

**Testimony**  
**Interim Information Technology Committee**  
**Senator Larry J. Robinson, Chairman**  
**August 27, 2008**

Chairman Robinson, members of the Information Technology Committee, I am Mike Schwindt, Director of the Child Support Enforcement Program with the Department of Human Services. As requested, I am here to provide information about the awards our Program recently received.

Earlier this month we received the National Child Support Enforcement Association's (NCSEA) 2008 award for the Outstanding Program. In accepting that award, we were asked to provide a short presentation describing "How We Did It". The following was our presentation.

Individuals employed by the program have consistently received awards from the **North Dakota Family Support Conference**. As noted in the presentation,

- Ron Keller, Cindy Hagen and Peter Russell received the FSC Service awards for 2005, 2006 and 2007.
- Earlier this year, Mary Jo Nordine received the 2008 Outstanding Individual Achievement award for her efforts with the Outgoing Interstate Center in Grand Forks.

In **2006**, the CSE program received the **Outstanding State Program** award from WICSEC, the Western Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council, which includes all states west of the Mississippi.

In **2007**, our successful PRIDE program was recognized by the Council of State Governments (CSG) with its **Innovations Award**. PRIDE (Parental Responsibility Initiative in the Development of Employment) involved

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- The county-operated Regional Child Support Enforcement Units in Dickinson and Grand Forks;
- Job Service North Dakota;
- The district courts in Dickinson, Grand Forks and Grafton;
- The Badlands and Northeast Human Service Centers;
- TANF; and
- The CSE state office.

Last August we were in competition with other states at the Midwest Regional CSG meeting in Michigan; each presenting one or more innovative programs involving multiple levels of government and offering unique solutions that are readily adaptable by other jurisdictions. PRIDE was one of the two programs selected to receive regional recognition. Subsequently, PRIDE was one of eight programs recognized at the national CSG convention in Oklahoma City in November. An excellent write-up of PRIDE was included in the CSG's November/December 2007 edition of State News and is attached.

In September 2007 the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Commissioner selected PRIDE for the **Commissioner's Award for Innovative Partnership**.

We subsequently submitted an application on PRIDE to Harvard's Kennedy School of Government for consideration in its Innovations in American Government Program. Earlier this year, we were notified that we had cleared the initial screening and added information was requested. That data was provided; unfortunately, we didn't make the list of the 50 finalists. Just last week, they contacted us again, inviting us to apply for the award.

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As noted at the start, our program received NCSEA's **Outstanding Program** earlier this month. I was awarded NCSEA's **Outstanding Manager Award** the next day, a very humbling experience.

Earlier this week, we received the OCSE **Commissioner's Award for Innovative Partnership**, a back-to-back win for our state. This year, the Commissioner recognized the Multi-Program Collaboration Workgroup's efforts, undertaken by JSND, TANF, Foster Care, Medical Assistance and CSE, to identify and resolve programmatic issues at the local level. At the same time, I also received the **Commissioner's Award for Exemplary Leadership**.

We were also part of another **Commissioner's Award for Innovative Partnership** involving the national Judicial-CSE task force, a task force we have been part of since its inception in 2003. This task force is looking for and promoting workable technological and structural alternatives to how the courts and child support currently establish and enforce court orders.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes our testimony. I'd be happy to answer questions.

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