



# U.S. MAYOR

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## Little Rock Goes After Delinquent Accounts, Brings in Much Needed Revenue

It has been almost two years since Little Rock (AR) contracted with the law firm of Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP to assist it in collecting delinquent district court fines and fees. City officials say they are quite pleased with the overall results. Linebarger Goggan developed and customized the collection program according to the city's and Court's preferences, which has provided value-added services with minimal burden to the staff.

"I am very pleased with the overall process as well as with the truly unique partnership which has developed and with the approach used by the law firm on this project" said Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola. "From the initial communications and project overview discussions, through all aspects of project implementation, and continuing through every daily operational function, Linebarger Goggan partner Scott McGlasson and his team have always been immediately available and responsive to every inquiry and need on our end. Their knowledge, expertise and pure common-sense professionalism, shines through in every aspect of our relationship."

Linebarger Goggan was hired by the city in early 2010 to assist in collecting delinquent traffic fines. While the city had utilized the services of a collection agency in the past, they really hoped that their delinquent defendants would respond more readily to the collection efforts of a law firm – and that has been the case. Treasury Manager Scott Massanelli thinks that "Linebarger Goggan's collection efforts showed dramatic increases from their very first efforts and their results have continued to improve ever since."

Since April 2010, when their collection efforts began, Linebarger Goggan has collected approximately \$750,000 in delinquent traffic citations on behalf of the city, recovering in excess of 50 percent of the accounts that are referred by the Court. In addition to the amounts collected, the law firm also provides assistance in obtaining information necessary to close and remove cases from the Court's docket – reducing the number of open cases in the court and, in turn, reducing court staff time and burden in managing the Court's open case load – through resolution other than payment (such as in the event the law firm finds out a defendant is now deceased). All things considered, Linebarger Goggan is having the



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net effect of either collecting or otherwise resolving more than 80 percent of the accounts referred for handling.

Stodola states that, “the bottom line is that this law firm is able to pursue collection efforts in circumstances where we would be unable to do so because of budget and resource limitations, where our ability to locate, reach out and effectively communicate with delinquent defendants is very limited or nonexistent. It allows our Court personnel to focus on their core functions and processes. In doing so, we have enhanced case resolution and court revenues – with the law firm basically taking over at a point in the process where it is no longer feasible for our Courts and their staff to do so.”

Massanelli notes the ease of the overall project functionality, saying that, “Once we contracted with Linebarger, Scott McGlasson and his team sat down with us and walked us through the entire implementation process. The pros and cons of every possible customized option were fully explained, allowing our team staff to make informed decisions all along the way. The fact that we were dealing with an experienced law firm and highly trained professionals [they only work with public-sector clientele], provided us with the comfort of knowing that our interests came first and were well protected. We could not be more satisfied with the results achieved through our association with their law firm.”

Noting that often times, collateral benefits go unnoticed, Stodola also suggests that even their defendants who owe them money are often appreciative of the law firm’s efforts. “As our collection efforts commenced, several defendants actually expressed gratitude for help with resolving their outstanding liabilities with the Court. In this regard, we believe that these delinquent defendants, and our constituents in general, appreciate the valuable and measurable services that this law firm is providing on behalf of our city.”

For more information, contact Scott Massanelli with the city of Little Rock at 501-371-4532.

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