



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2009

CONTACT: Susan Vandermeer, Community Services Officer

PHONE: (707) 268-2587

CHECK ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

The District Attorney's Office created the Check Enforcement Program in September, 2006, to combat a problem local businesses face. 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 District Attorney's Office is currently prosecuting several individuals who have failed to come forward and acknowledge their bad checks. It is recommended that all Humboldt County businesses register with the Check Enforcement Program and display the sign prominently in their business, showing support for the program. The program has gained momentum and is steadily making progress in deterring bad check writers.

Collection Statistics:

2007	\$21,691
2008	\$45,593
2009 (year to date)	\$10,585

Thanks to the business community and individuals' participation, the Check Enforcement Program has received bad checks, with a face value of \$224,092.00, as of May 2009. To date, the Check Enforcement Program has collected and returned to businesses **\$77,869.00** and provided **\$20,487.00** 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 the Check Enforcement Program Coordinator 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.