

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-4082
dwert@sbcounty.gov

County honored with 10 national achievement awards

Programs and services created by the County of San Bernardino received 10 2006 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties. The Board of Supervisors recognized and honored the people and departments responsible for the programs and services during today's Board of Supervisors meeting.

"I am honored to be a part of such a creative and hard-working organization," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus. "Our county has once again set an example of how to use innovation and technology to improve the services we provide to the citizens of San Bernardino County."

The NACo Achievement Awards Program recognizes counties for improving the services they deliver to the public. The awards focus on innovation and the use of technology. The county is particularly proud because only seven of California's 58 counties received Achievement Awards this year. The following are San Bernardino County's winning programs:

- **The County Administrative Office's Multi-Jurisdictional Emergency Response and Assistance Project.**

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005, the County of San Bernardino set out to provide direct assistance to a local government agency in the disaster area that was being neglected by traditional avenues of relief. The County established contact with the City of Gulfport, Mississippi, organized a team of officials from the county and five of the county's cities, and quickly organized an effort to collect and deliver items needed by Gulfport. Donated items included power tools, office furniture and equipment, surplus vehicles, and approximately \$45,000 in merchandise vouchers donated by county employees.

This effort was recently awarded the highest honor offered by the Inland Empire Chapter of the American Red Cross – the Humanitarian Award.

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- **Supervisor Paul Biane's Grant Workshop/Non-Profit Resource Seminar.**

Supervisor Paul Biane has been conducting grant-writing workshops since 2003 to teach non-profit groups how to secure funding to provide services to the people of San Bernardino County. The most recent event in November 2005 went beyond grant writing to include workshops on topics ranging from media relations to starting fund-raising campaigns. Attendees were provided with a guide to grant opportunities, and the publication is available online to organizations that did not attend the seminar. These events have helped hundreds of organizations become more effective, thereby making more services available to the people of San Bernardino County. The next workshop is scheduled for September 18.

- **Probation Department's Gang Intervention and Prevention Program.**

This program combines community-based gang supervision and suppression with community outreach and education programs. It targets schools, gang members, and juvenile detention center detainees. It has increased the number of arrests and state prison sentences. Meanwhile, intervention and prevention programs have been implemented at local schools, detention facilities, and placement facilities.

- **Human Service System's 'My Easy Desk Source'.**

This program is designed to reduce the number of discrepancies between the county's and state's Medi-Cal eligibility information. These discrepancies can result in sanctions and reduced funding for the Medi-Cal program. This easy-to-use, web-based product is used by county staff more than 8,000 times each month.

- **Human Resources' Retirement Medical Trust Fund**

This program was developed to assist retirees with the high cost of medical and dental expenses by providing them with a method to pay on a non-taxable basis for expenses not otherwise reimbursed by insurance.

- **Community Development and Housing Department's Southern California Drought Assistance Wood Utilization Loan Program.**

This program assists companies in removing dead and dying trees from our local forests and delivering them to market, helping to hasten the removal of this fire hazard from the county's mountain communities. Five loans were funded in 2004 and 2005, resulting the removal of 11,000 tons of infested timber.

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- **Department of Children's Services' Adolescent Specialized Unit.**

This program helps adolescents in group homes establish strong trusting relationships with adults with the goal of preparing them to live stable lives as they enter adulthood. This is accomplished by giving social workers the flexibility to spend more time with the children under their watch. A study conducted by Cal State San Bernardino showed the program has been effective in helping young people develop stable relationships with mentoring adults.

- **Behavioral Health Department's Assertive Community Treatment Program.**

This program is an innovative approach to mental health treatment in which mental health practitioners focus on the client's stated goals in life rather than predetermining what is best for the client. Ninety-three of the 100 clients are now living in the community with varying degrees of success. The program saves the county \$1.2 million annually by reducing hospitalizations and the used of locked facilities.

- **Arrowhead Regional Medical Center's Extension of Outpatient Pharmacy Services to County Correctional Facilities Patients.**

County jail inmates who entered the system with pre-existing medical conditions have been traditionally ineligible for medical benefits once they become jail inmates, forcing the Sheriff's Department to bear the full cost of medical treatment. Under this program, jail inmates who need acute treatment are technically under the care of ARMC, making the county eligible for reimbursement. In six months this program saved the county more than \$800,000.

- **Arrowhead Regional Medical Center's McKee Family Health Center Patient Visit Redesign.**

This program redesigned how patients are greeted and treated at the McKee Family Health Center in San Bernardino with the goal of reducing wait times at the facility, which sees about 100 patients per day. The program focuses on improving communication between staff members, who now use radio headsets to reduce the time between check-in, diagnosis, and treatment. The result has been fewer patients leaving McKee without being treated simply because they grew tired of waiting.