

Torrance County Clerk, deputy clerk graduate from NMSU's County College

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SANTA FE – Torrance County Clerk Linda Kayser and Deputy Clerk Linda Jaramillo were among the 20 county officials from across New Mexico who received professional development certificates from New Mexico State University/New Mexico Association of County's County College during the first graduation in the program.

Certificates were presented Jan. 16 during a luncheon at the New Mexico Association of County's Mid-Winter Conference in Santa Fe.

“The goal of County College is to foster professional development in order to build stronger leaders in county government,” said Paul H. Gutierrez, vice provost of NMSU's outreach services and NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service state director. “There is a strong desire among the New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC) membership for professional development. More than 400 members have participated in workshops provided by the joint efforts of NMSU and NMAC.”

More than 400 individuals have taken County College courses since its inception in December 2004, and 365 different individuals have participated since last April. There were 152 class participants at this year's meeting, compared to 78 at the 2007 Mid-Winter Conference. To receive the certificate the participants must complete 36 units, including 12 in their specific affiliate.

“We are very proud to recognize these graduates by presenting them this professional development,” said Michael Anaya, Santa Fe County commissioner and NMAC president. “We look forward to continuing to work with NMSU in this program.”

Other recipients are Rhoda Coakley, county clerk, and Douglas Shaw, chief deputy clerk of Chaves County; Eileen M. Martinez, county clerk of Cibola County; Rayetta Trujillo, county clerk of Colfax County; Mario Trujillo, county clerk and Coni Jo Lyman, chief deputy clerk of Curry County; Melinda Hughes, county clerk, Beverly Wofford, deputy clerk, and Keith Manes, bureau of elections administrator; Sheryl Nichols, chief duty clerk, Adrianna Ortiz, deputy clerk, and Gloria Maestas, election manager of Los Alamos; Karen Smyer, county clerk, and Natalie Pacheco, chief deputy clerk of Luna County; Jacqueline C. Sloan, county clerk of McKinley County; Robyn Holmes, county clerk of Otero County; and Elaine Montano, county clerk, and Anna Martinez, election supervisor/coordinator of Taos County.

Presenting the certificates were Paul H. Gutierrez, director of NMSU's Cooperative

Extension Service, and NMAC board members president Michael Anaya, Santa Fe County commissioner, vice president Tony Atkinson, San Juan County commissioner, past president Oscar Vasquez Butler of the Doña Ana County Commission, and Paul Gutierrez, NMAC's executive director.

“With these graduates going forward and receiving continuing education it enhances their ability to be better public servants,” said NMAC executive director Paul Gutierrez.

County College, managed by New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, is a professional development certification program for county officials in New Mexico. In collaboration with New Mexico Association of Counties the program's goals are to:

- Provide education and professional development opportunities.
- Develop courses based upon county officials' needs and input.
- Offer learning experiences to enhance participants' leadership and decision-making abilities.
- Teach community leaders to build collaborative relationships and strengthen citizen participation in local government.
- Assist county government associations to meet members' professional development and training needs.
- Maximize the limited education/training funds available to staff in New Mexico counties.
- Utilize the expertise of the land grant university to bring effective educational programs to county government.

For more information regarding County College visit NMSU's Web site at <http://cahe.nmsu.edu/ces/countycollege> or call Kim Hand at (575) 646-5096.