

History of the Southern Region – District of Utah

The Southern Region of the District of Utah was established in 2018. This action was motivated by the growing population of Southern Utah; the fact that Utah has only one full-service federal court location in Salt Lake City; the distance between Salt Lake City and Southern Utah areas; the history of bankruptcy, felony, and misdemeanor cases in St. George since 1995; the convenience of parties, witnesses, victims, defendants, and their families; the convenience and cost savings for attorneys and staff; and the presence of many federal agencies in Southern Utah.¹

The Southern Region enabled statistical tracking and establishment of a Southern Region jury division to reduce travel demands for jurors. The Southern Region includes Beaver, Emery, Garfield, Grand, Iron, Kane, Millard, Piute, San Juan, Sanpete, Sevier, Washington, and Wayne counties.



The Southern Region is not a statutory division of the court under [28 U.S.C. § 125](#) but is a jury division formed under [28 U.S.C. § 1869\(e\)](#).

Historical data showing that about 10% of the district civil caseload and 15%-20% of the criminal caseload arise in the Southern Region.

History

Key events in the history of court services in Southern Utah include:

1876 – [Verdict issued in Parowan, Utah in the Trial of John D. Lee](#), tried by [U.S. District Judge Jacob S. Boreman](#).

1983 - Magistrate Judge Patrick Fenton serves in Cedar City handling petty offense and misdemeanor matters arising on federal lands, including national parks.

1995 – Legislation changes location of holding court in Southern Utah to St. George; Magistrate Judge David Nuffer appointed at one-tenth time status. A probation officer takes residence in St. George.

2002 – A visiting Bankruptcy Judge began holding hearings and adversary proceedings (2004).

2003 - Lease of Federal Building hearing room and office space.

2003 – Magistrate Judge Robert Braithwaite appointed at half-time status. The Southern Utah CJA Panel was established. A courtroom deputy is hired.

¹ [General Order 18-01](#).

2006 – Judge Braithwaite adds initial duties in felony cases. Motions, pleas, and trials continue in Salt Lake City. The first annual Southern Utah Federal Law Symposium is sponsored by the Federal Bar Association.

2007 – Magistrate Judge Alba conducts petty offense and misdemeanor hearings in Moab and Monticello.

2009 – Lease of Courtroom and two chambers spaces in State Courthouse at 206 West Tabernacle. Magistrate Judge Braithwaite is assigned taking of guilty pleas.

2010 – Chief Judge Ted Stewart conducts felony hearings, including sentencings, and trials in St. George.

2016 – Magistrate Judge Dustin Pead based in Salt Lake City travels to Moab, Utah to hear misdemeanor and preliminary felony matters and to Aneth, Utah, at the Four Corners, to conduct Tribal Community Re-Entry Court.

2018 – In March, [General Order No. 20-001](#) establishes the Southern Region of the Central Division of the District of Utah.

2019 – Magistrate Judge Paul Kohler appointed at half-time status in St. George.

2019 – Judge David Nuffer moves residence to the St. George area. [Tenth Circuit orders](#) that “existing active district judge, then stationed in Salt Lake City, shall maintain his or her abode in St. George.” An amended [jury plan](#) includes a Southern Region Jury Division.

2020 – A second courtroom deputy and resident court reporter are hired.

2021 – Chief Judge Shelby shares in the draw of Southern Region cases.

2022 – Magistrate Judge Paul Kohler elevated to full-time status.

2022 – Judge Nuffer takes senior status; Chief Judge Shelby takes a share of the criminal case draw in the Southern Region. The court establishes a housing contract with the jail in Lincoln County Nevada.

2023 – Chief Judge Shelby adds a share of the civil case draw and Judge Stewart takes a share of civil and criminal case draw in the Southern Region. A Southern Region Grand Jury is empaneled and meets monthly.

2024 – Judge Ann Marie McCliff Allen is appointed as an active district judge, resident in the Southern Region. Judge Nuffer moves to temporary space including a civil courtroom at 197 East Tabernacle.

Current Staffing

Currently, three district judges hear cases in St. George (Chief Judge Shelby, Judge Allen, and Senior Judge Nuffer). Two law clerks are resident in St. George. The court has five support staff including two courtroom deputies, one operations specialist, one court reporter, and one IT staff member.

Future anticipated developments

2024 – [28 U.S.C. § 125](#) is amended to include Southern Region locations of holding court in Moab and Monticello Utah, to enable jury divisions in that area. The amendment was sponsored by Congressmen Chris Stewart (with the concurrence of his successor Celeste Molloy) and Congressman John Curtis and has the support of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

2025 – Court moves to location on St. George Boulevard with two courtrooms and four judges' chambers.

Other Federal Court Agencies

Other court related entities have offices and staff in St. George. The Federal Defenders' Office has three resident attorneys. The United States Probation and Pretrial Service has five officers.

Other federal agencies important to the court have established a presence in the Southern Region including the following, which are based outside the leased courthouse space:

The United States Marshals Service has three Deputy Marshals resident in their St. George office. Also, four CSOs are based in St. George and have office space at the courthouse location.

The United States Attorney started an office in St. George with one attorney in 2007, expanding to two attorneys and two support staff in 2008, and five attorneys and three support staff currently.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has a St. George office with one Special Agent (and usually 1-2 more local officers assigned full-time to the DEA). And they are building a drug diversion office in the area (5-10 employees).

Homeland Security (including Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE)) has a St. George office with six criminal Special Agents and 4-6 administrative law enforcement officers.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has a St. George office with three agents and has one agent in Monticello, Utah.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) has one local officer cross designated for federal work who spends 25% of his time on federal cases.