

For Immediate Release

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**Idaho Supreme Court Issues 2014 Annual Report
Courts see changing faces, innovation in court services,
and improved technology and business practices**

Boise, ID – The Idaho Supreme Court released the fiscal year 2014 annual report of the Idaho Judiciary. The full report is available on the Court’s website, <http://www.isc.idaho.gov/annual2014>.

In the report, Chief Justice Roger Burdick highlights major accomplishments of the court and also significant changes in the makeup of Idaho’s judiciary for the past year.

After serving as the administrative director for Idaho courts for more than 20 years, Patti Tobias accepted a position with the National Center for State Courts, where she will be able to help serve state courts around the country, including Idaho. Former Chief Justice Linda Copple Trout is serving as the court’s interim administrative director until the position is filled.

There were also many retirements on the district and appellate bench. In the last five years, 18 district and appellate judges have retired and another 34 are eligible for retirement in the next five years. During this time of transition, Idaho’s judiciary remains committed to recruiting highly qualified individuals to serve the state and providing them with the support and training they need to be successful.

“Innovation, progress and shifting demographics will change the face of the Judiciary in the coming years,” said Chief Justice Roger Burdick. “Fortunately, we are well-equipped with effective leadership, immense talent and strong partnerships with the Idaho Legislature and the Executive Branch. We look forward to the many benefits that will come from these changes for the good of all Idahoans.”

The Court and the Judicial Council were awarded a grant to examine Idaho’s judicial performance evaluation program and to make recommendations for improvements, including the development of a new survey instrument. The focus of the program will continue to be on self-improvement. The Judiciary is seeking an appropriation to support this program and implement a pilot in 2015. Surveys will be administered randomly to attorneys, court personnel, and others on a rotational basis with each judge participating every three years.

In an effort to better serve Idahoans, the State Judiciary started implementing its business plan to increase access, efficiency and integration through the use of technology. This year, the Idaho courts will begin to transition to an electronic court record. The transition will include the ability to electronically file a court case and subsequent documents, provide judges with judicial workbench tools and provide the public enhanced access to court records.

The 2014 annual report shows felony and misdemeanor drug cases in Idaho continue to increase. Compared to five years ago, felony drug case filings are up 67 percent and misdemeanors have increased

16 percent. The number of driving under the influence cases, however, decreased 25 percent compared to last year.

Idaho's courts have worked to expedite sentencing for domestic violence cases by creating domestic violence courts in all of the judicial districts. In 2014, domestic violence cases were resolved 30 days faster in these problem-solving courts, providing victims with timely access to support services and helping offenders receive treatment more quickly.

The Idaho Judiciary is also pleased to announce that all seven of its districts have now adopted rules designed to improve the service it provides to citizens. The Idaho Rules of Family Law Procedure aim to simplify and streamline court processes, facilitating early case resolution, saving time for attorneys and increasing access to the courts for Idahoans who choose to represent themselves.

Idaho's veteran treatment courts continued to expand; currently there are four courts in the state. In 2014, these problem-solving courts were able to serve 87 veterans.

The Idaho courts remain committed to providing access to justice and ensuring fair and timely case resolution, and continue to identify innovative ways to improve service to Idahoans in the new year.

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