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NEWS RELEASE

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Thomas Owen Rice Confirmed as District Judge for Eastern District of Washington

SAN FRANCISCO – The United States Senate today confirmed President Obama’s nomination of Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Owen Rice of Spokane to serve as a district judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington.

Mr. Rice, 51, was confirmed on a 93-4 voice vote of the Senate. He is expected to receive his commission shortly and will fill a judgeship left vacant when District Judge Robert H. Whaley assumed senior status on July 12, 2009.

Mr. Rice has been an assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Washington since 1987 and has served as first assistant U.S. attorney since 2006. He previously served as chief of the Criminal Division from 2003 to 2006, and as deputy chief of the Criminal Division from 2000 to 2003. Mr. Rice worked as a trial attorney in the Tax Division of the U.S. Department of Justice from 1986 to 1987.

A native of, Spokane, Washington, Mr. Rice received his B.B.A. in 1983 from Gonzaga University and his J.D. in 1986 from Gonzaga University, School of Law, where he graduated *magna cum laude*.

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington, which has courthouses in Richland, Spokane and Yakima, had 1,256 new case filings in fiscal year 2011. The court is authorized four permanent judgeships, all of which are filled.

Federal district court judges, appointed under Article III of the Constitution, are nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior. Their current annual salary is \$174,000.

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