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**“CASH BAIL BY CREDIT CARD” PROGRAM COLLECTS
OVER \$1 MILLION IN LESS THAN 100 DAYS**

Pilot Program Exceeds Expectations

CHICAGO (October 3, 2005) – After only 98 days into the “Cash Bail by Credit Card” pilot program, the Office of the Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, surpassed the \$1 million mark, exceeding all expectations.

“We are very pleased with the response to the pilot program,” said Clerk Brown. “To collect over \$1 million in less than 100 days is a true indication of the importance of this service to the citizens of Cook County.”

On June 22, 2005, the Clerk’s Office implemented a system through which individuals can pay their bail bonds with a major credit card. On September 29, 2005, records showed that the pilot program processed 553 credit card transactions and collected \$1,006,951, an average collection of \$10,275 a day.

“This new initiative affords citizens another option when paying their bail bonds,” said Clerk Brown. “It permits individuals who possibly would not have been able to bail out ordinarily, to bail out, saving Cook County money.”

Cook County spends approximately \$100 per day to incarcerate individuals, the Cash Bail by Credit Card program will greatly help to alleviate jail overcrowding and operating expenses, while generating additional funding for Cook County.

“This program could lead to significant cost savings for the citizens of Cook County, while ensuring that public resources are utilized efficiently and effectively,” said Clerk Brown.

Through the “Cash Bail by Credit Card” program, a detainee, his or her friend or family member, uses credit cards to pay a bail bond. All major credit cards; Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Diners Club and American Express are accepted.

The Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County is one of the first Cook County agencies to accept payment of fines and costs by credit card. In anticipation of implementing this new service, Clerk Brown initially proposed legislation in 2003 to eliminate the \$300 limit previously imposed by Public Act 84-613 on the amount of bail that could be paid by credit card. The new legislation, PA 093-0760, effective January 1, 2005, allows the Clerk of the Court to accept unlimited credit card payments for fines and fees.

D. Brown/Cash Bail by Credit Card – Add One

The “Cash Bail By Credit” program is being offered through a partnership between the Clerk of the Circuit Court’s Office, Government Payment Services and the Cook County President’s Office; also involved is the Cook County Sheriff’s Office.

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