

Deschutes County Bad Check Program Gaining Success

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The Deschutes County District Attorney's office announced this week that the effort to reduce the number of bad check circulation in the County is gaining success. Mike Dugan, Deschutes County District Attorney, has joined with American Corrective Counseling Services (ACCS) to develop an alternative to prosecution for those who write bad checks. "It costs the citizens of Deschutes County a minimum of \$750 for the DA's office to file and prosecute each person who writes a bad check. We will continue to prosecute those who intentionally and chronically write bad checks," Dugan said, "By working with ACCS we have developed an alternative that helps bad check victims, the community and the check writer. The program seems to be working as recent bad check circulation numbers are analyzed. In June of 2006, ACCS worked with 157 bad checks writers and in July that number was reduced to 97." ACCS began working with Dugan's office in January of this year. From January through this past July there have been over 800 checks referred to the program. Bad check victims have received, at no cost to them or to Deschutes County, \$41,581 in restitution. ACCS provides a local training program to help educate check writers on strategies to avoid writing bad checks. ACCS has generated fees for victims of crime in Deschutes County in the amount of \$4,396. "Sometimes check writers don't take the time to learn how to balance their checking accounts. The ACCS program teaches basic accounting skills, helping bad check writers change their check writing habits and adopt good behavior," Dugan said. Local merchants can join the ACCS program free of charge by calling 1-800-325-3910.

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