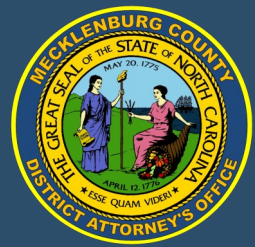




FROM THE DESK OF DA MERRIWEATHER

The District Attorney's Office is responsible for the prosecution of criminal offenses in Mecklenburg County. Each month, this newsletter provides information about court happenings, initiatives being used to combat crime, the DA's work in the community, and more.



Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office

TRIAL TIME

How the DA's Office schedules trials

Effectively and efficiently utilizing court time is a top priority for the DA's Office every day. It is so important in part because the amount of trial time we have to pursue justice for survivors, defendants, and the community is so limited. At any given time, there is typically a maximum of only three trial courtrooms in Mecklenburg County Superior Court, where felony cases are prosecuted. Depending on the type of charges involved or the complexity of the case, a Superior Court trial could take days or weeks. Our prosecutors are divided into teams, and we assign those teams in a rotation each week to the available courtrooms. Then, each team creates a trial order, which is a list of cases ready to be tried. That list is written in order of which cases we plan to handle first, considering factors such as the age of the case and the custody status of the defendant. But if a defendant on that list pleads guilty or the case must be continued, the team then moves to the next defendant on the list. When trials end with time remaining in that week's court session, we work with court partners to determine whether there is enough time to call another case from the trial order. If there is a day or two left in the session, that may not be enough time to try a complex case with several witnesses. In that scenario, we often use the remaining time to handle pre-trial motions or try misdemeanor cases that have been appealed to Superior Court for a jury trial.

During the week of February 6, our [Felonies Crimes Team](#) tried a defendant for drug trafficking charges. The jury found him guilty as charged. Another three defendants entered guilty pleas.

Our [Violent Crimes Team](#) led a two-week trial session during the weeks of February 13 and February 20. During that time, the team's prosecutors were able to take four cases to trial. The team also secured seven guilty pleas.

Our [Special Victims Team](#) closed out the month with a two-week trial session that ultimately resulted in a jury finding a man guilty of second-degree rape and second-degree sex offense. The team also tried two other cases, and another defendant entered a guilty plea.

EXPUNCTION

The DA's Office recently teamed up with court partners and the N.C. Pro Bono Resource Center to hold an expunction clinic. State law allows people to remove certain charges or convictions from their record in a process known as expunction or expungement. This office supports expungement efforts for those who have demonstrated years of law abidingness. [Click here](#) to learn why.



RADAR/LIDAR

In mid-February, the DA's Office learned that some speed detection devices, such as radar and lidar equipment, used by some local law enforcement agencies were not properly certified. The results of these devices are used to corroborate the opinion of a trained officer when testifying about the speed of a vehicle. By law, the devices are used only to corroborate, but we recognize the important role they play in our ability to prosecute speeding charges. We took action immediately, and our prosecutors are now reviewing pending speeding cases as they appear in court, as well as other cases that arose from traffic stops in which radar or lidar equipment was used. We believe we will be able to proceed with many of these cases without the radar/lidar evidence, but some cases may be dismissed. [Click here](#) to learn more.

FAQ: In light of the issues with speed detection devices, what should I do if I have a speeding citation?

If you have been charged with a speeding citation in Mecklenburg County, you or your attorney should appear in court on your court date to discuss available options. Do not pay for your speeding citation online to resolve the citation. If you use that online service, the DA's Office will be unable to review your case to determine whether it was affected by the radar/lidar issue. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police were impacted by this certification error, while the Matthews Police Department and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office were also impacted to a lesser extent.

Visit www.charmeckda.com for the latest news, information about the courts, and more. Follow @charmeckda on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

