



# news

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## **Third Judicial District celebrates Dependency & Neglect Drug Court Grad** *First Court participant set to graduate Nov. 8*

TRINIDAD, Colo. – The Third Judicial District (Huerfano and Las Animas counties) will mark a milestone Thursday, when the first graduate is set to complete monitoring and treatment in the “Alternative Court Program,” a problem-solving dependency and neglect drug court.

The graduation ceremony will begin at 1 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 8, 2012, at the Las Animas County Courthouse (200 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Trinidad, CO 81082). The problem-solving court was launched in August 2011 and currently has two participants in Huerfano County and five participants in Las Animas County.

“The Alternative Court Program team is very excited to see our first participant graduate from the program,” said District Court Judge Leslie J. Gerbracht, who presides over the court docket. “Participants in this court work hard and I am confident that we are equipping them with the skills necessary to achieve successful integration back into the community and with their families.”

The mission of the Alternative Court Program is to ensure that children have a safe and nurturing environment by concurrently focusing on healthy and sober parenting, permanency planning and family reunification. This purpose is intended to change behavior through a team approach that includes intense monitoring and supervision with an added focus on parenting. This focus includes helping the parent to become emotionally, financially, and personally self-sufficient; and to develop adequate parenting and “coping” skills to be able to serve an effective parent on a day-to-day basis. In order to do this, a variety of strategies are used, including: utilizing community services; recognizing and responding to the cultural diversity of children

and parents involved in court proceedings and the environments in which they live; and treating children and families holistically.

Similar to other problem-solving courts in Colorado, the Third Judicial District Alternative Court Program is a collaborative effort among various agencies. In addition to the District Court, the core team includes the Las Animas County Department of Human Services and its legal counsel, Crossroads Treatment Center, Third Judicial District Probation Department, local attorneys representing the participants and Guardians ad Litem representing the children.

Colorado is home to more than 70 problem-solving courts operating in 19 of Colorado's 22 judicial districts. Colorado's problem-solving courts include adult and juvenile drug courts, family/dependency and neglect drug courts, DUI courts, adult and juvenile mental health courts, and veteran trauma courts.

**Editor's Note:** Any news media organizations wishing to record audio and/or video, or take still photographs, of the proceedings must receive prior approval from Judge Gerbracht, and participants will have the choice to decline to be taped or photographed. Click [here](#) for rules governing expanded media coverage, as well as an application form.