

## PRESS RELEASE

### Relocation of Federal Court Functions in Miami During November FTAA Conference

Chief United States District Judge William J. Zloch announced today that the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida will suspend all daily operations at its three Miami Division courthouses from November 17 through November 21, 2003 during the meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). United States District Court locations at 301 North Miami Avenue, 300 NE First Avenue, and 99 NE Fourth Street will be closed during this period. Miami court operations will be relocated within the Southern District of Florida to the Federal courthouses in Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach.

Miami Division facilities will be closed during this period because all three Federal courthouses in Miami are located within a primary security zone designated by the local law enforcement community for the FTAA meeting. In the past, large-scale demonstrations prompted by meetings of similar organizations have resulted in serious incidents. Law enforcement officials have advised the Court that such demonstrations may be anticipated in Downtown Miami during this meeting. In the interest of public safety, the Court deems it prudent to close its Miami facilities so that Court staff and the general public need not travel to the areas within designated FTAA security zones.

No federal criminal nor civil hearings or trials will be held in Miami during this period. United States District Court functions that would normally be conducted in Miami will be carried out from the Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach courthouses. Provisions noted in the paragraph below have been made for handling both routine and emergency matters in District Court locations other than Miami.

Attorneys and the public should not attempt to conduct routine business **in person** at the Miami Division during the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>. Routine filings should be submitted through the mail or via the Court's electronic filing system. Emergency filings or similar matters requiring immediate personal attention should be brought to the Federal courthouse located at 299 Broward Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. New arrests and daily magistrate duty court hearings that would normally be held in Miami **and** Fort Lauderdale will be heard at the Federal Courthouse located at 701 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, Florida.

More detailed information about the Court's procedures and calendar for the week of November 17<sup>th</sup> may be found at the Court's website, [www.flsd.uscourts.gov](http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov) by 5:00 p.m. today. Please contact the Court Administrator at (305) 523-5001 with any questions.

**October 30, 2003**

## **Contingency Plan for Continuing Operations during week of November 17-21**

The Miami Courthouse complex will be closed to the public the week of November 17-21, 2003. All public services normally available through the Clerk's Office in Miami will be provided in the Fort Lauderdale Division. Non-essential administrative and support services that are centered in Miami will be suspended for the week.

### **1. Emergency Matters**

District Judges who are in the district will be in contact with the Clerk's Office. If any emergency filing assigned to a Miami Judge is received during this week, and is determined by the Clerk to in fact need immediate judicial attention, the Judge to whom the matter is assigned will be contacted, and the pleadings transmitted forthwith. If the assigned Judge deems a hearing necessary, such hearing will be scheduled and held in a Northern Division courtroom, depending on availability. Cathy Wade will assist in coordinating courtroom scheduling if need be. Miami Judges' chambers staff should be on call to assist the judge in processing emergency matters.

### **2. Duty Matters**

All Miami duty matters arising on November 17, 18 and 19, 2003, will be assigned to the District Judge scheduled for November duty in the Fort Lauderdale division. Any duty matters arising on November 20 or 21, 2003, will be assigned to the scheduled duty Judge in the division in which those matters arise. However, such matters will not be directly transmitted to the duty Judge unless they are in the nature of an emergency.

All duty Magistrate Judge matters arising in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, or West Palm Beach during the week of November 17-21, 2003, will be handled in the West Palm Beach Division by a Magistrate Judge assigned to that Division. The United States Marshals Service and the Office of the United States Attorney have already been advised of that fact and all prisoners who must appear during that period will be transported to the West Palm Beach Courthouse.

### **3. Clerk's Office Operations**

#### **a. Filing**

All filing in Miami cases must be done either by mail, electronically, or, if in person, at the Fort Lauderdale Federal Courthouse. Pursuant to Administrative Order 2003-107 (attached), Local Rule 5.1.B, which requires filing in the division where the presiding Judge is chambered, will be temporarily suspended and the deadline for "nightbox" treatment will be extended to 1:00 p.m. for documents filed over the counter in Fort Lauderdale. All U.S. Mail addressed to the Miami Courthouse complex will be diverted to Fort Lauderdale for processing.

#### **b. Case and Document Processing**

Sufficient Miami personnel will be deployed to the Northern Division as needed to carry out the residual Miami functions that will be performed in Fort Lauderdale and to support the increased

workload in both divisions. All automated systems supported by servers and other equipment located in the Miami Courthouse will be remotely monitored. The FaxBack and E-filing programs will be operated from the Fort Lauderdale division. Every effort will be made to timely open cases, docket pleadings, and scan documents, in order that the electronic record be as current as possible. Paper records in Miami cases, however, will not be available during that week.

c. Administrative and Other Functions

Various administrative personnel will be on site in Fort Lauderdale to carry out necessary functions. Although a recording will be placed on the main Miami Clerk's Office telephone number informing callers that the Miami Courthouse complex is closed and that all filing should be directed to the Fort Lauderdale office, the information options that follow will be forwarded to personnel located in Fort Lauderdale.