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Governor Addresses Judicial Conference

Ninth Circuit conference kicks off Monday in Sun Valley

By GREG STAHL
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Continuing the war against drug use, abuse and sales is important and only as good as the courts that enforce the laws.

Those are sentiments expressed by Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter during a welcome address to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference at the Sun Valley Inn Monday evening.

"Our prisons in Idaho and other states are filled with drug users and people working in the drug trades," Otter said.

He said one in 35 men in the Idaho prison system is serving time for a drug-related charge. With women the statistic is one in 128. They're numbers that have an impact on Idaho's infrastructure and budgets, but also on communities and families.

The Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference meets annually pursuant to U.S. Code to consider business and means of improving administration of justice. Federal judges, members of the federal bar and judiciary staff from throughout the western U.S. are gathered for the event, which ends Thursday.

In addition to Otter, special guests included Paul Clement, who until recently was the U.S. solicitor general, and Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy of the U.S. Supreme Court.

During Otter's address he touted the Idaho Meth Project, a program that targets methamphetamine use. He said the goal is to "unsell" the next generation of potential meth users in Idaho, and he said he hopes the courts will continue to work to help turn that tide.