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**For Immediate Release**

## **Secretary Pamela Hyde Announces the Governor's *Fresh Start Program* is Now Available Statewide**

Parents behind in paying child support are encouraged to learn how the *Fresh Start Program* can help.

**Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 7, 2006**– Human Services Department Secretary Pamela Hyde announced today that Governor Bill Richardson's child support enforcement *Fresh Start Program* is now available in every New Mexico county, with Bernalillo County the last to join in. "The *Fresh Start Program* has already helped 566 parents with their child support, and now that the program has begun in the county with the largest population we hope to double that figure," said Hyde.

The *Fresh Start Program* began in April 2005 as a pilot program in Las Vegas, serving the northeastern counties of the state. Over the past year the program has rolled out county by county and has finally reached Bernalillo County to complete its rollout phase.

*Fresh Start* is a first for the state's Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) and is part of an overall Arrears Management Program. "The ultimate goal of CSED is to help non-custodial parents manage their child support payments so they do not get behind to the point that the payments seem unbearable," said Stephanie Gonzales, CSED Director. "The *Fresh Start Program* can help by restoring suspended drivers' or professional licenses, decrease the interest rate being paid on balances and even begin to negotiate the forgiveness of some of the child support owed."

Since April 2005, the *Fresh Start Program* has brought in \$637,803 in lump sum payments to custodial parents, waived \$4.2 million in principal and \$3.6 million in interest, received \$2.4 million in new judgments and closed 362 cases.

Parents interested in learning more about the *Fresh Start Program* and how it can help them are encouraged to call toll free, 1-888-293-0825.

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