

Wilner heads group of five traveling to Russia in DOJ exchange program

By a Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer

Five members of the Maryland legal community will travel to the Leningrad region of Russia today as part of the Rule of Law exchange program sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

The delegation will work with Russian prosecutors, defense lawyers and judges on several areas of law, including plea bargaining in criminal cases, according to Court of Appeals Judge Alan M. Wilner, who heads the group of five.

"We hope to really get into plea negotiations, which is just coming into their criminal justice system," Wilner said yesterday.

The group also will conduct a session dedicated to environmental law, Wilner said.

Court of Appeals Judge Lynne A. Battaglia, Department of Natural Resources counsel Joseph Gill, Howard County State's Attorney Marna McLendon and Baltimore defense attorney Jack Rubin will join Wilner to round out the group.

Wilner will separate from the group

long enough to participate in a work session in Amsterdam on medical malpractice mediation, to be conducted by the Dutch Ministry of Justice. All five will return to the United States on Oct. 21.

This marks the 10th trip to Russia for Wilner since early 1996, and he has worked with several groups, including the American Bar Association, to help Russian lawyers make the transition from communism to democracy.

Recently, he said, he received a warm and touching letter from a Russian judge who visited Annapolis along with other Russian jurists earlier this year.

The judge thanked him for the experience and expressed deep sympathy for the suffering caused by terrorist attacks on Sept. 11.



FILE PHOTO

This marks the tenth trip to Russia since 1996 for Court of Appeals Judge Alan M. Wilner, above.