

The Lane County Circuit Courthouse

Lane County is one of 36 counties in Oregon and is located within the 2nd Judicial District.

According to the 2020 census, the population was approximately 380,532 - making it the fourth-most populous county in Oregon. Lane County is named in honor of Joseph Lane, Oregon's first territorial governor, and the county seat is Eugene.



The Lane County Circuit Courthouse is where all criminal and civil trials that are filed in Lane County Circuit Court take place. The Lane County Court includes criminal, civil, probate, family and children, drug court, and juvenile divisions and/or programs. Each of these deal with cases related to specific subject matter. For example, family law is an area of law and includes cases involving: custody, dissolution, support, juvenile dependency, misdemeanor domestic violence, and termination of

parental rights. The Probate Division handles cases involving wills and property transfers.

The current Lane County Circuit Court handles between 35,000 and 40,000 new case filings each year, with 15 judges (not including one additional judge at the Juvenile Justice Center located on Martin Luther King Boulevard). The current presiding judge is Honorable Judge Jay McAlpin.

Lane County's first official courthouse was built in 1855 at the corner of Eighth and Oak



streets. The original wooden building stood until 1898, when it was replaced with a brick courthouse that featured a bell tower. The current courthouse was built on the same location in 1959. Since then, Lane County has grown significantly, and planning for a new Lane County Courthouse is currently underway.

Courthouse Experience Tour Student Reflection

Name _____

Class _____

As you observe the courthouse and all the components of the justice system on your tour, try to capture your thoughts, reactions, and what you learn. Please keep in mind proper etiquette while on the tour - be respectful of the space and the people you encounter.

- 1. What do you notice as you enter the courthouse? How does it align with what you imagined it to be like? How does it differ?**
- 2. What do you expect to hear or see on the tour?**
- 3. Draw the courtroom you visit - what are traditional placements of where people sit? What are specific places called?**
- 4. What type(s) of case(s) were you able to witness or hear? What details can you capture about the points, arguments, and testimony shared? Did anything stand out or surprise you?**
- 5. Explain how our courts are part of our country's democracy? What role do they play in our government and society?**