

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 26, 2008

Contacts: Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, 701-328-4933

Human Services announces leadership program graduates

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services celebrated the graduation of the inaugural class of its new Leadership Development Program on November 25 in Bismarck. The 17 graduates were selected from across the agency to participate in the 16-month program that was designed to help them explore leadership concepts, individual leadership styles, and interpersonal traits. Programming promoted a deeper understanding of the Department's programs and services, and its strategic planning and budgeting process. Participants also learned about the legislative process.

Graduates included the following **Bismarck**-based employees: **James Fleming**, Child Support Enforcement Division; **Casey Goodhouse**, Human Resources Division; **Twyla Lee**, Executive Office; **Bill Marsh**, Fiscal Administration; **Rhonda Obrigewitch**, Fiscal Administration; **Shelly Paul**, West Central Human Service Center; **Terry Peterson**, Child Support Enforcement Division; **Lauren Sauer**, Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; **Sandy Thompson**, West Central Human Service Center; and **Susan Van Asperen**, Economic Assistance Policy Division.

Leadership program graduates from other department locations included: **Julie Baumgarn**, Lake Region Human Service Center, **Devils Lake**; **Maureen Lilleby**, formerly of Southeast Human Service Center, **Fargo**; **Ruleen McMillan**, North Dakota State Hospital, **Jamestown**; **Tammy Ness**, North Central Human Service Center, **Minot**; **Holly Pope**, North Central Human Service Center, **Minot**; **Doug Rumpza**, Southeast Human Service Center, **Fargo**; and **Randy Slavens**, Northeast Human Service Center, **Grand Forks**.

"The Department of Human Services wants to attract and retain qualified and talented staff, and we are committed to developing future leaders," said Executive Director Carol K. Olson. "This program complements other professional development efforts, and we expect our management team to look to these graduates, as well as other emerging leaders, as future resources."

An umbrella agency, the department provides health and human services to vulnerable individuals, including many children, directly and in partnership with private providers and county social service offices. The agency employs about 2,200 individuals; many are involved in direct work with clients at the regional human service centers, State Hospital, and Developmental Center.

#