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BATON ROUGE – On October 6, 2010, the Louisiana Public Defender Board (LPDB) appointed G. Paul Marx the District Defender for the 15th Judicial District. Mr. Marx was recommended by the local selection committee, which was chaired by local attorney Michael D. Skinner, and approved by the full board at its last board meeting. He assumed the position immediately.

Mr. Marx leaves private practice to assume his new position. However, while in private practice Mr. Marx continued to represent indigent clients as a panel attorney with the United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana and as appointed counsel with the Louisiana Appellate Project. He has been the long-term Executive Director of the Louisiana Public Defenders' Association and will continue that role through January 1, 2011. Mr. Marx served as the Chief Public Defender for the 15th JDC Indigent Defender Board from 1983-2001. He replaces former District Defender David Balfour, who is working with Mr. Marx to transition the office to new leadership. Mr. Balfour will remain a contract attorney with the office.

The 15th JDC District Public Defender Office was threatened with litigation from the ACLU of Louisiana last year. LPDB contracted with the National Legal Aid & Defender Association to conduct an evaluation of the office. This report, "Effective Assistance of Counsel: Evaluation of Public Defense Services and Operations in Louisiana's 15th Judicial District Indigent Defense System" was released on June 16, 2010, and included many recommendations to improve the delivery of legal defense services to indigent clients in Acadia, Lafayette and Vermilion parishes.

Mr. Marx will implement the following reforms immediately: Develop an office mission statement; restore investigative resources; review all staff and provide mandatory orientation to office vision and practices; evaluate physical space for office sustainability and potential growth; develop secondary leadership and supervisory structure; conduct site visits to all public defender offices in the 15th JDC, and; perform meaningful outreach to criminal justice system partners – locally, regionally and nationally.

LPDB has entered into a contract with Mr. Marx to provide District Defender Services, and now has signed contracts with all District Defenders in Louisiana, except for the three districts where there are current District Defender vacancies (the 14th JDC – Lake Charles, 20th JDC – East and West Feliciana, and the 38th JDC – Cameron Parish). Searches for new leadership in the 14th, 20th and 38th district public defender offices are underway.

Frank Neuner, LPDB Chairman and Lafayette attorney says, "The Board and staff of LPDB continue to work hard to implement the reforms mandated by the Public Defender Act of 2007. We are grateful to the many people in the 15th JDC who have invested themselves in the effort to ensure that our criminal justice system provides justice to all – both for victims and eligible defendants. We look forward to Mr. Marx' leadership in the office to deliver high quality

defense services and system-wide improvements that serve the public, leverage tax dollars, and improve our community.”

The NLADA report on the 15th JDC District Public Defender Office is available online at: http://lpdb.la.gov/Serving%20The%20Public/Reports/txtfiles/pdf/June_2010_Effective_Assistance_of_Counsel_15th_JDC_Report.pdf

The sample contract for District Defender Services is available online at: <http://lpdb.la.gov/Supporting%20Practitioners/Professional%20Development/District%20Defender%20Contract.php>