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Juvenile Justice Panel Schedules April Hearings

HARRISBURG, March 29, 2010 - The Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice which is investigating failures in the juvenile justice system in Luzerne County will hold public hearings on Thursday, April 1, in Wilkes-Barre, and on Monday, April 12, in Harrisburg.

The hearings originally were scheduled in Wilkes-Barre on February 25, 2010, but were cancelled due to inclement weather.

Witnesses at Thursday's hearing in Wilkes-Barre are to be four juveniles whose cases were adjudicated by former Judge Mark A. Ciavarella. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. at the Best Western East Mountain Inn at 2400 East End Blvd., Wilkes-Barre.

The hearing on April 12 is to begin at 10 a.m. at the Pennsylvania Judicial Center, 601 Commonwealth Avenue, Harrisburg. Scheduled witnesses are Patrick Judge Sr., a former chairman of the state Judicial Conduct Board; Joseph A. Massa Jr., chief counsel to the conduct board; Francis J. Puskas 2d, deputy chief counsel to the board, and Samuel C. Stretton, an attorney whose practice includes litigation in matters involving legal and judicial ethics.

TV and radio stations can pick up live feeds of the hearings transmitted to an audio/video mult box from pool cameras provided by PCN. Still photography of the hearings is permitted **without the use of a flash**.

The Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice is conducting a noncriminal investigation into the circumstances that led to failures in the juvenile justice system in Luzerne County. Its purpose is to determine the causes of the failures, to restore public confidence in the administration of justice and to make recommendations to prevent a recurrence of a similar situation in Luzerne County or elsewhere.

Superior Court Senior Judge John M. Cleland, chairman of the commission, will be available to the media to answer questions during breaks and at the conclusion of the hearings.

Transcripts of the commission's prior public hearings and other information about the commission are available at:

<http://www.pacourts.us/Links/Public/InterbranchCommissionJuvenileJustice.htm>

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