

March 22, 2023
Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Clerk
North Dakota Supreme Court
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505-0530

RE: Vacancy in Judgeship No. 3, Northwest Judicial District – Supreme Court No. 20230068

Dear Clerk:

The Divide County Commissioners were recently notified of the retirement of Judge Paul W. Jacobson effective May 31, 2023. The North Dakota Supreme Court indicates it will accept comments regarding the upcoming vacancy until April 10, 2023.

Divide County completed renovations to create a new judge's chambers, support staff office, and a new larger jury room in August 2017. The courtroom remains essentially the same for historical purposes. The clerk's office has moved to provide more space accommodating the clerk and two deputy clerks. The jury room encompasses enough space to accommodate jurors both pre-Covid and throughout the pandemic with a six foot separation for each. In addition, the county maintains the presence of security on all court days.

The judges in the Northwest Judicial District have and continue to demonstrate a consistent commitment to the citizens of Divide County and in doing so continue to appear in person for court. The Commission not only recognizes this but also in turn continues to support the needs of the judiciary.

Divide County has continually put forth county dollars to support access to justice, through the much-needed renovations that took place in 2017 to the courtroom, jury room and an additional meeting room for attorneys to meet with their clients when visiting Divide County for court. Additionally, Divide County has always ensured the clerk of court office is properly staffed through the last oil boom and will continue to support what the Court and Clerk's Office feel is necessary to ensure exceptional service to the citizens of Divide County when citizens have interactions with the court system.

The Divide County Board of Commissioners respectfully request the State of North Dakota reciprocate the investment Divide County has put forth by retaining Judgeship No. 3 in the Northwest Judicial District with chambers in Williston.

Respectfully,



Rodney Johnson
Chair, Divide County Commission

Cc: Divide County Commissioners