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Lawyer seeks district bench

by Scott Hunter

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Patrick Earl has practiced law in Grant County's District Court for 18 years, and now he'd like to be the judge.

Earl says he's running against incumbent Richard Fitterer because he's noticed changes in how the court is run in recent years.

"At times, it could run faster, or start on time," Earl told the Grand Coulee Dam Area Chamber of Commerce at a luncheon Thursday.

About 4,400 cases were filed in district court last year, Earl noted. The court hears cases involving traffic infractions, misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors and small claims civil disputes.

He said the court's current practice of traveling to venues around the county, including to local city halls, is "a smart thing. That is definitely something that should continue."

Earl said after working for 18 years in the system, "I feel like I'm ready to serve."

Earl said people who end up in district court are generally not hardened criminals, just people who have issues that can be addressed so they don't have to come back to court.