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NEWS RELEASE

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**ADAMS COUNTY BENEFITS FROM \$2.2 MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE**

Last year, Adams County residents and businesses received \$2.2 million from Department of Health & Welfare programs that help people in need. The investment benefits every one of the county's 3,500 residents. Of Idaho's 44 counties, Adams County ranks number 34 in per capita outlay of Health & Welfare dollars.

The disbursement of state and federal tax dollars amounts to \$626 for every man, woman and child residing in Adams County. This includes citizens who may not receive a single direct service from the Department. The statewide average is \$839 per capita.

The Department distributed \$1.15 billion in 2004 statewide in Idaho communities. These funds came from Medicaid, additional payments to hospitals, Food Stamps, the Idaho Child Care Program, the Women, Infants and Children nutritional program, foster care and a variety of other assistance programs.

"This is an investment for all Adams County residents," says Health & Welfare Director Karl Kurtz. "These are tax dollars put to good use because they are used to help people become healthy and productive. This money goes to foster care for children in crisis, substance abuse treatment, child care so parents can work to support their family, and dozens of other badly needed services."

"This is as much about sustaining communities as it is investing," adds Kurtz. "By providing programs that support people, we are helping communities and their residents build the endurance and strength they need to remain vital. Everyone profits from this investment, not just those who use Department programs. This isn't just me pounding my chest. That's what community leaders tell us."

Adams County Commissioner Mike Paradis says, “(Department) programs help families make ends meet. Without Medicaid there would be a lot of pressure on the county’s indigent care program. It’s an investment because it helps drive the economy of the area.”

Last year, the Department’s Medicaid Division spent \$1.8 million on health care for residents of the county. These dollars are especially critical because Adams County does not have a hospital. Many residents must leave the county for their medical needs.

Adams County parents received \$21,000 in child care subsidy payments last year. The subsidy program helps low-income working parents and parents looking for work. The program also provides a big boost for the county’s seven child care providers who participate in the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP).

“Another example is Food Stamp payments,” says Kurtz, “It is a direct investment in neighborhood grocery stores which use that money to hire clerks and meat cutters. Adams County residents received \$189,000 in Food Stamps. Local grocers redeemed \$197,400 worth, including Food Stamps issued in other counties. This means families get the food they need, and the merchant creates jobs in the community.”

The family-owned Council Valley Market, which employs 10 people, redeemed \$14,700. That helps keep the secondary help — the box boys — on the payroll.

Department spending helps people, and it has an upside for business, according to Idaho economist John Church. “This is not lost money. The spending is an investment. It goes back into the economy. If an employer came to town and spent this much money we would be elated. People need to remember that a big chunk of this is federal money which is a huge return on our taxes. This comes back and helps stimulate the economy and it helps people.”

Kurtz says, “Not only is the Department money a human investment, but it creates jobs and maintains healthy businesses. These dollars recycle numerous times in each community and help us keep the high quality of life we enjoy in Idaho. This is a wise use of taxpayer dollars because the money spent in the community often stays in the community. The dollars are spent again and again to help create jobs and an infrastructure that provides healthy and safe neighborhoods.”

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(Editors: Interviews are available on request. Contact Ross Mason at 334-0693 or Regional Director Randy Woods at 455-7102 for more information.)

**More information on Health & Welfare's
investment in every Idaho County
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<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov>**