

# Paw Paw FLASHES

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## Judge implores potential jurors to return county qualification questionnaires

**PAW PAW** - Several thousand Van Buren County residents, possessing either a Michigan driver's license or identification card showing residence in the County, will be receiving juror qualification questionnaires from the County's Jury Board this week.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to create a list of qualified persons to serve as jurors in Van Buren County courts in the year 2008. To be a qualified juror, one must be at least 18 years of age, a U. S. citizen, a Van Buren County resident, able to communicate in English, without a felony conviction, a person who has not served as a juror in the last 12 months, and physically and mentally able to serve.

"It is of the utmost importance that people receiving these questionnaires promptly return them," said the Hon. William C. Buhl. "Common misconceptions are that nothing will happen if the questionnaires are not returned, and that the Board already knows about a person's status as unqualified because they must already know a person has moved, or has a felony conviction, or is a non-citizen.

"The Board does not know these things, and the whole purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain this information," said Buhl.

In 2006, more than 5,300 questionnaires were mailed and after three notices, 239 non-responders were ordered to show cause why they should not be found in contempt. Of that group, 113 failed to respond and warrants were issued. A total of 69 people were found in contempt, and penalties totaling \$2,555 were paid for non-compliance.

This year, the Board is reducing the number of people receiving questionnaires by nearly a thousand names, in hopes of getting a better response, thereby calling on fewer people to serve the needs of the courts. The Board urges everyone to promptly reply. A strong response will reduce costs, save Board members' time, allow fewer people to be inconvenienced by jury duty, and save the Court time hearing contempt charges, according to Buhl.

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