

C. DAVID EYSTER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

☐ COURTHOUSE
P.O. Box 1000
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 463-4211 Fax (707) 468-4687

☐ COAST OFFICE
700 S. Franklin St., Rm. 148
Ft. Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 964-5624 Fax (707) 961-2429

NEWS RELEASE

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Mendocino County District Attorney David Eyster has hired a veteran North Coast journalist to be the agency's first public information officer.

Mike Geniella, a former staff writer for The Press Democrat newspaper and 26-year resident of Mendocino County, will work at the District Attorney's Office part-time.

Eyster said Geniella's primary role will be assisting him in coordinating the timely release of information to the public and the news media. Geniella will oversee writing of news releases, plan news conferences when necessary, and timely respond to all media inquiries. Geniella also will serve as liaison between Eyster and other law enforcement agencies on media-related issues.

"Mike Geniella understands the importance of providing accurate public information, and the critical role the news media plays in the distribution of that information," said Eyster. At the same time Eyster said Geniella's reporting experience over more than three decades has made him keenly aware of the confidentiality requirements of those working in the criminal justice system.

"Mike will help the prosecution team balance public interest, with protecting the rights of the accused to a fair trial," said Eyster.

Additionally, Eyster said Geniella's assistance will allow him and his staff of attorneys to better focus on their ever-increasing workload, yet also keep the public informed of critical developments in criminal justice-related issues.

“We are eager for the public to know about the work the District Attorney’s office does, and the positive effects it has on the well-being of county residents and the safety of the communities where we all live,” said Eyster.

Geniella said he looks forward to his new role as the DA’s media adviser.

“My experience has taught me the importance of fair and accurate information, and I will rely on that. I’m also eager, however, to explore different ways the DA’s office can better communicate with the public including expanded use of Internet-related tools including blogs and social networking sites,” said Geniella.

Geniella said he sees his role as an aide to the prosecution staff.

“It’s no secret that the DA and his staff attorneys are very busy these days. Despite the workload, however, they are committed to supplying the public and the news media with the information they want or need to know and I can help them do that,” Geniella said.

Geniella said he and Eyster have had a professional relationship for 25 years. “I’ve long admired his professionalism and dedication,” said Geniella.

Geniella is an award-winning journalist who got his start at his hometown newspaper in Marysville in the Sacramento Valley. He worked for newspapers in Hawaii and Colorado before moving to Santa Rosa and embarking on a 28-year career with The Press Democrat. In 1985, Geniella moved to Mendocino County after being named chief of that newspaper’s Ukiah News Bureau. Geniella served in that role until retiring two years ago.

Geniella can be reached at 707-391-1019