

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Department 325, Bismarck N.D. 58505-0250**

Contact: Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, 701-328-4933

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 4, 2008

**Sheridan County Social Services Receives Award**

Bismarck, N.D. –North Dakota Department of Human Services' Food Assistance Program officials recently recognized Sheridan County for improving its food stamp benefit accuracy rate the most among counties with caseloads ranging from one to 50 per month. The county shared this award with Cavalier County. State officials presented the awards during the annual Spring Showcase training and recognition event held in Mandan, N.D.

North Dakota Food Assistance Director Arlene Dura said, "This award demonstrates the county's commitment to providing accurate and timely food assistance benefits to county residents."

County employees who received the award included: Director Steve Reiser, and employees Lana Kaye Ebach, Cheryl Jesz, and Diana Shull. Connie Pederson, the regional representative for the department, and Joan Irwin, the department's quality control reviewer, also received recognition certificates.

Currently the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Assistance Program (formerly known as the 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. The program also serves low-income working families.

Individuals apply for the Food Assistance 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 can be used to purchase food at over 400 grocers.

###