



# NEWS RELEASE

## Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

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### **Filings Up for Judiciary's Second Quarter Increases Seen in Most Chapters Over 12-month Period**

The number of bankruptcy cases filed in federal courts rose 2.7 percent in the 12-month period ending March 31, 2004, according to statistics released today by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Bankruptcy filings rose from 1,611,268 in the 12-month period ending March 2003 to 1,654,847 in the same 12-month time period in 2004. The number of filings was down slightly from the record 1,661,966 bankruptcy cases filed during fiscal year 2003, the 12-month period ending September 30. Total bankruptcy filings first broke the 1.5 million mark in the 12-month period ending March 31, 2002.

Non-business filings for March 2004 totaled 1,618,062, up 2.8 percent from the total non-business filings of 1,573,720 filings in the 12-month period ending March 31, 2003. The highest number of non-business bankruptcy filings was for fiscal year 2003, when 1,625,813 bankruptcy cases were filed in the 12-month period ending September 30.

Business filings in March 2004 totaled 36,785, down 2.0 percent from the 37,548, business filings in the 12-month period ending March 31, 2003.

Filings per authorized bankruptcy judgeship have risen from 2,965 filings per judgeship in March 1992 to 5,108 in March 2004.

#### **Filings by Quarter**

The number of bankruptcies filed during the second quarter of the Judiciary's fiscal year 2004 (January 1, 2004 -March 31, 2004) was 407,572. Filings for the Judiciary's first quarter of fiscal year 2003 (October 1, 2003 -December 31, 2003) totaled 393,348. Statistics for previous quarters can be found on the Judiciary's website at [www.uscourts.gov/bnkrpctystats/statistics.htm#quarterly](http://www.uscourts.gov/bnkrpctystats/statistics.htm#quarterly).

#### **Business and Non-Business Filings**

Years Ended March 31, 1999-2004

| Year        | Total            | Non-Business     | Business      |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>2004</b> | <b>1,654,847</b> | <b>1,618,062</b> | <b>36,785</b> |
| 2003        | 1,611,268        | 1,573,720        | 37,548        |
| 2002        | 1,504,806        | 1,464,961        | 39,845        |
| 2001        | 1,307,857        | 1,271,865        | 35,992        |
| 2000        | 1,301,205        | 1,263,096        | 38,109        |
| 1999        | 1,419,199        | 1,378,071        | 41,128        |

(MORE)

**Filings by Chapter**

Filings increased under all bankruptcy chapters, except Chapter 12. Chapter 7 filings increased 3.6 percent, from 1,135,436 in 2003 to 1,176,654 in the 12-month period ending March 31, 2004. Chapter 13 filings rose 0.3 percent, from 464,369 at the end of March 2003 to 465,878 in 2003. Chapter 11 filings rose 8.6 percent, from 10,722 in 2003 to 11,649 in 2003. Only Chapter 12 filings fell, dropping 9.3 percent from 632 in March 2003 to 573 in March 2004.

**Total Bankruptcy Filings by Bankruptcy Chapter  
Years Ended March 31, 1999-2004**

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Chapter</u> |           |           |           |              |
|-------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
|             | <u>7</u>       | <u>11</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 2004        | 1,176,654      | 11,649    | 573       | 465,878   | 93           |
| 2003        | 1,135,436      | 10,722    | 632       | 464,369   | 109          |
| 2002        | 1,059,777      | 11,477    | 389       | 433,107   | 56           |
| 2001        | 904,397        | 10,139    | 248       | 393,033   | 40           |
| 2000        | 908,802        | 10,071    | 739       | 381,568   | 25           |
| 1999        | 1,017,049      | 8,010     | 859       | 393,245   | 36           |

Chapter 7 is designed to allow individuals to keep certain exempt property while the remaining property is sold to repay creditors. Under Chapter 13 bankruptcy, creditors may be repaid in installments, in full or in part, over a 3- to 5-year period. Chapter 11 provides for a business to continue operations while formulating a plan to repay its creditors. Chapter 12 is designed to meet the needs of financially distressed family farmers. Chapter 9 provides protection for a financially distressed municipality from its creditors while it develops and negotiates a plan for adjusting its debt.

For more on bankruptcy, go to the Judiciary's web site at [www.uscourts.gov/bankbasic.pdf](http://www.uscourts.gov/bankbasic.pdf) or to <http://www.fjc.gov/federal/courts.nsf>. Local bankruptcy court rules can be found at [www.uscourts.gov/rules/bk-localrules.html](http://www.uscourts.gov/rules/bk-localrules.html). A breakdown of the latest data on bankruptcy filings follows and also is available on the Judiciary's web site at [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov) under Newsroom/Bankruptcy Statistics at

**Quarterly Bankruptcy Filings\***

| <b>PERIOD</b>  | <b>FILINGS</b> | <b>PERIOD</b>  | <b>FILINGS</b> | <b>PERIOD</b>  | <b>FILINGS</b> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| MAR. 31, 2004  | 407,572        | SEPT. 30, 2000 | 308,718        | MAR. 31, 1997  | 335,073        |
| DEC. 31, 2003  | 393,348        | JUN. 30, 2000  | 321,729        | DEC. 31, 1996  | 311,131        |
| SEPT. 30, 2003 | 412,989        | MAR. 31, 2000  | 312,335        | SEPT. 30, 1996 | 303,309        |
| JUN. 30, 2003  | 440,257        | DEC. 31, 1999  | 318,634        | JUN. 30, 1996  | 297,162        |
| MAR. 31, 2003  | 412,968        | SEPT. 30, 1999 | 323,550        | MAR. 31, 1996  | 266,149        |
| DEC. 31, 2002  | 395,129        | JUN. 30, 1999  | 345,956        | DEC. 31, 1995  | 244,494        |
| SEPT. 30, 2002 | 401,306        | MAR. 31, 1999  | 330,784        | SEPT. 30, 1995 | 233,593        |
| JUN. 30, 2002  | 400,686        | DEC. 31, 1998  | 353,108        | JUN. 30, 1995  | 235,302        |
| MAR. 31, 2002  | 379,012        | SEPT. 30, 1998 | 361,205        | MAR. 31, 1995  | 212,626        |
| DEC. 31, 2001  | 364,921        | JUN. 30, 1998  | 373,460        | DEC. 31, 1994  | 201,618        |
| SEPT. 30, 2001 | 359,518        | MAR. 31, 1998  | 354,118        | SEPT. 30, 1994 | 208,187        |
| JUN. 30, 2001  | 400,394        | DEC. 31, 1997  | 347,685        | JUN. 30, 1994  | 216,213        |
| MAR. 31, 2001  | 366,841        | SEPT. 30, 1997 | 353,515        | MAR. 31, 1994  | 206,565        |
| DEC. 31, 2000  | 310,169        | JUN. 30, 1997  | 367,168        | DEC. 31, 1993  | 206,570        |

\*Because of ongoing corrections to the bankruptcy database, the quarterly data may not total to the most recent annual figures.