

ND Child Support Program Earns Industry's Highest Awards

Governor John Hoeven announced that North Dakota's Child Support Enforcement Program has achieved a rare honor from the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA). The association has awarded the North Dakota Department of Human Services the 2008 Outstanding Program Award and its Child Support Enforcement Division Director, Mike Schwindt, the Outstanding Manager Award. A committee of peers representing public, private, and international child support enforcement organizations made the selections based on program performance.

During 2007 North Dakota received regional and national awards for its innovative program that helps non-custodial parents find work or better paying jobs, set a new collection record of \$114 million, and continued to rank among the top states on federal performance measures, according to Department Executive Director Carol K. Olson. These accomplishments were achieved during a major structural change that moved the regional enforcement units from county to state administration.

"It is unusual for a state to receive both awards, which represent the industry's highest honors," Hoeven said. "The Department of Human Services' Child Support Enforcement Division earned this recognition because of its very dedicated employees and partners who, together, do an outstanding job serving children and families and providing high quality customer service."

Olson said, "This recognition would not be possible without the efforts of parents, employers, the courts, and division employees, and their combined focus on meeting the needs of children."

NCSEA invited Mike Schwindt to attend the organization's annual conference in August in San Francisco to receive the award and to share "How We Did It," with others.

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Schwindt said, "It is both humbling and rewarding to receive this recognition because it was accomplished through the efforts of many people at the state and regional level over the years, coupled with significant legislative and department support. I appreciate the vote of confidence."

NCSEA is a nonprofit organization representing professionals and organizations within the child support community. Members include local, state, tribal, and international IV-D agencies; affiliated governmental agencies; nonprofits; corporate members; and individual professionals affiliated with the child support enforcement field.