Administrative Office of the Courts

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Supreme Court Chief Justice to sit in on Metro Court proceedings

ALBUQUERQUE – Supreme Court Chief Justice David K. Thomson will experience first-hand the workings of one of New Mexico's busiest courts on Saturday.

The Chief Justice will assist Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Chief Judge Joshua J. Sánchez with custody arraignments and felony first appearances.

"Sitting in with local judges provides a fuller understanding of the work that our courts deal with each day," said Chief Justice Thomson. "This helps in assessing the resources needed by courts and what the Judiciary can do to best serve the people of New Mexico."

The visit to the Metropolitan Court is part of the Chief Justice's efforts to meet with judges and employees at courts across the state. On occasion, he will sit in on local court proceedings.

"We greatly appreciate Chief Justice Thomson taking the time to sit in on proceedings that our judges hear six days-a-week to protect constitutional rights and to keep our busy court dockets manageable," shared Chief Judge Sánchez. "Last fiscal year alone, 7,358 felony cases were filed in the Metropolitan Court with case filings steadily increasing in recent years."

The Metropolitan Court is scheduled at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 5, to conduct custody arraignments, in which the presiding judge makes a probable cause determination for defendants charged with misdemeanors and sets conditions of release.

Immediately following those proceedings, the court will hold first appearances for defendants charged with felonies. The judge advises the felony defendants of their rights, informs them of charged offenses, and sets conditions on their release while awaiting trial. The judge conducts all of the proceedings in person from a courtroom but the in-custody defendants appear remotely from the Metropolitan Detention Center.

The Metropolitan Court has 19 judges: 14 in its Criminal Division, three in the Civil Division and two in the Felony Division. The court is staffed by more than 300 full-time employees. In the 2024 fiscal year, the court had a caseload of about 78,500 new, reactivated, and reopened cases.

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Media Advisory: Members of the press should contact Camille Baca, public information officer at the Metropolitan Court, for information about coverage of the Saturday proceedings. 505-401-6149, metrcrb@nmcourts.gov.

Chief Justice David K. Thomson	Metropolitan Court Chief Judge Joshua J. Sánchez