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PRESS RELEASE

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**FABENS RESIDENTS CAN TRADE OLD MERCURY
THERMOMETERS FOR NEW DIGITAL ONES**

On Friday, May 15, 2009, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Fabens residents can bring mercury fever thermometers to the Thomason CARES clinic and exchange them for digital thermometers, free of charge.

This thermometer exchange is intended both to remove mercury from the municipal waste stream and to educate Fabens residents about the potential hazards posed by mercury found in thermometers and many other common household products.

The Fabens mercury thermometer exchange is sponsored in part by El Paso County Attorney's Office, Thomason CARES in Fabens, and Medlife.

“Fever thermometers are a common source of mercury in municipal trash. With thermometer exchanges like this one in Fabens, we can reduce the amount of mercury in the waste stream, and at the same time educate consumers about the need to be conscious and careful about the products they buy and how they dispose of them,” said Assistant County Attorney Cristina Viesca-Santos.

Exposure to mercury may cause a variety of health effects in people, and children and developing fetuses are particularly sensitive to its hazards. Depending on the level of exposure, mercury can cause damage to the nervous system, the brain, the kidneys, the liver and the immune system.

In Texas and elsewhere around the country, mercury is released to the environment in the emissions of coal-fired power plants, and municipal and medical waste incinerators. Many

common household products – such as thermostats, fluorescent light bulbs, switches and button batteries – contain mercury. When these products are incinerated, land filled or broken, the mercury can pollute the environment. All of these products can – and should – be disposed of properly at household hazardous waste collections or by calling a licensed hazardous waste disposal company.

But unfortunately, many mercury-containing products currently are tossed out with the household trash and end up in incinerators or landfills. Unlike many other pollutants, mercury does not degrade into something harmless once it mixes with the air or water. In fact, mercury persists in the environment for long periods of time, and bio-accumulates in animals and humans, meaning its concentrations and harmful effects only increase as it moves up the food chain. For additional information about mercury safety measures, please visit www.noharm.org

For more information about the Fabens mercury thermometer exchange, contact the Cristina Viesca-Santos at (915) 546-2081.

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WHO: County Attorney's Office and Thomason Hospital

WHAT: Mercury Thermometer Exchange Event

WHEN: Friday May 15, 2009 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

**WHERE: Thomason CARES Clinic in Fabens
101 Potasio Street**

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