

# KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

## Traffic tickets plummet, pinch court revenues

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**By Rod Smith**

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ALLEGAN -- A cutback in patrols by budget-strained Michigan State Police has put a pinch on Allegan County's revenues from traffic fines, according to a court official

The number of civil infractions logged in Allegan County District Court dropped by 2,734 during the first six months of the year, compared to the same period a year ago, pulling revenue from fines down \$320,518, Linda Lenahan, district court administrator, told county commissioners.

Revenues from civil infractions are divided six ways, between the county's general fund, libraries, local municipalities and state departments.

"With the price of gas, the state police have a limit," Lenahan said of miles state troopers have been allowed to drive.

The court's revenue picture may improve over the second half of the year.

Mileage restrictions for state troopers, which had been in place for about five months to help the state save money, were lifted last month, The Associated Press reported. The restrictions had been expected to last at least until Sept. 30.

Also in a report to the county board on the status of District Court, Judge Joseph Skocelas told commissioners that 80 percent of the court's docket involves alcohol-related offenses.

"The biggest substance-abuse problem in Allegan is alcohol," Skocelas told commissioners. The judge said he'd spent that morning presiding over cases of drunken driving, assault while drunk, drunk and disorderly conduct and a minor in possession of alcohol. Only one case he handled that morning didn't involve alcohol in some way, Skocelas said.

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