



Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Heavican visited Holdrege and Hastings on Tuesday as part of a tour of courts in south-central and southeast Nebraska.

Heavican said the tour was intended as a way to get input about how things are working at the county court level. He was accompanied by state court administrator Corey Steel and staff members with the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation.

“We like to get out talk to trial court judges,” Heavican said. “We want to get input as to what is working and what is not working.”

During the visit to Hastings, staff with the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation also provided continuing legal education with seminars on electronic filing and attorney discipline.

Hastings Attorney Amy Skalka helped organize a reception Tuesday evening at the Lochland Country Club.

“With Judge (Michael) Mead being appointed, we wanted to give the Chief Justice a chance to come and meet him,” Skalka said. “I think it’s an honor for him (Heavican) to want to come out.”

Heavican said he enjoyed meeting Mead, whom he didn’t know prior to Mead’s appointment as a judge in the 10th Judicial District in June.

“We always want new judges to get off to a good start and understand they always have support from our office and support staff,” Heavican said. “I’m looking forward to working with him in the future.”

Judge Michael Mead said he was honored by the Chief Justice’s visit and was glad to be able to showcase the local county court.

“We have a tight, cohesive group here,” he said. “I like for folks to see that we have a great judicial district.”

The tour started Tuesday in Holdrege, where state court administrator Steel recognized retired Judge Robert Ide for stepping up to help after the death of Judge Michael Offner last year. Instead of the three months it usually takes to have a new judge appointed, Ide stayed on to help for seven months until Mead was appointed and able to take over.

Steel presented Ide with a pair of cuff links, as well as a fishing pole to enjoy one of his favorite activities.

“We really felt he did extra duty,” Steel said. “We just wanted to thank him.”

The tour continued Wednesday to Geneva and Seward. On Thursday, the group will visit Auburn, Falls City, Pawnee City and Beatrice before making a final stop in Wilber on Friday.