St. Louis. The Center is devoted to permanent exhibits, changing displays and interactive demonstrations about the role of federal courts and the operation of the justice system in the 8th Circuit. The primary purposes of the Learning Center are to inform visitors about the judicial process in the courts of the United States, and to promote public understanding about the importance of an independent judiciary and the rule of law in American society. Visitors to the Center learn not only about the three levels of federal courts, each of which is housed in the Eagleton Courthouse, but also discover why the judicial branch was designed to be a separate but coequal branch of government. News items about current events affecting citizens in federal court, parties pursuing justice and the public officials who perform the work of the federal courts are also highlighted in a special section of the Center space.

This is an inviting space in the Thomas F. Eagleton Courthouse attracting both visitors who are simply curious about the building and organized groups of students and members of community organizations visiting the courthouse on scheduled tours. The Center, with its prominent main floor location, is a focal point for organized tours, and provides an educational experience for those interested in the work of the United States judicial system.

The Center is a jointly sponsored program supported by the courts of the 8th Circuit and The Judicial Learning Center, a non-profit corporation whose board members represent the legal community in St. Louis. Content for the Center has been developed in consultation with prominent educators, representatives of the bar, museum experts, community leaders and judges to insure that the exhibits and displays further the mission of the Center.



The Eighth Circuit Judicial Learning Center is approximately 2500 square feet

Displays around the perimeter of the Learning Center are designed for interactive, interpretive and educational interface between the Court system and the public focusing on a variety of topics including:



An Independent Judiciary and the Rule of Law

- ★ Constitutional framework of the three branches of government, separation of powers, checks and balances
- ★ Distinct role of three branches of government
- ★ Judicial review of laws claimed to be unconstitutional
- ★ Reasons for independence of the judicial branch
- ★ Structures and safeguards designed to protect independence



The Difference Between State and Federal Courts

- ★ What are the differences
- ★ Where are the courthouses located
- ★ What types of cases in each court
- ★ Jurisdictional Limitations



How Courts Work

- ★ Civil Cases/Criminal Cases
- ★ How a case begins: (complaint/indictment/grand jury)
- ★ The people involved in the administration of justice
- ★ Pretrial process and discovery
- ★ Trials and Hearings
- ★ Rules of Evidence - judge as referee
- ★ Judges decide the law; juries decide the facts
- ★ Juror duty
- ★ Bankruptcy Court Jurisdiction and Caseload
- ★ Appeals and Appellate Court Review



Courts of the Eighth Circuit

- ★ Seat in St. Louis
- ★ Geography, number of judges, districts involved
- ★ History and organization of the circuit
- ★ Unique Position because of geography
- ★ Indian Law
- ★ Admiralty Law

