Office of the State Public Defender

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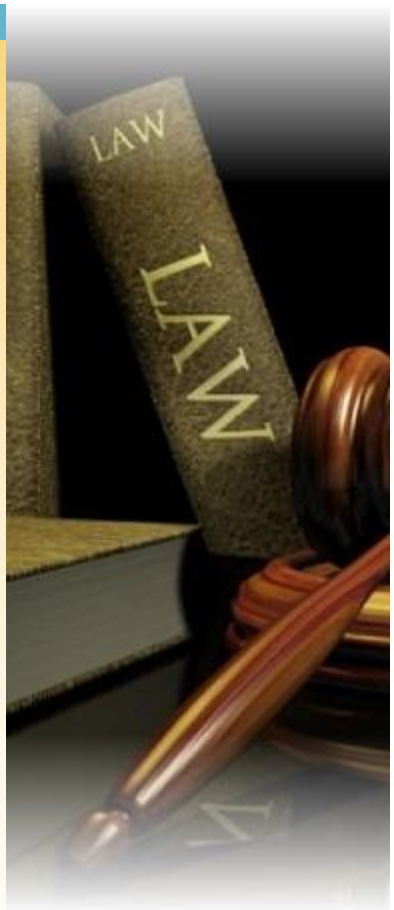
Public Defender News



Agency Reorganization

The Task Force on State Public Defender Operations requested HB 77 to reorganize OPD's management structure. In it's final form, an OPD director is to be hired by the Director of the Department of Administration to oversee all OPD programs by July 1. The legislation requires the Public Defender Commission to submit a list of nominees to the DOA director for consideration, although the DOA director may hire someone not recommended by the Commission. The legislation also sunsets the Governor-appointed Commission (2-15-1028, MCA) effective July 1, 2017.

The Commission sought candidates for the nomination and interviewed three applicants in a public meeting on June 1. They voted unanimously to submit one name, Jim Taylor, for consideration. Jim was the first chair of the Public Defender Commission when OPD was created, and has most recently been involved with the agency during his tenure as the ACLU-Montana legal director.

The position was also posted to the state careers website, and State Human Resources is managing that process. Today, June 30, Director Lewis named Harry Freebourn as the Interim OPD Director, effective July 1, until the position is permanently filled. Read Director Lewis's message to OPD staff here.

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Special points of interest

- Billings Renovation

Upcoming Training Events

MTACDL/OPD CLE , Missoula
September 22
Registration materials here.

DN Training, Bozeman
September 14-15

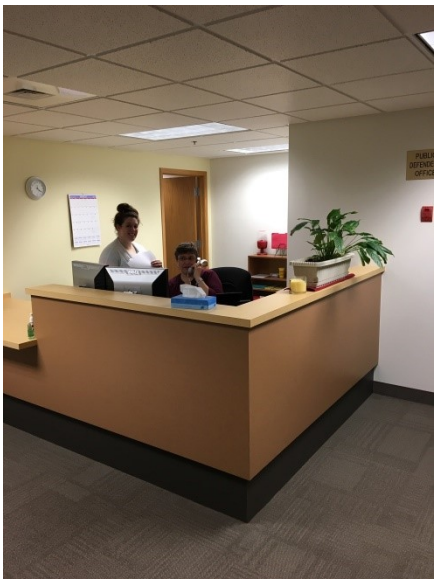
ICWA Legal Summit, Polson
September 6-7

OPD Annual Conference, Missoula
October 11-12

For more information, contact Peter Ohman or Chris Thomas in the Training office. Please wait to express interest in the annual conference as that will open up for registration later in the summer.

Billings Renovation

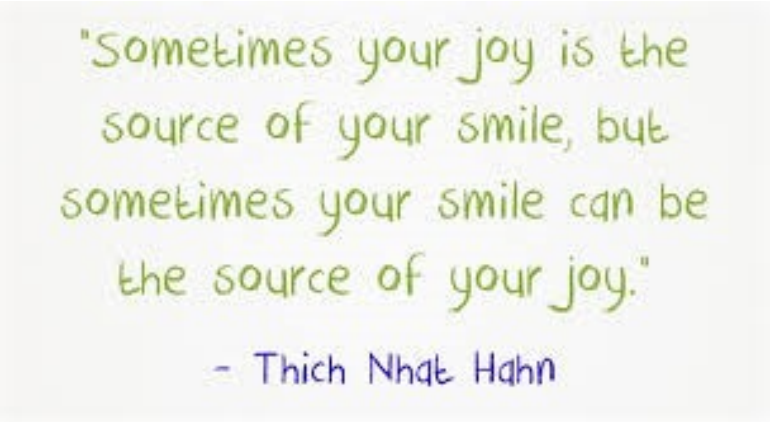
The Billings office recently underwent a remodel. Chief Hooks provided the before and after photos.



A Pocketful of Happiness Practices

Excerpted from an RBH Webinar, Humor, Health, and the Science of Happiness

- Laugh—out loud, at yourself, look for the giggles, be silly
- Just smile (your smile can be the source of your joy)
- Look forward to one thing each day
- Do a brief heart coherence meditation once or more daily
- Slow down
- Listen to music daily
- Turn the news off
- Practice optimism



Take Your Kids to Work Day

Cathy Huston, Region 6 Investigator

Governor Bullock designated June 9 "Take Your Kids to Work Day." Region Six kiddos had a great time in District Court (Judge Dan Boucher), Justice Court, Juvenile Probation, clerks' offices and they did some shredding Thought it would be fun to share.