



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **25<sup>th</sup> Circuit celebrates National Drug Court Month**

For immediate release Friday, May 10, 2013

MADISON/HAMLIN, W.Va. – In celebration of May as “National Drug Court Month,” the Twenty-Fifth Judicial Circuit’s Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts are planning a graduation, art show, and softball tournament.

National Drug Court Month is coordinated on a national level by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). Drug courts throughout the nation are celebrating the month with the theme: “Drug courts: Where accountability meets compassion.” The celebration is intended to show that the Twenty-Fifth Judicial Circuit’s Drug Courts and drug courts in general save lives and money.

“National Drug Court month is an acknowledgment of the positive impact that drug courts have had on our society as well as recognizing the need to address the problems addiction has caused our society,” said Twenty-Fifth Judicial Circuit (Boone and Lincoln Counties) Judge William Thompson, who presides over both adult and juvenile drug courts in Boone County and adult drug court in Lincoln County.

Adult and juvenile drug courts are intensive probation programs. Juvenile drug court participants are usually in the program for six to eight months. Initially, a participant meets with the drug court judge weekly and a probation officer several times per week. Juvenile drug court is intended for youth who are at risk of becoming addicted, not those who are already addicted.

Adult drug court is for those who already are addicted. Participants complete a treatment program of no less than twelve months. They are required to attend group and individual counseling, to take drug tests multiple times per week, and to do community service work. They meet with a probation officer frequently and see the drug court judge at least weekly in the beginning of the program.

The average annual cost incurred by the state for one adult drug court participant is approximately \$7,100 compared to \$18,000 in jail or \$25,000 in prison. About 10 percent of drug court graduates return to jail, but 30 percent of traditionally incarcerated defendants return. Drug courts, there, are proven budget and recidivism solutions.

All local drug court participants were encouraged to prepare a presentation for this month’s art show. The participants’ work will be displayed at the Boone County Courthouse May 20 to 24 and at the Lincoln County Courthouse May 28 to 31. The public is encouraged to view the work.

A softball tournament will be held May 20 and includes Lincoln, Boone, and Logan County adult drug court participants and staff. This is the third year for the softball game and it's always enjoyed by all involved, according to Adult Drug Court Probation Officer Matt Beckett.

A drug court graduation ceremony will be held later this month for one adult and two juvenile participants. Because it includes juveniles, the event is closed to the public.

“Drug courts offer the best opportunity to stop the revolving door of drug offenders. Drug courts offer treatment to non-violent offenders and the hope that they can put the wreckage caused by drugs behind them,” said Tenth Family Court Circuit (Boone and Lincoln Counties) Judge Scott Elswick, who presides over Juvenile Drug Court in Lincoln County.

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