



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Butte County Law Enforcement First in State to Use Digital Signature on Search Warrant**

District Attorney Mike Ramsey today announced a significant step “into the digital age” with the electronic signing of a search warrant by a local judge. Ramsey said the warrant was issued last Thursday night to search the home of an Oroville man who is accused of stabbing his wife. Using a relatively new law which allows judges to electronically review and sign search warrants forwarded to them via the internet, Ramsey said Butte County became the first in the state to use the new and faster electronic process.

Previously officers would have to prepare search warrant affidavits and orders, have them reviewed by a deputy district attorney and then physically transport the papers to a judge’s office or home for the judge’s review and signature. Depending on where the officer was and the judge’s residence, this physical transportation could add more than an hour to the process of obtaining a search warrant.

When minutes count in a rapidly changing crime scene, Ramsey said it was “so 20<sup>th</sup> Century” and backwards not to take advantage of the instant communication ability of the internet and keep officers on the crime scene rather than driving back and forth from a judge’s home. After nearly a year of planning and preparation, Ramsey said collaboration between the county’s judges, law enforcement and his office brought forth the new process that depends on a secure, encrypted digital signature site which stores everyone’s signatures for use on a judge-approved search warrant.

Ramsey said the site belongs a web vendor, **DocuSign**, which is already well known and trusted in the financial, corporate and mortgage industries for rapidly bringing together electronic signatures from far flung customers/signers on a single document. “By piggy backing on this proven technology,” Ramsey said, “we were assured the signing process would not only be safe and secure, but legally acceptable to our judges.” Judges are issued an Apple® iPad® tablet for after-hours use.

Ramsey said the new electronic process is relatively simple and allows the officers and judges to use word processing software they already have and use. “Law enforcement locally is constantly searching for new and innovative ways to cut costs and increase public safety,” Ramsey said. “This is just another step on that path.”