



United States Courts for the District of Idaho

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NEWS RELEASE

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Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Change effective October 1, 2015

BOISE -

Effective October 1, 2015, the title and responsibilities of Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge in the District of Idaho will transfer to Judge Ronald E. Bush. The magistrate judges in the District regularly rotate through a seven year term as Chief Magistrate Judge, in which capacity he or she meets regularly on administrative matters with the Chief District Judge, the Chief Bankruptcy Judge, and the Clerk of the Court. Judge Bush succeeds Judge Candy Wagahoff Dale, who has served ably as Chief Magistrate Judge since October 1, 2008. Judge Dale has been a member of the federal bench in Idaho since March 30, 2008.

The District of Idaho has two magistrate judge positions authorized by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Those positions are filled through a merit review process and appointment by the District Judges. The authority of magistrate judges to preside over criminal and civil matters in the federal district courts is broadly outlined in federal law. Idaho's magistrate judges are among those most fully utilized in the country. Both Judges Dale and Bush carry a significant civil case load, including jury and court trials; carry out most preliminary proceedings in all criminal cases; are responsible for the empaneling of the grand jury in each of the three divisions of the District Court and for proceedings to accept the returns of the grand jury; and assist the district judges and court unit executives on a variety of matters. The authority to adjudicate matters as a magistrate judge in the District Court is outlined in 28 U.S.C. § 636, which includes the availability of consent of all parties in civil cases for the magistrate judge to preside over civil cases in their entirety, including the issuance of final orders that then may be appealed to the Circuit Court.

Among other matters, the Chief Magistrate Judge is responsible for appointments of private counsel under the federal Criminal Justice Act for indigent defendants in criminal appeals and habeas corpus cases; works closely with Probation and Pretrial Services regarding bail reports, pretrial release conditions, presentence reports for misdemeanors and other procedures and

forms; and interacts with the U.S. Attorney's Office regarding preliminary criminal proceedings, search warrant procedures, and petty offenses on federal lands.

Although the responsibilities of Chief Magistrate Judge will transfer to Judge Bush effective October 1, 2015, both Judges Dale and Bush continue to carry out other administrative responsibilities for the District Court. Judge Dale will continue to serve as the Chair of the Local Civil and Criminal Rules Advisory Committee and Judge Bush will continue to serve as the Chair of the annual Bench/Bar Conference. In addition, Judge Dale and Judge Bush continue their work with the District of Idaho's problem solving court, START ("Success Through Assisted Recovery and Treatment") in Boise and Pocatello. This reentry program, which began in September of 2008 under the leadership of Senior Magistrate Judge Mikel H. Williams, allows offenders released from prison to participate in an intense supervision program with a team (led by a magistrate judge) that works with the probation office to assist the offenders with reentry issues, including substance abuse, housing and employment, to increase the opportunities for rehabilitation and reduce the rate of recidivism.

Judge Bush, a native of Idaho Falls, has been a U.S. Magistrate Judge since October 1, 2008. Previously, Judge Bush served for five years as a district judge in the Sixth Judicial District of the State of Idaho, and prior to that he practiced law for 20 years in both Pocatello and Boise. He is a graduate of the University of Idaho and the George Washington University Law School. Judge Bush was an organizer and the first president of the American Inn of Court No. 130, in Boise. He also is a former member and chairman of the Idaho State Historical Society Board of Trustees, and was an organizer and first president of the Idaho Legal History Society and continues on its board.

In noting this transition, Chief District Judge B. Lynn Winmill commented that "Judge Dale has played a central and critical role in the administration of the District's business over the last 7 years. Both she and Judge Bush have been instrumental in promoting and supporting a number of the District's most important and innovative programs. That joint commitment of our two Magistrate Judges, coupled with Judge Bush's considerable administrative skills, ensures that the affairs of the District of Idaho will be in good hands over the upcoming 7 years."

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