



# news

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## **Larimer County DUI Court celebrates anniversary**

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – The Larimer County DUI Court will celebrate its first anniversary on Friday, July 15, 2011.

The problem-solving court opened in July 2010 with the mission of promoting public safety by providing qualifying repeat DUI offenders with intensive court supervision, prompt and comprehensive access to treatment, and accountability for their progress in the program. The court's main priorities are reducing the occurrence of DUI in Larimer County and the rehabilitation and accountability of those most at risk to commit the offense.

The DUI Court program applies cost-effective, evidence-based methods to achieve its outcomes. Participants are reviewed regularly by the network of agencies that make up the DUI Court team, which includes representatives from the Probation Department, the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the private defense bar, local treatment providers, and the Larimer County offices for the Sheriff, Criminal Justice Services, Alternative Sentencing Department, and Pretrial Services.

Participants work to improve all areas of their lives, but the treatment of their substance abuse issues is the primary emphasis of their supervision. Participants are encouraged to build

positive, sober connections in the community that will help them to live more successfully in recovery and reduce the incidence of relapse.

The DUI Court requires a minimum of 18 months of participation over four phases to complete. Of the court's 21 participants, 4 have reached the third phase of the program, and several more promotions to Phase 3 are anticipated by the end of the summer.

"The participants in the DUI Court are all working extremely hard, and the DUI Court team has high hopes for their continued success in the Court and afterwards," said Magistrate Matthew Zehe, the judicial officer presiding over the court.

The program is offered to qualifying repeat DUI defendants through a sentence agreement with the District Attorney, with reduced jail offered as an incentive to participate. Through mid-July, the current participants' willingness to submit to the rigors of the DUI Court saved the county approximately 1,900 days of jail time that would have otherwise been imposed.

"I am very pleased with the interest that the DUI Court has generated within the local criminal justice community," Magistrate Zehe said. "That demonstrates confidence in alternative, innovative, evidence-based sentencing practices."

More than 60 problem-solving courts are in operation in 17 of Colorado's 22 judicial districts. In addition to DUI courts, other problem-solving courts operating in the state include adult and juvenile drug courts and mental health courts, dependency and neglect courts for families, truancy courts, and a veteran trauma court. In addition to the DUI Court, Larimer County also operates adult and juvenile Drug Courts and a Dependency/Neglect Court.