

For Immediate Release

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**United Way Campaign Reaches Record High, Again**  
\$603,875 Generated for Local Causes

February 24, 2006 Durango – United Way of Southwest Colorado announced today that for the second year in a row it has raised the highest amount ever in its 33-year history. United Way reported raising \$603,875 in its 2005 campaign. Seventy two programs for people in need in the five counties of Southwest Colorado will be supported with the donations. The 2005 campaign goal was \$600,000.

The announcement was made at United Way’s annual Campaign Celebration and Awards Luncheon held at the Doubletree Hotel. Twenty seven awards were presented to local businesses for their support before the final fundraising total was revealed. BP sponsored the event.

Brad Bartel, President of Fort Lewis College and United Way’s campaign chair for La Plata and San Juan Counties, said “This is one of the most altruistic communities I’ve ever had the opportunity to work with, and I’ve lived in lots of places. Today’s announcement proves that to be true. Thank you to everyone who was able to lend their support.”

Gina Picolli, United Way’s outgoing chair of the board of directors, commented “I’m so proud of our community for responding to our appeals for donations. While we conduct fundraising events and a direct mail appeal, over 70% of donations to our campaign come from the workers of Southwest Colorado. When an employee pledges a small amount per paycheck and we combine that with thousands of others, we can solve problems that do exist in our community through the work of our Community Partner Agencies.”

United Way’s Community Investment Committees in all five counties of Southwest Colorado determined in advance of the annual fundraising drive where donations would be invested. Each committee conducted a review of its local needs, interviewed local nonprofit organizations that are addressing those needs, and then submitted funding recommendations to United Way’s board of directors that ultimately formed the campaign goal.

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“The success of the fundraising drive allows United Way to fully fund each of the 72 funding recommendations that our Community Investment Committee made last summer,” said Tim Walsworth, United Way’s President and CEO. “Local programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters, Southwest Safehouse, senior meal programs in Bayfield and Vallecito, Seeds of Learning in Pagosa Springs, and the Piñon Project in Cortez will be supported in 2006 with these donations. I’m so proud that we achieved our goal, but what is more important is how we invest those generous donations. We owe it to our donors to put them to their best use, and we’ll do that through our relationships with these incredible local programs.”

Montezuma and Dolores Counties’ campaign was chaired by Chuck Bill of Southwest Memorial Hospital and guided by United Way staff member Toledo Cluff. The two-county area beat its local goal of \$87,000 by raising \$87,326.

Archuleta County’s campaign was chaired by Susan and Mike Neder and guided by United Way staff person Stacia Kemp. The area beat its goal of \$66,000 by raising \$66,221.

La Plata and San Juan Counties’ goal was \$447,000. A total of \$450,328 was raised.

The 2005 total represents a 7.5% increase over 2004’s record breaking campaign. One hundred and sixty three businesses across the region supported the campaign, along with 209 individuals. Eight fundraising events, from two golf tournaments to two radiothons to a raffle of Denver Bronco tickets also generated funds.

“Despite some talk of donor fatigue during our campaign with all the fundraising that occurred for tsunami relief early in 2005 and for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita response later in the year, our generous community came through again for United Way. Our Pace Setter accounts, businesses that run their drive early to get us off to a good start, contributed over \$100,000,” said Walsworth.

The awards presented to top supporters were for businesses and individuals in La Plata and San Juan Counties. Awards will be given in separate events in Archuleta County and Montezuma and Dolores Counties in March.

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United Way has served Southwest Colorado since 1972. To learn more, call 247-9444 or visit [www.unitedway-swco.org](http://www.unitedway-swco.org)