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**HOT CHECK WRITERS CAN NOW PAY OUTSTANDING
AMOUNTS ONLINE**

New program will save County residents a trip to downtown El Paso

On Thursday November 25, 2009 El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal announced the launching of "Hot Check E-pay," a new service that will make it easier for County residents to pay outstanding hot checks.

The County Attorney's Office offers free hot check collection services to all county residents and businesses that have problems locating check writers. During the last decade, the Hot Check Department has received on average 14,000 checks for collection every year. During 2009 our office has received 6,560 checks. Currently the County Attorney's Office is attempting to collect 3.24 million dollars in worthless checks.

One of the obstacles hot check writers faced while trying to take care of outstanding amounts was they had to pay in person on the fifth floor of the County Courthouse. In the past, some had expressed their fear of coming to the courthouse and getting arrested before they could take care of the outstanding amounts. Other hot check writers no longer live in El Paso and, until now, were not able to pay online or over the phone.

El Paso Commissioners Court recently approved a contract that allows County departments to receive credit card payments online. As soon as the decision was taken, the County Attorney's Office started working with the IT Department to develop a secure site to receive hot check payments via internet.

El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal explained that offering free collection of hot checks is an effective way to support the local economy.

“Hot checks hurt not only the business owners, but all the consumers as well. They increase the cost of doing business and merchants usually transfer those costs to consumers by increasing prices,” Bernal said.

“We understand how important this service is for the community and that is why every day we are exploring new ways to increase hot check collections in El Paso County,” Bernal finalized.

Individuals with outstanding hot checks can make online payments with credit cards by visiting the County Attorney’s web page at www.epcounty.com/ca.

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