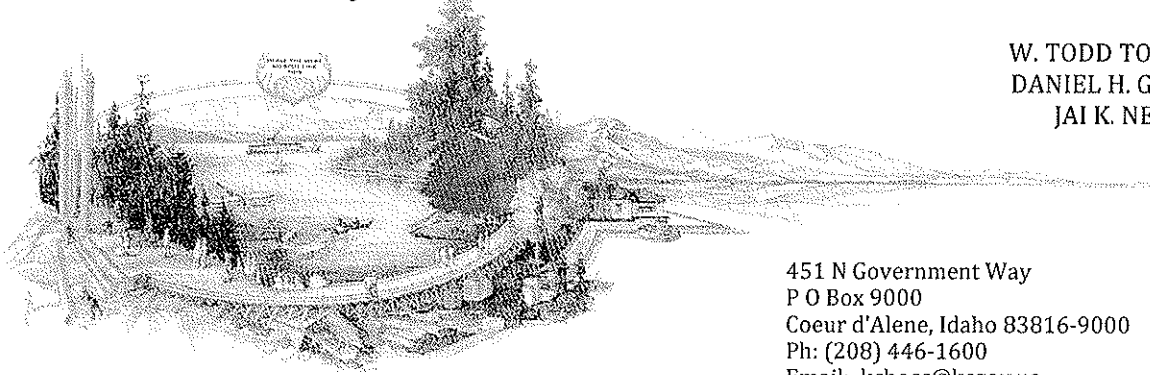


# Kootenai County Commissioners



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## Press Release

**Date:** April 2, 2013

**Re: COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC DEFENSE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

This press release is provided to address a number of questions and public concerns relating to Resolution 2013-26, and announce the adoption of Resolution 2013-29.

First, the Board has the duty to provide for the legal representation of needy persons in criminal matters. The Board takes these duties seriously. For example, in recent months, the Board implemented a system of conflict public defenders to be paid on an hourly fee basis to provide more effective representation in those cases. The Board recognized this was potentially a more expensive alternative, but decided that it was important to strive to meet constitutional standards.

The Board also decided that it was important to have an up-to-date and comprehensive study of the public defender system in Kootenai County to most effectively provide for the representation of needy persons. The taxpayer dollars devoted toward providing this essential service are significant. The County devotes in excess of \$2.7 million annually toward public defender services and that amount may increase to in excess of \$3 million annually.

The Board did not and has not made a predetermination of how these services will be most effectively provided in the future. Concerning the current public defender, John Adams, it has been brought to the attention of the Board as a whole that Mr. Adams is undergoing serious health issues. Mr. Adams told Commissioner Tondee certain facts concerning his health but specifically requested that Commissioner Tondee not reveal that conversation to Commissioners Green or Nelson. Since learning of these facts, the Board as a whole has decided that it is in the best interests of all concerned, including the County and Mr. Adams, that the previously passed Resolution be superseded to eliminate the reference to expiration of the term of the public defender.

The Board looks forward to working in a cooperative way with the public defender to provide the best services to Kootenai County citizens in an effective and constitutional manner. The Board recognizes that this goal can be accomplished only through the cooperation and open communication by all concerned.