NEWS RELEASE

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NEW MAGISTRATE JUDGES COMPLETE INTENSIVE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. _ Twenty-eight new Magistrate Court judges completed an intensive training program to provide them with a legal foundation for serving on the bench.

The judges attended two weeks of training in Albuquerque covering a range of issues, including judicial ethics, trial procedures, sentencing and matters related to criminal and civil cases.

Experienced magistrate judges served as faculty for the training, which is provided by the Judicial Education Center at the University of New Mexico School of Law. Under state law, the center offers education and training for judges and staff of New Mexico courts.

"The training was by far the most comprehensive and concise that we have had for new judges since I took the bench 16 years ago," said Harding County Magistrate Court Judge Karen Mitchell, who was among the presenters.

The orientation program provides judges with "what they need to know day one on the bench in magistrate court," said Mitchell.

Among those attending the orientation in late November and early December were judges who've been on the bench since their appointment by the governor but who won election for the first time this year. Judges on the magistrate court undergo training after their appointment but also must attend the next post-election orientation session.

A day after finishing the orientation, the new judges joined other magistrate court judges _ those re-elected this year _ at an annual conference that provides legal updates and training to meet continuing education requirements.

Topics at this year's conference, which was Dec. 8-10 in Albuquerque, included criminal procedure rules as well as DWI, domestic violence and tribal-state issues. The magistrates also met with justices of the New Mexico Supreme Court and were sworn into office for new terms starting Jan. 1.

The state's 67 magistrate court judges are subject to election every four years. Magistrate courts have limited jurisdiction and handle DWI cases, misdemeanors, traffic violations, civil actions up to $10,000 and hold preliminary hearings to determine probable cause on felony charges.

The 28 judges attending the orientation and the county of the magistrate court:

K. C. Rogers, Chaves County; Johnny Valdez, Cibola County; Samantha Madrid, Richard Jacquez, Beverly Singleman and Norman Osborne, Dona Ana County; D'Ann Read, Eddy County; Christopher Baca, Guadalupe County; Craig La Bree, James Brown and David Finger, Lea County; Katie Lund and Mickie Vega, Lincoln County; Kenneth Howard, McKinley County; Alexandra Naranjo, Rio Arriba County; Connie Johnston, Trudy Chase and Rena Scott, San Juan County; Christian Montano and Melanie Rivera, San Miguel County; Bill Mast, Sandoval County; Donita Sena and Donna Bevacqua-Young, Santa Fe County; Alan Brown, Sierra County; Felix Saavedra, Socorro County; Jeff Shannon, Taos County; Matt Page, Torrance County; John Chavez, Valencia County.

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ATTACHMENTS: Group photos of those who attended the orientation for new judges held Nov. 17-21 and Dec. 2-6 in Albuquerque. Photos courtesy of Rolling R Productions LLC and the New Mexico Judicial Education Center.

Cutline information for the photos:

Magistrate Group Photo 1:
Top Row, left to right: Jeff Shannon, Taos County; K.C. Rogers, Chaves County; John Chavez, Valencia County; Bill Mast, Sandoval County; Richard Jacquez, Dona Ana County.
Bottom Row, L-R: D'Ann Read, Eddy County; Katie Lund, Lincoln County; Donita Sena, Santa Fe County; Johnny Valdez, Cibola County. Photo courtesy Rolling R Productions LLC/New Mexico Judicial Education Center.

Magistrate Group Photo 2:
Top Row, left to right: Alan Brown, Sierra County; Matt Page, Torrance County; Felix Saavedra, Socorro County; Christian Montano, San Miguel County; Connie Johnston, San Juan County.
Bottom Row, L-R: Melanie Rivera, San Miguel County; Mickie Vega, Lincoln County; Craig La Bree, Lea County; Rena Scott, San Juan County. Photo courtesy Rolling R Productions LLC/New Mexico Judicial Education Center.

Magistrate Group Photo 3:
Top Row, left to right: Kenneth Howard, McKinley County; David Finger, Lea County; Alexandra Naranjo, Rio Arriba County; James Brown, Lea County; Christopher Baca, Guadalupe County.
Bottom Row, L-R: Samantha Madrid, Dona Ana County; Donna Bevacqua-Young, Santa Fe County; Trudy Chase, San Juan County; Beverly Singleman, Dona Ana County; Norman Osborne, Dona Ana County. Photo courtesy Rolling R Productions LLC/New Mexico Judicial Education Center.