As the 2011 program takes shape, programs last time around included things like: how to use an electronic trial-notes system; using social-networking tools to serve the public; providing cost-effective but high-quality computer networking at remote judicial sites; remote, centralized language interpreting; how to get eCourt project funding; court technology on a tight budget; and tips for improving court websites.

As the 2011 program takes shape, you'll find information about it at the website noted above.

Fourth National Symposium on Court Management
Sponsored by the State Justice Institute, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the National Center for State Courts.

In times of tight budgets, it's hard to get a chance to attend a national conference that has good speakers who are exploring new ideas. But you can catch whatever portions you'd like on video from the National Symposium on Court Management held October 27-28, 2010.

The first of these periodic symposia was convened in 1981. The 2010 gathering focused on managing courts in times of budget challenge, discussing key questions like: What are the essential functions of courts? How can courts best organize themselves to achieve those functions?

Several of the presentations would be of interest to most judges, and many would be of interest to judges who have administrative responsibilities:

- Dr. John Martin of the Center for Public Policy Studies in Boulder, Colorado, addressed trends that are shaping the state courts from 2000 to 2020.
- Dan Hall, vice president of the National Center for State Courts, reviewed the key principles of judicial administration that should guide presiding judges, trial-court administrators, and state-court administrators.
- Administrators and judges from Arizona, Minnesota, and Vermont explained changes that are being made to “reengineer” the delivery of justice in rural, suburban, and urban settings.
- Chief justices or state-court administrators from Ohio, Texas, and Utah, as well as court administrators and presiding judges from five other states, discussed a new set of principles for court governance.

All of the presentations, along with papers and some PowerPoint slides, are available on the web. The articles are mostly short and easy to read; they give a great overview both of judicial-selection reforms and questions raised about them.

Many of the nation's top experts are represented. For example, Prof. Charles Gardner Geyh, an expert on judicial ethics, provides a few thoughts about White, Caperton, and Citizens United. David Rottman, a researcher at the National Center for State Courts who has closely followed the work of judicial campaign oversight committees, explains how such committees might be used to that pressure judicial candidates not to stray too far from accepted norms. Prof. Anthony Champagne, a political scientist, provides a perspective of judicial elections based on empirical research.

Other article topics include whether campaign contributions are compromising judicial independence, how judicial-selection reform may impact minority voters, whether partisan elections are the best means to hold judges accountable, how federal judicial selection really works, and how other nations pick judges. In all, there are 16 articles. If you're interested in this subject at all, you'll find this special issue of interest.