



U.S. Department of Justice

Carlie Christensen

**United States Attorney
District of Utah**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 6, 2011**

**CONTACT: MELODIE RYDALCH
U. S. Attorney's Office
801-325-3206
801-243-6475 (cell)**

NEWS RELEASE
***CHANGES MADE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
AT U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE***

SALT LAKE CITY – United States Attorney Carlie Christensen announced this week that she is making leadership changes in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Salt Lake City.

“These changes involve very experienced attorneys who have the judgment, administrative skills, and in-depth knowledge to handle increased responsibilities in our office,” Christensen said. “I am confident these changes will help us meet our responsibilities to law enforcement and client agencies and, most importantly, in serving the residents of Utah.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Barbara Bearnson, who has been chief of the office's Criminal Division for the last several years, has been appointed Senior Litigation Counsel in the office. She also will be Acting First Assistant U.S. Attorney. (The First Assistant United States Attorney is the second ranking official in a U.S. Attorney's Office.) Bearnson, who has broad experience in both legal and administrative components of the office, has been in the U.S. Attorney's Office for almost 20 years. Prior to being appointed to lead the Criminal Division, Bearnson was chief of the General

Crimes Section in the office. She prosecuted violent crime cases, including domestic violence and Indian Country cases, for many years.

Christensen has appointed Assistant U.S. Attorney Felice Viti to head the Criminal Division. The Criminal Division in the U.S. Attorney's Office includes Violent Crime, Narcotics, White Collar, National Security, and Appellate sections. Viti, who previously worked as a local prosecutor in New York and as a special agent with the FBI, has been in the U.S. Attorney's Office for more than 15 years. He served two overseas details for the Department of Justice in Bosnia and Iraq and also worked with DOJ's National Security Division in Washington, D.C. Viti has previously been chief of the Violent Crime Section in the office.

Assistant U.S. Attorney William Kendall has been appointed deputy section chief of the office's Violent Crime Section. Kendall worked in the Salt Lake District Attorney's Office for seven years before joining the U.S. Attorney's Office more than three years ago. Assistant U.S. Attorney Trina Higgins is chief of the Violent Crime Section in the office.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Veda Travis will be acting chief of the Narcotics Section in the office while Assistant U.S. Attorney Rob Lund is on active duty in the military for six months. Travis, a former police officer, has been in the U.S. Attorney's Office for more than 11 years working in violent crime and narcotics sections.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Carlos Esqueda is taking on new responsibilities in civil rights and public corruption, two priority areas for the Department of Justice. Esqueda will be expanding the office's civil rights outreach efforts, including coordinating training for law enforcement officers. He also will work with the FBI in the investigation and prosecution of public corruption cases. Esqueda has been an Assistant U.S. Attorney for eight years. He worked in the Salt Lake District Attorney's Office for six years.

###