



# El Diario Sin Nombre

The Newsletter Without a Name

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## ISD Open House Attracts Radio

Mescalero Apache President-Elect Also On Hand

New Mexico Human  
Services Department

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When planning office grand openings, on the to-do list is invite state and local dignitaries, sister agencies, others within the department and maybe a local color guard. In Alamogordo, ISD County Director Sandra Kindell outdid everyone by inviting a local radio station to broadcast live from her office for her grand opening on November 7. The event was rather unusual, and a first for the department, since most people are used to hearing radio broadcasts from the usual places like car dealerships, oil change outfits and retail store grand openings, but never from a "welfare" office.

The idea to broadcast from the new ISD office actually came from Alamogordo KUPR FM radio host Bob Flotte. And right on schedule, he went live from the ISD office at 2:00 p.m. "We are here this afternoon in the

beautiful, new Otero County Income Support Division office as we celebrate the grand opening of your new income support office," said Flotte. Throughout the afternoon, he kept Alamogordo area listeners abreast of the happenings at the open house. He tantalized the audience by describing the food on hand and



Alamogordo radio personality Bob Flotte.

heralded the arrival of special guests like Mescalero Apache President-elect Mark Chino (the Alamogordo office handles Mescalero clients). He also interviewed members of the Alamogordo Community Christian School Orchestra, who provided music for the event.

"It was great having Bob here," said Kindell. "We have so many programs that people don't know about, especially food stamps and Medicaid, and this is a wonderful opportunity to get the word out to the community about them in a positive way." Kindell and others were also on the microphone answering questions about the department and discussing how ISD offices around the state are helping families make ends meet with the various programs they administer.

Kindell said her clients and staff appreciate the new building, and she wanted to show it off in the best way possible, even if that meant – of all things – having a radio DJ blasting away from her lobby.



Mescalero Apache President-elect visits with ISD's Carolyn Craven. Craven handles most Mescalero cases in the Alamogordo office.

## Española ISD Office Continues Giving Tradition

This Thanksgiving, 11 families served by the Española ISD office were surprised when they were called and asked to stop by the office and pick up a Thanksgiving dinner, replete with a nine-pound turkey, yams, vegetables, rolls, cranberry sauce and pie. “This office has always given food baskets to its clients, only this year we were able to give more than one or two,” said Rio Arriba County Director Eloysa Archuleta. “We also found an organization that prepares and delivers complete, uncooked meals for a reasonable price.”

Two other employees besides Archuleta purchased a whole food basket: Stephanie Garcia and Elsie Salazar. Staff and other community agencies donated money to purchase the other eight food baskets.



Española ISD employees (from top left) Leticia Chism, JoAnn Valerio, Suzanne Suazo-Martinez, Stephanie Garcia and Eloysa Archuleta (from bottom left) Marla Hanlon-Abeita, Bernadette Quintana and Nancy Martinez.

### How the Program Works

Once it is decided how many food baskets are available or about a month before the holiday season, Española caseworkers review their cases and choose families in special need for the Thanksgiving meals. This year, FAA Suzanne Martinez chose four families from among her caseload. Two of the families were mothers with or recovering from cancer. The third family was denied food stamps because one family member was working part-time. Martinez said both of women with cancer cried when I called them to ask if they wanted a

Thanksgiving dinner. The fourth client was a single mother who has a Down Syndrome child.

FAA Bernadette Quintana chose an elderly woman who had recently lost her husband and only qualified for \$10 in food stamps each month, while FAA Leticia Chism, through her supervisor Colleen Martinez, selected a single, undocumented immigrant mother with seven children of whom only three qualified for benefits. FAA Nancy Martinez, on the other hand, chose a single man who was recently injured but didn't qualify for any assistance at the ISD office, “not even commodities,” she said. FAA worker Joann Valerio selected an elderly couple who didn't qualify for Food Stamps—they only qualified for QMB. FAA Anthony Romero selected a client who lost her job and had just had surgery.

FAA Marla Hanlon-Abetita picked a mother with two children, six and nine years old, each with Down Syndrome. The family recently moved from Oklahoma to the Española Valley to be with family. “It was so sad,” said FAA supervisor Corina Vigil. “But both children were happy to receive the food basket – It was like Christmas for them.” FAA Rosan Clayton gave the last food basket to a single mother with three children.

### Christmas Will Also be Special This Year

Generous employees at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) provide Christmas gifts each year to 100 special children in northern New Mexico. For each of the past two years, the Taos and the Santa Fe ISD offices participated. This year, the Española ISD office provided LANL with the names of 100 special children. “The kids asked for things like Leapfrog, bikes, remote control cars and CD headphones to Barbie doll houses,” chimed the ISD staff as they discussed their plans for receiving and distributing the gifts later this month. Archuleta said, “We will pick up the wrapped gifts from LANL, and then have the clients stop by and pick up the individual gifts at their convenience.”

The office has also contacted Toys for Tots for contributions from the local community to more of their clients who may have a hard time affording gifts for their kids this year. “Our clients are the best,” said Archuleta. “This is our community, and we know most of them very well.”

## Two More HSD Employees Participate in Gov's Task Force

Earlier this year, ISD's Deputy Director Marise McFadden participated in phase I of the governor's task force charged with identifying new ways to save money and finding better ways to deliver state services. Now MAD's Elinor Dickson and DoIT's Tom Sata have recently returned from phase II of the program, which began in late August. Although neither could speak about the specific recommendations they and 15 other state employees made to the governor's office, both said they worked extremely hard and felt that if some of their recommendations were eventually adopted, efficiency and cost saving could be realized.

Sata, who worked on information technology issues for the task force, said, "If our recommendations are adopted it would be good. Some were small and would be easier to implement than others that were much broader and touched more agencies." Dickson was assigned to look at improving the efficiency of health and human services programs across the state. "The analytical process followed up on and expanded the work of Phase I."

Most of the research done in both phases of the initiative was actually generated from surveys that state employees were asked to complete earlier in the year about how they would improve their agency. Dickson and Sata agreed that their work at first involved research like searching the Internet, talking with state agencies and calling other states to find out what they were doing. Later, they each went through a series of "tollgates," where they briefed the governor's staff on what they had come up with so far. Following tollgate briefings they were either asked to continue working on the project or to drop the project altogether.

The results of phase I are now a document called "Moving New Mexico Forward" dated August 2003. It is posted on the governor's Website in its entirety and can be accessed at <http://www.governor.state.nm.us/performanceview.html>.

According to McFadden, "Over 92 specific suggestions are included in the phase I report, and they represent possible savings of \$379 million over the next five years." Most of the cost savings recommendations centered around human resources, health and human services, criminal justice, transportation, information technology and contract management.

"Participating in the performance review team was a wonderful experience that broadened my understanding of state government," said McFadden. "I learned that every agency has committed and dedicated employees, and the vast majority of people are eager to provide their agency's programs and services in the most effective and efficient manner possible."

## Career HSD Employee Retiring

Lupe Urioste began working with the Human Services Department way back in 1978, when most current employees were still in elementary school. His first job was in Farmington with the fledgling child support enforcement bureau, then part of the Income Support Division. Later he transferred to the Las Vegas child support office, where he continued to work with parents by trying to encourage them to agree to child support settlements prior to court hearings. In 1996, he worked with both child support enforcement and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on an initiative to increase the number of bench warrants issued by law enforcement officials for non-paying child support obligors.

"From my perspective, the most important innovation in child support enforcement was the introduction of DNA testing into the program," said Urioste. "Prior to that, proving paternity was inconclusive at best and there were ways around the system." He offered one example of this that didn't quite work out the way the perpetrators planned. "One day," he said, "three men appeared at a child support court hearing near Farmington and all three claimed to be the child's father. The judge concluded then that all three should each pay one-third of the child support obligation. The ruling didn't sit well with two of the defendants, so they confessed that they were just trying to help their friend avoid paying child support."

In 1997, Urioste transferred to OIG full-time as an investigator. He was later promoted to special agent, and



Lupe Uriosti retires from HSD with fond memories...

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## CSED's License Revocation Program Getting Results

As Secretary Hyde noted in last month's newsletter, the Child Support Enforcement Division has been working more closely with other state regulatory agencies to better coordinate collection efforts. And according to Child Support Director Stephanie Gonzales, the license revocation program is the highest profile enforcement tool the division has.

The license revocation program began in 1995, when those seeking mostly occupational licenses such as teachers, barbers, realtors and even Christmas tree salespersons had to pass the child support test. There were 58 different licenses in all. However, a few years later, two additional state/federal laws gave child support the authority to revoke drivers' and hunting and fishing licenses, which affected nearly every non-paying child support obligor.

Five years later, the Child Support Enforcement Division, the Motor Vehicles Division and State Game and Fish Department are fully meeting the intent of the law: to get the attention of those who refuse to meet their financial obligations to their children. This year, a record-breaking \$1.7 million has been collected through license revocation. The division has also issued 2,336 Certificates of Compliance this year, which are obtained after an obligor has come to the table with a lump-sum payment on the arrears. Recently, James Brooks of Game and Fish told a reporter from the *Albuquerque Journal*, "The whole philosophy is to make sure people pay. We are not here to rehash their divorce. We are not here to help them with a parenting plan. The only thing that matters is whether you're in compliance with the court order or not."

Gonzales said, "We really appreciate the efforts of our sister agencies like Game and Fish are making to support our program." The interdepartmental cooperation is paying off, and soon license revocation collections will surpass the \$10 million mark. About 25 percent of the money goes back to the state as reimbursement for public assistance the custodial parent is receiving or has received, and the rest goes to the families who decide to use child support enforcement services for a small up-front fee.

Child support's license revocation program is becoming so effective that recently two people wanting to get married rushed into a child support enforcement office seeking to clear their records so that they could obtain a marriage license for their wedding the next day. Of course, the child support enforcement office was happy to comply and issued the eager couple letters of compliance once they paid up.

### New Mexico Human Services Department

2009 S. Pacheco St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87504  
Phone: 505-827-7750  
Fax: 505-827-6286

Email: Marty.Eckert@state.nm.us  
Email: Barbara.Gay@state.nm.us

We're on the web:  
[www.state.nm.us/hsd/home.html](http://www.state.nm.us/hsd/home.html)



## Retiring

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then to senior special agent. His most rewarding experience in OIG was working on the Medicaid Mega Oxygen fraud case, which the OIG broke in 1998 and resulted in federal convictions for Medicaid fraud of millions of dollars. "My job during this time was to travel all over the state looking for people who may be in need of oxygen, and at the same time gather more information for the on-going investigation."

Urioste also learned a lot from the numerous law enforcement courses the department encouraged him to attend over the years. "I learned a lot from these courses, and I encourage those new to the department to attend as many professional development courses as possible," he said.

In retirement, Urioste plans on staying busy with his side business making saddles, other leather products and cabinets in Las Vegas. Also an avid hunter, he will continue hunting deer and elk.