



RUIDOSO FREE PRESS

More N.M. children falling into poverty

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SANTA FE – Poverty rates for New Mexico’s youth have increased due to economic woes, as more than half of the state’s children live in poverty or in low-income households, according to an annual report from the New Mexico Voices for Children.

Details of the report by the youth advocacy organization were released Tuesday during a press conference inside the Rotunda of the State Capitol building as the Legislature opened its 30-day budget session.

According to the report, the rate of children living in single-parent families has increased from 33 percent in 2000 to 42 percent in 2010. Only three other states have higher percentages of children in single-parent homes.

The report also says that the rate of children living in poverty has increased from 26 percent in 2000 to 30 percent in 2010. About 250,800 children live in poverty or in low-income households.

“Fewer families are economically secure now and more children – especially those living in families with income below the poverty level – live in homes where employment for parents is either not full-time, not year-

round or both,” said Christine Hollis, director for New Mexico Kids Count.

The statistics were also broken down by county and school district for the 2010-11 academic year.

In Lincoln County, the rate of children living in poverty was 34 percent from 2008 to 2010, and the rate of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, or food stamps, was 12 percent from 2008 to 2010.

The rate of children in the county without health insurance was at 21 percent in 2009, while there were 2,924 children enrolled in Medicaid in 2011.

The rate of students living in poverty that attend Ruidoso Municipal Schools was 23.6 percent. For Capitan Municipal Schools, that rate was 15.3 percent.

For school districts in Carizozo, Corona and Hondo, those rates were 29 percent, 27.2 percent and 32 percent, respectively.

“After three years of deep budget cuts,” said Hollis, “New Mexico needs to be reinvesting in programs that serve children – child care, early learning, K-12 education, unemployment benefits, and other programs that help families that are struggling with the loss of income and other resources.”