

MEMO

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District Court Administrator
Sixth Judicial District

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September 23, 2013

TO: Linn County Attorney's Staff and Criminal Defense Attorneys

FROM: Carroll Edmondson, District Court Administrator

RE: Pilot Program – Felony Pretrial Motion Hearings

At the request of Linn County Attorney Jerry Vander Sanden, the district court has agreed to schedule pretrial motion hearings for felony trials in Linn County on the Friday afternoon before trial starts on Monday. The purpose of scheduling these motion hearings on the Friday before trial is to resolve any pretrial motions before the day of trial so trial can commence shortly after jury orientation on Monday morning. Starting trials immediately on Monday will also help reduce waiting time for jurors. The long waits before jurors are called into the courtroom for jury selection is the most common complaint that jurors have about their jury service.

The court will initiate this procedure on a pilot basis beginning Friday, September 27, 2013 for September 30 felony trials in Linn County. Whenever possible, the court will assign the pretrial motion hearings on Friday to the judge who will be the trial judge on Monday.

In order for this procedure to work effectively, court administration will need to know which felony trials are going to trial by noon on Thursday instead of Friday at noon. This will assist the court in its ability to assign the trial judge to the pretrial motion hearing. It will also assist the court in determining the number of civil trials it can try on a particular Monday since the civil trial schedule is predicated on the number of felony cases that are going to trial each week.

As indicated above, the Friday motion hearings will be on a pilot basis. After three or four months we will evaluate whether the procedure is working as intended and should be continued or whether it is not accomplishing its major purpose of starting felony trials immediately on Monday morning and should be discontinued.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Kellee Cortez or me.