



COCONINO COUNTY ARIZONA

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

We serve the public by advocating for justice.

End of Fiscal Year 2009 Report from County Attorney David Rozema

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Summer greetings to everyone! Here's a brief report on some of the major office events for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

Budget Challenges

As everyone knows, the budget difficulties are significant and not expected to end any time soon. Our office entered this crisis in a very lean condition, having staffing levels for secretaries and attorneys that are essentially ten years old. Fortunately, with support from the County Manager and Board of Supervisors, we have been able to maintain those levels without losing any positions (so far). We did stop using any outside contract attorney or secretarial help in order to save those costs. This is not an insignificant amount of additional work that we have absorbed in the office.

During lean times such as these, the upside is that all county departments, including our office, are compelled to evaluate which services and programs are essential and which are not. And, we need to make sure we're providing those services in the most efficient manner possible. One of the reasons I attend Neighborhood Watch and similar community meetings regularly is so we will know the community's priorities and major concerns. This helps our office focus on what's most important, in conjunction with our numerous statutory mandates.

Solution-based Prosecution

We are committed to evaluating each criminal case individually and always keeping the "end-game" in mind. In trying to advocate for justice in each case, we utilize a broad spectrum of input and treatment or sentencing options.

We encourage defense attorneys (and others) to attend our in-house case review panels, where we analyze serious criminal cases and try to determine what the outcome should be. We continue to support the Flagstaff DUI/Drug Court as an alternative to prison for those with substance abuse problems, when appropriate. And, through a lot of hard work and good collaboration with many agencies, a Page/Fredonia DUI/Drug Court will be starting soon!

For serious and dangerous offenders (unfortunately, we have many of these cases), public safety is the main concern. We are currently in the process of formalizing our prosecution of repeat offenders, through better communication and collaboration with law enforcement, to ensure that these individuals are removed from our communities. More on that to follow!

Drug Prevention

I want our office to do more than simply react to bad things when they happen. We want to be involved in prevention work and support other positive community endeavors. So far this year, we have continued our drug and underage drinking prevention activities with the Western Navajo-Hopi Meth Task Force, Citizens Against Substance Abuse, Williams Alliance, Coconino County Coalition Against Drugs and the Page Meth Forum, among others.

I recently co-chaired a meth forum in Flagstaff with Attorney General Terry Goddard, where many local agency representatives and concerned citizens, including several from Navajo and Hopi, were able to express their concerns to the Attorney General directly and lobby for greater support to their causes and communities. We hope to have more of these types of community forums throughout the county with the Attorney General (and others) in the months ahead.

Satellite offices

We now have “satellite offices” at the Juvenile Court Center and the LEAF (Law Enforcement Administration Facility that houses the Flagstaff Police Department and the Coconino County Sheriff’s Office).

We have two full-time prosecutors assigned to our Juvenile Justice Program who now have an office available to them at the juvenile court. This will save time traveling back and forth to our offices during busy court days and allow for better interaction and communication with the juvenile court staff.

As a quick aside regarding juvenile matters, we have had some preliminary meetings with Dr. Kevin Brown, Superintendent of the Flagstaff Unified School District, and others concerning new ideas and potential better ways to address status offenses (e.g. smoking, curfew), truancy and drugs in the schools. More work is planned on this in the coming months.

One of our felony prosecutors now has a part-time office at the LEAF. This will improve communication and coordination with law enforcement on some of the more serious crimes that we are prosecuting.

Many thanks to the Juvenile Court, Flagstaff Police Department and Coconino County Sheriff’s Office for making these offices available to us!

Page Office Hours

I have open office hours at the Page City Hall on the second Wednesday of every month. This gives citizens from some of the more remote northern communities an opportunity to meet and talk with me in-person, without having to travel to Flagstaff. It also helps our office stay in touch with that part of our county. The office hours have been a great experience and I look forward to continuing them.

It is my great honor and privilege to serve as your County Attorney. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have concerns, questions or ideas.

Thank you,

David Rozema