

PRESS RELEASE

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ALASKA COURT SYSTEM
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ANCHORAGE SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE WILLIAM F. MORSE APPOINTED
PRESIDING JUDGE FOR THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Chief Justice Dana Fabe announces the upcoming appointment of Anchorage Superior Court Judge William F. Morse as presiding judge of the trial courts in the third judicial district. The appointment is effective April 15, 2014. Judge Morse replaces Presiding Judge Sen K. Tan, who retires on July 1, 2014.

Judge Morse was appointed to the superior court in Anchorage in 2002. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and his law degree from Lewis and Clark. He worked as an assistant public defender, assistant attorney general, and associate general counsel for the IBEW Local 1547. For seven years he presided over a therapeutic court, a collaborative program to monitor and assist probationers with alcohol and substance addictions. He presides over the Probationer Accountability with Certain Enforcement (PACE) court, a multi-agency program designed to provide a rapid response to probationers with alcohol or other substance abuse problems. He has been a member of the Appellate Rules Committee for fifteen years. He is the chair of the Governance Committee of the Lynx project, the court system's implementation of electronic filing and the transition to an electronic (paperless) record.

Chief Justice Fabe stated, “I appreciate Judge Morse’s willingness to take on the additional duties of Presiding Judge. I am confident that he will provide outstanding leadership for the third judicial district. I also most sincerely thank Judge Tan for his exceptional service as Presiding Judge and for his work on the court’s Fairness, Diversity and Equality Committee, and Child in Need of Aid Improvement Committee. Judge Tan’s unwavering commitment to equal justice will benefit all Alaskans for years to come.”

The Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court appoints a presiding judge for each of the four judicial districts. The presiding judges are appointed for a one-year term, which covers a calendar year period, from January 1 to December 31, with eligibility for reappointment.

In addition to regular judicial duties, the presiding judge has the administrative responsibility to supervise the assignment of cases and administrative actions of judges and court personnel, keep current the business of the courts, review and recommend budgets, and review the operation of all trial courts to assure adherence to statewide court objectives and policies.

The third judicial district is administered from Anchorage. The district covers South-central Alaska, extending from the Canadian border to the end of the Aleutian Island chain. The district includes 15 court sites, ranging in size from single magistrate locations to the Anchorage trial court, which alone handles almost half the workload of the Alaska Court System.