

Eastern District of California

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U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

By U.S. Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner

On November 9, 2009, I was sworn in as the tenth Presidentially appointed United States Attorney since the creation of the Eastern District over 43 years ago. I am deeply honored and humbled to have been selected to serve.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys

The office I now lead includes over 75 attorneys and an equal number of support staff stationed at the U.S. Courthouses in Sacramento and Fresno. In my 17 years as a prosecutor in this office, I have come to know them well. They are dedicated, hard-working men and women, devoted to seeking justice. One reflection on the high quality of the work done in this office is the fact that the U.S. District Judges in this district recently selected two supervisors in the office, Ken Newman of the Affirmative Civil Enforcement Unit in Sacramento, and Sheila Oberto of the White Collar Crime Unit in Fresno, to fill open Magistrate Judge positions in Sacramento and Fresno, respectively. Both are expected to don their robes in the coming months.

Protecting the Public

As U.S. Attorney, I must be accountable not only to the Attorney General and the President in Washington, but to the public. Accordingly, I plan to use this space to report to the district, at least every two months, on matters of interest to the public relating to the activities of the U.S. Attorney's Office. Topics will include major

prosecutions and civil cases, and other issues bearing on public safety, justice, and the expenditure of public funds. My primary job as U.S. Attorney is to protect the public while adhering to the highest ethical standards, and to ensure that the employees of the U.S. Attorney's office continue to uphold the traditions of integrity, non-partisanship and transparency that have long characterized this office.

The Goals

Within that framework, I have set several goals for the office, including increasing the prosecution of white collar crimes such as mortgage fraud, financial crimes, and public corruption. First, there will be an increase in the number of white collar prosecutors in the Fresno Division; already, two new positions have been authorized for that office which are now being filled. Second, there will be an increased focus on the enforcement of both federal criminal and civil laws that protect civil rights, the environment, and consumers. Finally, in the area of narcotics and violent crime, the office will continue to strongly support local law enforcement agencies in combating the proliferation of rural marijuana grows operated by armed criminal organizations, and the threat of urban gang violence.

Citizen Input

The input of state and local law enforcement, policy makers, community leaders and the citizens of the Eastern District is critical to helping us understand and address the important public safety concerns of this region. I look forward to speaking with officials and residents in many of the 34 counties within the Eastern District of California over the next several months.
