



PRESIDING JUDGE

WILLIAM W. McLEES
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State of North Dakota

DISTRICT COURT

NORTHWEST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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DISTRICT JUDGES

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and

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November 17, 2008

Counsel:

After a very thorough review of our present case assignment plan, and much discussion, the decision has been made to implement a new case assignment plan in Ward County-----with the present civil/criminal rotation method of assigning judges being replaced by an individual calendar case assignment plan. Simply stated, this will result in all four (4) of the judges chambered in Minot receiving an equal number of Ward County civil and criminal case assignments-----and the judge assigned to a particular case will stay with the case from start to finish, unless the assigned judge recuses himself from the case or a demand for change of judge is made against that judge.

While civil cases are already (i.e., as of November 5, 2008) being assigned to the judges on the basis of this revised plan, criminal cases will not start being assigned to the judges under this new plan until the week beginning February 2, 2009.

The change from the current civil/criminal rotation system to an individual calendar system is designed to facilitate a more equitable distribution of the caseload in Ward County. Additionally, it is hoped that this change will enable our judges to more timely dispose of cases in order to comply with the docket currency standards established by the North Dakota Supreme Court. *N.D. Sup. Ct. Admin. R. 12.*

It should be noted that the implementation of this new case assignment plan in Ward County will not change how "master calendar" civil and criminal matters, and criminal trials, are handled in Mountrail County, as the two Williston judges will continue to handle these matters. However, contested Mountrail County civil matters will now be divided equally among the four (4) judges chambered in Minot. In Burke County, the caseload will continue to be divided equally among the four (4) Minot judges.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this revised case assignment plan please contact Trial Court Administrator Carolyn Woolf at 701 857-6625.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W W McLEES".

William W. McLees
Presiding Judge

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF WARD

NORTHWEST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

STANDING ORDER - REVISED CASE ASSIGNMENT PLAN

The decision has been made to implement a new case assignment plan in Ward County, with the present civil/criminal rotation method of assigning judges being replaced by an individual calendar case assignment plan.

Salient features of this new case assignment plan are as follows:

1. The four (4) judges chambered in Minot will no longer rotate between the criminal and civil calendars.
2. Each of the four (4) judges chambered in Minot will receive an equal number of criminal and civil cases. The judge assigned to a particular case will remain assigned to that case from start to finish, unless the assigned judge recuses himself from the case or a demand for change of judge is made against that judge.
3. The judges began receiving civil case assignments on the basis of this revised plan on November 5, 2008. Criminal case assignments under this revised plan will begin to be made on February 2, 2009.
4. The implementation of this revised case assignment plan will not change how "master calendar" civil and criminal matters, and criminal trials, are handled in Mountrail County, as the two (2) Williston judges will continue to handle these matters.
5. Contested Mountrail County civil matters will now be divided equally among the four (4) judges chambered in Minot.
6. The Burke County caseload will continue to be divided equally among the four (4) judges chambered in Minot.

It is hoped that this change will enable our judges to more timely dispose of cases, in order to comply with the docket currency standards established by the North Dakota Supreme Court. *N.D. Sup. Ct. Admin. R. 12.*

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated at Minot, North Dakota, this 8th day of December, 2008.

BY THE COURT:



William W. McLees
Presiding Judge