

## [Idaho] State of Judiciary: Doing more with limited resources

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Idaho Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Burdick gave his annual “State of the Judiciary” address to both houses of the Legislature today, telling lawmakers, “I bring greetings from Idaho’s judiciary, who handled over 436,000 filed cases and 655 filed appeals in 2012.” Among the efforts the courts are making to cope with their increasing caseloads: “Our magistrate and district judges traveled over 309,000 miles last year to preside over hearings in courthouses across the state,” Burdick told lawmakers. “By the use of advanced technology, mileage costs and travel time will be significantly reduced and attendant cost savings to law enforcement will be realized.” He said, “We will embrace this new technology and look for the efficiencies it will provide.”

Idaho’s courts have completed an in-depth assessment of their existing systems and developed a plan for technological upgrades that will “affect Idaho’s judiciary for decades,” Burdick said. That will include a move to electronic filing of all court papers, a move that the courts anticipate will be funded by court users and bring significant savings to counties and the state.

Burdick also said the judiciary is having increasing trouble recruiting district judges, noting that Idaho ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in compensation for its general jurisdiction judges. He said the courts will provide more information about the judge-recruiting challenges to lawmakers this year.

The courts also are asking lawmakers to repeal the sunset, or expiration, clause of the 2010 legislation imposing a surcharge on offenders. “The emergency surcharge has kept the courthouse doors open in each of your counties,” Burdick told lawmakers, and he said the state can’t afford to replace the \$4 million a year that courts would lose if the charge is allowed to expire. “The repeal of the sunset provision is vital to the judiciary’s constitutional role to solve people’s disputes and keep our communities safe.”

Also recognized in the chief justice’s address: Patti Tobias, the court system’s administrative director, who this year received the Warren E. Burger award for excellence in court administration from the National Center for State Courts. Burdick noted that that’s the highest award given for that type of work, and the House honored Tobias with an ovation.

House Majority Leader Mike Moyle, R-Star, who is presiding over the House today and tomorrow while Speaker Scott Bedke is at a new speakers’ training session in Texas, told the chief justice, “We appreciate all the hard work the courts do with limited resources, and we thank you for that.”