



For Immediate release

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(SUN VALLEY) - The Conference of Western Attorneys General convenes its 2009 summer meeting August 2 in Sun Valley, Idaho. Nearly 500 people, including 16 state attorneys general are expected to attend the four-day meeting.

The conference opens with a full day devoted to the Alliance Partnership, a project in which state attorneys general in the U.S. and Mexico co-operate on cross border law enforcement. As part of the Alliance Partnership, the U.S. state attorneys general are providing technical assistance and training to prosecutors and law enforcement agencies in Mexico to assist Mexico in its transition to an adversarial judicial system.

The Attorney General of the Republic of Mexico, Eduardo Medina Mora Icaza, and the attorneys general of 24 Mexican states are expected to attend. The US-Mexico sessions build on the Alliance Partnership that CWAG, the Council of State Governments, and the US Agency for International Development entered into in 2007 to promote bi-national exchanges among attorneys general of both countries.

"My colleagues in CWAG and I look forward to hosting our fellow attorneys general from the Republic of Mexico in Sun Valley and participating in discussions that advance our shared interests in justice," Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden said.

A detailed discussion of South Dakota's 24/7 program is also on the agenda. The 24/7 program, developed by CWAG Chair and South Dakota Attorney General Larry Long, seeks to reduce alcohol and drug related crime through frequent and mandatory alcohol and drug monitoring of criminal defendants and probationers involved in alcohol and drug related crimes.

"Alcohol and substance abuse has always been a critical topic amongst the Western AG's and this year is no exception. I have long believed that the key to reducing criminal recidivism is breaking the defendant's addiction to alcohol and drugs," Attorney General Long said. "My 24/7 Program is working to combat these addictions in South Dakota and in sharing these best practices it is my hope that it can work for other states that are looking for innovative ways to reduce prison population and the number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities. The summer meeting is a great opportunity to brainstorm and not only does this benefit our individual states, it strengthens the CWAG organization as well."

The attorneys general will also discuss a wide array of issues including: the interconnection of natural resource issues, desalination as a potential source of relief from water shortages, Indian gaming, water law and consumer protection. A panel of new federal officials will include John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Assistant Secretary of Interior for Indian Affairs, Larry EchoHawk. Assistant Secretary EchoHawk was a member of CWAG while serving as Idaho Attorney General.

In addition to the substantive legal discussions, CWAG will elect new officers for 2009-10 and present awards to highlight the achievements of Attorneys General and their staff.

CWAG is a bipartisan organization providing a forum for chief legal officers of member states and jurisdictions to cultivate knowledge, cooperate on concerns, and coordinate actions which improve the quality of legal services available to members. Members include the chief legal officers of 15 western states and three Pacific territories: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Other CWAG members include Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Vermont, and West Virginia.

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