Local prosecutors gain 4 of 5 State Bar awards

By Leslie Hoffman
Tribune reporter

Four local prosecutors have been recognized by the State Bar of New Mexico and the District Attorney's Association for their work in Bernalillo County.

The awards were handed out at the association's annual awards banquet last month. District Attorney Jeff Romero made a formal announcement this week.

"This is just an example of what this office has been doing, and we will continue to represent the public in the fight against crime," Romero said Tuesday.

Of the five annual awards handed out at the banquet, the 2nd Judicial District Attorney's Office took home four. The fifth went to Las Cruces prosecutors.

Senior Trial Prosecutor Paul Spiers, who has been with the District Attorney's Office about 12 years, was named 1999 Prosecutor of the Year.

Spiers is an assistant supervisor in the Violent Crimes Division and has led the state's case against several high-profile defendants, including Diazien Hossencofft. Hossencofft and his girlfriend have been accused of kidnapping and killing his estranged wife, Girly Hossencofft, who disappeared last September. Her body has not been found.

Assistant District Attorney Neal Speer received the Service to the Community Prosecutor award for his work in the Gang Prosecutions Division.

Deputy District Attorney Elliott Guttman, who has been a local prosecutor for nearly 20 years, was named the Law Enforcement Support Prosecutor.

And Assistant District Attorney Christopher Sturgess, who joined the office last January, received the New Prosecutor of the Year award for his work in the Metro Court Division.

Award nominations were taken from bar members. Recipients were selected by the bar's nine-member Prosecutor Section board.