



news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 14, 2009

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Denver Drug Court celebrates National Drug Court's 20th anniversary with May 15 graduation ceremony *Court, corrections and elected officials to attend events*

DENVER – The National Association of Drug Court Professionals is celebrating 20 years of Drug Court and has designated May as National Drug Court Month. The Denver Drug Court is joining in this celebration by holding a special drug court graduation ceremony on Friday, May 15, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. in Room 275 of the Denver City and County Building.

More than 50 men and women are slated to graduate on May 15, and will bring the total number of Denver Drug Court graduates for 2009 to 216. The graduation marks a drug court participant's completion of a 12 to 24-month intensive treatment program that includes probation supervision, in-court visits (substantial judicial oversight or court review hearings) and full accountability.

“The drug court concept has proven itself a successful problem-solving strategy for drug-dependent members of the community who can be rehabilitated without incarceration,” said Denver District Court Chief Judge Larry J. Naves. “Drug courts across the country are saving lives, reuniting families and strengthening communities. We are seeing impressive results from Colorado's drug courts, which also provide criminal justice authorities a lower cost yet potentially more effective solution than incarceration.”

Denver Drug Court was originally established in 1994 as one of the first drug courts in the country. In 2007, Denver Drug Court was redesigned to become more aggressive in its approach. The court is currently absorbing more than 30 percent of the criminal filings that would have landed on a traditional district court docket, which has also greatly reduced the amount of time for the court to process a drug case.

“National Drug Court Month” is coordinated on a national level by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), which was established in 1994 to assist in the planning, implementation and operation of drug courts. What started in a Florida courtroom 20 years ago has become the nation’s most successful strategy for dealing with substance abusing offenders. The Denver Drug Court graduation is being held in concert with graduations in many of the 2,300 Drug Courts across the country.

Activities and commemorations during the month will center on the theme “Celebrating Twenty Years of Drug Court: Restoring Lives, Reuniting Families and Making Communities Safer.”