

PRESS RELEASE

May 6, 2003

**MASON COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584
(360) 427-9670 EXT. 263**

**TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN,
SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

RE: Drug Court Pilot Project

Judge James B. Sawyer II announced that the Mason County Superior Court will initiate the adult Drug Court pilot project on May 7, 2003. Judge Sawyer stated " Our team has not only completed the required training but has now developed the framework to allow our community to implement Drug Court. The County Commissioners have agreed to provide funding for an initial pilot project and the community response has been supportive. It is time to move ahead on this very worthwhile program".

It is believed that the Drug Court program, once established, will have many benefits. Among those benefits will be:

- a). Benefits for families and children: Many Drug Court participants are parents of minor children. The impact of Drug Court will be seen by its effect on families and children in our community.
- b). Reduce recidivism by requiring effective treatment and direct court accountability for offenders.
- c). Cost effectiveness: Use criminal justice resources more effectively to address violent and other serious criminal cases.

Message from the Mason County Drug Court Team

(Judge James B. Sawyer II, Prosecuting Attorney Gary Burleson, Sheriff Steve Whybark, Chief of Police Terry Davenport, County Commissioner Herb Baze, Juvenile Court Administrator Harris H.Haertel, Defense Attorney Charles Lane, Director of Public Health Steve Kutz and Chemical Dependency Specialist Cynthia Santiago)

It has become clear that unless we address the drug addiction side of the drug problem in our community we will continue to experience enormous impacts in health care, family dysfunction and of course the traditional costs of the criminal justice system.

The Drug Court Planning team believes that requiring comprehensive chemical dependency treatment along with strong court-ordered monitoring and supervision will provide the necessary accountability for offenders, while significantly reducing recidivism.

Ron Henrickson, Mason County Administrator