

# **El Dorado County provides alternative to civil litigation**

El Dorado County and the Superior Court are partnering to continue the successful Alternative Dispute Resolution program. The program is an alternative way to resolve civil disputes without the burden of litigation.

In Alternative Dispute Resolution, trained, impartial people decide disputes, or help parties decide disputes themselves. The sides typically meet with a dispute resolution officer at a case management conference within 120 after the case is filed. At the conference they discuss the various procedures for alternative dispute resolution, select the one best suited to their case, and set time lines for completion, usually 60 days after the case management conference.

The most common forms of resolution are mediation, arbitration and case evaluation.

More than 90 percent of all civil cases filed in El Dorado County Superior Court are resolved by agreement.

Under state law, counties collect an \$8 fee on all civil actions filed in court. In turn, the county recently entered into a four-year contract with the court to fund the Alternative Dispute Resolution program.

Since the program's inception in 1994 the court has reduced the civil case backlog by more than 50 percent. The number of cases pending more than two years has decreased by 75 percent.

For more information, call (530) 621.7629.

