

STATEMENT BY:

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THE RELEASE OF THE PUBLICATION "HOW TO USE
THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT TO RESOLVE SMALL CLAIMS".

In North Carolina the Magistrate's Court might well be called "The People's Court". It provides a forum for citizens who have small claims and disputes and find they must go to court in order to resolve them.

Many North Carolinians occasionally find themselves involved in a disagreement with another citizen. Often the matter cannot be resolved easily. Each has a point of view, possibly regarding money owed by one to the other, and the positions are clearly in conflict. There may be a matter of principle involved, as well as something of value.

The Consumer Protection Division of my office has tried to assist in mediating disputes when our help is requested. However, we cannot act as the advocate for one citizen who has a disagreement with another when the conflict involves primarily a dispute as to the facts or the amount allegedly owed by one to the other. And, if we cannot help resolve the matter by aiding communication, the best solution is often the Magistrate's Court. There each party can be heard, and an impartial court official will decide the issue.

The booklet we are releasing today is designed to help North Carolinians understand the function of the Magistrate's Court and to use it to resolve small claims. We hope it will increase the confidence each person has in our State's system of justice.

Members of my staff have delivered some 90,000 of these booklets to Clerks of Superior Court throughout the State. While doing so, we want to call attention to the fact that the booklets are available in the various Clerks' offices in North Carolina.

This seventeen page booklet includes sections on types of claims handled by Magistrates and the steps required to file for hearing. It also gives examples of various types of claims suitable for hearing before a Magistrate.

It is certainly my hope that through this distribution and our efforts to call attention to the availability of this publication that every North Carolina Consumer and businessman will know about the booklet by tomorrow.