



JUDGE YAHARA LISA GUTIERREZ

65th District Court

EL PASO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
500 EAST SAN ANTONIO, SUITE 1105
EL PASO, TEXAS, 79901

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday February 14, 2011

For More Information Contact:

Josefina V. Alfsen

Phone: (915) 546-2147

Fax: (915) 543-3811

JAlfsen@epcounty.com

RIBBON CUTTING AND SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF FIRST FAMILY VIOLENCE COURT

This morning 65th District Court Judge Yahara Lisa Gutierrez presided over the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Family Violence Court, also known as the "Protective Order Court." Some of the participants in the ceremony included County Commissioner Precinct 1 Anna Perez, El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal, Philip Mullin from the Family Bar Association, and Stephanie Karr, Director of the Center Against Family Violence.

During the ceremony, Michelle Little Locke was also sworn-in as the new Associate Family Court Judge and will be presiding over this new court.

El Paso's first "Protective Order Court" is dedicated exclusively to deal with victims of domestic violence and was made possible thanks to a \$93,000 grant Judge Gutierrez received from the Office of the Governor of Texas. El Paso County Commissioners Court approved the creation of the new court on January 10, 2011 by authorizing the use of a special family violence fund to help pay for the salary of the new judge.

The idea behind "Protective Order Courts" is to provide a one stop venue for all issues involving the family during the duration of the protective order, including child support, custody of children and visitation issues. The new court will allow for the consolidation of a majority of the protective order caseload by transferring most of the cases to the new court.

The "Protective Order Court" will operate under the supervision of the 65th District Court, and will allow victims of domestic violence to have expedited access to the court system on their application for protective orders. This consolidated approach will also allow for a more efficient supervision of all protective order cases, while permitting the other family courts to dedicate more time to other types of family cases.

65th District Court Yahara Lisa Gutierrez said this new Protective Order Court is a giant step forward in helping the victims of domestic violence in El Paso County.

“I am grateful for the support of the Commissioners Court and the Governor’s Office. There must be recognition by the community that no amount of violence is acceptable in El Paso,” said Judge Gutierrez.

#