



The Sarpy County Bar Association hosted members of the Nebraska Supreme Court during the court’s annual summer tour, June 29, 2021. (David Golbitz/Daily Record)

Nebraska Supreme Court Visits Sarpy County Courthouse

By David Golbitz
The Daily Record

Members of the Nebraska Supreme Court visited the Sarpy County Courthouse late last month, including a luncheon hosted by the Sarpy County Bar Association.

The visit was part of its annual summer tour of Nebraska courts, where the justices dedicate several days to traveling to courts outside of Lincoln to meet with Nebraska Judicial Branch staff, tour courtrooms and learn about special projects throughout the state.

The court was unable to tour the state in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The group of Supreme Court justices, including Chief Justice Michael Heavican, visited Sarpy County on June 29.

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Tour

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Led by Sarpy County Court Judge Todd Hutton and Sarpy County District Court Judge David Arterburn, the tour began at the county probation office, where District Court Judge Stefani Martinez provided a brief update about the county’s new mental health court.

The first problem-solving court of its kind in the state, the mental health launched earlier this year. It is a voluntary program available to people with mental illnesses who are facing nonviolent felony charges.

Participants must plead guilty to the charge

and agree to go through the 18-to-24 month program. Martinez is the presiding judge.

Following the visit to the probation office, the justices toured the office of the county clerk before Hutton showed off upgrades made to courtrooms due to the pandemic, including flat screen monitors for Zoom or Webex video conferencing.

The tour ended where it began, in the county boardroom, where the justices marked the 10-year anniversary of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, or JDAI, with a proclamation.

“After more than a decade of innovation

and replication, JDAI is one of the nation’s most effective, influential and widespread juvenile justice system reform initiatives,” Heavican said, reading the proclamation. “JDAI has been influential in reducing the unnecessary use of detention in Nebraska.”

Since JDAI’s inception in Nebraska, Sarpy County has seen a sharp decrease in the number of juveniles who have gone through the juvenile court system, from 336 in 2012 to only 66 in 2020.

Find more photos at omahadailyrecord.com/content/supreme-court-sarpy-tour.