The background of the slide features a large, faint, circular seal of the Judicial Council of California. The seal contains a central figure holding a scale of justice, surrounded by various symbols including ships and a landscape. The text "JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA" is written around the perimeter, and "EUREKA" is visible at the top. The year "1920" is at the bottom.

CONTRA COSTA SUPERIOR COURT Liaison Report

Presented by Judicial Council Member

Hon. Rebecca L. Wightman

September 24, 2019

Location

One of the "9 Bay Area Counties"
Situated in the East Bay



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Background

- Authorized Judicial Positions: **42**
38 judges; **4** commissioners (1 vacant)
- Population: 1.1 million (est.)
- Courthouses: **6**
 - 3 in Martinez + Court Records building
 - Richmond
 - Walnut Creek
 - Pittsburg



COURTHOUSES

Justice Wakefield Taylor Courthouse
Martinez CA



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COURTHOUSES

A.F. Bray Courts Building Martinez CA



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OF CALIFORNIA

COURTHOUSES

Peter L. Spinetta Family Law Center
Martinez CA



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COURTHOUSES in Martinez...

Situated so closely, it's akin to a ...



Courthouse Campus



COURTHOUSES

Judge George D. Carroll Courthouse Richmond CA

To enter must go to the
back "front" entrance



COURTHOUSES

Superior Court - Walnut Creek



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COURTHOUSES

Richard E. Arnason Justice Center
Pittsburg, CA



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“The A Team”



Hon. Barry Baskin, PJ
Kate Bieker, CEO






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Budget Overview



- Sinking... 
 - 2013 – let go staff; 2014: liaison visit reported \$52.9 million total revenue; \$58.3 expenditures
- Treading Water... 
 - 2016-2018 total revenue hovered \approx \$56 million, and \approx \$56-57 million expenditures
- *Barely* Treading... 
 - 2018-2019 budget total revenue and expenses \$59,551,348 (excl. \approx \$350K encumbered exp.)



Concerns, Challenges and Needs

- ❑ Legislative – unfunded and underfunded mandates
- ❑ Employees' needs & staffing issues:
324 employees
 - years of no raises; creative alternatives; small raises
 - work absorbed when positions eliminated; stressful



Concerns, Challenges and Needs

☐ Maintenance – IT, facilities, equipment



Which brings us all back to: Funding
– and the need for more discretionary funds,
especially funds to help employees



Deferred maintenance... it keeps adding up



One upgrade that couldn't be ignored...



Good News - Successes!

- Case Management: Traffic (C-Track)
 - JC Info Tech. very helpful here and elsewhere
- Innovation Grant: Veteran's Court (8/2017)
- FL/Civil Self-Help: Children's Waiting Rm (7/2019)
- Tier Model Mediation: Family Law (3/2019)



Spinetta Family Law Center FLF/Self Help



FLF/Civil Self Help

- Expanded Self Help Funds:
 - Laptops for FLF's to service different locations
 - New Children's Waiting Room



Tier Model Mediation in Family Law – Custody/Visitation

- Switch from “recommending” (non-confidential) to “non-recommending” (confidential) mediation [Futures Commissions recommendation]
- Huge culture change...but also a...
- **Huge success!**
 - Agreement rate went from <40% up to 60%



Reaction to Tier Model Mediation

“Only after transitioning to a tiered model did I realize ...[o]ur recommending model encouraged many parents to focus on defeating instead of collaborating with the other parent. [It] has greatly helped...shift the focus of [everyone] toward working together instead of striving to win.”

Jim Paulsen, FCS Director



Reaction to Tier Model Mediation

“It changed our entire court culture. Now we all have a stake in encouraging parents to take responsibility for making decisions about their children. As a judge who lived through the transition from recommending to non-recommending, I was skeptical at first, but I have learned not only to expect agreements from parents, but to trust them to reach agreements. This has resulted...in (more agreements and fewer contested hearings) but more importantly, better results for families.”

Hon. Joni Hiramoto



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Thank you

Questions?

Thank You
Contra Costa!



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