

LATINO AMERICAN COMMISSION

ESTABLISHED IN 1972 | WINTER 2014-15 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.

2015 Nebraska Legislative Session

The 2015 Legislative Session is from January 7 to June 5. The Legislative Bills listed below are a few NLAC has been following, several that we have testified on (LB 623, LB 111, etc.) and some that we have directly worked on (LB 294, etc.):

- LB 24 (Krist) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Capitol Commission;
- LB 28 (Krist) Adopt the Radon Resistant New Construction Act;
- LB 36 (Bolz) Adopt the Community College Gap Assistance Program Act;
- LB 50 (Scheer) Change provisions relating to Medicaid covered services;
- LB 77 (Nordquist) Require a Medicaid state plan amendment for family planning services and state intent relating to appropriations for the Every Woman Matters program;
- LB 82 (Cook) Appropriate funds in support of dental services;
- LB 84 (Davis) Permit a public body to use telephone conferencing or video conferencing for public meetings;
- LB 98 (Bolz) State intent regarding appropriations for tobacco use prevention control;
- LB 107 (Crawford) Eliminate integrated practice agreements and provide for transition-to-practice agreements for nurse practitioners;
- LB 108 (Crawford) Appropriate funds to the University of Nebraska to fund behavioral health internships;
- LB 111 (Larson) Require identification to vote;
- LB 113 (Larson) Provide a co-payment for correctional inmates' health care services;
- LB 121 (Schumacher) Require voter identification and secret ballot envelopes;
- LB 125 (Nordquist) Create a fund relating to health care homes for the medically underserved;
- LB 147 (Crawford) Change provisions relating to asset limitations for public assistance;
- LB 182 (Haar) Create the School Funding & Educational Outcomes Review Committee;
- LB 196 (Campbell) Change provisions of the Rural Health Systems and Professional Incentive Act;
- LB 224 (Harr) Provide and change restrictions relating to electioneering;
- LB 227 (Hansen) Change provisions relating to educational bridge programs;
- LB 232 (Nordquist) Adopt the College Choice Grant Program Act;
- LB 233 (Howard) Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services;
- LB 243 (Bolz) Create a pilot project relating to family finding services;
- LB 294 (Scheer) Adopt the Human Trafficking Victims Civil Remedy Act and change and adopt provisions relating to service of process, sexual assault, human trafficking, etc.;
- LB 343 (Kolowski) Provide funding for schools offering certain programs and courses as prescribed;
- LB 379 (Bolz) Adopt the Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant Program Act;
- LB 380 (Morfeld) Create and provide duties for the Higher Education Affordability Commission;
- LB 382 (Cook) Change provisions of the Diploma of High School Equivalency Assistance Act and state intent relating to certain transfers;
- LB 383 (Hansen) Permit registered voters moving within Nebraska without re-registering to vote provisionally;
- LB 470 (Hansen) Provide an income tax credit for caregivers;
- LB 472 (Campbell) Adopt the Medicaid Redesign Act;
- LB 494 (Nordquist) Change minimum wage for persons compensated by way of gratuities;
- LB 519 (Sullivan) Provide for school and student aid, grants, and assistance as prescribed;
- LB 530 (Sullivan) Provide a duty for Student Achievement Coordinator;
- LB 572 (Davis) Provide duties for the state school security director relating to cyberbullying and digital citizenship issues; and
- LB 623 (Nordquist) Provide for issuance of motor vehicle operators' licenses and state ID cards to persons with lawful status.

You can ask your senator to support or oppose a bill. Visit www.nebraska.gov to find your senator and their contact information.

INSIDE

**Meet NLAC Commissioner
Maria Valentin**

Page 3

**Two Exhibits Share Latino
Heritage & Artwork**

Page 5

**10 Students Graduate
with their GED**

Page 7



Lazaro 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**
- Maria Valentin**

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

A Message from the Executive Director

We are at the mid-point of the 2015 Nebraska legislative session. There have been many legislative bills that did not advance, are currently stalled, or are just waiting to be debated on the legislative floor.

One such bill is LB 623 that would allow Deferred Action (DACA) recipients to receive their driver's license. Nebraska is currently the only state that does not allow grant this. There were many supporters at the hearing with several organizations including ourselves present. The hearing with the Transportation Committee had many students testify and share their struggles. I am proud to say that we were one of several organizations that brought students to testify. There were only two opponents. Sadly, this bill is currently stalled in Committee. It has been chosen as a Priority Bill by Senator McCollister, but this is not a guarantee that it will make it to the legislative floor. Nevertheless, as of April 02, the bill had 25 cosponsors so it is likely that it will make it to the floor for debate; expect a lengthy debate. If the bill doesn't move forward, expect to see it again next year along with all supporters.

Let us not forget LB111, the Voter ID Bill will go nowhere this year. While not targeting Latinos, the Bill contained a number of contradictions that would've made voting difficult for Latinos. This measure would come at significant economic cost creating the possibility of individuals not being able to vote. We were among many opponents. We also testified against LB 113, in favor of LB 107, and in favor of LB 294.

You can support or oppose any bill by contacting your senator. On a national level you can contact your state representative. If you do not know who your representative is, go to http://nebraskalegislature.gov/senators/senator_find.php, click 'Find Your Senator' and enter your address. To find your Congressional representative, visit: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> and enter your zip code. To find your U.S. Senator, visit: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm. You can have a discussion with their legislative aides, or leave a short message or email asking them to support or oppose a bill. You can also request a meeting with your representative to tell them in person. It is your right. And of course, if there is an issue that concerns you, a bill you want to support or oppose, you are always welcome to contact us and let us know.

Happy Easter,

Dr. Arturo Spindola - Executive Director, Latino American Commission

Farewell, Commissioner Hauke

Ralph J. Hauke, M.D. has resigned as an NLAC Commissioner.

Dr. Hauke was appointed Commissioner in June 2012 by Governor Dave Heineman and resigned September 2014, serving a little over two years in a three-year term. He represented the City of Omaha with the Commission.

NLAC Executive Director Dr. Arturo Spindola offers Dr. Hauke well wishes for the future, "We appreciate Dr. Hauke's service to the Commission and while we are sad to see him leave, we wish him the best on his endeavors," he said.



Ralph Hauke, M.D.

Originally from the country of Panama, he earned his medical degree at the University of Panama School of Medicine in Panama City before coming to Nebraska in 1993. He completed his internal medicine residency at UNMC in 1996 and stayed on as faculty until 2008 when he joined Nebraska Cancer Specialists. He is a member of the American Society of Hematology, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Metro Omaha Medical Society (MOMS), Nebraska Medical Association (NMA) and was listed as one of the 2009-2010 Best Doctors in America in Medical Oncology and Hematology.

Dr. Hauke and his wife, Yasmin, also from Panama and a pediatrician, reside in Omaha. Their son, Ralph, Jr. is a student at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Indiana.

NLAC Welcomes Commissioner Maria Valentin

Maria Valentin was appointed by Governor Dave Heineman in December 2014 as Commissioner for the Latino American Commission.

Valentin will fill in the vacant seat left by Ralph Hauke, M.D. who resigned in September.

She will represent the Omaha metro area for the Commission, and will also be the last Commissioner to be appointed by Governor Heineman whose term ends in January 2015.

“As a Commissioner, I would like to continue to create opportunities to engage Latinos and non-Latinos to come together to work on issues such as education, health, immigration and housing that are currently impacting the Latino community in Nebraska,” she said.

Originally from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Valentin earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico in 1990. Since then, she has had more than 20 years experience in community relations, management and volunteerism.

In 1992, she began her career in Nebraska as an Employment & Training Specialist/Case Manager at the NAF Multicultural Human Development Corp. in North Platte before becoming the Regional Manager in 1996, a position she held for two years.

She joined ConAgra Foods, Inc. in 1999 as a Corporate Community Relations Coordinator where she was promoted to Manager in 2002.



Maria Valentin

She would be with ConAgra for more than 10 years. During this time, she developed initiatives and programs to address strategic social issues and organized state and national alliances with non-profit organizations, government agencies and companies, among many other duties.

In December 2013, Valentin joined the South Omaha Surgical Center where she is currently responsible for planning, organizing, directing, and coordinating administrative operations.

In addition, she develops, coordinates and implements all marketing and public relation initiatives.

Valentin’s community service includes serving as a Board Member of several local and state organizations including: Latina Resources Center, the Juan Diego Center, Girls, Inc. of Omaha, One World Community Health Center, Campfire USA, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Board of Counselors, the Heartland Latino Leadership Conference, the Nebraska Commission of the Status of Women, Nebraska Urban League and Heartland Workforce Solutions.

Her national involvement includes serving as a Board Member of the National Hispanic Corporate Council, serving as a Corporate Advisory Member of the National Council of La Raza and Corporate Board of Advisors and Class Representative of the National Hispana Leadership Institute graduating class of 2008.

Continued on Page 4

NLAC Staff Named Employee of the Year

NLAC’s Public Information Officer, Jasel Cantu, has been named the Commission’s 2014 Employee of the Year.

As the Public Information Officer (PIO), Cantu’s role includes overseeing the Commission’s website and organizing the Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration among other duties.

“Jasel has done an excellent job in her role as Public Information Officer,” said NLAC Executive Director Dr. Arturo Spindola, “She deserves this recognition and we are certainly proud of her.”

October is Nebraska Employee Recognition Month. State agencies are allowed to select one employee and one supervisor of the year for every 500 people employed by the agency. Employees and Supervisors/Managers of the Year are nominated by their Agency, Director, Board or Board members.

“I am honored and thankful to everyone who nominated me,” said Cantu. “I am very proud of my achievement.”



Jasel Cantu with Lt. Governor John Nelson

Cantu’s nomination included recognition of her work quality and commitment:

“She organizes, coordinates, evaluates and distributes information on current events and social activities that impact all residents in Nebraska communities. An excellent writer, she has done a good deal of work for the Commission in producing text for many public relations brochures and informational pamphlets, including the Commission’s Quarterly Newsletter.”

Jasel exhibits commitment to quality in carrying out job responsibility, and is a notable asset to the mission and function of the Commission.”

A total of 108 employees were recognized for their professional excellence at a ceremony

held October 28 in the State Capitol Rotunda.

Honorees received an award, an Admiralship, had their photo taken with Lt. Governor John Nelson and attended a reception at the Governor’s Residence following the ceremony.

Human Trafficking Awareness Proclamation



On January 14, supporters who were present at the Proclamation signing ceremony at the Capitol Building were, from left to right: Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson, NLAC Public Information Officer Jasel Cantu, Legislative Aide Niki Behmer from Sen. Nordquist's office, NLAC Director Dr. Arturo Spindola, Governor Pete Ricketts, Deb Lien and her son Jacob representing Free the People Movement non-profit, Nebraska Appleseed Intern Inonge Kasaji, Nebraska Appleseed Child Welfare Program Associate Becca Brune, The Bay non-profit Director of Outreach Nikki Siegel and Amber Smith representing The Bay and I've Got a Name non-profits.

On January 14, Governor Pete Ricketts signed a Proclamation observing January 2015 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Nebraska. The Proclamation reads:

WHEREAS, Human Trafficking is modern day slavery that is a violation of a person's rights and dignity through the trade of human beings in

sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and other forms of involuntary servitude; and

WHEREAS, Human Trafficking became a federal crime when the United States Congress passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, which in 2013 has been renewed as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act; and

WHEREAS, Human Trafficking occurs when an adult, child, or infant is forcibly recruited, harbored, or transported for the purpose of forced exploitation, commercialized sexual exploitation, slavery, illicit adoption, removal of organs, and forced labor or services; and

WHEREAS, the Human Trafficking victim is treated in this manner for personal or monetary gain through involuntary servitude, fraud, coercion, debt bondage, physical and mental abuse, kidnapping, or death; and

WHEREAS, while the exact scope of Human Trafficking remains unknown, it is estimated that as many as 27 million people are affected worldwide, including an estimated two million children. The targets are both United States citizens and foreign nationals, who are chosen for their vulnerability in society; and

WHEREAS, the existence of Interstate-80 and internet advertising makes the State of Nebraska vulnerable to Human Trafficking. Law enforcement has increased efforts to investigate, prosecute, and help curb Human Trafficking in Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has been passed in Nebraska to raise awareness, education, prevention and protection for all residents, thereby declaring that the State of Nebraska does not support this crime in any form and will continue the fight to end Human Trafficking; and

NOW THEREFORE, I, Pete Ricketts, Governor of the State of Nebraska do hereby proclaim the month of January 2015 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

Valentin Continued...

Valentin also received training in Diversity Management, Domestic Violence, Immigration Specialist, Case Management, Employment and Training Specialist, Leadership and Executive Training by the National Hispana Leadership Institute in 2008.

Her awards and accomplishments include being named an Admiral of the Navy of Nebraska in 2001 by then-Governor Mike Johanns, serving as a 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics Torchbearer for the City of Omaha.

She received the 2004 Nebraska Hispanic Woman of the Year award from the then-named Mexican American Commission (current NLAC), being the University of Nebraska-Omaha's 2007 Women of Color Community Award recipient and receiving the Community Relations Star Award in 2010 by the National Hispanic Corporate Council.

Valentin said her goal is to serve as catalyst supporting NLAC in advocating for the Latino community of Nebraska.

"The Latino experience in America is a unique story. It is a story of immigration and redemption, of anguish and celebration, of the gradual construction of a new American identity that connects and empowers millions of people today. Latinos from all walks of life are bringing their careers, talents, culture and traditions to help this nation continue to be the most powerful nation in the world. Latinos will take this nation to the next level," she said.

Vaquero Museum Exhibit in Chadron

An exhibit at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center features the history of the Vaquero, or cowboy, in America.

The exhibit, titled 'Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy' features photographs, a roping station for children, and texts, interviews and books in both English and Spanish that reveals the foundation of cattle work in the United States.

The exhibit materials are from Texas historian, Joe Frantz, who offered Bill Wittliff a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—to visit a ranch in northern Mexico where the vaqueros still worked cattle in traditional ways. Wittliff photographed the vaqueros as they went about daily chores that had changed little since the first Mexican cow herders learned to work cattle. One panel shares Wittliff's interview with a vaquero. He asks how long the man had been working with cows. "Since I was six," the man replies. Wittliff asks what his father did. "Vaquero," the man says. His father before that? "Vaquero," the ranch man responds, "Vaquero since the beginning."

The exhibit is free and open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed at noon) Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Closed on Sunday.

The Vaquero exhibit is the Sandoz Center's first bilingual exhibit with all captions, texts and books in both English and Spanish.

The exhibit will be at the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center from now until May 19, 2015.

The Center is located at: 1000 Main Street in Chadron, Neb., phone: (308) 432-6401 and website: <http://www.sandozcenter.com/>

Paper Papel Art Exhibit in Papillion

Omaha Artist Linda M. Garcia is presenting a Paper Papel Exhibit from Saturday, April 11 to May 31, 2015 at the Sump Memorial Library on 222 North Jefferson Street in Papillion, Neb.

An opening reception will take place on Saturday, April 11, 2015 from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Library with Harpist William Sanchez giving a performance.

Artist Garcia's show is devoted exclusively to the use of paper as a medium to create art objects.

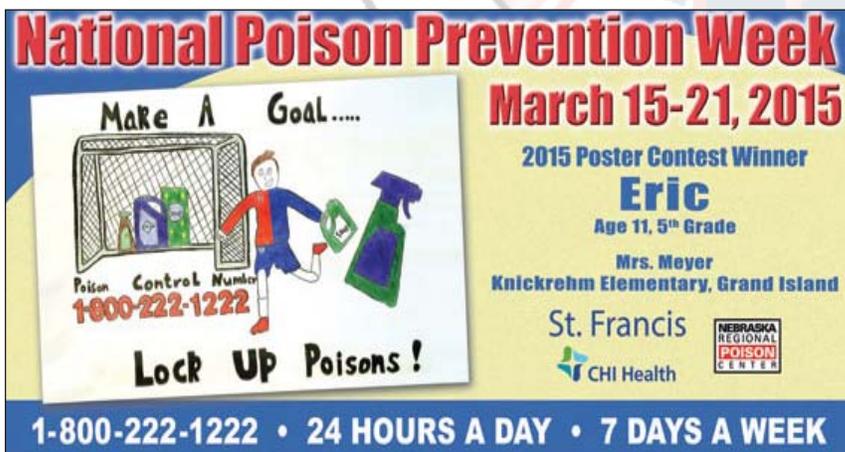
"I study, explore, experiment and create my paper arts from the influence of Mexican folk arts that use other mediums of clay, wood, tin, fibers and textiles and transfer these into contemporary paper expressions," said Garcia. "I want people to see and think of paper as a living thing since the majority of the source comes from organic matter. Paper is precious."

Garcia's art has been exhibited in galleries and museums throughout the state. She just ended a paper papel exhibit at the Museum of Nebraska Art in Kearney, titled, "Cut, Formed, Folded, Pressed: Paper." The exhibit ended in March 2015 with a paper-cutting presentation.

Garcia is an artist, art instructor and storyteller who has spent nearly 40 years creating, teaching and exhibiting Chicano, Mexican American and Latino art, culture and stories throughout the state. She is a 1971 graduate of the College of St. Mary with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, and a retired Children's Librarian with Omaha Public Libraries.

The Papel Exhibit at the Sump Memorial Library is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Linda Garcia at (402) 651-9918.

Grand Island Student Wins Art Poster Contest



National Poison Prevention Week
Make A Goal....
March 15-21, 2015
2015 Poster Contest Winner
Eric
Age 11, 5th Grade
Mrs. Meyer
Knickrehm Elementary, Grand Island
St. Francis
CHI Health
NEBRASKA REGIONAL POISON CENTER
Lock UP Poisons!
1-800-222-1222 • 24 HOURS A DAY • 7 DAYS A WEEK

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center held a poison prevention poster contest. The winning design by Eric Rodriguez, a fifth grader from Grand Island's Knickrehm Elementary, was used in the (above) PSA. On March 18, Governor Ricketts signed a proclamation (right) recognizing March 15-21, 2015 as National Poison Prevention Week. From left to right, Ricketts, Joan McVoy of Nebraska Regional Poison Center, Educator Diane Meyer, and Eric Rodriguez with his art.



Pieces of Nebraskan Hispanic History

Senator Ray Aguilar of Grand Island

This article was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on Nov. 17, 2014. It has been reprinted with permission by the editor.

It happened quietly in 1999. So quietly, that even appointee Ray Aguilar didn't know about his first-and-only status. *Hmmm, OK*, the Grand Island native thought after he was sworn in and the media began to headline it. *So, I am the first Hispanic member of the Nebraska Legislature.*

Aguilar's been gone now for six sessions -- four election cycles -- and so far, the first-and-only status stands. No second. A couple of Latino Nebraskans since then have tried and failed to make it to the Capitol, to see their names on the voting board in the Unicameral Legislature's chamber. But the day is coming, researchers who study population and demographics believe. It must be. Numbers show Hispanics are at 10 percent and growing -- fast.

"It's going to be a considerable level of growth, and likewise you would expect that the voting and representation will change according to that," said David Drozd, research coordinator at the UNO Center for Public Affairs Research. "There will be more candidates who run as it becomes a voting block, per se, in certain areas," Drozd said.

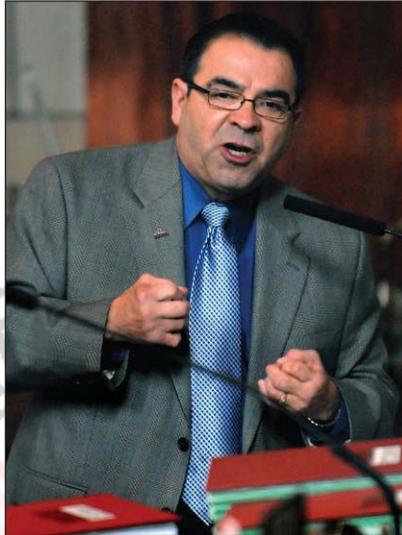
Aguilar, a third-generation Nebraska Hispanic and a Republican, was appointed by Gov. Mike Johanns in 1999 to represent District 35, which includes Grand Island. He was elected in 2000 and re-elected in 2004.

"My reaction then was, I'm going to accept that as a sense of pride, you know, proud of the fact that I'm the first one, and work very hard to make sure that I'm representing everybody as well as I can across the board, and doing my heritage proud at the same time."

Looking back after six years, Aguilar sees the benefit of being a Latino in the Legislature. One point of pride was co-sponsoring and providing his input on Nebraska's Dream Act (LB239), with Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek, that provided resident university tuition for undocumented students who graduate from Nebraska high schools.

"I got to speak a lot on that and felt very good about it, because I was able to bring up some things that a lot of people weren't aware of," Aguilar said.

Two Latino Nebraskans, Rebecca Barrientos-Patlan in South Omaha's District 5 and Luis Sotelo of Lexington in District 36, have since entered and lost legislative races. Barrientos-Patlan, a Republican, lost to Democrat Heath Mello in 2008 in south Omaha's District 5, where 28 percent of potential voters are Latino. She brought in 3,460 votes to Mello's 7,041. Sotelo, 25, was walloped by Sen.-elect Matt Williams, earning 2,148 votes compared to Williams' 7,599.



Senator Ray Aguilar in Legislative Chamber. Photo Courtesy of LJS.

Having Hispanic representatives at the statehouse is important for a number of reasons, candidates and leaders say. "When you have people who don't understand what those needs are, it's harder to produce legislation that benefits those communities," Sotelo said.

NLAC Executive Director Lazaro Spindola agreed that education is one of those important issues. The state Department of Education has failed to understand, he said, how to improve the academic performance of Latino children in high schools and middle schools. But there are other issues, including poverty, the lack of health insurance and access to business opportunities.

With no Latino member in the Legislature, an important point of view is eliminated, Aguilar said. Unless you've walked a mile in the shoes of Hispanic residents, he said, it's hard to understand the differences, their experiences and the barriers

they face. What would it take to have a Latino senator, especially in the current political environment?

The numbers show that by 2020, Latinos of voting age are expected to rise to 10.6 percent of the Nebraska population. By 2030, their numbers will grow to 14.3 percent of the voting age population, according to UNO's Center for Public Affairs Research. By 2050, projections show Hispanics will make up about a fourth of the state's overall population. But growing numbers don't ensure election of a Hispanic candidate.

Their young age, relatively low rates of U.S. citizenship and lack of political ability to transform numbers into registered and active voters might dilute their influence in future elections, said Lourdes Gouveia and Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado of the UNO Office of Latino/Latin American Studies.

Party politics also don't help. Hispanics in Nebraska are more likely to be independent voters, Spindola said. "Sometimes they feel that one of the political parties basically antagonizes them and the other political party takes them for granted."

"A Latino candidate would have to earn the heart and souls not only of the Latinos but also of other individuals," Spindola said. And they would be competing against other candidates who usually have been neighbors of voters for a long time.

Aguilar said the key to Latino representation is education, time and establishing trust. In most cases, it helps to start at the local level with city councils, county boards and school boards. He wishes more would.

"In Grand Island, we finally have one Hispanic member on the school board, but I think that's been a long time coming," Aguilar said.

Upcoming Events

- **Event: April 13**
Dayani Cristal Film Screening - UNL
- **Event: April 16**
Language Fair - UNL campus, Lincoln
- **Holiday: April 24**
Arbor Day
- **Event: April 20-May 5**
Cinco de Mayo Festival - Omaha
- **Event: April 25**
Cinco de Mayo Festival - Lincoln
- **Event: May 16**
Omaha Heritage Festival - Omaha
- **Exhibit End: May 19**
'Vaquero: Genesis of the Cowboy' - Chadron
- **Holiday: May 25**
Memorial Day

Contact Information

Latino-American Commission
Sixth Floor, State Capitol
P.O. Box 94965
Lincoln, NE 68509-4965
Phone: 402-471-2971
Fax: 402-471-4381
Email: latino.info@nebraska.gov
Website: www.latinoac.nebraska.gov
Twitter: @NLACommission
www.facebook.com/NLACommission
www.pinterest.com/nlacommission



10 Students Graduate with GED



The 10 GED graduates pose with their recognition certificates and GED instructors after their graduation ceremony. From left to right (standing) Yolanda Gallegos Barboza, Uriel Alvarez Garnica, Veronica Gonzalez Ortiz, Juan Osniel Sanchez, Jose Jaime Orozco Gurrola, Armind Avelar and Instructor Beverly Denman. From left to right (sitting) Instructor Alejandra Ayotitla, Corina Figueroa-Ibarra, Erica Rocio Diaz Vargas, Maribel Portales-Garcia, Yolanda Flores Guerrero and GED Director Gloria Sarmiento. Not pictured: GED Instructor Amberlyn Edson.

On January 10, 2015, 10 students received their GED at a graduation ceremony held at El Centro De Las Américas non-profit in Lincoln.

The students, of various backgrounds and ages, took Spanish GED courses at supporting institutions in Hastings, Lincoln and Omaha.

The 10 students had to travel to Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, WY to take the GED exam to earn their diplomas.

The graduates are Uriel Alvarez Garnica of Omaha, Armind Avelar of Crete, Corina Figueroa-Ibarra of Hastings, Yolanda Flores Guerrero of Omaha, Yolanda Gallegos Barboza of Lincoln, Veronica Gonzalez Ortiz of Lincoln, Jose Jaime Orozco Gurrola of West Point, Maribel Portales-Garcia of Lincoln, Erica Rocio Diaz Vargas of Hastings and Juan Osniel Sanchez of Hastings.

The supporters of the GED program include Catholic Social Services of Lincoln, El Centro De Las Américas of Lincoln, Everett Elementary School of Lincoln, Immaculata Monastery of Norfolk, Laramie County Community College of Cheyenne, WY, the Latino Center of the Midlands, the Migrant Program of Hastings, the Nebraska Latino-American Commission and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Service Learning Center.

For more information on the Spanish GED program, contact Gloria Sarmiento at 402-438-8853.