

LATINO AMERICAN COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED IN 1972 | WINTER 2012-13 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.

2013 Nebraska Legislative Session

The 2013 Legislative Session, January 9 to June 5, has many Bills that affect the Latino community of Nebraska.

A Bill is a proposed law that a Senator brings to a bill drafter, who works with the senator to transform the idea into the proper legal form. Bills introduced in Nebraska may contain only one subject. Bills must be introduced during the first 10 days of the legislative session, which begins each January.

Among the 2013 Bills that directly affect the Latino community are:

- LB 98 (Mello) - Change provisions relating to administrative rules;
- LB 99 (Mello) - Change provisions relating to racial profiling information;
- LB 119 (Cook) - State intent relating to appropriations for Public Health Aid;
- LB 127 (McGill) - Provide pre-registration to vote for 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds;
- LB 179 (Kintner) - Eliminate Learning Communities;
- LB 190 (Harms) - Appropriate funds for the Early Childhood Education Endowment Cash Fund;
- LB 240 (Harms) - Aid to Dependent Children over the age of 24 to count basic educational activities toward work requirements;
- LB 243 (Howard) - Redefine nurse practitioner practice;
- LB 271 (Lautenbaugh) - Change provisions relating to early voting;
- LB 332 (Harms) - Change application provisions relating to the Access College Early Scholarship Program;
- LB 355 (Larson) Change the age of majority and certain age requirements;
- LB 381 (Janssen) - Require presentation of government-issued photographic identification to vote in election;
- LB 382 (Janssen) - Change presidential elector selection and voting requirements;
- LB 518 (Janssen) - Change certain eligibility provisions of the medical assistance program;
- LB 528 (Howard) - Provide for partner treatment relating to sexually transmitted diseases;

- LB 561 (Ashford) - State findings and intent for changes to the juvenile justice system and a funding mechanism;
- LB 565 (Nelson) - Prohibit registering to vote and voting early on the same day;
- LB 577 (Campbell) - Change provisions relating to the medical assistance program;
- LB 593 (Lautenbaugh) - Adopt Charter Schools Act; and
- LB 619 (Haar) - Require instruction in sexual health education.

Each Senator is allowed to designate a Bill as a Priority Bill, which has to be selected prior to the 30th work day of the session. The legislation then focuses on these Priority Bills for debate on the floor.

As a constituent, you can express your support or opposition to a Bill by testifying at a legislative hearing. You can also e-mail or call the Senator that is your District Representative and let them know your stance on a Bill.

NLAC's Executive Director Dr. Arturo Spindola testified at several hearings for Bills including LB 98, LB 99, LB 127, LB 243, LB 381, LB 518, LB 528, LB 577 and LB 619.

To date: LB 179, LB 518, and LB 593 were indefinitely postponed. LB 271 and LB 528 advanced and was presented to the Governor on April 18, 2013. LB 382, LB 561 and LB 565 were placed on General File, which is the first stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature. LB 99, LB 243 and LB 332 advanced for Enrollment and Review Initial, a process that a bill undergoes after it is advanced from General File. LB 240 passed and is on Select File, a second stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature.

A Bill must receive a majority vote (25) to pass on to a Final Reading, or two-thirds vote (33) to pass if the Bill contains an emergency clause. During this time, the public can still show their support or opposition by telling their District Senator to support or oppose on their behalf.

If a Bill passes onto Final Reading, it is sent to the Governor for consideration, where he may sign or veto the Bill within five days. Visit www.nebraska.gov for updates.



Lazaro Arturo Spindola
NLAC Executive Director

Latino American Commission Commissioners

- Yolanda Nuncio (Chair)
- Chabella Guzman (Vice-Chair)
- Chandra Diaz DeBose (Secretary)
- Norma de la O
- Ralph Hauke, MD, FACP
- Gisella Munoz
- Ramon Otero
- Leticia Rodriguez
- Jose Santos

NLAC Staff

- Lazaro Arturo Spindola
Executive Director
- Jasel Cantu
Public Information Officer
- Dora Lima
Staff Assistant

Visit Our Website:
www.latinoac.nebraska.gov

A Message from the Executive Director

Good Morning,

The Nebraska legislature is still in session, and what a busy session 2013 has turned out to be. The Commission has testified on 10 Bills so far, and are happy with the direction they seem to be heading. While the Commission serves as a voice in the legislature, we encourage all Latinos to show their support or lack of support to a Bill that affects their interests and concerns. You can voice your opinion by calling or emailing the Senator who introduced the Bill or your district Senator. You can find the Senators' contact information on www.nebraska.gov along with information and updates on the Bill you are following.

The Bills we are focusing on for this session includes Bills on racial profiling, human trafficking, prenatal care, voting rights and education. So far, one is heading to the floor and one was killed in Committee.

Lately, we have been trying to bring the film *Bless Me, Ultima* to a theater near you. One of our mandates is to promote the culture and films are a way to promote history and culture. So far, the film will be shown at the Hastings Museum on the Cinco de Mayo weekend.

We are also planning our upcoming Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let us know. In our Spring Newsletter we will introduce our Hispanic Heritage Month Committee to you.

Follow us on twitter and Facebook for updates, and you are always welcome to contact us.

Dr. Arturo Spindola
Nebraska Latino-American Commission Director

NLAC Commissioner Receives MLK Award



NLAC Commissioner Chandra Diaz-DeBose of Lincoln was awarded the Lt. Colonel Paul Adams Education Award on Jan. 18, 2013 at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday Celebration at the Nebraska State Capitol. The Award recognizes the efforts of educators. From left to right: Commissioner Chandra Diaz-DeBose with her award, First Lady Sally Ganem and last year's winner Virginia Saporta, Lincoln High International Baccalaureate Counselor.

Nuestra Nebraska Exhibit Winners Announced

The Nebraska Latino American Commission (NLAC) invited the youth of Nebraska to participate in the Commission's first statewide youth photography exhibit in more than 10 years.

The exhibit, sponsored by Rockbrook Camera and ConAgra, is titled, "Nuestra Nebraska, My Nebraska" and was open to students of all backgrounds and ethnicities attending a school in Nebraska. The purpose was to showcase a statewide exhibit promoting Latinos while giving students an opportunity to display their work in a museum.

Three Latina students received top honors after their entries were judged by NLAC staff, UNL Art Professor Francisco Souto and Lincoln Journal Star Photo Editor Ted Kirk. All submitted photos were judged on quality and how well the images correlated with the theme of representing Nebraska Latinos in everyday life. The top placings included Grand Prize, first place, second place and third place. There are a total of 10 photos in the exhibit including the top four place winners and six of the remaining best photos.

Grand Prize winner Natalia Ceballos, 18, took her winning photo of her father, Rodolfo Ceballos, sister, Jazmin Ceballos, and mother, Maria Ramirez, on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012. A second photo Natalia submitted is also included in the exhibit.

"My sister had just found Easter eggs by herself. She was really happy so she came over to where we were all sitting down on the grass and hugged my parents," said Natalia. "The images represent Latinos in Nebraska because we celebrate the same holidays the same way, like having egg hunts on Easter. It represents Latinos well because it clarifies some of the misguided ideas that Latinos must do everything differently because we are of a different race."

Natalia is a senior at Benson High School in Omaha. Her family is originally from Michoacán, Mexico and moved to Omaha in 1993. She learned of the contest through her bilingual liaison, Mrs. Hofsommer.

"I have been in several photography classes. I am currently taking Art 6, Studio Art and Pottery 4. My goal is to attend either the University of Nebraska at Omaha or the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. I am still not sure if I am going to major in art or if it is just going to be my minor," she said.

Dayana Rodriguez, a student attending the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) and President of the Lambda Theta Nu sorority chapter at UNK, won third place for her photo taken in September 2011 of her sorority sisters picking up litter at the highway they adopted.

"I took this picture because it shows the ladies of Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc., a Latina-based sorority, working towards a better community," said Rodriguez. "To me, this depicts an accurate image of Latinos in Nebraska. When people are driving on the highway and see individuals picking up trash on the side of the road, a stereotype may

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Nuestra Nebraska, My Nebraska winning photographs. (Top) Grand Prize winning entry by Natalia Ceballos. (Middle) First Place winning photo by Karen Puentes de la Luna and (Bottom) Second Prize winning photo also by Karen Puentes de la Luna.



Represent on a Board to Help Your Community

An excellent way for Latinos and youth to help their community is to become a member on a local, county or statewide Board or Commission. By becoming a member you are voicing opinions to issues that affect the community and can help solve these issues. Board and Commission memberships are also an impressive addition to a resume, especially for college students.

There is a lack of Latino representation on many Boards and Commissions, you can help change that by volunteering to represent your community. Each Board and Commission has different eligibility requirements. If you are interested in one, please call Kathleen Dolezal at 402-471-1971 for details.

Below are the upcoming deadlines for Commission and Board member applications, please submit applications before the month is over:

May:

Dry Bean Commission
Commission on Latino-Americans
Liquor Control Commission
Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board
Violence Prevention Advocacy Council

June:

Corn Development, Utilization & Marketing Board
Environmental Quality Council
Housing and Homelessness Commission
Commission on Industrial Relations
Library Commission

Medicaid Reform Council
Nebraska Center for Nursing Board
Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force
Rural Development Commission
Wheat Development Utilization & Marketing Board
Women's Health Initiative Advocacy Council

The Governor's website states, "Your willingness to participate in state government by applying for appointment to a board or commission is appreciated. If you have questions about requirements for any of the boards or commissions listed please contact my office at 402-471-2244."

Applicants who have recently prepared a biography or resume may fax or email it to Kathleen Dolezal at:

Fax: (402) 471-6031

Email: Kathleen.dolezal@nebraska.gov

USPS Mailing Address:

Kathleen Dolezal, Staff Assistant for Boards and Commissions
Nebraska Governor's Office, State Capitol

P.O. Box 94848

Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Phone: (402) 471-1971

Fax: (402) 471-6031

The online application can be found, completed and submitted at:
http://www.governor.nebraska.gov/bc/board_comm.html

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arise on what kind of people they are. Although, some may think those individuals are obliged to do community service because they have gotten into trouble, those individuals might actually be my sorority sisters serving the community because they desire to do so."

Karen Puentes de la Luna is a student at Southeast Community College in Lincoln. All three photos Luna submitted are in the exhibit, with two winning top honors in first and second place.

Her first place photo shows her little brother playing with her baby nephew.

"I took my baby nephew out to take some pictures of him in the grass when my little brother came in and started playing with him. In my eyes there is nothing that makes me happier than seeing these two little boys laughing and playing," said Luna. "My little brother Christopher is almost like my son. The baby is my first nephew and that in itself is reason enough to love him with all my heart."

Luna's second place photo was taken on August 25, 2012, featuring her sister, Jessica, on her fifteenth birthday proudly wearing her Quinceañera gown.

"I took this picture for two main reasons, the first was because she looked absolutely stunning in her dress and the second because more

than anything she was beyond happy to have a limo," said Luna. "I was more than excited when she asked me to plan her Quinceañera and I put in my all to make it as perfect as I could. And for those of you who don't know what a Quinceañera is, it's when a girl from Latin American society transcends into a woman. It's our tradition to have a church ceremony and have parties letting the public know that our daughters, sisters, granddaughters, and cousins have come of age."

The exhibit debuted at the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln on February 1, 2013, and will travel to public venues throughout the state for several years. The exhibit will be displayed:

- State Office Building Lobby, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE, from May 1 - May 31, 2013;
- Carnegie Arts Center, 204 West 4th Street, Alliance, NE, from Aug. 19 - Sept. 29, 2013; and
- State Capitol Building, 1445 K Street, Lincoln, NE, from Oct. 7 - Oct. 18, 2013.

The goal of the NLAC exhibit can be summed up with an observation by Ceballos: "I am honored that my photos were selected because when I took these I was not really thinking that anyone outside my family would get to see them or even less likely that they would be displayed."

UNL Student Works on Hollywood Film

Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film senior Benito Sanchez, of Lincoln, Neb., had the opportunity to work on Alexander Payne's latest film, "Nebraska," last semester, working as a camera production assistant and serving as the personal assistant to Cinematographer Phedon Papamichael. The film is expected to be released late in 2013.

"I'd actually been tracking the movie for about a year because I knew Alexander Payne was going to do a new project," Sanchez said. "He's always interested me because he is from Nebraska, and I enjoy his films quite a bit. To have an Oscar-winning director make a movie about your home state, that peaks your interest."

But he almost missed out on the experience. Initially, he made calls to the production office to find out if any jobs were available, but they kept telling him to call back later. He continued to contact the production company and eventually got in contact with Factotum Deidre Backs, who finally told him she could put his resume in with everyone else's or she could get him on, pretty much guaranteed, as an intern.

"At first I wasn't sure, but then I realized if I could get a guaranteed spot on there, then I'm going to take it," Sanchez said.

Then, at the beginning of the fall semester, Backs called with bad news: the internship program had been cancelled by the studio due to legal issues, and he no longer had a spot on the film. Then, about 10 days before production was scheduled to begin on Oct. 15, Sanchez received another phone call from Backs.

"She told me the camera production assistant had to take another job and asked if I wanted to come out and interview," Sanchez said.

He attended a Husker party in Norfolk the crew was attending for the Nebraska-Ohio State game, where he had the chance to meet Payne and interview with various members of the crew.

"They took me out to the fire pit and just grilled me with questions," Sanchez said. "It was probably the most unique interview I've ever had. But they seemed to like me."

Sanchez got the job. Associate Professor of Film Rick Endacott is not surprised at Sanchez's resourcefulness.

"I think Benito represents the type of high achievers that exemplify our Film and New Media students," Endacott said. "He's always seemed to have a solid personal compass and that has led him to make opportunities for himself as a director and for his peers. Benito wants to work at a professional level and has pushed himself in his student films to meet that goal."

Sanchez felt at home on the film set. He set up the monitor for the camera and made sure batteries were charged, among other duties.

"I like to say that I was the grease in the camera department's operation. There were first, second and third assistant cameras, so there were three camera support guys there always doing camera stuff, but they couldn't be everywhere at the same time, so I had to go grab something or go get something," Sanchez said. "I was also doing Phedon's personal assistant type stuff, so I would get him coffee or tea or



Benito Sanchez on the set of "Nebraska"

water, I kept track of his bags, and since it was cold, I had to make sure he had his hats and gloves and everything like that. I just had to keep track of his things."

"Nebraska," which stars Bruce Dern and Will Forte, tells the story of a father and son road trip from Billings, Mt., to Lincoln, Neb., to claim a million dollar Publisher's Clearing House sweepstakes prize. The film was shot entirely on location and in black and white.

Sanchez said Payne's movies have a reputation for (cast and crew) feeling like a family.

"He always remembered your name, I thought was really impressive," Sanchez said. "He would greet you in the morning. I'd see the tone that he brought to set, and it just kind of infected everybody else. Everyone kept telling me that I was spoiled that this was my first feature film because I'm not going to get it as nice as this probably again ever."

One of Sanchez's best moments came on the very last day of filming when Dern gave a speech to the crew following his last shot in the film.

"During his speech he was talking and talking and talking," Sanchez said. "And then he called me out very specifically and said, 'Here's somebody who is doing something very unique—he's working on a movie, but he's still in school.' He said he'd never seen that before."

Though he intends to work professionally in film, Sanchez is not entirely clear on what the future holds for him.

"It's always a tough question for film and new media students. You're kind of forced to take what you can get [for work]," Sanchez said. "But there is also a lot of putting yourself in position to get good stuff. What I want to do is solidify my contacts, get through school, finish my thesis, continue to make movies and music videos, and then move to Los Angeles or New York and find work. I think now, especially with this experience, it will not necessarily be easy, but it might be easier."

Photograph and Article Reprinted Courtesy of Kathe Andersen, Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts E-newsletter, to read the full article visit www.newsroom.unl.edu

Pieces of Nebraskan Hispanic History

Omaha Native Becomes First Latina Miss Nebraska in 2003



Jessica Perea (above) after being crowned Miss Nebraska and (below) representing Nebraska at the Miss USA 2003 pageant. All photos republished and provided courtesy of Jessica Perea.

The following article was originally published in the Omaha World-Herald on October 27, 2002. The article is reprinted below with permission from the Omaha World-Herald.

Byline: Niz Proskocil

When she was young, Jessica Perea watched streams of blond, blue-eyed "All-American" girls parade down beauty pageant runways.

She longed to wear the sash and diamond-studded tiara but figured her chances were slim.

Her dad was Mexican, her mom was Thai. Perea didn't look like the women on stage.

"I just never thought it was a possibility," said Perea, now 22.

That changed earlier this month when she was crowned Miss Nebraska USA 2003. She is the first Latina to win the title.

Perea, a senior broadcast communication major at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, will compete in the Miss USA pageant next spring.

"I feel like it's a big responsibility on my shoulders to represent the Latino culture," said the 1999 Omaha South High graduate. "I want to be a positive influence."

Perea is enrolled in a UNO scholarship program and is a member of the university's Association of Latino American Students. She's a Cub Scout leader and active at St. Bridget Catholic Church.

After she graduates in December 2003, she wants to work as a national broadcast anchor like Katie Couric.

In the meantime, she said she's excited to return to South High to talk to students about the value of education and goal-setting.

Jessica is the daughter of Clyde and Chinda Perea of Omaha.

End of Article

Since being crowned Miss Nebraska 2003, Jessica graduated from UNO in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Relations, Advertising, and Applied Communication. In 2010, she graduated with a master's degree in Human Services and Counseling from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

She has worked as a Correspondent for WOWT-TV and as a Human Resources Counselor for the U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers. She currently resides in Texas and works as the Talent Acquisition Manager for a Web Hosting Company called Peer1.

The Commission contacted Jessica for this newsletter, she provided an update on herself:

"I now reside in San Antonio, Texas and live here with my husband, Jeremy, and I am currently pregnant with our first child. I love San Antonio and the culture but still call Nebraska home and visit often since I have family in Nebraska and Seattle...I manage and hire globally for the company from London, Miami, San Antonio to Vancouver. I look for the best and brightest to work at an awesome company where they value people. It's a very fulfilling job where I can help others-all over the world-find a career that they are passionate about. Our company offers great perks that include a beer keg in the office, video games, foosball tables, and a fun working environment."

Upcoming Events

- **Holiday: April 26**
Arbor Day
- **Event: May 1-5**
Cinco de Mayo Celebration, Omaha
- **Film: May 3, 4, 5**
Bless Me, Ultima, Hastings Museum
- **Holiday: May 5**
Cinco de Mayo
- **Holiday: May 27**
Memorial Day
- **Legislation: June 5**
Last Day of Legislative Session
- **Meeting: June 15**
NLAC Quarterly Meeting,

Contact Information

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Community Recognition

Gina Ponce (right) was honored at the Latino-American Commission Quarterly Meeting in Omaha, NE on November 10, 2012.

NLAC presented the award to Gina Ponce for her continued service supporting the Latino community. Gina is a former NLAC Commissioner and current Education and Arts Director at the Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Community Center in Omaha. Her past work with the Latino community includes being the former Director of Outreach Services at Bellevue University (1996-2009), Director of the South Omaha Scholarship Program (2000-2008), Program Manager for South Omaha Outreach at Bellevue University (2000-2004), and Executive Director of the Chicano Awareness Center (1995-2000), now known as the Latino Center of the Midlands, among other Latino outreach work.



On January 5, 45 students received their GED at a graduation ceremony held at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. The students, of various backgrounds and ages, took GED courses with supporting institutions in Lexington, Lincoln, Hastings, Norfolk, Omaha and Schuyler.

The graduates are Irene Acosta of Hastings, Carmen Cardona of Hastings, Analia Dorado of Norfolk, Rodrigo Martinez Franco of Schuyler, Miguel Angel de Loera of Hastings, Jose Marez Ochoa of Hastings, and Maria Guadalupe Landa Patino of Lexington.

The graduates from Lincoln are Norma Hernandez Avila, Alicia Carrion, Noe A. Hernandez Castaneda, Alicia Vazquez Cruz, Jose Antonio Curiel, Magaly Vazquez Diaz, Sandra Pena Dominguez, Ana Verena Garcia, Leonardo Mendez Guiza, Martin Hernandez, Raul Martel, Kenia Moron Mendez, Claudia Ponce, Lilia Reyes, Maria Cecilia Sandoval and Mayelin Villalobos.

The graduates from Omaha are Maria de la Luz Alvarado, Ladislao Benitez, Daniel Alberto Castañeda, Cleivy Cruz, Héctor Diaz, Edwin Arturo Garcia, Maria Guadalupe Godínez, Luis Guzman, Sandra Hernandez, Sonia Castro Hernandez, Maria Alvarado Herrera, Adriana P. Macossay Jiménez, Víctor Martínez Leon, Julia Mora, Evangelina Centeno Nava, Marcos Ramirez, Vanessa Ramos, Esteban Rodriguez, Gabriela Rodriguez, Walter Peraza, Nora Toro Vallin and Sabino Vázquez.