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## **Limestone County First to Make Video Hearings Come to Life –**

**With the CNG-SAFE Integrated Document Management Platform**

**County processes more inmates, while improving public safety and constituent services**

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According to U.S. Department of Justice, the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. Counties nationwide, large and small seek an updated approach to help overcome this costly and enduring burden.

For Limestone County, much of this burden lies in the labor, vehicles and time needed for shuttling inmates between the county jail and the courthouse the County saw it could make some sweeping changes at the front end of the judicial process by combining two leading technologies and conduct its preliminary hearings remotely, without needing to transport prisoners. The county deployed Cabinet NG's electronic document management and Cisco Systems' Videophones as the enabling technologies to conduct new prison inmates' preliminary trial hearings with the judge. Cabinet NG's Shared Access Filing Environment (CNG-SAFE) electronic management platform makes legal forms and other court paperwork instantly available during the video hearing process. All necessary documentation is created, signed, shared and filed using the CNG-SAFE platform. This creates a binding legal process that saves the county time and money while boosting public safety.

The videophone preliminary hearings Application created another milestone in making local government work better for Limestone County's citizens. Used for preliminary hearings between the Limestone County, AL 39th Judicial Court and the Limestone County Sheriff's Office, the Video Hearing application is made possible by CNG-SAFE's unique ability to integrate with other technologies and processes an organization already has in place.

As David Seibert, Limestone County Commission Chairman, noted, "It would have been hard to put the video hearing technology into place without Cabinet NG: the company ensured we protected plaintiff rights upheld the spirit of the law and gained huge efficiencies in manpower by making court documents available electronically." Added David Freeman, IT Director for the county, "Limestone County is completely satisfied with Cabinet NG's on site training and no-holds-barred attitude to customer support. I cannot emphasize how helpful the company and its technology is to us as we work to make local government better."

## **Eliminating prisoner transport saves manpower, transportation and time**

The videophone hearings use CNG-SAFE to ensure documents are properly routed between the Sheriff's Office and the Courthouse. Judges electronically sign case documents; these documents, along with questions and recorded responses, are sent to the inmate's legal file. The County uses a Cisco IP videophone to conduct the "face to face" preliminary hearing; other hardware includes a server to store the digital files along with a laptop, printer and signature pad.

A legally compliant face to face trial is made possible as a result of CNGSAFE ability to electronically free documents from physical constraints. Without the need to appear in person, inmates' preliminary hearings can be conducted at any time. Judges' productivity is enhanced. And, as Mike Blakely, Limestone County Sheriff says, "Public safety is a significant ROI resulting from the role Cabinet NG fills in the video hearing application."

## **Leveraging the power of integrated electronic document management**

Limestone County is proud of the new preliminary hearing process, and local officials intend to use integrated electronic document management to further improve local government. For example, they are looking for more opportunities to replace other paper court documents used throughout the entire judicial process with electronic documents. Cabinet NG's proven ability to integrate document management with other technologies and processes could make this vision a reality for Limestone County – gaining the goodwill of attorneys and other courthouse visitors currently weighed down with paper filled briefcases.

As local governments find savings and efficiencies in going green, electronic document management with its clear and compelling ROI will prove worthy to concerned citizens and officials across the country. Limestone County is proving to be at the forefront of several important technology trends, as it strives to deliver the best to its citizens.

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