

Minutes of the Media / Courts Committee Meeting

Monday, June 10, 2013 // Harrison Room // Supreme Court, Boise, Idaho

Welcome and Introductions: The Media/Courts Committee meeting was called to order on Monday, June 10, 2013 at 3:00 pm MDT by Chief Justice Roger Burdick, Chair, who welcomed the Media/Courts Committee, including: Doug Bauer, Ysabel Bilbao, Becky Boone, Joan Cartan Hansen, Judge Timothy Hansen, Jason Grey (for Joel Hazel), Steve Kenyon, Judge John Melanson, Judge Gregory Moeller, Larry Reiner, Betsy Russell, Bryan Taylor, Russ Webb, Michael Henderson, Dan Black, Libby Smith, Patti Tobias, and Shirley Throop.

A. Approve Minutes of the November 13, 2012 Meeting/Teleconference

IT WAS MOVED BY JUDGE MOELLER AND SECONDED BY JUDGE HANSEN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 13, 2012 MEETING / TELECONFERENCE. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Educational Programs

Patti Tobias reported that information the media and the courts is available to all Idaho judges via educational programs at New Judges Orientation, as well as the *Judges Guide to the Media*. She asked the committee to forward any suggestions for special media topics for judicial education sessions at future Judicial Conferences. In addition, she noted that the courts are willing to participate in any workshops planned by the media for reporters and others. Betsy Russell reported that the Fall conference for the media may have a session available for the court to participate.

Action Items

- Committee members were invited to forward any suggestions for special media topics for judicial education sessions at future Judicial Conferences
- Betsy Russell will contact Patti Tobias if the Fall conference has time available for the court to provide an educational program for reporters and others.

C. Court Technology Update

Chief Justice Burdick reported on the extraordinary efforts underway to modernize the Judiciary's technology, develop best practices, and obtain RFPs for technology updates. In addition, he noted that with the addition of Kevin Iwerson as the Court Information Officer and the high level of activities from the Administrative Office of the Courts, great strides are being made in this area.

Patti Tobias reviewed the IT Strategic Plan which includes strategic business themes such as improved access to information by both internal and external stakeholders; improved integration of information with business partners; and maximized efficiency of business processes. She also noted the enabling strategies for these priorities, including standardization of data, forms, and business processes statewide; maintenance of case documents in electronic form and associated automated workflows; more use of videoconferencing and teleconferencing capabilities; and the development of full judicial information interfaces.

She also asked the committee members to start thinking about how Rule 32 might evolve in the coming world of new technologies, which prompted discussion about how sealed cases are shown in the Repository. Libby Smith related how the federal courts handle sealed cases online, listing the document but not allowing access.

Action Items

- Committee members were asked to start thinking about how Rule 32 might evolve in the coming world of new technologies.
- Libby Smith will transmit to Patti Tobias examples of how the federal courts handle sealed cases online, listing the document but not allowing access.

D. Court Website

The Court's Website is evaluated for openness and accessibility at each meeting.

1. A potential video of the appellate process or appellate argument is being explored.
2. Court fines and fees can now be paid online by using Idaho Court Payments: <https://www.citepayusa.com/payments/welcome.do?state=ID>. The user then can select any court from the drop down list (minus Bonner County) to make a payment on a court case. A hyperlink will be added to the online Repository within the next few weeks which will allow people to make an on line payment from that screen. The State is also assisting all counties in adding a hyperlink and the above icon to their county website to enable people to pay directly from that location. This functionality will soon be available to the media when requesting copies of documents and making a payment for those copies.
 
3. The success of Idaho Public Television's live streaming of oral arguments was reviewed. Questions remain about archiving these files, both from a legal standpoint and a technology/cost standpoint.
4. Follow us on Twitter. Steve Kenyon reported that the Court has 259 followers on Twitter, which is used to announce opinions when they are issued. It was also suggested that the Court tweet the schedules for oral arguments, especially as a reminder on the day they are scheduled.
5. "What's New" section of the Court's Website was reviewed. It was also suggested that when information is posted in this section that it also be tweeted to increase the Court's community outreach.

Libby Smith reported that the federal court is in the process of revamping its website, starting with the judges procedural pages. A fall launch of the new website is planned, and she will provide a review for the committee at the next meeting. She also invited committee members to contact her with suggestions for ways to make the website more user-friendly.

Action Items

- A hyperlink to *Idaho Court Pay* will be added to the online Repository within the next few weeks to allow people to make an on line payment for court fees and fines. Functionality for the media will also be available.
- The Court will tweet the schedules for oral arguments, especially as a reminder on the day they are scheduled.
- When information is posted in the "What's New" section of the Court's website, it will also be tweeted to increase the Court's community outreach.
- Libby Smith will review the new federal website at the next Media/Courts Committee meeting, and invited committee members to contact her with suggestions for ways to make the website more user-friendly.

E. Media Guide to the Idaho Courts

Patti Tobias reviewed the suggested updates for the *Media Guide to the Idaho Courts*, including:

- revisions to the "Courthouse Etiquette for the Media" section regarding electronic devices;
- the addition of information at the end of the "Special Rules for Electronic Devices" section;
- some additions to the section "Getting Court Records"; and

- revising the Retained Jurisdiction information in the section “Post Trial / Guilty Plea – Possible Sentences.” In this section, Judge Moeller suggested that the revision should be amended to read “... reports are considered **addendums to** presentence investigation reports ...” and “whether to **relinquish** ~~release~~ jurisdiction ...”.

IT WAS MOVED BY JOAN CARTAN HANSEN AND SECONDED BY JUDGE MELANSON TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED REVISIONS AS AMENDED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Michael Henderson advised that the Rule 32 Committee will review concerns outlined in the November 16, 2012 letter from Betsy Russell and Debora Kristensen.

Action Items

- The Media Guide will be updated as directed by the committee.
- The status of the November 16, 2012 letter will be added to the November 4, 2013 agenda.

F. Media-Court Meetings in Each of the Judicial Districts or as the Court Travels

The committee reviewed the status of any recent court-media meetings held in the judicial districts or one-on-one orientations with new reporters, or meetings with the media as the Supreme Court travels.

G. Cameras in the Courtroom

No new issues or concerns were reported.

H. Idaho Press Club

Betsy Russell reported that at an IDOG board meeting, discussion was held concerning ways to ease the appeal process for denial of public records requests (on requests outside the courts). A suggestion was made to consider using a “small claims court” type venue to review such appeals. Patti Tobias submitted that the Courts would be interested in continuing the dialogue and exploring ways to help expedite the review process if a work group is established.

I. Idaho Courts

Patti Tobias noted that the 2012 Annual Report and yearly reports produced for the Governor and Legislature are available on the Court’s website.

J. Case Study

The Idaho Legislature funded five new judges, effective October 1, 2013. The committee was invited to review media coverage from around the state and offer its observations and advice to the Judiciary on what we can do better to improve coverage of significant events, including two video links from news coverage on KTVB-Boise and KIDK-Idaho Falls.

In discussing the varied types and amount of coverage about this topic, several observations, comments, and suggestions were made:

- the television interviews contained false assumptions, and the right people were not interviewed for the story.
- “get ahead” of the story by doing a press release; including facts and figures you want reported; including favorable quotes from those supporting the action; and including names of “allies” in the press release for reporters to contact.
- make or renew contacts with news directors and reporters

- educate reporters to understand that county clerks may not be the appropriate representative of the judiciary
- issue press releases early in the week – not on Fridays
- few agencies have dedicated “court reporters” so new, inexperienced reporters are often given the assignment
- issue a press release in advance
- a one-page fact sheet online would have been helpful
- the response can’t come “later”
- a joint press release would have been a great way to “tell” our story
- sending out information is most effective on a Monday, as opposed to a Friday, and that it is very helpful to tell a reporter if pictures are available, and/or if and when a particular person could be available for an interview and their contact information.

K. Other Business

1. ICAR 32 as amended – update / concerns; add to the November 2013 agenda
2. News from other states was included in the materials, for information only
3. The current committee roster was included in the materials. Please let us know of any changes.
4. **Next Meeting** is set for **Monday, November 4, 2013, from 3:00–5:00 pm MST.**

Chief Justice Burdick thanked all the committee members present and participating on the phone for their contributions, and the meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm MDT.