

**IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
EASTERN AND WESTERN DISTRICTS OF ARKANSAS**

IN RE: COURT OPERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UPDATED ANNOUNCEMENT EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Effective March 16, 2020, this court has operated pursuant to the terms of its Administrative Order that suspended all in-court proceedings until further notice. The Administrative Order dated July 1, 2020, extended the period for conducting hearings and trials both telephonically and by video conference at least through July 31, 2020.

Based upon continued review of the current situation in the state, the court has determined that we will continue operating on the basis of our Administrative Order dated March 16, 2020 until further notice. The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) continues to be a significant problem and poses continuing challenges; however, the vaccines are here or coming shortly. Filings are down and the recent harsh weather has posed even more delays and problems. In addition, we have had unfortunate water damage to the Little Rock courthouse due to the prolonged historic freezing temperatures. We are sure that a number of you or those close to you suffered power outages, frozen pipes, and water issues so you have our sympathy. Safety is still a major concern and our top priority. We will continue with our restricted protocol of hearing matters remotely. Please note that each judge reserves the right to schedule an in-court hearing notwithstanding the current circumstances and might do so following notice and consent of all parties with the understanding that specific protocols would be required in these instances. If the current situation improves, we may begin more in-court hearings this summer; we must see how things progress. Rest assured that we are doing all we can to keep the court's business on track and stay up with our dockets.

On behalf of the judges and the clerk's office, we want you to know we are thinking about you. We know that times have been and are still difficult for most all of you. We can look forward to improved weather. The restoration process is underway in the Little Rock courthouse. We hope to

carry on normal business for the court in Little Rock but that may prove difficult in the near future. We will have a bright energetic new bankruptcy judge in May. We will continue assessing our circumstances and monitoring the District Courts in both the Eastern and Western Districts. Please recognize this could involve different protocols in each District and Division. We will keep you informed of any changes regarding our current plans. Please continue to contact the clerk or respective chambers concerning procedures generally or specific cases and proceedings.

This difficult period has certainly continued longer than anyone could have imagined and has presented challenges for everyone. We appreciate and recognize your continued understanding and cooperation which has made it possible for our work to continue. We thank you again and hope that each of you remains safe and well.

Dated this 24th day of February 2021