

# ANNUAL REPORT of the NEVADA JUDICIARY

The Work of Nevada's Courts - July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002

## Supreme Court of Nevada



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### CHIEF JUSTICE

A. WILLIAM MAUPIN

### ASSOCIATE JUSTICES

CLIFF YOUNG

ROBERT E. ROSE

MIRIAM SHEARING

DEBORAH A. AGOSTI

MYRON E. LEAVITT

NANCY A. BECKER

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Prepared and published by the  
Supreme Court of Nevada  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
201 South Carson Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701  
(775) 684-1700  
[www.nvsupremecourt.us](http://www.nvsupremecourt.us)

**Ron Titus**, State Court Administrator

**Bill Gang**, Statewide Court Program  
Coordinator

**Robin Sweet**, Court Research Analyst

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*Mineral County*

The Mineral County Courthouse in Hawthorne is one in a series of drawings of old Nevada courthouses by Reno artist PATTY ATCHESON MELTON. The series, printed throughout this publication, was completed in 1976. Thus the drawing of the Lander County Courthouse on page 21 depicts the original building in Austin, which was the county seat until 1980 when it was relocated to Battle Mountain.

Each drawing is accompanied in this publication by a Nevada map showing the location of the county seat where the courthouse sits.

The limited series of drawings may be purchased by contacting the artist at (775) 250-4568.

# Justice Cliff Young Retires

“There is no question that Justice Young is one of the most important public figures in the history of this state.”

**AFTER MORE THAN** half a century of service to his country and his state, Justice Cliff Young announced his retirement from the public life that has helped shape Nevada law and the judiciary.

Justice Young served two terms as a U.S. Congressman, 14 years as a Nevada State Senator and 18 years on the Nevada Supreme Court.

“That represents a lifetime commitment to the citizens of the State of Nevada,” said Chief Justice A. William Maupin. “There is no question that Justice Young is one of the most important public figures in the history of this state.”

The federal courthouse in Reno was named in Justice Young’s honor.

Justice Young, a Lovelock native, has always strived to improve the judiciary in Nevada by finding ways to streamline the justice system. He was one of the creators of the criminal appeal “Fast Track” program and was a driving force behind the highly successful Nevada Court Annexed Arbitration Program. He was instrumental in the creation of the current Supreme Court settlement program, which has resolved over 55 percent of the civil appeals filed with the high court since 1996.

One reform Justice Young would still like to see is a change in the way Supreme Court justices are selected. “I’d like to see a modified Missouri plan because it’s so expensive to run a campaign. It cost \$500,000 for my re-election campaign six years ago,” he said.

As a State Senator, he worked to expand the state park system. Many of today’s state parks are a result of his efforts.

“I get a certain satisfaction in going by parks and thinking ‘I did something there,’” he said. “Nobody knows now what I did, but that’s life.”

Before he was a legislator or a justice, he helped mold the future of America as an officer in the U.S. Army’s 103rd Infantry Division for two years in Europe during World War II. The 1949 Harvard Law School graduate ended the war as a Major and returned to Reno to practice law.

Much of his life has been spent involved in wildlife and conservation matters, which led to his serving two terms as president of the National Wildlife Federation, an organization with 4.2 million members.



*Pershing County*





# A Message from the Chief Justice



**THIS ANNUAL REPORT** of the Nevada Judiciary not only provides a statistical panorama of the work of Nevada’s courts, but also documents the latest achievements in our continuing era of progress. This state’s unique and innovative programs – from the nation’s leading drug court programs to information sharing solutions – have raised the Nevada judiciary to an enviable level in the country.

There have been improvements in the delivery of formal dispute resolution and in avenues of access to the court system. In partnership with the other branches of state government, the judiciary has increased the availability and quality of our judicial resources. The productivity figures in this report reflect our successes.

At the Supreme Court, the justices continued to reduce the backlog of cases and bring final resolution to cases.

In Nevada’s busiest areas, the district, justice and municipal court judges worked to keep pace with burgeoning populations and caseloads and increasingly complex legal matters. In rural districts, the judges continued to provide quality justice for all despite hard economic times and diminishing resources. The dedication of our judges at all levels should be recognized and commended.

The Administrative Office of the Courts continued to serve all areas of the state and all levels of the judiciary, providing technology solutions and addressing specialized needs, like establishing the interpreter certification program to ensure access to the courts by those who do not speak English.

As I conclude my second year as Chief Justice, I would like to thank the judges at every level whose contributions have made the Nevada justice system one of the nation’s best.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. William Maupin".

A. William Maupin  
Chief Justice  
Nevada Supreme Court



# Report from the Administrative Office of the Courts

**THIS REPORT MARKS** the third year we are reporting judicial workload statistics and documenting the activities of the Nevada Supreme Court, the state's trial courts and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) in an annual report.

Fiscal 2001-02 was an active year for the Nevada Judiciary. The role of the Nevada Judicial Council has been expanded and its members are operating with renewed vigor. The Council established four standing committees to assist in providing administrative recommendations to the Supreme Court. The AOC provides staff support for the Council and its various research projects. The AOC has also established a court interpreter certification program and will make qualified interpreters available for our courts before year's end.

The AOC has also been heavily involved in upgrading the abilities of our courts to process cases by providing needed technology. Two major projects discussed in this report are our nationally acclaimed Multi-County Integrated Justice System (MC-IJIS) and the Nevada Rural Courts System (NRCS). We also provided technical assistance to the Justice and Municipal Courts in Clark County.

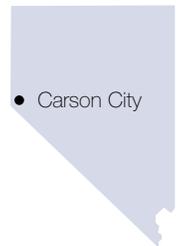
In cooperation with the Nevada Attorney General's Office, the AOC worked to develop standardized forms for domestic violence orders issued by judges throughout the state. The AOC also has been facilitating communications between our state courts and tribal courts of Nevada through grants from the Attorney General's office.

Every year our court statistics become more accurate and complete. This year we have 100 percent reporting of filings from all courts for all months. An additional 31 courts are reporting dispositions, which are much more difficult to count. With the advent of new technology we should have all courts accurately reporting filings, dispositions and other data by the 2005 legislative session.

None of the progress of Nevada's Judicial Branch documented in this report could have been possible without the vision and enthusiastic leadership of the Justices of the Nevada Supreme Court and the collaboration and cooperation of the judges and staffs of the trial courts and the employees of the AOC. Together we have advanced the Nevada judiciary's goal of providing justice to all of Nevada's citizens.



Ronald R. Titus  
State Court Administrator



Carson City

# The Supreme Court of Nevada



From left, seated: Chief Justice A. William Maupin, Vice Chief Justice Cliff Young, Justice Robert E. Rose.  
Standing: Justice Nancy A. Becker, Justice Myron E. Leavitt, Justice Miriam Shearing and Justice Deborah A. Agosti.

### **CHIEF JUSTICE A. WILLIAM MAUPIN**

By the time Justice A. William Maupin was appointed to the Eighth Judicial District Court bench in 1993, he already spent 22 years as an attorney in both the public and private sectors. Although he handled murder cases as a public defender, he chose to focus his career on major civil litigation. Justice Maupin was elected to the Supreme Court in 1996. He became chief justice in 2001 and has served nearly two years. During that time, he focused on revising and streamlining court case management systems to improve efficiency and expanded the use of technology throughout the court system. The Court also created the Jury Improvement Commission and the Commission on Rural Courts. His term ends in January 2003 (he was re-elected in 2002).

### **VICE CHIEF JUSTICE CLIFF YOUNG**

Vice Chief Justice Cliff Young is the most senior judge on the Nevada Supreme Court. He was elected in 1984 after a political career that included two terms as a U.S. Congressman and 14 years as a Nevada State Senator. He was inducted into the Nevada State Senate Hall of Fame in 1995. The Lovelock, Nevada, native also spent 35 years practicing law as a private attorney in Reno. During World War II, he was an officer in the 103rd Infantry Division and served in Europe. He was the first Nevadan to be president of the National Wildlife Federation. His term ends in January 2003. He did not seek re-election.

### **JUSTICE BOB ROSE**

Justice Bob Rose is serving in his third term on the Nevada Supreme Court. He was first elected in 1988 to cap a political career that began with his election as Washoe County District Attorney in 1970 and as Nevada Lieutenant Governor in 1974. He returned to the practice of law in 1979 in Las Vegas until 1986 when he was appointed to the Eighth Judicial District Court. He twice served as Supreme Court chief justice and created the Judicial Assessment Commission — the so-called “Rose Commission” — and also co-chairs the Jury Improvement Commission. His term expires in 2007.

### **JUSTICE MIRIAM SHEARING**

Justice Miriam Shearing’s judicial career has provided nearly a quarter century of “firsts” for women in Nevada. In 1976, after practicing law for seven years, she became the first woman elected as justice of the peace in Las Vegas. In 1982, she became the first woman elected as a District Court judge in Nevada. Justice Shearing became the first woman on the Nevada Supreme Court with her election in 1992 and served as Chief Justice in 1997 – again the first woman to hold that position. Currently, she is president of the American Judicature Society. Her term ends in 2005.

### **JUSTICE DEBORAH A. AGOSTI**

Justice Deborah A. Agosti has been a judge since 1982, when she was elected to be a Reno justice of the peace – the first woman to hold that position. For five years before that, she was senior staff attorney for the Senior Citizens Legal Assistance Program in Reno and a Washoe County Deputy District Attorney. In 1984, she became the first woman to be elected district judge in the Second Judicial District – a post she held for 14 years. In 1998, she was elected to the Nevada Supreme Court. She is co-chair of the Jury Improvement Commission. Her term expires in 2005.

### **JUSTICE MYRON E. LEAVITT**

Justice Myron E. Leavitt is a Las Vegas native who has had one of the most diverse careers of any justice. He began his elective career as a Las Vegas Township Justice of the Peace in 1961-62. He served on the Clark County Commission and Las Vegas City Council before winning election in 1978 as Nevada Lieutenant Governor. For 28 years he also was a private attorney. He returned to the judiciary in 1984 when he was appointed to the District Court bench at the Eighth Judicial District. He was elected to the Supreme Court in 1998 and re-elected in 2000. His term expires in 2007.

### **JUSTICE NANCY A. BECKER**

Justice Nancy Becker is a native Las Vegas and the youngest of the seven members of the Supreme Court. She worked for the late Sen. Howard Cannon in Washington, D.C., before returning to Nevada and a job at the Las Vegas City Attorney’s Office. Her election in 1987 to a seat on the Las Vegas Municipal Court made her the first woman to preside in that city court. In 1989, she was named to a vacant seat at the Eighth Judicial District Court, making her the first woman appointed as a district judge in Nevada. She was elected to the Supreme Court in 1998 and re-elected in 2000. Her term expires in 2007.

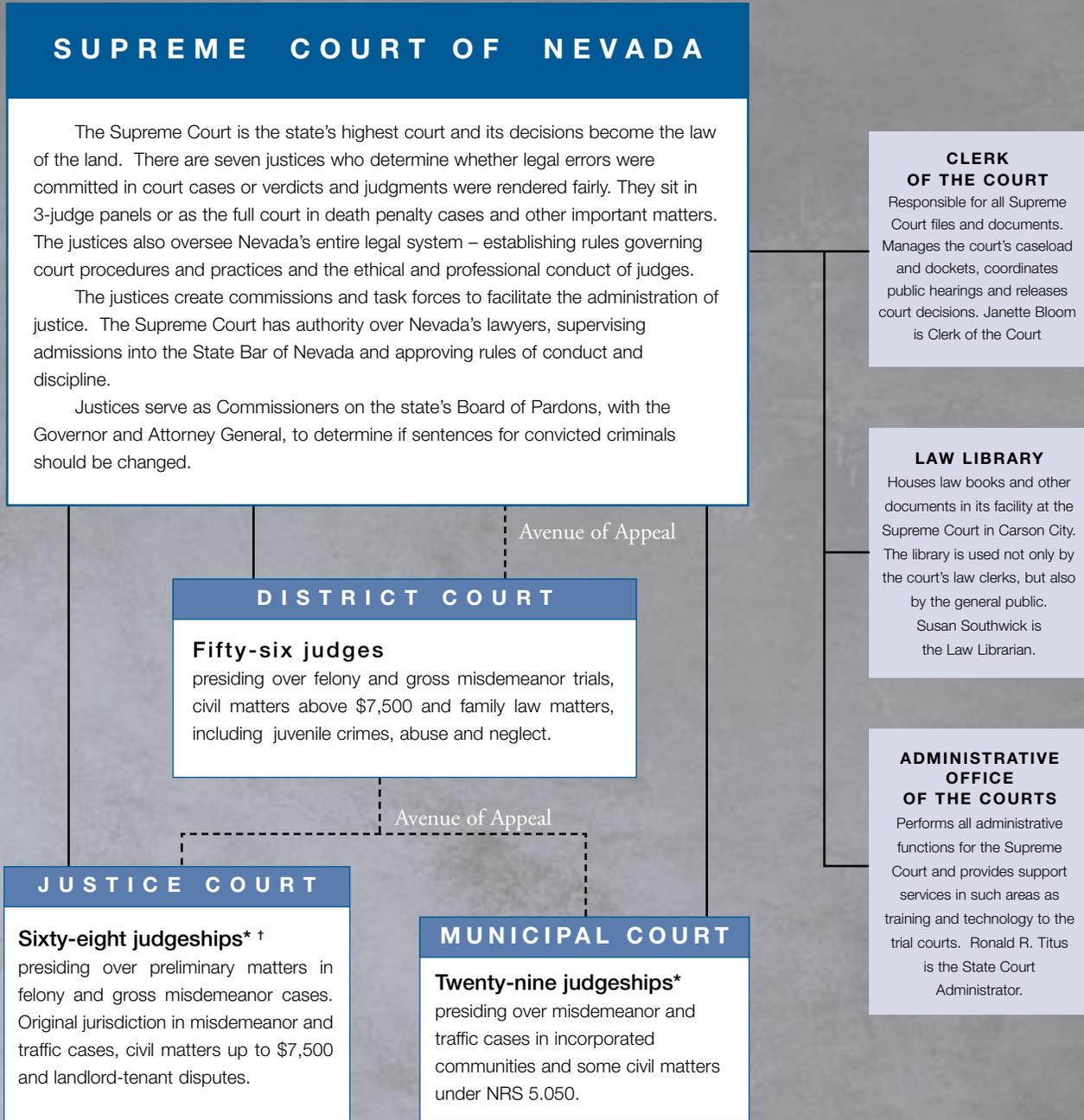




# THE NEVADA JUDICIAL SYSTEM

## Structure & Function

The judicial system in Nevada is one of the three independent and co-equal branches of government working together to serve the citizens of the state. The responsibility of the judiciary is to impartially resolve legal disputes brought before it. In Nevada, the judiciary consists of one appellate court – The Supreme Court – and three divisions of trial courts – state District Courts, county Justice Courts and city Municipal Courts. The chart below represents information as of June 30, 2002.

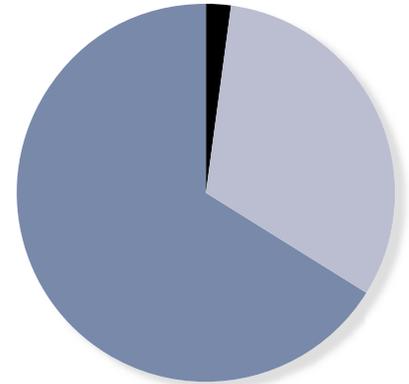


\* Ten lower court judges serve their communities as both justice of the peace and municipal judge.  
† One Justice Court was closed during fiscal year 2001-02.

## Funding

The judicial system, through the Administrative Office of the Courts, received \$22,887,095 for fiscal year 2001-02 to fund the Supreme Court, district judges salaries and limited programs of the state court system, such as judicial education and court interpreter certification. The funding comes from administrative assessments, peremptory challenges and the State General Fund.

Administrative assessments are fees charged to defendants in criminal cases. Peremptory challenges are fees paid by attorneys and litigants to exclude particular judges in civil cases. Together they make up about 34 percent of the funding, or \$7,752,663. The State General Fund provides \$15,134,432, or just under 66 percent of the funding. This amount represents the General Fund appropriation (as shown in table below) plus one-time funding for specific programs. The \$15,134,432 represents less than 1 percent of the total state budget (see table below).

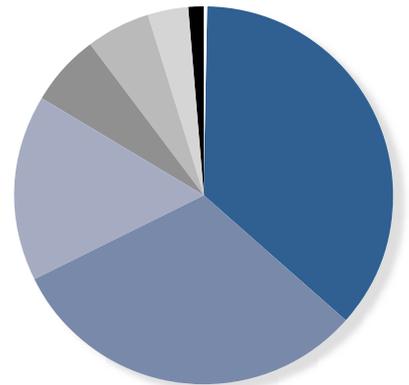


66%	GENERAL FUND	\$15,134,432
32%	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENTS	\$7,265,638
2%	PEREMPTORY CHALLENGES	\$487,025

## Expenditures

Funding administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts pays for the operating expenses of the Nevada Supreme Court, limited support services for the court system statewide and retirement for Supreme Court justices and District Court judges.

The majority of state court costs are borne by the local governments. With the exception of the salaries and benefits for District Court judges and some support services, the operations of the District Courts are funded by county governments. County governments also fund the Justice Courts. City governments fund the Municipal Courts in incorporated cities.



37%	SUPREME COURT OPERATING EXPENDITURES (55% General Fund & 45% AA's)	\$8,353,296
32%	DISTRICT JUDGES SALARIES (100% General Fund)	\$7,136,715
16%	AOC (100% AA's)	\$3,642,257
6%	PENSIONS (100% General Fund) (Includes Justices & District Judges Pensions)	\$1,404,121
5%	LAW LIBRARY (100% General Fund)	\$1,252,915
3%	JUDICIAL ASSISTANCE (Peremptory Challenges & AA) (Includes Senior Judge & Visiting Judges Expenses)	\$792,953
1%	RURAL DRUG COURT (100% General Fund)	\$300,000
.02%	JUDICIAL SELECTION	\$4,838

## General Fund Appropriation

*The Judiciary's Share of the State Funds*

	FY2001-02	% of Total	FY2002-03	% of Total
Judicial Branch (Includes the Commission on Judicial Discipline)	14,606,717	<b>0.80%</b>	16,009,003	<b>0.81%</b>
Other State Government (Includes: Other Constitutional Agencies, Finance & Administration, Education, Human Services, Commerce & Industry, Public Safety and Special Purpose Agencies)	1,811,947,227	99.20%	1,953,721,463	99.19%
<b>Total General Fund Appropriations</b>	<b>1,826,553,944</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,969,730,466</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

\*This table reflects total budgeted Legislative appropriations, including the Commission on Judicial Discipline. Actual funding for each fiscal year may differ based upon actual events and expenditures during the year.



# THE NEVADA JUDICIAL SYSTEM

## Structure & Function

### District Courts

Comprising the second level of the judiciary, the District Courts are courts of general jurisdiction and have the most authority of any trial court. This is where major trials are conducted and citizens get their “day in court” before a jury of their peers. The district judges preside over felony and gross misdemeanor cases, civil matters above \$7,500 and family law issues. The judges also decide a variety of a complex legal disputes that do not require jury trials, including appeals of Justice and Municipal Court cases.

The District Courts are constitutionally authorized and the judges have statewide jurisdiction, although they are elected and serve primarily in one of the state’s nine judicial districts. Because of the state’s sparse rural populations, five of those judicial districts encompass multiple counties to best utilize the judges’ time and taxpayer resources.

### Nevada’s Judicial Districts and Judges

(as of June 30, 2002)

#### FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Carson City & Storey County

- Judge Michael Griffin
- Judge William Maddox

#### SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Washoe County

- Judge Brent Adams
- Judge Janet Berry
- Judge Peter Breen
- Judge Steve Elliott
- Judge James Hardesty
- Judge Scott Jordan
- Judge Steven Kosach
- Judge Charles McGee
- Judge Jerome Polaha
- Judge Deborah Schumacher
- Judge Connie Steinheimer

#### THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Churchill & Lyon Counties

- Judge Archie Blake
- Judge Robert Estes
- Judge David Huff

#### FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Elko County

- Judge Jack Ames
- Judge Mike Memeo

#### FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Esmeralda, Mineral & Nye Counties

- Judge John Davis
- Judge Robert Lane

#### SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Humboldt, Lander & Pershing Counties

- Judge Jerry Sullivan
- Judge Richard Wagner

#### SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Eureka, Lincoln & White Pine Counties

- Judge Steve Dobrescu
- Judge Dan Papez

#### EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

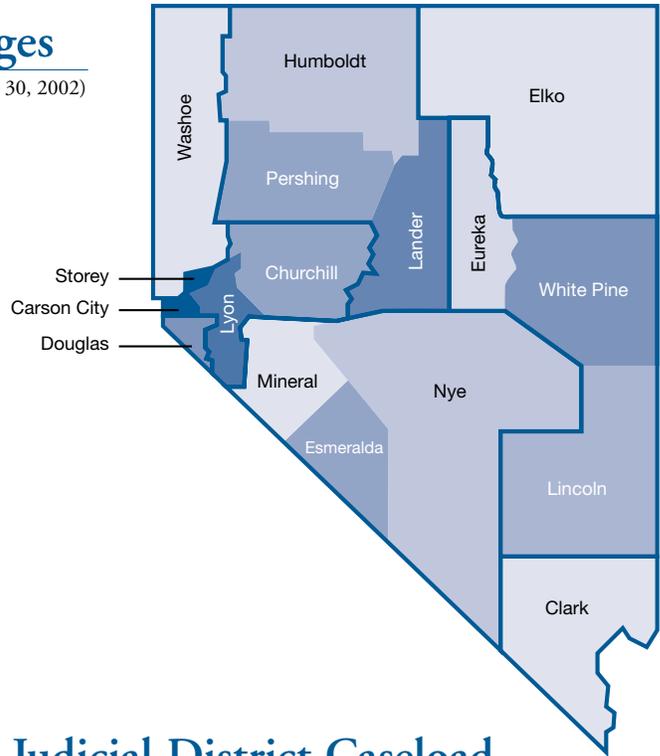
Clark County

- Judge Joseph Bonaventure
- Judge Lisa Brown
- Judge Michael Cherry
- Judge Nicholas Del Vecchio
- Judge Mark Denton
- Judge Michael Douglas
- Judge Allan Earl
- Judge Robert Gaston
- Judge Lee Gates
- Judge Mark Gibbons
- Judge Gerald Hardcastle
- Judge Kathy Hardcastle
- Judge Steven Jones
- Judge Michelle Leavitt
- Judge Jack Lehman
- Judge Sally Loehrer
- Judge Robert Lueck
- Judge John McGroarty
- Judge Donald Mosley
- Judge Cheryl Moss
- Judge Ronald Parraguirre
- Judge Gene Porter
- Judge Arthur Ritchie
- Judge Nancy Saitta
- Judge Gloria Sanchez
- Judge Jeffrey Sobel
- Judge Dianne Steel
- Judge Jennifer Togliatti
- Judge Valorie Vega
- Judge William Voy

#### NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Douglas County

- Judge David Gamble
- Judge Michael Gibbons



### Judicial District Caseload

Judicial District	Judicial Positions	Population as of 7-1-01	Caseload	Avg. cases per judge
First	2	57,885	3,191	1,596
Second	11	353,271	20,111	1,828
Third	3	62,257	3,300	1,100
Fourth	2	46,668	2,103	1,052
Fifth	2	40,165	2,906	1,453
Sixth	2	28,798	1,187	594
Seventh	2	17,330	618	309
Eighth	30	1,485,855	67,409	2,247
Ninth	2	43,450	1,555	778
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2,135,679</b>	<b>102,380</b>	<b>1,217</b>

## Justice Courts

The Justice Courts are county courts that have responsibility for a variety of matters – from felony arraignments and preliminary hearings to small civil issues and landlord-tenant disputes.

The justices of the peace have authority over misdemeanor cases and traffic matters in unincorporated townships. In rural Nevada, many Justice Courts have part-time judges.

### The Five Busiest Justice Courts

Justice Court	Population as of 7-1-01	Judicial Positions	Non-traffic caseload	Cases filed per judge*	Traffic & Parking
Las Vegas	1,090,578	8	101,528	12,691	217,773
Reno	233,675	5	27,159	5,432	40,682
Sparks	103,740	2	7,509	3,755	8,497
Carson City	54,171	2	7,025	3,513	15,624
North Las Vegas	150,511	2	6,425	3,213	1,245

\* Traffic violations may be resolved by payment of fines and not require judicial time. Therefore, they are not included in “cases filed per judge.”

## Municipal Courts

These are city courts that operate within the city limits of incorporated municipalities to handle traffic violations and misdemeanor offenses. They also have limited jurisdiction in civil cases under NRS 5.050. In rural communities, many of the municipal judges work part-time.

### The Five Busiest Municipal Courts

Municipal Court	Population as of 7-1-01	Judicial Positions	Non-traffic caseload	Cases filed per judge*	Traffic & Parking
North Las Vegas	127,897	1	6,812	6,812	30,275
Las Vegas	503,188	6	40,339	6,723	133,725
Sparks	66,420	2	6,554	3,277	13,700
Henderson	196,780	2	5,894	2,947	26,307
Reno	182,818	4	8,423	2,106	20,387

\* Traffic violations may be resolved by payment of fines and not require judicial time. Therefore, they are not included in “cases filed per judge.”

• Virginia City

Storey County

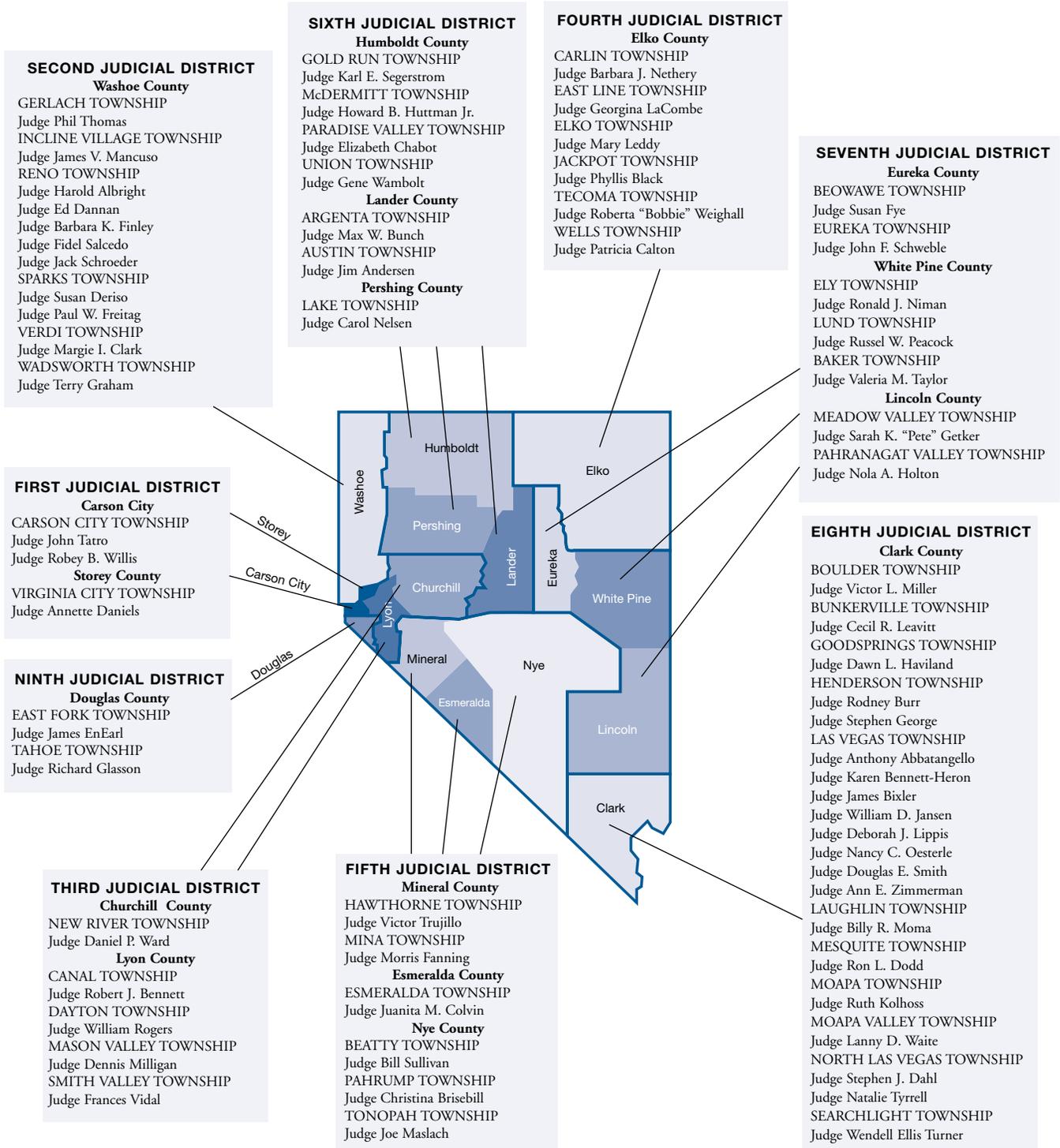




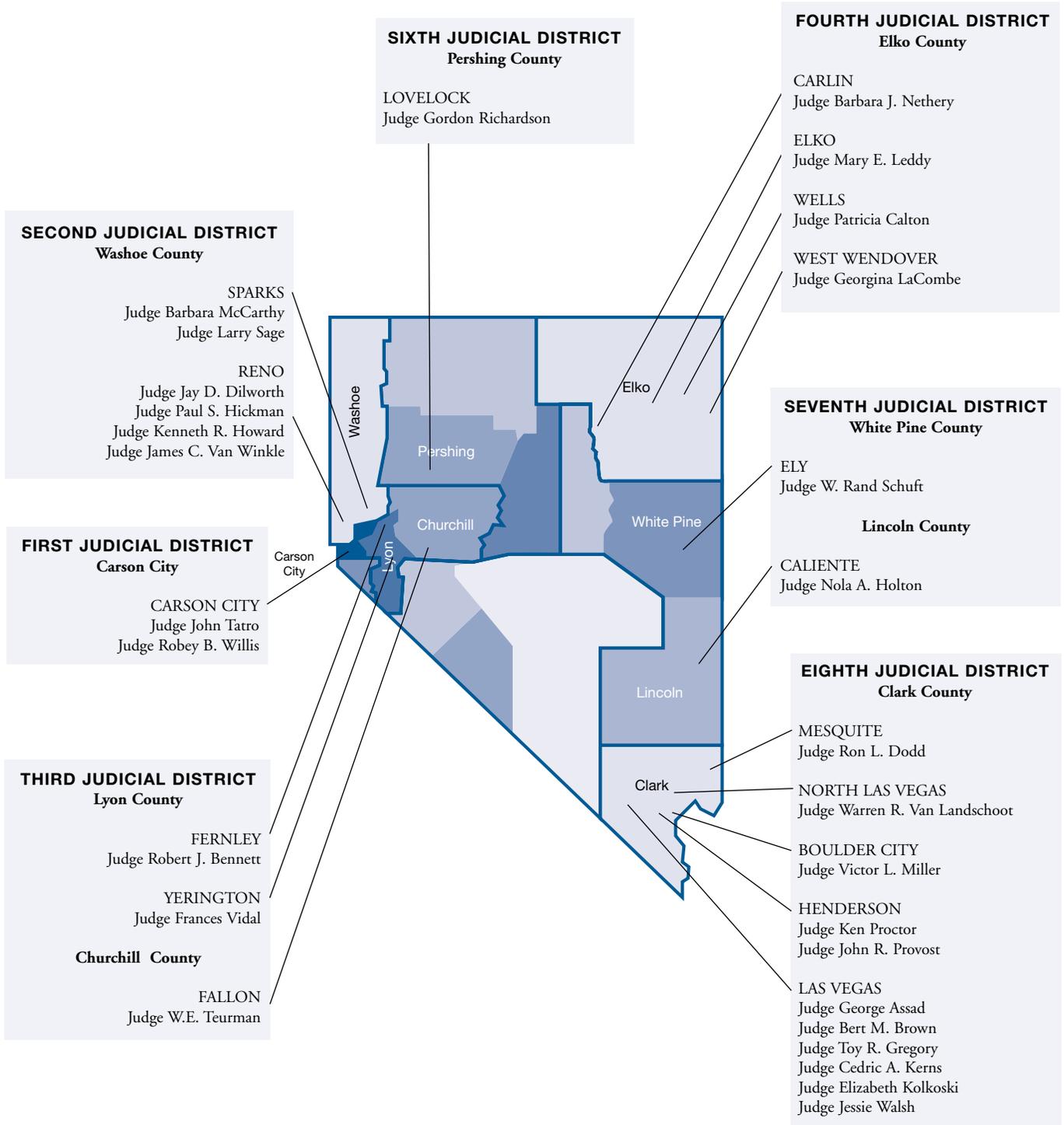
# THE NEVADA JUDICIAL SYSTEM

## Structure & Function

### Nevada's Justices of the Peace (as of June 30, 2002)



# Nevada's Municipal Court Judges (as of June 30, 2002)





# Judicial Council of the State of Nevada

## MEMBERS

### Supreme Court

Chief Justice A. William Maupin  
Vice Chief Justice Cliff Young

### Clark Region

District Judge Mark Gibbons  
District Judge Jack Lehman  
District Judge William O. Voy  
Municipal Judge Ken Proctor  
Municipal Judge Jessie Walsh

### North Central Region

District Judge Jerry V. Sullivan  
Justice of the Peace Max Bunch

### Sierra Region

District Judge Michael P. Gibbons  
Justice of the Peace Robey B. Willis

### South Central Region

District Judge Dan L. Papez  
Justice of the Peace Nola A. Holton

### Washoe Region

District Judge Charles M. McGee  
Justice of the Peace Ed Dannan  
Municipal Judge J. D. Dilworth

### Ex-Officio Members

Judge Cynthia Dianne Steel  
Nevada District Judges Association

Judge Ron L. Dodd  
Nevada Judges Association

Ron Titus  
State Court Administrator, AOC

Ron Longtin  
Second Judicial District Court Administrator

Charles J. Short  
Eighth Judicial District Court Administrator

*“To unite and promote Nevada’s judiciary as an equal, independent and effective branch of government.”*

— Mission of the Judicial Council

The Judicial Council of the State of Nevada has expanded its role as an administrative arm of the judiciary, developing policies for the improvement of the court system and making recommendations to be considered by the Nevada Supreme Court.

The Judicial Council is comprised of 16 judges from across the state at every level, with the Supreme Court Chief Justice as ex-officio chairperson. Members meet independently in five Regional Judicial Councils. Together these councils form the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada.

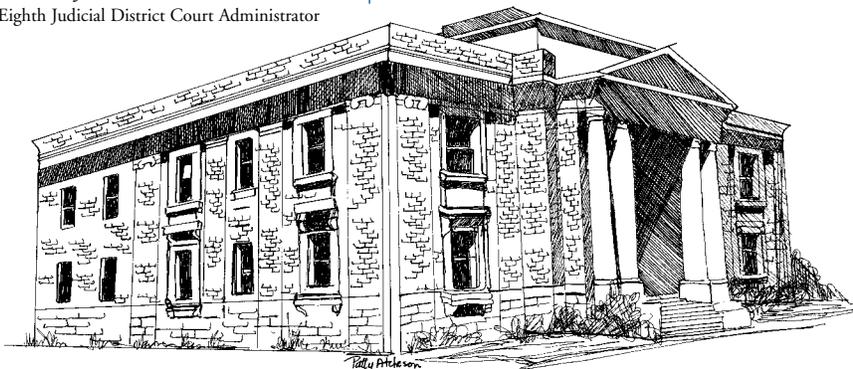
The Judicial Council has become instrumental in the continuing efforts to form the courts and judges into, in essence, a judicial family. The Judicial Council has the responsibility to develop and recommend policies to the Supreme Court for the administration of the judiciary and improvements in the courts and the statewide court system.

The Commission on Rural Courts was established by the Judicial Council to identify problems in Nevada’s smaller courts and communities and explore solutions.

In addition, the Judicial Council has established four standing committees to make recommendations about training and education for judges and their staffs, and develop minimum standards for judicial administrative performance, court facilities, technology, security and staffing.



• Yerington



Lyon County

Committees include:

**LEGISLATION AND RULES** with a mission to promote and support a coordinated legislative strategy for the Judicial Branch concerning legislation that affects the Nevada Judiciary and makes recommendations to the Judicial Council regarding court rules for submission to the Supreme Court for approval.

**JUDICIAL EDUCATION** with a mission to promote the competency and professionalism of the Nevada judiciary and staff through a comprehensive system of education.

**TECHNOLOGY** with a mission to promote and facilitate the application of technology to the work of the courts and promote the coordination, collaboration and integration of technology efforts between the judiciary and state and local governments.

**COURT ADMINISTRATION** with a mission to promote excellence in court administration throughout the state by considering the business and problems pertaining to the delivery of judicial services and to make recommendations for its improvement to the Judicial Council.

To pursue its goals, the Judicial Council recommends legislation or court rules to the Nevada Supreme Court and reviews legislation proposals from the Nevada Judges Association and Nevada District Judges Association.

The five Regional Judicial Councils are:

- Sierra Region (First, Third and Ninth Judicial Districts)
- Washoe Region (Second Judicial District)
- North Central Region (Fourth and Sixth Judicial Districts)
- South Central Region (Fifth and Seventh Judicial Districts)
- Clark Region (Eighth Judicial District)

Each Regional Judicial Council is composed of one district judge, who is the chairperson, and one limited jurisdiction judge. The Clark Region, the state's most populous, has two additional district judges and two limited jurisdiction judges as members. The Washoe Region, encompassing the state's second most populous region, has one additional limited jurisdiction judge. Limited jurisdiction judges are justices of the peace or municipal judges.

Regional Judicial Council meetings are open to all judges in the region and every judge has a vote on regional matters.

## PASSINGS

### Seymore Brown

Las Vegas Municipal Court Judge died in June 2000 at age 70. He had served as judge since 1973 and was the last non-attorney judge in the urban court that now requires all judges to be lawyers. In November 2000, the municipal court facility was renamed the Seymore H. Brown Municipal Courthouse.

### Larry R. Graham

Wadsworth Township Justice of the Peace died in July 2000 at age 62. He had served the community 30 miles east of Reno since 1979 and the court building was dedicated in his honor. His son, Terry L. Graham, was appointed to replace him.

### Stephan Lehman

Canal Township Justice of the Peace died in October 2000. He had been a judge in Fernley since being appointed in 1980. Judge Lehman was 52. In April 2001, the court building housing the Justice Court and juvenile facilities was renamed the Stephan W. Lehman Complex.

### Marley Robinson

Moapa Township Justice of the Peace died in January 2002 in a fire at her mobile home. She had been the judge in Moapa Township, 50 miles northeast of Las Vegas, for 29 years. She was 63.



# Work of the State Courts

## Supreme Court of Nevada Jury Improvement Commission

Exploring ways to make the jury system in Nevada better was the task of the Jury Improvement Commission, established in September 2001 by the Nevada Supreme Court.

The 15-member commission, co-chaired by Justice Bob Rose and Justice Deborah A. Agosti, concluded its year-long study with a 92-page report recommending dramatic changes in the manner evidence is presented to jurors, the way the court system processes those called to jury duty and the way they are treated once they arrive at the courthouses.

During fiscal year 2001-02, the Commission listened to former jurors, attorneys, judges and the general public and received input from national leaders in jury reform.

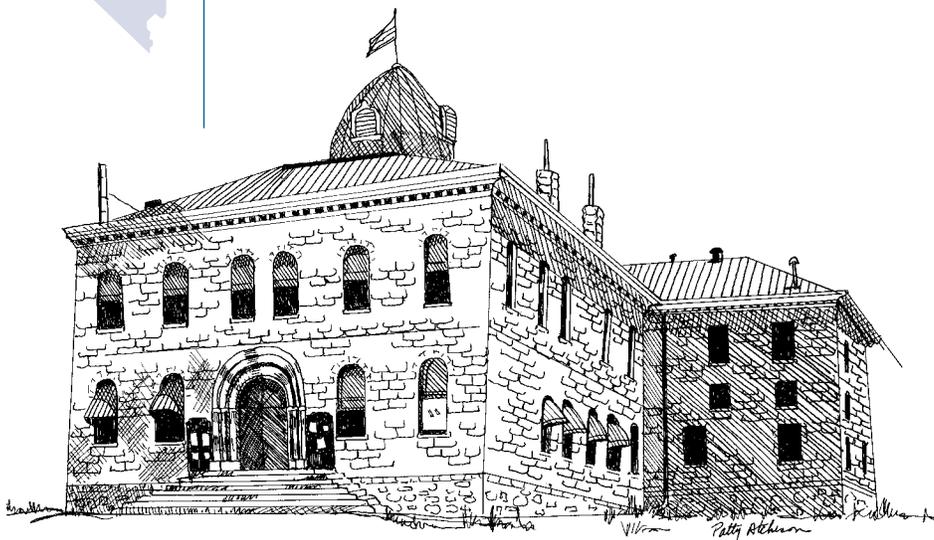
The Commission recommendations, if adopted, could give jurors a more active role in jury trials – from being allowed to ask questions of witnesses in every case to being provided with notebooks containing preliminary instructions on the law, exhibits and even photos of witnesses.

There are also recommendations to improve the way cases are processed to help resolve disputes and legal issues before trial, reducing the impact on prospective jurors and jurors.

A series of recommendations to update juror compensation statutes proposes increasing juror pay from \$15 to \$40 per day while eliminating the \$9 appearance fees and mileage allowances for those traveling less than 65 miles one way. Projected annual savings exceed \$350,000.

Copies of the Jury Improvement Commission report are available from the Administrative Office of the Courts, telephone (775) 684-1700 to request copies, or view it on line at: [www.nvsupremecourt.us](http://www.nvsupremecourt.us)

Tonopah



Nye County

## Nevada Judicial Council Commission on Rural Courts

Although access to justice should be the same throughout Nevada, that is not always the case in rural communities where there are aging courthouses, limited professional services and economic woes.

To examine the unique issues impacting the sparsely populated judicial districts, the Nevada Judicial Council established the Commission on Rural Courts during fiscal year 2001-02.

Although the primary concern is the perpetual problem of adequate funding, the 19-member Commission also will explore:

- A shortage or lack of service providers, like counselors and other treatment professionals
- Education and training issues
- Inadequate facilities and courthouse security
- The closing of some justice courts and whether standards should be set to determine when such closings are warranted
- Police protection in rural communities
- Availability of legal assistance for citizens who represent themselves in court
- Lack of communication with funding sources, like the Legislature
- Unfunded mandates and their impact on rural courts

While issues often revolve around funding problems, the Commission will first seek solutions within Nevada's communities rather than pursue relief from the financially strapped state government. The Commission also is exploring opportunities for neighboring communities to work together in establishing or expanding resources for the benefit of all.

The Commission is comprised of rural and urban judges, court and law enforcement representatives, two legislators and a rural county commissioner.



*Elko County*





# Work of the State Courts

## Court Technology – Project Brings National Attention to Nevada

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) expanded its Information Technology (IT) Department during fiscal year 2001-02 to better serve the needs of the Nevada Supreme Court and the state’s trial courts. The Department is now responsible for providing guidance and support services to help standardize and improve the technological capabilities of all courts in the state. Success of projects at the Supreme Court and within the judiciary statewide has attracted national attention.

### THE NEVADA RURAL COURT SYSTEM PROJECT

Most of Nevada’s trial courts are located in rural areas. Usually there are one or two judges with few staff, limited technical support and marginal financial resources. Yet these courts have recognized that the time is long past when they can effectively operate as independent entities. There is an increasing need to interact electronically with other courts as well as share information with law enforcement and other governmental entities if they are to deal with increasing caseloads and community needs.

To aid the rural courts, the AOC acquired a user-friendly case management system (CMS) that can be supported centrally by the IT Department. Installing a centralized, state-of-the-art CMS that is shared by the vast majority of Nevada’s rural courts will promote the efficient collection, storage, management and use of information within the judiciary. Rural court staff will no longer manually maintain case information, financial records and statistical data. The computer system also will aid courtroom and judicial scheduling and jury management.

After two years of preparation and the acquisition of a modern CMS for more than 30 courts, the first pilot court in the Nevada Rural Courts System (NRCS) project will be implemented early next fiscal year. Monitoring the system and making minor adjustments to enhance performance will be a continuing task for the NRCS project team. Beginning in January 2003, the CMS program is scheduled to be installed in one or two courts per month.



*Humboldt County*

## MULTI-COUNTY INTEGRATED JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM

A project that has gathered national attention is the Multi-County Integrated Justice Information System. MC-IJIS is a secured information exchange system that electronically links the courts with law enforcement, prosecutors and public defender's offices as well as other criminal justice agencies. By utilizing current data exchange guidelines, MC-IJIS gives all participating courts and criminal justice agencies the ability to electronically share case information.

MC-IJIS is particularly appealing because it respects the various missions, needs and priorities of its users. No participating agency is expected to modify its business policies or procedures to use MC-IJIS. All agencies will continue to maintain their own document tracking or case management systems in their original configurations.

The MC-IJIS project was showcased during the SEARCH Symposium on Integrated Justice in March 2002 in Washington, D.C. As a result, AOC Director Ron Titus was asked to share details of Nevada's MC-IJIS project with several justice-related entities across the country.

The MC-IJIS project team is scheduled to install the pilot system in Carson City by the end of 2002. A schedule to implement the system statewide will be set in January 2003.

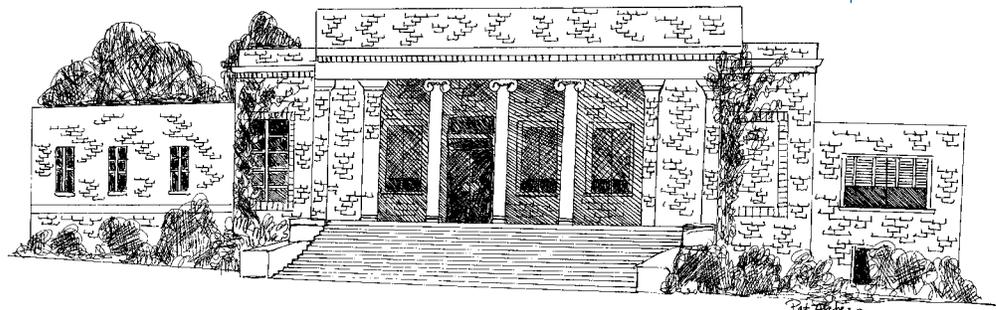
## SEPTEMBER 11 CHANGES THE FOCUS OF TECHNOLOGY

After the tragic events of September 11th, the assignments and priorities of the IT Department were dramatically changed. Instead of focusing its efforts on wireless and video communication, the IT Department's new direction involved off-site data storage and disaster recovery. The IT Department quickly regrouped and developed the Infrastructure Upgrade plan that placed two identical high-end servers in Carson City and Las Vegas to replicate and preserve vital computer data every 2-4 hours. Two servers operating over a secured wide area network, plus nightly tape backup, ensures there would be minimal data loss and quick production recovery if the Supreme Court should lose one of its primary servers.

A bonus is that the new system allows the IT Department to upgrade other components and improve accessibility and reliability of the Supreme Court's network.



*Douglas County*





# Work of the State Courts

## Nevada's Drug Courts – First in the Nation Again

Nevada continued to be the national leader in Drug Courts, with the establishment of the first Multi-County Rural Drug Court in the country. Drug Courts have been around for more than a decade, but few are available to those who live in the more sparsely populated regions.

To bring Drug Court services to rural residents, Third Judicial District Judge Archie Blake has been out ridin' circuit, like judges did in the Old West, through five counties in Western Nevada. As in the urban Drug Courts, the Western Nevada Regional Drug Court works to help drug dependent offenders regain productive lives and stay out of prison.

During fiscal year 2001-02, the nation's first and only Early Release Re-Entry Drug Court saw its first graduates. This program, begun in December 2000, gives prison inmates with drug problems an opportunity to get out of prison a year or two early if they participate in one of the established Drug Courts in Clark or Washoe Counties. The program was sponsored by Governor Kenny Guinn and funded by the Nevada Legislature.

Without the Drug Courts, about 80 percent of inmates with histories of drug dependency violated parole and returned to prison. The recidivism rate for those inmates involved in the Re-Entry Drug Court is only 14 percent.

Eighth Judicial District Judge Jack Lehman started the nation's fifth Drug Court in 1992 in Clark County. In 1995, Second Judicial District Judge Peter Breen launched a Drug Court in Washoe County. The success of those courts led the judiciary in Nevada to become a national leader in the Drug Court field.

• Fallon



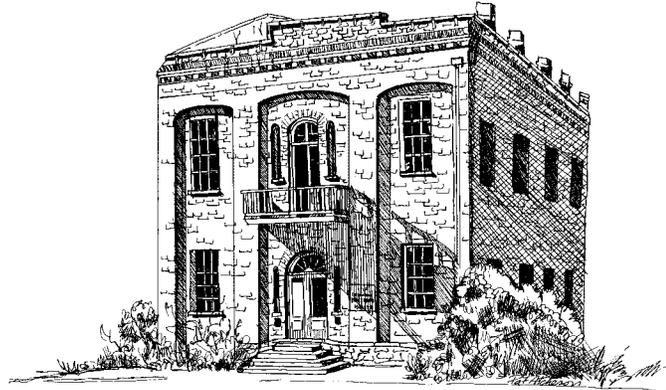
### Nevada Began the Nation's First . . .

- Juvenile Drug Court (Clark County)
- Family Drug Court (Washoe County)
- Early Release Re-Entry Drug Courts (Clark and Washoe Counties)
- Child Support Drug Court (Clark County)
- Multi-County Rural Drug Court (Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon and Storey Counties)

*Churchill County*



Pioche



Lincoln County

## Court Interpreter Certification Program – Ensures Access to Justice for All

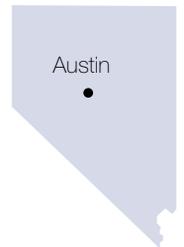
Providing equal access to justice for those who do not speak English has been a dilemma for many courts in Nevada, where Hispanic populations, in particular, are burgeoning.

Certified court interpreters simply were not available in many communities and obtaining foreign language interpreter services has been difficult and expensive for the courts. One rural Justice Court routinely used a mechanic from a nearby service station since there was simply no other choice.

During fiscal year 2001-02, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) began a certification program to ensure that foreign language interpreters in Nevada are measurably competent and certified to provide needed services in our courts.

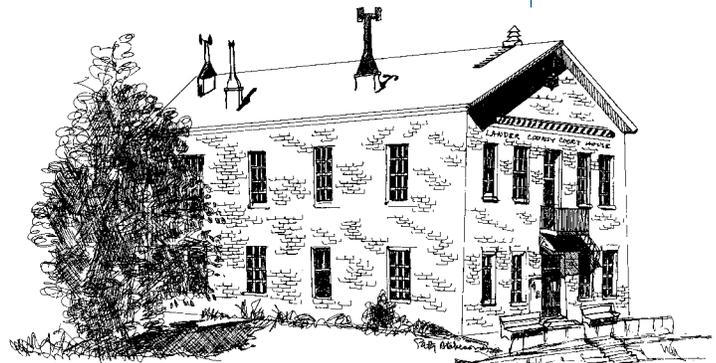
Workshops are conducted for those with ambition to work as interpreters in courts across the state. Formal testing follows and certification is awarded once a series of requirements are met.

The Nevada Legislature provided funding and the AOC hired a program coordinator. Nevada joined the National Center for State Courts Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification, which provided standard testing instruments in 10 languages, interpreter rating services and training for those who administer the certification program.



Austin

*The Lander County Seat was moved from Austin to Battle Mountain in 1980.*



Lander County



# Work of the State Courts

## New Domestic Violence Forms – Approved by Supreme Court

The committee that worked to protect domestic violence victims by standardizing protective order forms for courts across Nevada concluded its task in fiscal year 2001-02 by creating five additional forms for mandatory use. That brings the total number to 12.

The initial forms created by the Study Committee for the Adoption of Standardized Forms in Cases of Domestic Violence have already proven their value in courts throughout the state. Before the committee began its task, court forms varied and not all were recognized and enforced by law enforcement. Victims were not protected and perpetrators were not held accountable.

The first seven standardized forms were mandated by a unanimous vote of the Nevada Supreme Court in 2000. The standardization made it possible for information on all domestic violence protection orders to be available to law enforcement through the Nevada Criminal History Repository for Domestic Violence. Before disbanding the committee, the Nevada Supreme Court adopted the five new forms and revised four of the original forms.

The forms are available on the Administrative Office of the Courts website at [www.nvsupremecourt.us](http://www.nvsupremecourt.us)



Las  
Vegas



*Clark County*

## Judicial Education – Promotes Excellence in Judges and Staff

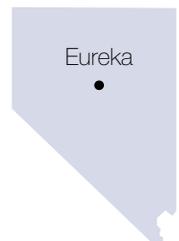
“Reading maketh a full man, conferences a ready man and writing an exact man,” noted Francis Bacon. The goal of the Judicial Education Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts is to “maketh ready” judges and court staff for the increasingly complex issues facing the justice system in Nevada.

In fiscal year 2001-02, more than 500 Nevada judges, court executives and staff received education and training through a wide range of programs offered and funded by the Judicial Education Division. The Division also sent more than 150 judges and court staff to conferences offered by other educational organizations. Foremost among these were the statutorily-mandated and Supreme Court-ordered courses for new judges at The National Judicial College and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in Reno, Nevada.

Judicial education addressed technology, criminal evidence, court security, domestic violence issues, traffic laws, family matters, drug courts and mental health courts, the complexities of capital cases, access to fair treatment in small claims cases, and a variety of other legal and administrative matters affecting the courts.

The Division expanded its educational offerings during the year by convening first-ever seminars for rural district court judges and family jurisdiction judges, and conducted a legislative review for all judges and court executives. Another first was the joining of the Nevada judiciary and the Federal Ninth Circuit Court in Nevada for a federal/state district court seminar to address many of the issues affecting both court systems.

Nevada’s courts will continue to face an ever-expanding range of legal and social issues. The Judicial Education Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts will work to anticipate and plan appropriate education and training activities for the most valuable resource in the court system, its judges and court staff.



*Eureka County*

