

LATINO AMERICAN COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED IN 1972 | FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER | WWW.LATINOAC.NEBRASKA.GOV



Mission Statement: The mission of the Latino - American Commission is to serve as a voice in the Nebraska State Government for Latino Americans/ Latinos.

Vision Statement: The vision of the Latino - American Commission is to empower the Latino Community through a pro-active approach to issues that affect their access to educational, political, economical and social opportunities in Nebraska.

2014 General Election Results

The results of the Nov. 4, 2014 state general election are as follows:

The new Governor and Lt. Governor are Pete Ricketts and Mike Foley. The Governor and Lt. Governor serve four-year terms and are limited to two consecutive terms. However, there is no limit on the total number of terms they may serve.

The results for the state government are:

- State Treasurer: Don Stenberg;
- Attorney General: Doug Peterson;
- State Auditor: Charlie Janssen; and
- John A. Gale was re-elected as Secretary of State.

State representatives in Congress are:

- District 1: Jeff Fortenberry - re-elected;
- District 2: Brad Ashford - replaces Lee Terry; and
- District 3: Adrian Smith - re-elected.

District 1 is most of the Eastern portion of the state including Lincoln, Norfolk and Fremont. District 2 includes Douglas County, the entire Omaha metro area, and part of Sarpy County. District 3 encompasses the western three-fourths of Nebraska including Grand Island, North Platte, Hastings, Scottsbluff and Lexington.

New state representation in the United States Senate are:

- Ben Sasse: replaces Mike Johanns.

Results for Nebraska Legislature:

- District 2: Bill Kintner - re-elected;
- District 3: Tommy Garrett - elected after Governor appointment;
- District 4: Robert "Bob" Hilkemann - replaces Pete Pirsch;
- District 6: Joni Craighead - replaces John Nelson;
- District 8: Burke J. Harr - re-elected;
- District 10: Bob Krist - re-elected;
- District 12: Merv Riepe - replaces Steve Lathrop;
- District 14: Jim Smith - re-elected;
- District 16: Lydia Brasch - re-elected;
- District 18: Brett Lindstrom - replaces Scott Lautenbaugh;
- District 20: John S. McCollister - replaces Brad Ashford;

- District 22: Paul Schumacher - re-elected;
- District 24: Mark A. Kolterman - replaces Greg Adams;
- District 26: Matt Hansen - replaces Amanda McGill;
- District 28: Patty Pansing Brooks - replaces Bill Avery;
- District 30: Roy Baker - replaces Norm Wallman;
- District 32: Laura Ebke - replaces Russ Karpisek;
- District 34: Curt Friesen - replaces Annette Dubas;
- District 36: Matt Williams - replaces John Wightman;
- District 38: John L. Kuehn - replaces Tom Carlson;
- District 40: Tyson Rope Larson - re-elected;
- District 42: Michael Groene - replaces Tom Hansen;
- District 44: Dan Hughes - replaces Mark Christensen;
- District 46: Adam Morfeld - replaces Danielle Conrad; and
- District 48: John P. Stinner Sr. - replaces John Harms.

The Nebraska Senators serve four-year terms and are limited to two consecutive terms.

To learn more information specific to your district, please visit the Secretary of State's website at: www.sos.ne.gov/elec/voter_info.html

The next large election will take place in 2016 with the Presidential election. In this election, a new President and Vice-President will be elected. The current President will not seek re-election due to term limits.

In addition, all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives will also be up for re-election, that includes all three Nebraska Congressional seats.

If a State Senator seat is vacated before their term is up, the Governor will appoint a new Senator to fill their position.

Current Governor Heineman is seeking Senator applicants for District 15 (Dodge County) as Senator Charlie Janssen is resigning to become the new State Auditor.

To apply for the District 15 seat, please visit and apply at: <http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/>



Lazaro Arturo Spindola
NLAC Executive Director

A Message from the Executive Director

Hello,

We are nearing the end of 2014 and we are ready for 2015, and everything it will bring.

The November mid-term elections will bring 17 new Senators, a new Governor, a new Attorney General, State Auditor, and others. The 2015 Legislative Session begins in early January, and we will have new leaders in the state government. We are gearing up for the upcoming Session, and are working with Senators and organizations on Bills and issues that concern the Latino population. We will be following Bill introductions and hearings closely, and will be participating. It is the responsibility of every Latino in Nebraska to learn about issues affecting the community, communicate those issues to their state representative, and testify whenever the Bills come to a hearing. You can follow our social media accounts (www.Facebook.com/NLACCommission and Twitter at @NLACCommission) for updates.

Is there a particular issue or concern that you have, please let us know. The more information we receive, the better.

We will also have big announcement coming for 2015, among them, internship opportunities, published research on the history of the Commission courtesy of UNK, and plans for a larger Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration. We are also organizing Human Trafficking Awareness events and opportunities, some as early as January 2015. As I said, big announcements!

Feliz Navidad y Feliz Año Nuevo!

Dr. Arturo Spindola
NLAC Executive Director

Latino American Commission Commissioners

- Chabella Guzman (Chair)**
- Ramon Otero (Vice Chair)**
- Norma de la O (Secretary)**
- Jack Gutierrez**
- Gisella Muñoz**
- Aida Olivas**
- Leticia Rodriguez**
- Adrian Sanchez**
- Jose Santos**

NLAC Staff

- Lazaro Arturo Spindola. M.D.**
Executive Director
- Jasel Cantu**
Public Information Officer
- Dora Lima**
Staff Assistant

Visit Our Website:
www.latinoac.nebraska.gov

NLAC Board of Directors



The NLAC Board of Directors held the Election of Officers at the Quarterly Meeting on Aug. 23, 2014. The new officers are, from left to right: (Sitting) Secretary Norma de la O of South Sioux City, Chairperson Chabella Guzman of Scottsbluff and Vice-Chair Ramon Otero of Lexington. The Commissioners (Standing) from left to right, are Jack Gutierrez of Columbus, Gisella Munoz of Bellevue, Leticia Rodriguez of Madison, Aida Olivas of Hastings, Adrian Sanchez of Lincoln and Jose Santos of Gretna.

2014 Nebraska Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration

The 8th Annual Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration took place on Friday, October 10, at the Capitol Building in Lincoln, Neb.

The Commemoration, hosted by the Nebraska Latino American Commission (NLAC) was sponsored by McDonald's, Southeast Community College, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo and Humanities Nebraska, began with a ceremony in the Capitol second floor Rotunda at 3:30 p.m.

The event observes Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month in Nebraska and recognizes students and community leaders for their role in helping the Latino population.

Chabella Guzman, Chair of the NLAC Board of Directors, gave the Welcome to the audience of 140 people. The new Consul of Mexico, Guadalupe Sanchez, provided Opening Remarks in both English and Spanish recommending a better understanding between the two nations and encouraging residents from both countries to be bilingual in one another's language.

Carl Eskridge, Lincoln City Council Chair, presented the Proclamation signed by Governor Dave Heineman to recognize Hispanic Heritage Month.

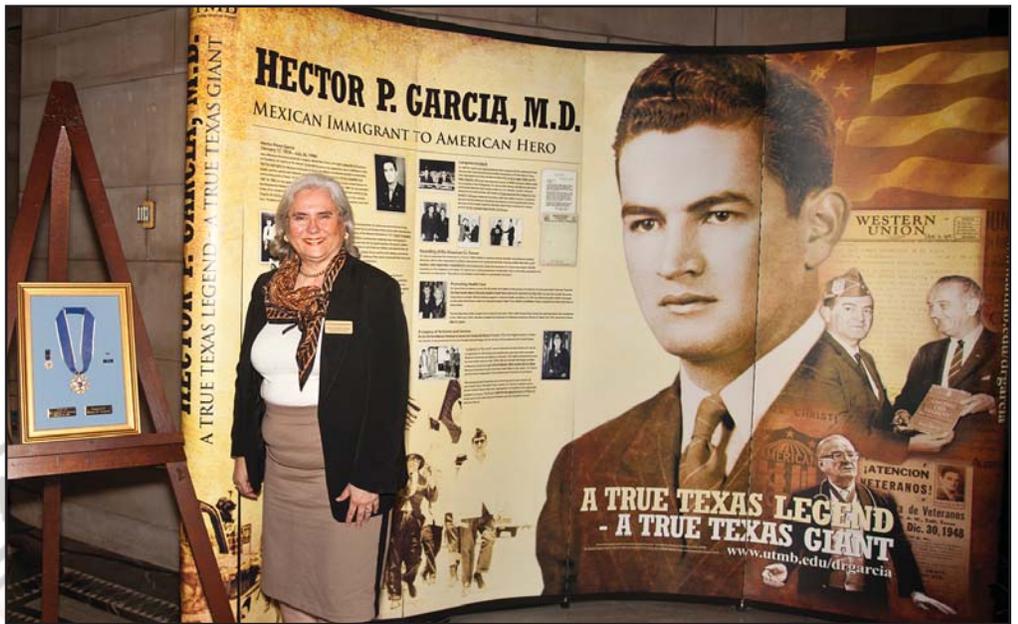
Six Nebraska students, two organizations and two community leaders were honored at this year's Commemoration. NLAC Director Dr. Lazaro Spindola served as emcee.

The Keynote Speaker was Cecilia Garcia-Akers, daughter of Latino civil rights leader Dr. Hector P. Garcia and founder of the Hector P. Garcia Memorial Foundation. Dr. Garcia was a leader in civil and veterans rights, and the only nationally recognized Latino rights leader with a tie to Nebraska. Dr. Garcia completed his medical residency at Creighton University in Omaha after he was not accepted to any medical schools in Texas due to being a Mexican-American.

After World War II, he began his lifetime career in public service including founding the American GI Forum, a national organization for veterans and veteran rights. Dr. Garcia was instrumental in repealing the poll tax, publicizing the working conditions of laborers and bringing awareness to discrimination among Latinos from the 1940s until his death in 1996. He was the first Mexican-American to be appointed ambassador to the United Nations and the first Mexican-American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"To honor my father: finish your education, be respectful to others, register to vote and go vote," she said. Garcia-Akers received a standing ovation from the audience of students and community members.

This year was the third Commemoration where award recipients were nominated by the public. Guzman presented the awards to the four



Cecilia Garcia-Akers with her father's Presidential Medal of Freedom and exhibit at the Capitol.

recipients: Candida Kraska, a Spanish teacher at Millard West High School, has promoted Latino culture and heritage with her students, staff and community including founding a student organization, was given the Inspiration Award. Ismael Valadez, a community activist from South Sioux City, was awarded the Humanitarian Award for having spent years giving back to the community and helping Latino youth.

The Event Award was given to the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln for their Dia de los Muertos Family Day event that is family-friendly, educational and open to the public. The non-profit, OneWorld Health Community Center of Omaha, was granted the Organization Award for providing health care, dental care, childcare and English classes to thousands of community members for the past several decades.

The Commemoration concluded with the recognition of the winners of the Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest, which was open to all students in grades 6 to 12. The essays were judged by a blind jury of 13 teachers, businessmen, and community leaders from across the state.

As a theme, students were asked to select one of two quotes by Latino leaders Jaime Escalante and Frida Kahlo and share their opinion on the quote. The first place winners read their essay to the audience.

Out of nearly 260 entries, the winners in the high school division were, from first through third place: Helen Guadalupe Martinez of Harry A. Burke High School in Omaha, Maria Ruiz of Lexington High School, and Nikki Yablonski also of Harry A. Burke High School.

In the middle school division, the winners were, from first through third place: Jacquelin Grado of Schuyler Middle School, Alexis Chytill of Morton Magnet Middle School in Omaha and Laura Liu of Brownell-Talbot Middle School of Omaha.

Hispanic Heritage Month Essay First Place Winners

Frida Kahlo's words have influenced me in accepting myself for who I am and where I come from. Digging back through my Hispanic roots I've come to see that my heritage and culture has helped develop the United States of what it is today, a melting pot of different cultures and ideas building one nation as a whole.

What would the U.S. be without Hispanic diffusion? Will it still function? My heritage and culture has shaped me to the strong independent person I am today.

Growing up, my first few years of school weren't that great; I attended a school that had little to no diversity. Struggling to adjust myself in an environment that only spoke of my second language has left me with an anxious desire for new and interesting things. Anxious to experience all that is to come. Being the only Hispanic in many of my Honor and A.P. classes I've come to see that our society has had a great impact on our learning. With the current use of social media many struggle to focus on coursework.

Today, many Latinos fail to see the success that education can bring to us, and worry more about the stereotypes that are shared about our heritage.

It disappoints me to see a class with no diversity. Our greatest developments are built through a wide range of ideas. But even to this day, racism is present. Attending classes like these have made me a strong individual. When I applied for these higher level classes I realized none of my Hispanic friends were joining in, I was afraid of not fitting in. It was difficult at first as I didn't have the confidence and courage to speak up for myself. But over time I cared less about it and more on the education I was gaining, now I attend class with no worries.

I am proud to be a Latina attending these classes, as it has helped me ride against the stereotypical topic of A.P. classes only being for "white people".

I'm glad to see more and more Hispanics in my community, I feel more communication and involvement taking place. Although I was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, my Mexican heritage hasn't left me. I enjoy speaking and reading in my mother's tongue, one's culture is something that cannot be stolen, but gained. Yes, I know I am different but so is everybody else.

Frida Kahlo was a great woman who faced many challenges and rode against the stereotypical statements for Hispanic women. Being a creative and successful artist she has inspired many other women to be independent and strong in what they do. Frida has made me realize that this Month isn't only about the success and contributions us Hispanics had on the States, but to realize that roots and struggles to reach this stage. It was a struggle to be accepted in the States and still is.

Hispanic Heritage Month is something we should all celebrate, not just us Latinos, but to all people.

Helen Guadalupe Martinez
12th Grade, Burke High School, Omaha, Neb.

I, Jacquelin Grado, have decided to write my essay on Jaime Escalante's quote. This quote is amazing. To me, this quote means, no matter what, don't let anybody bring you down. My dream job is to be a Veterinarian when I become older. I can't let anybody let me feel discouraged for choosing this type of job.

If someone tells me, "Your dream is too hard to achieve." Then I'll say, "That's the point of having a dream, you have to work hard for it." I will have to work hard for something I want. Everybody has to. If you aren't working hard, then what are you achieving? Nothing, that's what.

No one should ever say what and what not to do. For an example, some kids say, "Asking the teacher questions isn't cool." When I hear kids say this, it annoys me. Asking the teacher is going to help you pass the test, the assignments, the grades and your school year in general. While "the cool kids" repeat the same grade over and over again, because asking questions is "not cool".

You also have to believe in yourself. How are you going to achieve your goals when you think to yourself, "You aren't good enough."? You have to believe in yourself. Yes, you will make mistakes every now and then, but you can't let that stop you from achieving your goals. You have to try your hardest to keep all the negative thoughts away.

The question I chose to answer was, "What do Frida's or Jaime's words mean to you and have they influenced your opinion on your opinion of Hispanic Heritage Month?" The answer is, yes, Jaime's words have affected me. His words told me to not take no for an answer.

The next part of the question was if Jaime's words influenced my opinion of Hispanic Heritage Month, and the answer is, yes, because it has told me to be happy with myself. Thank you for reading my paper on the 2014 Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest.

Jacquelin Grado, 7th Grade, Schuyler Middle School, Schuyler, Neb.



The Essay Contest Winners (Above Left) Helen Guadalupe Martinez and Maria Ruiz (Right). (Above Right, from left to right) Alexis Chytil and Laura Liu (Above) Jacquelin Grado. Not pictured: Nikki Yablonski.

2014 Latino Summit in Lincoln



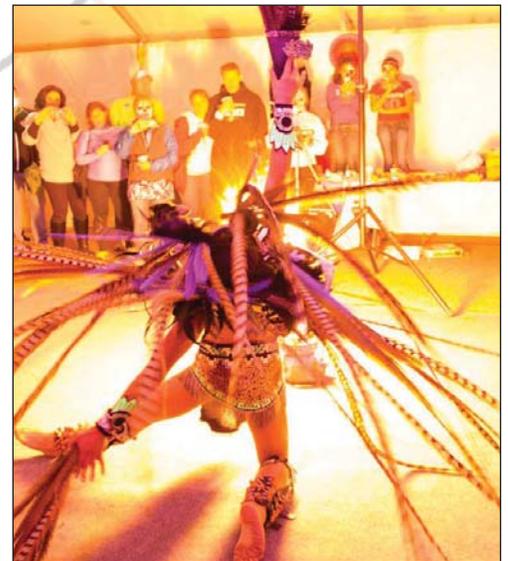
The 2014 Latino Summit took place on Monday, October 22 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. More than 400 Latino high school students attended the Summit that promotes secondary education. The Summit is organized and presented by NLAC and the Nebraska Department of Education. (Above Left) Keynote Speaker Jimmy Cabrera gave prizes and a lesson to a student from the audience after she correctly answered his question of naming the last five American presidents. The prizes: A Husker T-shirt, a backpack, two bags of candy, a book, and twenty dollars. The lesson: You will be rewarded for speaking up and sharing your knowledge. (Above and Left) Eighty students attended a breakout session on how to enter the medical field, entitled "Could Medicine Be For Me? Si Se Puede!" with NLAC Director Dr. Arturo Spindola, Dr. Horacio Alvarez, Dr. Josue Gutierrez and Nurse Laura Spindola answering questions and sharing information. The Session was one of 19 offered to students. (Below Right) Four professionals, from left, Maricia Guzman, Juan Cangas, Jani Martinez and Roger Garcia answer questions and give advice during the Q&A lunch panel. Oscar Rios served as emcee. (Below Left) Students speak with a recruiter from the University of Nebraska-Omaha. UNO was one of six universities at the Summit. Students (background) also filled out forms to get on UNO's email list for scholarship updates.



2014 Day of the Dead Events in Nebraska



(Above, from left to right) Comunidad Maya Pixim performs at the Sheldon Museum on Nov. 2 for their Day of the Dead Family Day event. Cierra Allsman paints a paper mache skull for art class at St. Cecilia High School in Hastings, photo courtesy of the Hastings Tribune. 12 Lincoln Public Schools Arts & Humanities high school students created Day of the Dead inspired artwork to display at the Capitol Building. (Bottom & Bottom Right) Mariachi Luna y Sol and Omeyocan Aztec Dancers perform at Multicultural Coalition of Grand Island's Day of the Dead 5K & Fiesta on Nov. 1, courtesy of Joe Wicks & Amanda Miller. (Right) Cass Mo recites poetry at Loom Weaves Day of the Dead DREAMer Awareness in Omaha on Nov. 1. (Bottom left) Librarian Adrian Gomez Meza built an ofrenda for writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez at South Omaha Public Library. (Left) Sheldon Museum public ofrendas modeled after Guatemalan cemeteries. NLAC had ofrendas for Jennie Gutierrez & Dr. Hector Garcia. (All photos reprinted with permission from owners.)



Upcoming Events

- **Holiday: November 27, 28**
Thanksgiving Holiday
- **Holiday: December 25**
Christmas Day
- **Holiday: January 1, 2015**
New Year's Day
- **Session: January 7, 2015**
Legislative Session Begins
- **Observance: Jan. 11, 2015**
Human Trafficking Awareness Day
- **Event: January 16, 2015**
MLK Freedom Breakfast in Lincoln
- **Holiday: January 19, 2015**
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- **Meeting: February 21, 2015**
Quarterly Meeting in Lincoln

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2014 Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation



The Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation signing took place on Sept. 11, 2014 at the Capitol Building. Those in attendance were, from left to right: NLAC Public Information Officer Jasel Cantu, NLAC Commissioner Aida Olivas, NLAC Commissioner Adrian Sanchez, Governor Dave Heineman, NLAC Director Dr. Arturo Spindola, and NLAC Staff Assistant Dora Lima.

A Proclamation observing September 15 to October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month in Nebraska was signed by Governor Heineman on September 11 in the Capitol Building.

In addition to the Proclamation, through the work of the Commission, Senators Mello, Nordquist and Wightman had introduced a Resolution during the 2014 Legislative Session to the Nebraska Legislature to approve recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month in Nebraska.

The Resolution passed with unanimous votes and Hispanic Heritage Month is recognized by law in Nebraska.

The Governor's Proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Hispanic men and women have worked hard to create opportunities in the next century, overcoming barriers of language, culture, language and tradition; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic men and women play an integral role in the progress and productivity of our great state, working to fortify our communities and strengthen our families; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic soldiers have shared in the strong democratic ideals of the United States, bravely serving the nation and garnering numerous awards, including the Congressional Medal of Honor, and continuing to follow a tradition of loyal and patriotic service in the U.S. Armed Forces, and

WHEREAS, By continuing to strive for equal opportunity in the areas of employment, education, and economic development, the Hispanic population is making our Nebraska united stronger than ever, and

WHEREAS, It is important to honor and celebrate Nebraska's Hispanic people and their accomplishments and cultural contributions to society.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dave Heineman, Governor of the State of Nebraska, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the month of September 15 through October 15, 2014 as HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH.

The Proclamation and Resolution can be viewed at the NLAC office.