

Governor taps county judge

To fill Superior Court vacancy

Brian Altman, an attorney and a judge in Goldendale, has accepted an interim appointment by Gov. Christine Gregoire as Superior Court judge for Klickitat and Skamania counties.

Altman, who previously presided as judge of Klickitat County's East District Court, is Gregoire's 31st judicial appointment since she took office in 2005. Altman replaces E. Thompson Reynolds of Trout Lake, whose retirement from the bench took effect Aug. 1.

"The community and his colleagues certainly have faith in Judge Altman--and that's not easily earned," Gregoire said in her July 28 announcement. "I am impressed by the overwhelming support displayed for Judge Altman, and am confident his energy, his fair and reasoned demeanor, and his dedication to the law will continue to be an asset for the citizens of Washington state in this new role."

A special three-day filing period for the non-partisan position, whose full four-year term expires in 2012, has been set for Aug. 18-20. The names of eligible candidates who apply will appear on the November General Election ballots in Klickitat and Skamania counties. The winner of the fall run-off will serve out the last two years of the current term.

"I am deeply honored to have been selected by Gov. Gregoire to fill Judge Reynolds' position on the Superior Court bench for Klickitat and Skamania counties," Altman said. "I will dedicate myself with unwavering commitment to work hard, to respect the law, and to ensure that every person before the bench is heard and is treated with dignity and fairness."

Altman, who received a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Washington before attending the UW School of Law, began his legal career in Klickitat County as a deputy prosecuting attorney before starting his own general practice in Goldendale in 1989. Altman's practice focused on family law and criminal defense; he also served as Goldendale city attorney.

In 1992, Altman won his first election to the position of East District Court judge. And, since 2001, he has served as a pro tempore judge for the Superior Court of Klickitat and Skamania counties.

Moreover, Altman serves on the seven-member Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee established by the Supreme Court and has been active in the District and Municipal Court Judges Association (including serving as a director from 2006 to 2009) and in the Klickitat/Skamania Bar Association (many years as its president).