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NO. 201218

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday December 19, 2012

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**EL PASO COUNTY UNVEILS RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION
INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF
THE COUNTY**

Program will promote safer and better built housing

El Paso County Judge Verónica Escobar and State Representative Marisa Márquez today announced the implementation of a Residential Construction Inspection program in the unincorporated areas of the County. The main purpose of the program is to provide residents with information regarding the quality of residential construction prior to making a purchase by requiring builders to have the homes inspected.

Texas law does not currently give County governments general authority to implement building codes for private residential structures. As a result, individuals interested in buying homes in the unincorporated areas have been making a decision to purchase their home without really knowing the quality of the construction.

“In the last year we have seen a tremendous growth of residential construction in the unincorporated areas of the County. Projections indicate that over the next 15 years between 11,000 and 12,000 new single family homes are planned to be developed in the unincorporated areas of El Paso County” said El Paso County Judge Verónica Escobar. “By implementing this inspection program, we are giving residents an important tool that will help them make better decisions about whether to buy a property, and to protect their investment,” Escobar concluded.

State Representative Marisa Márquez, who in 2009 was instrumental in getting House Bill 2833 approved in the Texas Legislature, said the implementation of this Texas law will assist county residents in having access to safer and healthier living conditions. “With this inspection registration program, families will have information to know whether or not their new

home or construction was inspected for basic building code compliance and whether the home meets the minimum code requirements,” Márquez said.

Implementation of the Residential Construction Building Inspection program will begin on January 1, 2012, and will be run by the El Paso County Public Works Department. The program applies to builders of new residential housing (single family homes or duplexes), or builders of an addition to an existing home (if it increases the square footage or value by more than 50%) in unincorporated areas of the County.

The builder/contractor or the owner of the property will be required to provide notice of a construction project prior to beginning the project. The program also requires them to hire a third party inspector to conduct inspections during 3 different stages of the construction:

- During the foundation stage
- During the framing and mechanical system stage
- At the completion of the project.

The builder/contractor will have to submit the results of the inspections to the El Paso Public Works department. Failure to disclose the results of the inspections to El Paso County could result in sanctions, such as referral to a state agency for an enforcement action, filing of a civil lawsuit in state court, or filing of criminal charges (a class “C” misdemeanor).

The complete details of the program and required forms, both in English and Spanish, will be available on the website of the El Paso County’s Public Works Department, at <http://www.epcounty.com/publicworks>. For more information, please call (915) 546-2015.

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