



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Lt. Gov. Urges New Mexicans to Collect Money That's Due Them

ALBUQUERQUE—Every year at tax time New Mexicans walk away from bagfuls of money. It's money they're entitled to – hundreds of millions of dollars of it – through income tax credits and rebates. But because many low-income workers do not know about them, these credits and rebates too often go unclaimed. Even workers who do not file income tax forms because they owe no taxes may also be entitled to some credits and rebates.

That's the message Lt. Governor Diane Denish will deliver to New Mexicans at a press conference on Friday, Jan. 5. Accompanying her will be representatives of TAX HELP New Mexico, who will be on hand to talk about the free, statewide electronic tax preparation and filing service available to low-income New Mexicans and seniors over age 65.

TAX HELP NM is a program of Central New Mexico Community College (CNM). Last year those who used the free service received, on average, a \$1,600 refund on both state and federal returns – for a total of \$21 million. This year, TAX HELP NM hopes to double its workload and net more than \$42 million in refunds for New Mexico residents. The tax preparers, many of whom are CNM accounting students, are trained in low-income credits and rebates such as the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and state childcare credits.

WHAT: PRESS CONFERENCE

WHEN: 10am, Friday, January 5, 2007

WHERE: CNM's Smith Brasher Hall lobby (Yale and Coal SE), Albuquerque

WHO: Lt. Gov. Diane Denish, TAX HELP NM's Diana Matier and Robin Brule, CNM President Michael J. Glennon, Community Health Partnership's Angelica Regino (invited)

NOTE: A Spanish speaker will be available for interviews

The Lt. Gov. will also warn against the high cost of refund anticipation loans. These short-term loans (made against the value of the refund) come with high interest rates and may only shorten the wait for a refund check by one or two weeks. Tax forms filed electronically usually result in a refund within two to four weeks, and the check can be deposited directly into a bank account.

New Mexico Voices for Children is partnering with the National Women's Law Center to spread the word about these under-utilized tax breaks. NM Voices believes that fighting poverty is key to improving child health and well-being.

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