



# El Diario Sin Nombre

*The Newsletter Without A Name*

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## IT Support Techs to the Rescue

It may seem incredible how much HSD's office automation infrastructure has changed since personal computers were installed statewide in 1998, but the people that built it, maintain it and support it can attest to how far it has come in four short years. The responsibilities of the HSD Network Help Desk have evolved apace—it now supports some 1,500 personal computer users and maintains about 60 wide-area network circuits and 120 servers across the state.

All HSD users now have Internet access and are standardized on the Microsoft Office suite for office automation. Microsoft Word and Excel have replaced Word Perfect and Lotus, and their integration with Outlook makes gathering, packaging and sending information much easier. Still, the information technology learning curve has been steep for end users and the HSD Network Help Desk receives about 150 calls per week about PC hardware and software failures, network printer failures, Windows NT access problems and circuit outages.

### MUTUAL EDUCATION

“When I first started using a computer I didn't use the Help Desk very often because I felt intimidated,” said Theresa Ordaz in Income Support Division's central office, who has been with HSD for 14 years and learned how to use her computer while on the job. “I believe the Help Desk has come a long way—they understand that people like me may not know as much as they do about computers.”

At the other end of the phone line, Help Desk Network Systems and Data Communications Analyst Delphine Trujillo said, “When computers replaced most of HSD's “dumb” terminals in 1998, employee calls to the Help Desk were very basic. Some were like, ‘I turned my computer on, but nothing is on the screen.’ My gentle answer to this question was: ‘Did you also turn on the monitor button?’ We don't get that type of call anymore. It has been exciting to see just how far HSD end users have come in their understanding and use of personal computers.”

### HELPING CALLERS

Today, the HSD Network Help Desk provides application end user support to all departmental employees. “Most of the calls we receive today are for problems having to do with printers, Outlook, and the Internet,” said Trujillo. “We talk a lot of managers through the process of setting up mailing lists for Outlook, and we help others install Adobe Acrobat so that they can print or view information that is on the Internet.” To provide prompt, courteous, effective and efficient support to departmental employees, the HSD Network Help Desk staff must have not only the technical skills to diagnose and troubleshoot network, application and personal computer problems, but also excellent communication and organizational skills.

The technical support staff of three (and two backup techs) do most troubleshooting over the telephone. It takes a special kind of skill to be able to talk any remote user through the process of fixing a problem. Some know just enough to get themselves into trouble and become impatient at



**Human Services Network Help Desk crew (front, left) Celina Fresquez, Valerie Lopez, (back) Rich Foster, Debbie Sandoval, Denise Trujillo, and Delphine Trujillo.**

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# Rosie Enriquez Cleans Up Welfare Fraud in Lea County



Just as Sheriff Pat Garrett helped clean up the New Mexico Territory in the late 1800s, OIG Special Agent Maria “Rosie” Enriquez is helping clean up the problem of welfare fraud in New Mexico today.

Enriquez started as a case accuracy specialist for the Income Support Division and is now a special agent in the Investigations Bureau of the Office of Inspector General (OIG). After five years, Enriquez has seven welfare fraud convictions and dozens of administrative sanctions under her belt—and tens of thousands of dollars in recaptured benefits.

“My busiest time was in Dec. 1997

when child support began revoking driver’s licenses,” said Enriquez. “This caught dozens of families who claimed the whereabouts of the breadwinner as unknown to qualify for food stamps or cash assistance, when actually the breadwinner was living at home. What was really surprising to me was that some of the breadwinners truly didn’t know why their license had been revoked and were quite angry when they found out the reason.”

## THE EXCITING AND THE MUNDANE

One of Enriquez’s high-profile cases involved a woman also suspected in an alleged murder-for-hire investigation in Lea County. It all started from the investigation in Hobbs of a woman allegedly collecting food stamps both in Arizona and in New Mexico. To qualify, she did not report the presence and income of her estranged husband, then living with her in Hobbs, and the full amount of child support she was receiving from an ex-husband in Washington. Now Enriquez is working with criminal inves-

tigators to prosecute the woman not only for welfare fraud, but also for felony criminal solicitation.

Not all of Enriquez’s investigations turn out to be as interesting. “A lot of work I do involves tips from people and businesses here in Hobbs,” said Enriquez. “Some of the more routine tips I receive are from people who claim that someone is selling burritos made with money they are receiving from food stamps.”

HSD Inspector General Kenneth Alessio said, “The identification and investigation of welfare fraud is a major priority for the OIG. Because of the fine

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*“... HSD OIG will have one of the best investigative organizations in the state.”*

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*Ken Alessio*

work of people like Rosie Enriquez, Leasa Powers, Maria Chavez and the rest of the Investigations Bureau staff, we have had more criminal prosecutions in the past 18 months than in the several years prior—and that has been with significant staff turnover and vacancies.

When the bureau is fully staffed and a new bureau chief in place, I believe the HSD OIG will have one of the best investigative organizations in the state.”✦

## Making Ends Meet with Help from Medicaid

Medicaid spending continues to be a topic of hot debate as growing enrollment and skyrocketing health care costs threaten a balanced state budget. But Paul Panas, the owner of a two-chair barbershop and inventor of the latest brand of salsa to hit one large grocery store (*Hook You Up* salsa), has no doubt as to the value of the Medicaid program.

Neither Paul, nor his wife Davina, have health insurance for themselves, but Medicaid pays the health care bills for Elexis, their pretty two-year-old daughter. Their other daughter, 12-year-old Gloria, has had health insurance since birth through a private program with her grandparents. “Medicaid has helped relieve our minds for Elexis,” said Davina Panas. “We would have used a small business insurance program if it weren’t for Medicaid. It would have been tough financially, but we would have done it.”

Paul and Davina found out about Medicaid from a television commercial and applied at the Belen ISD office two years ago. “They [The Belen ISD staff] were good to us; even the security guard was nice,” said Paul. Both also said the health care Elexis is receiving from Presbyterian *Salud!* is excellent. What Davina likes best about Medicaid is the new plastic cards. “I like them much better than the paper cards. Now, I don’t have to go into the income support office every month to make sure everything is okay.”

Paul, who has owned his barbershop for ten years, got into the salsa business only four months ago and is now selling about 240 jars a month. “Medicaid is good for working families,” he said, “because it helps people like us make ends meet.”



# Behind the Scenes at EBT

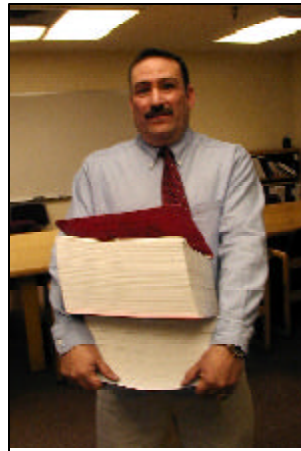
In a small office on the 15th floor of a building in central Albuquerque, the ISD EBT Section team of six performs work that affects every one of ISD's 80,000 clients. Last month, we highlighted their ISD Customer Service desk, but their behind-the-scenes work is just as important as the more visible public contact work.

The electronic shadow of every dollar distributed to our clients, whether in the form of food stamp credits or cash assistance, flows through this office. Here's how it works: 1) Client goes to an ISD field office and qualifies for assistance. 2) Field office worker directs the client to the EBT Specialist where the client is issued an EBT card. 3) Client selects a PIN and sees a video demonstrating the use of the card. 4) After 24 hours, the client can use the card at the store. 5) Everybody is happy.

Well, yes, but ... there are a few steps in between that are not normally visible to the naked eye. Let's try again:

## WHAT REALLY HAPPENS

1. A client goes to an ISD field office and qualifies for assistance.
2. ISD2 calculates the amount of benefits under all categories based on information input by the Family Assistance Analyst.
3. All approved benefits for the day are transmitted to Citibank through an overnight batch process. This information is stored in the Citibank pending file, which usually has about \$350,000 in benefits awaiting disposition.
4. The client returns to the field office and the EBT Specialist issues him or her an EBT card.
5. The client selects a PIN and watches a video demonstrating the use of the card.
6. When the client is issued an EBT card, Citibank creates an account into which benefits are deposited from the pending file. Now the card has an available balance to be used.
7. Citibank sends the deposit information to the Federal government's AMA system, which reconciles credits, debits and adjustments.
8. The net issuance is then sent to yet another Federal system, the ASAP system. This system holds the state's letter of credit balance and makes the payments to Citibank, which in turn pays the retailers.
9. The client goes out to buy food and clothing for her or his family and presents the card at the checkout counter.
10. The retailer's swipe technology handles the EBT card just like any credit card.
11. The transaction is processed through Citibank, whose systems update the card balance on the fly, just as they update credit card available balances.
12. The following month, at the client's issuance date, the ISD2 system sends a message through the communications channel and the EBT card's available balance is updated.
13. At the end of the month, the quarter, the year, the state fiscal year, the federal fiscal year and Lord only knows when else, all these accounts are reconciled and adjustments are posted to everyone's systems.
14. A few months later, all these accounts are audited and findings are issued and responded to.



**John Garcia of the EBT Section gets ready for an item in step 13 or 14.**

The process may seem complex, but most of the complexity has been pushed to mainframe computer systems designed to handle it transparently. And, indeed, with EBT cards, receiving assistance has become much less complex. The card allows HSD to consolidate benefits from several different programs into a single process and clients to take advantage of those benefits with far less stigma and paperwork.

Food stamps and TANF were the first benefits to be distributed this way, General Assistance was added a few months ago, and in a few weeks support services such as child care will be added. The EBT Section is now working with the Department of Health (DOH) to launch a new EBT card, which will look like a designer credit card (red chile theme) and incorporate a smart chip for benefits issued by DOH under the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Also in the works are changes to allow a swipe of the card to record time and attendance at work programs for TANF mandatory participation.

## SMOOTHING THE WAY

Implementation hasn't been without bumps and adjustments. At first, cards were all refreshed on the same day of the month. That caused huge humps in transaction volume that stressed retailers' systems, ISD2, federal systems and Citibank. Now, card balances are refreshed on a staggered schedule based on the client's Social Security Number so that transactions remain at a consistent volume throughout the month.

The 24-hour delay between qualifying for food stamps and being able to buy food remains an issue for some new clients. While the technology may not be there to eliminate that delay right now, at least one ISD office has taken an innovative approach to resolving the real problem—lack of food—by stocking a few boxes of FDA commodities from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) that they can give clients right away.

Not all states have fully implemented EBT. In California, for example, systems differ from county to county and can't talk to each other. But the Federal government has set a goal to implement EBT nationwide and barriers are falling. New Mexico cards can be used to purchase food in several neighboring states, including Texas, responsible for the largest volume of interstate transactions.

So next time you swipe a card, any card, think about Tillie Baca, Coralyn Burquette, Sandy Davis, John Garcia, Beth Ortiz and Jim Weber, perched in their fifteenth-floor roost and keeping an eagle eye on close to \$20 million a month as it moves through a complex series of systems.✦

*Continued from page 1*

being talked through every step of the process. Others need to have every click and keystroke spelled out in detail to overcome their discomfort with the technology. "We have to gauge each particular person's understanding of the computer as we talk them through fixing their problem," said Trujillo.

#### **FORESTALLING CALLS**

But that's not all: besides answering calls, the Help Desk assists in maintaining the network and its servers to ensure network availability and performance. Each morning, the Network Help Desk runs routine checks on network and server status to make sure all information technology re-

sources are available for workers statewide. This includes verifying the availability of the Income Support Division's ISD2 system, Child Support Enforcement's CSES system, Outlook and the Internet. "Our biggest headache is when the mainframe or circuits go down," said Rich Foster, manager of the Network Help Desk. "Employees can't do anything and everything is basically at a standstill until we get the system back up."

Besides the Network Help Desk, HSD has four Help Desks that focus on specific divisional management information systems or technologies: ASD, ISD, CSED and the EBT Section each have their own trained support staff.✱

## **Doña Ana County HSD Grows With Its Client Base**

The Income Support Division has completed several office moves in Doña Ana County to make services to its customers more convenient. "This is the second and final phase of moves in Las Cruces," said Richard Audette, Doña Ana County director. In February, ISD opened an office at 2121 Summit to serve clients living on the east and north sides of the city; last week, another new office opened at 655 Utah. "Just like Albuquerque, which has field offices splitting the city into four quadrants, we have split Las Cruces into east and west sectors to make trips to our offices more convenient and reduce the long lines clients were often burdened with at a single office," said Audette.

Although clients may like the convenience of two Las Cruces offices, at least one ISD employee has mixed emotions. "I've been in the Las Cruces ISD office for over eight years," said Tammy O'Hara of Las Cruces. She offered a list of pros and cons about the move, then she thought a minute and said: "Did I mention we'll miss our coworkers? Working in a new building with a reduced

client base will certainly be welcome, but not being able to see so many of my friends on a daily basis will be a big adjustment."

Audette will take over the west Las Cruces ISD office, with 31 employees, while new director Cindy Salazar will

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### **Help Desk Contact Information**

#### **General PC or printer trouble calls, network failures:**

##### **HSD Network Help Desk**

7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday  
E-mail to HSD Network Help Desk ([HSDNHD@state.nm.us](mailto:HSDNHD@state.nm.us))  
Telephone: 827-9493 or 827-7114 in Santa Fe, or  
1-800-456-8737, Option 4 from other parts of NM

#### **Questions about ISD2:**

##### **HSD ISD2 Help Desk**

E-mail to HSD ISD2 Help Desk ([HSDISD2HD@state.nm.us](mailto:HSDISD2HD@state.nm.us))  
Telephone: 827-7787, 827-7266 or 827-7255.

#### **Questions about CSES and PC Forms:**

##### **CSED Help Desk**

Telephone: 476-7150  
Fax: 476-7191

#### **EBT and Citibank Boss problems:**

##### **EBT Help Desk**

Telephone: 841-6620 / 6507 / 6546 in Albuquerque, or  
1-800-283-4465 from other parts of NM

#### **ASD service inquiries, status of purchase / payment docs:**

##### **ASD Help Desk**

Telephone: 827-9453 in Santa Fe, or  
1-866-320-8677 from other parts of NM

### **Tammy O'Hara's List of Moving Pros and Cons**

#### **Things We'll Miss**

- Our coworkers
- Thanksgiving Potlucks with over 50 coworkers
- Our coworkers
- Being next door to *NM Works*
- Having CSED just down the road
- Our coworkers

#### **Things We Won't**

- Lines of clients out the door
- Waiting in line to use the microwaves
- A parking lot that's too small
- Over 100 applications per day on average
- Using the conference room for storage

manage the east Las Cruces office, with 26 employees. James Sherk will continue to run the Anthony office, with 37 employees.

"ISD Region III remains on the move," said David Devitt, Region III Operations Manager. The Socorro ISD office will move in June to a new site from its current building near the plaza, which was partially built in 1937, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was president. It is an historic site because it was built as part of the Work Progress Administration program that found jobs for people during the Great Depression by building roads, buildings and dams. "We have long outgrown the building and look forward to having a facility in Socorro that provides adequate space and allows clients a measure of confidentiality," Devitt said. The three Doña Ana offices are planning progressive open houses on May 3.✱