

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MAINE

GEORGE Z. SINGAL
CHIEF JUDGE

156 FEDERAL STREET
PORTLAND, MAINE 04101
(207) 780-3119

April 8, 2008

TO: THE MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

At our last Strategic Planning Committee meeting in July 2007, members of the committee recommended further action on several issues. The court has considered each of these issues and has worked to address them over the past nine months. Below is an update of what we have done to address issues raised by the Strategic Planning Committee:

- Role of the Probation Office's in Sentencing: Because this topic of concern is specific to the criminal defense bar and the Probation Office, a meeting between those participants and the Court will be scheduled in the near future. Planning for this meeting is in process and we will inform you as soon as the details have been confirmed.
- Increase the involvement of the public and the Bar in the Court: In the past several months, with the help of some of the members of this committee, we have hosted over 100 high school students and their parents, coaches and advisors in mock trial competitions and scrimmages in our courtrooms; Students from the University of Maine School of Law have utilized our courtrooms for their trial practice class; and, as I noted in my open letter to the Committee in January, we have recently made changes to our admission ceremony to enhance its significance and formality. Members of the bar have been invited to attend these ceremonies and receptions, and in the most recent ceremony, several members of the Bar volunteered to sponsor the admission of our newest members.
- Internet access available in the Courthouse: A local rule has been drafted that would allow attorneys to wirelessly access the internet while in specified areas of the courthouse. This local rule is before the local rules committee and is awaiting final approval.
- Program to give an award to a Bar member: While the court agrees that such an awards program would provide needed recognition of the many valued contributions of our Bar members, we believe that it would be more appropriate for the bar to develop such a program than the Court. I would suggest that this committee form a subcommittee for this purpose.
- Feedback from Judges to the attorneys: This topic was one of those suggested for a possible breakout session at the District Conference in October. To facilitate this, I have given District Conference planners contact information for members of this committee and have asked them to contact you for help in planning some of the breakout sessions.

Page 2

April 8, 2008

Additionally, at our last meeting, the possibility of reconvening the committee for a meeting a few months before the 2008 District Conference was discussed. As noted above, I have given the District Conference Planning Committee the contact information for each of the Strategic Planning Committee members, in an effort to facilitate communication and shared efforts between these two groups. In light of this, I am not sure that you would consider a pre-District Conference meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee a valuable use of your time. I would greatly appreciate your feedback on this, however, and if the committee would find such a meeting useful, please contact the Clerk, Linda Jacobson, at 780-3356 x 2201, and one will be scheduled.

Sincerely,



George Z. Singal

GZS/rb