SPOKANE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE:

2014 Presiding Judge & Acting Presiding Judge

Recent Event

District Court Clerk's Office

Probation Department

Technology

Personnel

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of our District Court Judges, Department Managers and Staff, we would like to share with you some of the notable events and projects from 2013. This is the first of our Newsletters with distribution on a semi-annual basis. We want to be able to capture recent events in our Court Operation and to share them with you. Your continued support of our Court on and off campus is critical to us as it enables us to provide the best service possible to our citizens. We sincerely appreciate all that you do!

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families the very best in health and happiness for 2014!

2014 PRESIDING & ACTING PRESIDING JUDGE

The bench elected Judge Randy A. Brandt to assume the duties as presiding judge effective January 1, 2014. Terms are two years and will continue through December 31, 2015. The newly Acting Presiding Judge is Sara Derr.

CONGRATULATIONS!

EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION EVENT

The Court held an Employee Appreciation celebration on December 13, 2013 to thank our employees and recognize their value to the Court, their hard work and their dedication to the success of our Court. The event was catered by Azteca Restaurant and was hosted by our District Court judges. In celebration of this special time of year, the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Assistant Coordinator and his associate attended our luncheon. Employees donated toys and our judges presented the Toy for Tots Campaign a check for $200 on behalf of our employees.

We all recognize that these are the types of community events that are very special, especially during the holiday season. This was also a great opportunity to thank these Marines for their service to our country.

Presiding Judge Brandt, Gunnery Sgt. Matthew E. Fleury, Past Presiding Judge Hayes, Staff Sgt. Eric Nelson

We would also like to recognize the extremely talented men and women staff members of District Court. Their dedication and hard work not only ensures the success of the Court but they consistently maintain a high standard of excellence. Below are a few examples of the types of programs staff are working on. We will mention more programs in future newsletters.

District Court Clerk's Office:

Imaging Status
District Court is now scanning all filings on criminal filings. This means subscribers to the Spokane County Court Document Viewer Application can view virtual court files from the comfort of their own PC.

Customer Satisfaction
The Court has utilized customer comments cards for many years as a tool for measuring customer satisfaction. Customers are given the opportunity to privately and anonymously (if they so choose) evaluate our counter staff on their courteousness, prompt service, helpfulness, knowledge, neat appearance, and professional service. They are rated on a scale from one (poor) to five (excellent). For 2013, our staff achieved an outstanding customer rating of 4.6!!

PROBATION DEPARTMENT:

Alive @ 25 Classes – Defensive Driving Course
This is a Defensive Driving program sponsored by the National Safety Council. We have 11 trained instructors. This program is designed for young adults between the ages of 15 thru 24 who have received an infraction within Spokane County or Spokane Valley. If the person was ticketed for an infraction and completes the program satisfactorily, the infraction may be dismissed if the infraction occurred within one year. An individual may only benefit from a dismissal of an infraction one time. If an individual has been ticketed with a no insurance charge, proof of insurance must be shown and appropriate fines paid prior to registration for Alive @ 25. The incentive of dismissing the infraction has increased enrollment for Alive @ 25. We are booked out at least 2 months at a time. This program focuses on defensive driving and discusses the consequences of poor driving behaviors such as speeding, texting, and other distractions while driving. This is a very successful program and is offered once a week with at least 14 participants each class.

TECHNOLOGY:

Projects

A concerted effort and projects are underway to develop and expand the use of automated electronic court forms, reducing costs and promoting efficiencies of electronic workflows and storage. Another key project is for the court to migrate to using new software for connecting to the JIS system, with a deadline of February 1st much work has been underway to convert the court's various automation routines and we are on schedule for the transition. Additionally, for efficiency and expediency, new programs and procedures have been implemented that allow for electronic processing of search warrants between law enforcement and our Judges, as well as new procedures allowing our Judges to process weekend jail matters electronically. With other current and/or future projects such as document workflow, there will be a constant review of data sharing needs between criminal justice agencies, and electronic filing.

PERSONNEL

- The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) appointed Judge Richard M. Leland on May 27, 2013 to fill the vacancy left by newly elected Superior Court Judge John O. Cooney. Judge Leland hired Tracey Pendarvis on July 16 to act as his Judicial Assistant.

- Barbie Folden has been promoted from Evaluator to the position of Mental Health Therapeutic Manager effective November 16, 2013.

- We also welcome the following new hires to the team:
    - Greg Lewis, Grant PO1 – 10/16/13
    - Holly Schmehl, ECR OA3 – 9/3/13
    - Sara Claflin, Traffic AT2 – 7/22/13
    - Xanthe Supita, Court Clerk – 7/16/13
    - Maria Fell, OA4 – 6/22/13
    - Channel Alexander, OA4 – 3/16/13
    - Chantel Gallagher, JA – 2/25/13