

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Counties in North Region Recognized by Food Stamp Program

Bismarck, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Food Stamp Unit recently recognized the seven North Region counties and their employees for achieving the highest accuracy rate in 2007. Officials presented social service staffs from Bottineau, Burke, Divide, McHenry, Mountrail, Renville, and Ward counties with the Conrad J. Moe Award during the annual Spring Showcase training and recognition event held April 23-25 in Mandan, N.D.

Named for the state's first Food Stamp program administrator, a traveling trophy is awarded to the top performing region each year and is based upon quality control case file review results. North Dakota has six administrative regions.

The Department's regional representative, Sue Satterthwaite, who provides technical assistance and support to counties in the region, and department quality control reviewers Jim Brines, Joan Irwin, and Ken Wilhelmi also received recognition certificates.

North Dakota Food Stamp Director Arlene Dura said, "County employees, regional representatives, and quality control staff have worked hard to reduce errors. They deserve recognition for striving to ensure that people receive correct benefits."

Currently the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Stamp Program helps about 49,000 qualifying low-income North Dakotans pay for food. Almost half of the program participants are children; many others are elderly or have disabilities.

Individuals apply for the Food Stamp Program at their county social service office. If they qualify, individuals receive a special debit card, which can be used to purchase food items only.

Each month, the federally-funded program provides about \$4.8 million in benefits in North Dakota that are used to purchase food at over 400 grocers.

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