



For Immediate Release  
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## STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER USES VIDEOCONFERENCING TO REDUCE COSTS AND IMPROVE SERVICES

The State Public Defender is implementing a videoconferencing system to reduce costs and improve services. The system will allow attorneys to electronically meet with incarcerated clients. Indiana Public Defender Susan Carpenter announced the use of the technology and explained, "This will help us keep communication and travel costs down while still allowing our attorneys to meet with their clients."

The videoconferencing equipment was installed at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Carlisle in partnership with the Indiana Department of Correction and the Indiana Office of Technology. The equipment resembles a pay phone and is designed specifically for correctional use. It features a video screen and camera (similar to a web cam) that transmits audio and video in real time. All the controls are maintained at the server in Indianapolis, so an offender is connected automatically with the attorney by simply lifting the handset. The equipment was purchased by the State Public Defender for \$4630.



Deputy Public Defender Maria Mesoloras, in Indianapolis, videoconferences with her client who is at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Carlisle.

Before the videoconferencing system was implemented, attorneys communicated with their clients via mail or in-person meetings. Attorneys would drive from Indianapolis to the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility about 10 times per month, and each trip averaged about \$250. Chief Deputy of the State Public Defender, Bill Polansky, coordinated the project and explained, "Substituting videoconferencing for some of the in-person visits will reduce travel time and expense. Videoconferencing will also improve our service to clients by increasing the amount of time we can spend talking with them."

The Indiana Office of Technology worked to implement the system. Senior Network Engineer Carl Abel said, "This solution allowed us to utilize the state network infrastructure that is already in place. The convergence of voice, video and data lets us provide additional services without having to commit additional resources. We plan to install units in similar facilities across the state."

The Department of Correction worked to ensure the installation at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility would be successful. IDOC Commissioner Bruce Lemmon, who served as Superintendent at Wabash Valley when the pilot project was approved said, "The real beneficiaries are the taxpayers of the state who, because of the more efficient use of time by the State Public Defenders office and the cooperation of the Department of Correction, are getting more from their tax dollars. Due to this project, the State Public Defender's attorneys are able to use their time assisting clients rather than driving to and from the facility."

The Public Defender of Indiana is a state-funded agency that provides representation to indigent prison inmates in challenges to convictions and sentences. The Public Defender is appointed by the Indiana Supreme Court. The office works to assure the fundamental fairness of the criminal justice system. For more information about the State Public Defender's Office, visit <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/defender/>.