

## In the Field

**TWIN CITIES, MN** – In preparation for the roll-out of jury trials in Kyrgyzstan expected next year, four Kyrgyzstani judges, including the country's youngest Supreme Court justice, spent Oct. 18–25 in Minneapolis/St. Paul examining how U.S. courts manage jury trials. Organized by **Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Paul Anderson** and attorney **Robert Bayer**, the program allowed the delegates to observe opening statements and witness testimony in a drug possession case tried before a jury in **Hennepin County District Court**. The next day, as part of a session on jury trials in

general, the delegates did a postmortem on the case with the trial's presiding judge, an assistant district attorney, a public defender, and the court's jury supervisor and communications specialist. A probing question from a delegate on the use of forensic evidence led to a discussion of the "CSI Effect," a relatively new phenomenon where American jurors expect the prosecution to present conclusive scientific evidence, as happens on the popular U.S. television shows.

National Grantee: Russian American Rule of Law Consortium



*Kyrgyzstani judges meet in the Minnesota State Capitol with John Hultquist (at head of table), the governor's judicial appointments coordinator. State Supreme Court Justice Paul Anderson, the delegates' judicial host, stands in back.*

## Hosting Corner

**WILLIAMSBURG, VA** – Four accomplished Kyrgyzstani transparency and anti-



*Open World delegates from Kyrgyzstan visit the James City County Board of Supervisors.*

corruption professionals were hosted by **William and Mary Law School** and the **James City County Rotary Club** Oct. 4–10. The delegates—a deputy minister of justice, a senior government anticorruption official, and two top human rights activists—had a session at the National Center for State Courts, discussed criminal trials at the James City County Courthouse, learned about pre-incarceration procedures and prisoners' rights at a police station, and met with Williamsburg **Mayor Jeanne Zeidler**. **Deputy Minister of Justice**

**Bekbolot Bekiev** was impressed by a demonstration of technology at William and Mary's Center of Legal and Court Technology, saying, "We saw how new technology can increase the transparency of the judicial process, and reduce the expenditure of time and money." The group's facilitator, **Jenishbek Arzymbatov** of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative in Kyrgyzstan, noted that a real benefit of Open World is the dialogue it promotes between Kyrgyzstanis and Americans.

National Grantee: Rotary International

## Making a Difference

**COLORADO SPRINGS, CO** – Although the basic elements of the case being heard in El Paso County, CO Courtroom #205 on Oct. 8 were common enough—the owner of a bag found in a park claimed no knowledge of the drugs discovered inside—the jurors considering the evidence were anything but ordinary. All were high-level officials from Kyrgyzstan—one, **Irina Letova**, sits in Parliament—and all are or will be involved in introducing jury trials in their country. Deputy Letova, for example, serves on the parliamentary committee with jurisdiction over judicial reform and on the National Council on Judicial Reform, and was a member of a working group that drafted legislation to implement jury trials. So even though she and her fellow delegates were actually participating in a mock trial, they took their jury "service" seriously, as it enabled them to experience how a jury trial is conducted. To make the simulation as realistic as possible, **Fourth Judicial District**

**Judge Thomas Kane** recruited his colleague **Judge Theresa Cisneros**, two assistant district attorneys, two public defenders, a police officer, and court staff to take



*Kyrgyzstani parliamentary deputy Irina Letova, one of the delegates in the October Colorado Springs exchange on jury trials.*

part. "Everyone got into the spirit of the trial, asked questions, made motions, produced 'evidence,' etc.," says host **Colleen Denny** of **Colorado Springs Sister Cities International**. "The Kyrgyzstani 'jurors' even sent questions out to the judge."

The mock trial took place at the end of a day and a half of briefings and Q and A with Fourth Judicial District judges and other officers of the court—including the jury commissioner—and observation of jury selection. Deputy Letova says that the time spent in court "gave us a real sense of what happens in a jury trial and what the various processes are." No doubt the American participants in the mock trial would agree, as Deputy Letova and her fellow jurors delivered the same verdict as the jury in the real trial on which the role-play was based: not guilty.

National Grantee: Academy for Educational Development.