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**DOZENS OF INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED DURING A 3-DAY
HOT CHECK ROUNDUP**

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal today announced the arrest of 58 individuals with outstanding warrants during a 3-day roundup that ended Thursday night. Thirty six officers from the El Paso Sheriff's Office, County Constables Precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, and investigators from the County Attorney's Office participated in the operation.

In addition to individuals arrested with Theft by Check warrants, others were arrested on other types of misdemeanor and felony warrants.

During the 3 days of the roundup, our office was able to collect \$18,248 in restitution to local merchants. That amount, along with the \$116,000 collected since the beginning of the amnesty period on March 14, 2012, brings the total collections for the amnesty program to more than \$134,000; and cleared more than 870 checks hot checks.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal explained that most victims of hot check cases are small business owners who don't have the resources to collect on the checks themselves.

"Bad checks affect everyone, because they cause merchants to increase the prices of goods and services to make up their losses. With the hot check roundups, we seek to assist merchants in recovering losses from intentionally written bad checks," Bernal said.

"We will continue to aggressively pursue those persons with outstanding hot check warrants and encourage them to pay before they are arrested," Bernal added.

"I want to thank the El Paso County Sheriff's Office for their support in organizing the roundups, particularly Sergeant John Rodriguez from the Warrants Division. Also I would like to

thank the Constables from all the Precincts and their deputies, as well as Justice of the Peace Precinct 4 Barbara Perez, who served as the evening magistrate. The combined effort of the parties involved helped make this hot check roundup a success,” Bernal concluded.

In the upcoming weeks investigators from the County Attorney's Office will continue their search for individuals with outstanding arrest warrants.

Individuals can avoid arrest by paying their outstanding hot checks as soon as possible at the following locations:

El Paso County Courthouse
500 E. San Antonio, room 503
M- F 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

El Paso County Ysleta Annex
9521 Socorro Rd., Suite A-3
M - F 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Forms of payment accepted include credit cards, money orders, cashier checks, and cash; however, those paying with cash will have to bring the exact amount.

In addition, individuals can make payments online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through "Hot Check E-pay," by visiting the El Paso County Attorney's Office web-page at <https://www.epcounty.com/hotchecks/>

For more information regarding hot check payments and balances please contact the El Paso County Attorney's Office Hot Check Unit at 546-2051.

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