

REPRESENTING THE STATE AT TRIAL FOR US

As the Pottawattamie County Attorney, Matt Wilber supervises a staff of thirteen lawyers plus support staff who keep track of about 6000 cases a year. WILBER explained that most of the cases are misdemeanors and are dismissed before coming to trial. Less than one percent of all cases actually go to trial. WILBER noted the state wins about 85% of the cases in trial. WILBER stated that felony trials have increased and misdemeanor trials have decreased in recent years. Currently there are about 1000 open cases that the County Attorney's staff is processing. WILBER noted that this is appreciably less than a peak of 1400 in the past. WILBER explained this is the result of working to resolve cases faster, fewer charges from a shrinking police force, and work associated with major cases. Over the past several months there have been several cases that have drawn national media attention. WILBER said that he has been interviewed by several national media and as a spokesman for the State of Iowa, and he has to be careful of what he can say about a case. He noted that it is easier to discuss a case under investigation compared to one with charges pending against an individual. The current case of the skeleton found in a barrel is requiring much effort to identify the remains WILBER explained. It has been identified as age 24 – 35 and female. DNA evidence is still being processed at the state laboratory. WILBER noted that missing persons reports often do not exist because it is not a crime to run away. Also, there is no comprehensive data base for missing persons who are reported.