

**Minutes of the District Judges' Meeting
Held in Casper, Wyoming on December 8-9, 2005**

A meeting of the District Judges' Conference was held December 8-9, 2005 and was attended by the following Judges:

- First Judicial District: Judge Edward L. Grant, Judge Peter G. Arnold
- Second Judicial District: Judge Jeffrey A. Donnell
- Third Judicial District: Judge Dennis L. Sanderson, Judge Jere Ryckman, Judge Nena R. James
- Fourth Judicial District: Judge John C. Brackley
- Fifth Judicial District: Judge Gary P. Hartman
- Sixth Judicial District: Judge Dan R. Price, II, Judge John R. Perry, Judge Nicholas Deegan
- Seventh Judicial District: Judge David B. Park, Judge W. Thomas Sullins, Judge Scott W. Skavdahl
- Eighth Judicial District: Judge Keith Kautz
- Ninth Judicial District: Judge Norman E. Young, Judge Nancy J. Guthrie

Judge David B. Park chaired the meeting which began at 1:30 p.m. on December 8, 2005.

The following occurred:

1. Meeting with Governor Freudenthal. Judge Park began the meeting with a bad joke, which due to the fortunate absence of the secretary, will not be mentioned except to note that the fact that the joke was bad was a recurring theme in the Governor's comments.

The Governor discussed the problems in costs of placement and the need to keep costs in line. Among the matters discussed was self-interest of treatment providers and the need for information for placement alternatives and costs.

The Governor requested input from the judiciary and to have a state review committee to review the costs of placement in individual cases to help with the structure of the programs and alternatives.

The Governor also shared his concerns about the budgetary process in general and keeping within the budget.

The Governor also expressed his support for family problem solving courts noting that drug courts are successful.

The Governor said he welcomed suggestions from members of the judiciary.

2. Court Reporter Rules. Judge Donnell reported that the BJPC adopted the District Judges' recommendation regarding payments for court reporter equipment, etc.

3. Spring Meeting. It was decided to have the Spring Meeting of the Conference on April 27 and 28, 2006 so that it would not take up a Saturday. The exact place will be near a good fishing stream, but will be announced later.

4. A discussion was held on the proposed amendment to Title 7 sponsored by the County Attorney relating to mental health evaluations. It seems that the State Hospital gratuitously opines that the defendant is fit to stand trial even if that evaluation is not requested. No action was taken.

5. A brief discussion was held on the new GAL Rule. Judge Park said there was dissatisfaction by attorneys because there was a pay cut. It was reported that there are no GALs in Lincoln County because the attorneys there won't take the training. Judge Donnell said non-trained GALs could be appointed, but the county would have to pay the bill.

Meeting Reconvened on December 9th at 8:30 a.m.

6. A discussion was held on the *Noonan v. Noonan* case which required that there must be evidence on the record providing the basis for the property division. The *pro se* divorce forms don't provide a basis and there is no relief in sight. No action was taken.

7. A brief discussion was held on the necessity of having a hearing on motions to withdraw. No action was taken.

8. A brief discussion was held on the problem of out-of-state attorneys bringing collection cases and not having the appropriate in-state address. No action was taken.

9. Regarding Justice Golden's e-mail inviting a 2-day summit meeting next fall to discuss Juvenile Court issues, it was resolved to accept the invitation as long as it centered on issues of concern to the Juvenile Court judges. Judges will contact Judge Perry as to issues that should be discussed.

10. A discussion was held on jury selection problems. Use of numbers instead of names to protect jurors from the fear of being looked up after the trial, but allowing attorneys to see the names separately from the numbers. No action was taken.

11. Regarding Courtroom Security, it was reported that the Sheriff's Association wants to go to the Legislature to provide funding for the provision of courtroom security. The Chief Justice has appointed a task force with Judge Donnell as Chairman to study the matter and make a recommendation. The task force will be contacting the individual judges to ask or tell them of their needs, as the case may be.

12. Judge Hartman expressed his concern about the quality of prosecuting attorneys' work in criminal cases, noting the number of acquittal and the better preparation of the public defenders. He said he called the AG's office.

13. Regarding Court Technology, Judge Skavdahl reported that he was having problems in getting service on the computer and that Jim Bivona won't help District Court judges as promised. A discussion was held on where the funds from the court automation fee were being applied. Judge Sanderson moved that Judge Skavdahl be appointed to chair a task force or committee to study the problems and make a recommendation. The motion was not seconded and died for lack of a second. Sanderson withdrew the motion.

Judge Kautz made a motion to appoint a committee chaired by Judge Skavdahl to study the computer issues and make a recommendation for action. Motion seconded by Sanderson and carried unanimously.

14. Judge Harman presented a resolution in support of Problem Solving Courts. A lively discussion followed. No action was taken on this resolution. A motion was duly made to have Judges Donnell and Hartman, who best represented the opposing views meet and attempt to come up with a recommendation that takes into account the concerns of those who did not support the resolution and the concept of a problem solving process.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.