

Message from United States Attorney Brendan V. Johnson



It is an honor to serve as the United States Attorney for the District of South Dakota. This office is committed to implementing innovative new prosecutorial strategies aimed at improving the safety and quality of life in our communities, as well as protecting the public funds and financial assets of the United States. This report is designed to outline some of those new strategies, while also making clear that we continue to adhere to the same commitment of vigorous and impartial enforcement of the law that has been a hallmark of the office for generations.

The first change you may notice is the size and scope of the report. This year we have decided to provide a broader description of our work without limiting it to our efforts in Indian country. Crime in South Dakota's tribal communities remains a top priority for our office, but the United States Attorney's Office is charged with enforcing federal criminal laws and representing the United States throughout South Dakota. This report is designed to provide you with an accurate account of the entirety of those efforts.

Another change we have recently implemented is the creation of a new Appellate Division. This is a recognition that appellate decisions involving South Dakota cases impact not only our state, but potentially the rest of the nation. Our appellate advocacy needs to reflect the important role that these decisions have on the national stage. I am honored to announce that Mark Salter, one of the finest appellate advocates in South Dakota, has agreed to serve as South Dakota's first Appellate Chief.

As I mentioned, our commitment to tribal communities remains constant even as we alter our approach to working with tribal partners. Soon, we will issue our Community Prosecution Strategy that will outline the new methods our office is implementing to work with tribal communities. The Community Prosecution Strategy will be influenced in large part by information developed at a February 2010 tribal listening conference. South Dakota was the first state in the nation to conduct a tribal listening conference focused on public safety in Indian country. The listening conference brought tribal leaders and officials together with members of the U.S. Attorney's Office, officials from the Department of the Interior, and leaders from the State of South Dakota, including the Governor, the Chief Justice of the South Dakota Supreme Court, and the South Dakota Attorney General. The experience confirmed the universal view that tribal communities must become safer places to live and strengthened the relationships among those committed to that ideal.

Another primary focus of this office is national security. I currently sit on Attorney General Eric Holder's Terrorism and National Security Subcommittee, and I believe it is of critical importance that South Dakota continue to guard against any potential domestic or international terrorist threat.

During these tough economic times we will also continue to vigorously prosecute those who attempt to misuse tax dollars by defrauding the federal government or engaging in "white collar" crime. As you will see in this report, those cases have been vigorously pursued by both our Civil and Criminal Divisions.

Our office also remains determined to pursue the Department of Justice goal of keeping children safe by prosecuting those who employ computer technology to produce or distribute child pornography. Additionally, we will aggressively prosecute those who jeopardize the safety of children and adults through drug trafficking and gun offenses.

None of this work could be accomplished without the strong support and cooperation of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement. South Dakota's law enforcement community has a rich history of working together to protect our communities, and the United States Attorney's Office is proud to be a part of that team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendan V. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brendan V. Johnson
United States Attorney
District of South Dakota