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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MADERA COUNTY TO APPLY FOR NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD TO RECOGNIZE 311 CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER**

**MADERA, Calif.** – The County of Madera will apply for a national achievement award to recognize the development and implementation of its 311 Customer Service Center program, which provides citizens one phone number to dial for non-emergency County assistance.

The national achievement award program is presented by the National Association of Counties (NACo). The deadline for application submittal is April 1, 2016. For 46 years, NACo has recognized innovative county programs that modernize county government and increase services to residents. The 311 Customer Service Center program does just that.

This multifaceted program allows anyone within Madera County's boundaries to not only dial 311 to reach a live person, but utilize online tools to submit requests, report issues, and monitor the status of those requests. Further, the program provides internal support to County staff who can submit, monitor, and manage requests for personnel requisitions, facility services, and legal services.

The 311 Customer Service Center program went live on August 1, 2012. Since then, the Center has answered 220,315 calls. The program also has received 11,810 external requests for assistance (of which 47 percent were submitted directly by constituents), and 9,469 internal requests. There are three full-time employees assigned to the Call Center.

"It has always been a pet peeve of mine to deal with an automated answering service so reaching a live person every time I call the County is a great experience," said Jay Mahil, a local businessman

and County resident. “The County has made it very convenient to call one number to address my needs instead of having to leave a message or being routed from department to department.”



Left: Staff in the Madera County 311 Customer Service Center respond to citizen calls.

Right: 311 Staff (from Left to Right) Ignacio Magos, Dienel Iniquez, Cindy Barrientos, Jennipher Garcia, Nicole Desmond.



The program was developed due to reduced staffing levels following the fiscal crisis, and an independent, county-wide efficiency assessment that helped the County identify several million in cost cutting recommendations to increase efficiency and improve service levels.

The County was able to reorganize existing staff who previously handled revenue collection activities into the Call Center. These staff members already had the necessary skill-set to provide excellent customer service. Supervision of the new 311 Customer Service Center was also provided by existing staff within the County's Administrative Office.

“With the reduction in staff, the Call Center was able to fill a service gap by answering and filtering calls for departments that were short-staffed,” said Eric Fleming, County Administrative Officer. “The online tools have streamlined both citizen and internal requests so that departments can respond timely to both external and internal customers.”

To inform the community of 311, the County installed 311 signage at strategic locations countywide, and continues to provide outreach to educate residents on the benefits of this new service.

The County encourages citizens to call 311 and visit <http://www.madco311.com/> to contact staff, submit requests, and report issues.



Pictured above is one of the County's 311 signs located on Avenue 9.