



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 2008

CONTACT: Assistant District Attorney, Wes Keat

PHONE: (707)268-2554

CHECK ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Hundreds of bad checks are passed in Humboldt County every year. Merchants lose thousands of dollars to bad check activity while consumers share in these losses through higher prices. Everyone bears the additional cost of law enforcement efforts and prosecution of bad check cases in Humboldt County.

The District Attorney's Office created the Check Enforcement Program in September, 2006, to combat this problem. Its function is to find and notify bad check writers and recover funds on behalf of merchants and individuals who provided goods and services but were not paid. A check writer who qualifies for the Check Enforcement Program is temporarily "diverted" from criminal prosecution, and given an opportunity to make good on the check. Chronic bad check writers pay for§ and attend a class to educate themselves in money management. Cases on check writers who fail to fully repay their victims are reviewed for possible criminal filing. This diversion opportunity, coupled with the possibility of criminal prosecution, provides restitution to victims and deters bad check writers from future offenses.

The Check Enforcement Program forms a partnership between the District Attorney's Office and the local business community while removing some of the burden bad checks place on local police. The program, authorized by California penal code §1001.60, enables the District Attorney's Office to obtain restitution for bad check victims, and seek justice in these matters, in a method that is funded by the bad check writers, instead of Humboldt County taxpayers.

CRIMINAL DIVISION

825 5TH Street
Eureka CA 95501
(707) 445-7411
(707) 445-7416 Fax

VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE

712 4th Street
Eureka Ca 95501
(707) 445-7417
(707) 445-7490 Fax

Thanks to the business community and individuals' participation, the Check Enforcement Program has received bad checks with a face value of \$108,519.00, as of April 2008. To date the Check Enforcement Program has collected and returned to businesses \$31,625.00 and provided \$11,582.00 in fees to fund the program. The program urges businesses to establish and follow a strict check acceptance policy and post a sign indicating the business participates in the Check Enforcement Program. Signs, registration forms, and check submittal forms are available by calling Check Enforcement Program Coordinator, Susan Vandermeer, at (707) 268-2587. The forms can also be accessed online at www.co.humboldt.ca.us/distatty. Anyone needing further information can visit the District Attorney's Office on the 4th floor of the Humboldt County Courthouse building, located at 825 5th Street in Eureka.