

United States District Court
District of Colorado

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PRESS RELEASE

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Better Access to the Federal Courts for the Western Slope

To provide greater federal court access for the residents on the Western Slope, the United States District of Colorado is pleased to announce that it has adopted a Western Slope Protocol for criminal cases. The Protocol, implemented by [General Order 2015-1](#), authorizes magistrate judges assigned to Durango and Grand Junction to designate a case as a “Durango” or “Grand Junction” case, based upon findings that the defendant, witnesses, or events surrounding the allegations are tied to the respective community. The designation will mean that a detained defendant will be held locally, and that all hearings and the trial presumptively will be held in that location. In the past, residents of the Western Slope, including members of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe have had to travel to Denver, more than 350 miles away, for hearings and trials.

Durango or Grand Junction criminal cases will be assigned to a district judge who will preside over all criminal cases in that location for a period of one year. For the remainder of 2015, Chief Judge Marcia S. Krieger will preside in Durango cases and Senior Judge John L. Kane will preside in Grand Junction cases.

The Western Slope protocol coincides with the recent 10-year lease agreement between La Plata County and the U.S. General Services Administration for the build out of a federal courtroom and office space in the La Plata county courthouse. Renovations are expected to begin in early 2016 and be completed by the end of 2016. The new space in the La Plata County complex will accommodate Magistrate Judge West, as well as a visiting district court judge and provide a courtroom more suitable for grand jury work and jury trials. “I’m a Colorado native, so this to me is a perfect example of how government entities can work together to serve the population,” Chief Judge Krieger said. “This will provide much better service to everybody in the La Plata County area.”

In Grand Junction, Magistrate Judge Gordon P. Gallagher presides over various criminal and civil matters in the recently renovated Wayne N. Aspinall Federal Building and Courthouse. The Aspinall Courthouse holds the distinction of being located within one of the most energy efficient and sustainable historic buildings in the country.

Please contact Jeffrey P. Colwell, Clerk of Court if you have any questions.

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