



Associated Press

United States Attorney James A. McDevitt, center, laughs at jokes made by friends on his behalf before being sworn in on Wednesday.

# U.S. attorney 'perfect choice'

## McDevitt becomes region's chief federal law enforcement official

By Bill Morlin  
Staff writer

James A. McDevitt was formally sworn in Wednesday as the new U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Washington — the region's chief federal law enforcement official.

McDevitt pledged to bring hallmarks of service, respect and cooperation to the post he was appointed to fill by President Bush.

The 58-year-old lawyer and former Air National Guard brigadier general was sworn in by U.S. District Court Judge Frem Nielsen.

Nielsen presided, along with Mag-

istrate Judges Cynthia Imbrogno and Lonnie Suko, at the 45-minute ceremony.

Nielsen spent several minutes stressing the importance and responsibility of the U.S. attorney.

"Our district is large in size and large in population," Nielsen said.

The U.S. attorney has "awesome authority" that must be balanced with commensurate responsibility, the judge said.

"Jim McDevitt is the perfect choice for this job," Nielsen told a packed courtroom.

"The U.S. attorney makes the decision of who to charge and how to charge," Nielsen said.

"The U.S. attorney, to the chagrin of many judges, has more control over ultimate sentences than most

judges," he said.

Rep. George Nethercutt, who was instrumental in getting the presidential appointment for McDevitt, also spoke at the ceremony.

"He's the best one I believe we could have," and will display a high standard of excellence and commitment to justice, Nethercutt said.

"There may be no other position that is closer to the people or more responsible to the people," Nethercutt said of the U.S. attorney's post.

Ideally, the Republican congressman told the crowd, "You want somebody who's a good fisherman." That brought laughs from those who know McDevitt is an avid pilot and fly fisherman.

After he raised his right hand and was sworn in, McDevitt had members

of the U.S. attorney's staff stand and be recognized.

"This is as much about them as it is about me," he said.

McDevitt said the events of September 11 will bring new tests for the country's justice system.

The front lines of dealing with the enemy are now changed, he said. "Each and everyone of us find ourselves now on the front line."

There will be "push and pull" over balancing security concerns against individual and collective civil rights, McDevitt said. "We are ready."

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