

As the Third Branch of Government, we provide access to justice through the timely, fair, and impartial resolution of cases.

VALUES OF THE IDAHO COURTS

Integrity ~ Fairness ~ Independence ~ Respect ~ Excellence ~ Innovation

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE



Chief Justice Roger S. Burdick

In my 31 years on the bench, I cannot remember a more exciting, vibrant time for the Idaho Judiciary. There are so many inspiring and innovative developments currently unfolding in the Idaho courts. I will mention just a few of them.

First, in the area of technology, I want to share with you the Court's vision for the future. Idahoans will be able to file court cases online 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. They will be able to pay traffic tickets, learn when a particular case is scheduled for hearing, and access and view all documents filed in every case, all online, without visiting the courthouse. As the Judiciary continues to move toward "e-everything" in the area of court technology, Idahoans can expect better access, greater convenience, and more complete transparency.

Advancing Justice denotes another very exciting and innovative effort on the part of the Judiciary. Chaired by Senior Judge Barry Wood, the newly formed Advancing Justice Committee is charged with identifying and addressing unnecessary sources of delay in case processing to help ensure that Idaho courts are delivering timely, fair, and impartial justice. Tasks underway include a review of court rules and statutes to identify barriers to timely case resolution and a critical assessment of Idaho's time standards for case processing.

Tremendous progress has been made in the area of judicial retention and recruitment. Working with the Judicial Council and the Idaho State Bar, the Court has revised the bar surveys used for judicial selection to improve the quality of information available. In addition, Court of Appeals Judges Gutierrez and Lansing have traveled to judicial districts to meet with prospective applicants and answer their questions.

INNOVATIONS IN COURT TECHNOLOGY PROMOTE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Idaho's persistent growth and ever increasing caseloads continue to push the Court's need for the most cutting edge technology, to ensure the timely, fair resolution of cases. In May 2012, the Supreme Court commissioned national experts to conduct an assessment of its information technology (IT) program. The Court embraced a number of the recommendations made by the national experts.

Following the assessment, the Idaho Supreme Court appointed a Court Technology Committee. The Committee will guide the Court's upcoming conversion to ISTARs Enterprise, a new browser-based generation of ISTARs (Idaho Statewide Automated Records System) and development of a comprehensive e-filing business model. Given the critical importance of court technologies, Chief Justice Roger Burdick agreed to chair the committee.

Other Important New Developments in Court Technology Include:

- In August 2012, the Idaho Supreme Court began live streaming oral arguments from the courtroom in Boise. In conjunction with Idaho Public Television, a live video webcast is available at www.idaho.tv/org/leglive/.
- In May 2012, the Idaho Judiciary launched a new website, pairing a warm and welcoming aesthetic appeal, with a more intuitive navigation structure and a greater organization overall of content.
- The statewide rollout of Digital Recording was completed.
- A statewide refresh of over 1,300 desktop and 65 notebook computers, along with 48 servers, over 500 printers and the newest software was completed by July 2012. This equipment will facilitate future technology advances, including the new ISTARs Enterprise case management system.

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COURT HIGHLIGHTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

Children and Family Services

- A recent evaluation of Idaho child protection drug courts (CPDCs) show promising results: CPDC families have higher rates of successful reunifications, shorter out-of-home placements, and are less likely to have reports of maltreatment after case closure than families who do not participate in CPDC.
- There was a 10% increase this year in the number of Guardian ad litem volunteers who serve abused and neglected children in the court system, bringing the number to 575. These volunteers donated 29,782 hours of their time to investigate, report, and advocate for the 2,756 Idaho children in foster care.
- Family Court Services responded to nearly 72,000 requests for services—an increase of more than 100% from five years ago.
- The Center for Court Innovation facilitated a national site visit to Ada and Canyon County Domestic Violence Courts. The Center for Court Innovation assists courts with the planning and operation of Domestic Violence Courts both in the United States and around the world.
- Requests for Court Assistance services exceeded 50,000 for the third consecutive year. A new Court Assistance website was developed and launched in April to help meet the demand for services and facilitate access to forms and court information.

Problem-Solving Courts and Sentencing Alternatives

- Ada County, Canyon County, and Bannock County accepted offenders into their veterans courts during FY2012. A veterans court deals with an individual, most frequently having co-occurring mental and substance use disorders and experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from combat service in one of our country's armed forces.
- Thirty-five babies were born to clean and sober women in our drug and mental health courts this year, bringing the total to 283 drug-free births.
- Idaho Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) graduated Adult Misdemeanor Probation Academy Class #4, bringing the total number of misdemeanor probation officers completing POST to 70.
- HB 648 was passed, which will enhance the pre-sentence investigation process by improving screening for substance use disorders and serious mental health diagnoses for felony offenders who may remain in the community following sentencing.
- Youth courts and status offender programs served 1,144 youth and their families. In addition, adult and youth volunteers contributed 5,193 hours to help with these programs.

RECOGNITION, AWARDS, AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- Seventh District Judge Jon Shindurling was presented the 2011 Kramer Award and 3rd District Judge Juneal Kerrick was presented the 2011 Granata Award at the 2011 Judicial Conference in Boise. Both awards are given annually to recipients who have made significant contributions to the Idaho Judicial System.
- District Judge Juneal Kerrick of the 3rd Judicial District and Magistrate Judge Rick Bollar of the 5th Judicial District participated in a national two-year judicial leadership initiative after being identified as “justice system leaders of tomorrow.”
- Drug and Mental Health Court Coordinator, Norma Jaeger, was honored by the Idaho State Planning Council on Mental Health during a ceremony at the Idaho State Capitol on January 11, 2012. Norma was recognized for her dedication in helping improve the lives and families of people living with mental illness.
- Kootenai County Magistrate Judge Clark Peterson was awarded the 2012 Judicial Excellence Award by the Idaho Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.
- Michael Starnes was presented with the Children's Advocate and Protector Award during the 2012 Children and Families Institute held in Boise. Mike has served neglected and abused children for over 25 years and currently works at the Department of Health and Welfare in Region 1.
- Ada County Magistrate Judge David Manweiller was appointed to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Juvenile and Family Law National Committee. The committee is involved in formulating resolutions, policy, networking, education and training on juvenile and family law.

STATEWIDE CASELOADS BEGIN TO LEVEL OFF, GRADUALLY DECLINE

- A total of 1,047 appeals were filed with the Idaho Supreme Court in FY2012. While there was a 10% increase in criminal appeals, civil appeals were down 15% from last year.
- Mental commitment cases have seen a significant increase in recent years. They rose by 9% this year and have increased by a remarkable 111% since 2007.
- Overall, trial court caseloads decreased slightly in FY2012. District court caseloads were down 5%, though they remain 8% higher than they were five years ago. Magistrate division caseloads were down 3% and have been steadily declining over the past few years.
- District court civil filings continue to level off following a dramatic increase in 2009 and 2010. There was a 3% reduction in filings this year, though caseloads still remain 19% higher than they were five years ago.