



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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NEWS RELEASE

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WELD COUNTY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS UNIT WINS AWARDS

WELD COUNTY, CO – During their weekly meeting, the Weld County Board of Commissioners congratulated the Department of Human Services Public Assistance Fraud Investigations Unit on winning the 2015 Outstanding Group of the Year Award from the Colorado Welfare Fraud Council (CWFC).



Weld County Commissioners with the Department of Human Services Public Assistance Fraud Investigations Unit, winners of the 2015 Outstanding Group of the Year Award and Ted Cole Memorial Award Recipient Investigator Aleissa Thomas.

The award recognized Investigators Anne Coz, Aleissa Thomas, Brenda Valasek, Lissette Reta, Tammy Saunders, Shirley Paswaters and Mark Magnuson as a group for their impact on prevention, detection, prosecution and recovery of fraudulently obtained public assistance money within the last year.

In 2014, the group completed 419 investigations and established over \$1.3 million in wrongfully claimed public assistance money. So far in 2015, investigators have completed 177 investigations and established over \$827,000 in fraudulent claims.

Investigations Unit," said Commissioner Julie Cozad, coordinator for the Weld County Department of Human Services. "They are an extraordinary team and are dedicated to ensuring the honesty and accountability required from those receiving services."

In addition to the group award, Investigator Aleissa Thomas was recognized as the recipient of the Ted Cole Memorial Award also from the CWFC. This award recognizes an individual who demonstrates excellence in performance and enhances the general principals and goals of the CWFC. Thomas received the award for her positive contribution to newsletters, legislation, and her commitment to program integrity by providing training on "Determining True Eligibility" to investigators across the state.

"The Ted Cole Memorial Award is the most prestigious award you can receive from the Colorado Welfare Fraud Council," said Investigations Manager Mark Magnuson. "Aleissa is very passionate about her job and goes above and beyond to complete investigations."

In the past nine years, the Public Assistance Fraud Investigations Unit has won 13 awards, and Thomas has won four.



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"The investigators pursue administrative and judicial solutions to prosecute and collect back taxpayer dollars from individuals that were given public assistance and are not being honest with us," said Weld County Department of Human Services Assistance Payments Administrator John Kruse. "I am very proud of the investigators, and they deserve to be recognized for their hard work in upholding Weld County's values of program integrity and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars."

"The Investigations Unit is a significant part of Team Weld," said Commissioner Chair Barbara Kirkmeyer. "Congratulations on winning these awards, and thank you for the work you do to ensure resources go to those who truly need it."

For more information about assistance programs or to report public assistance fraud, visit the Department of Human Services page on the Weld County website at www.weldgov.com.

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