

OUR HISTORY 1972-2022



NEBRASKA
COMMISSION
ON LATINO-
AMERICANS

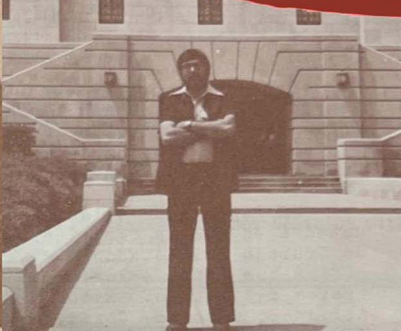
FALL/OTOÑO 2022 · EDITION/EDICIÓN 51 · VOLUME/VOLUMEN 2

On January 29, 1972, the six Commi

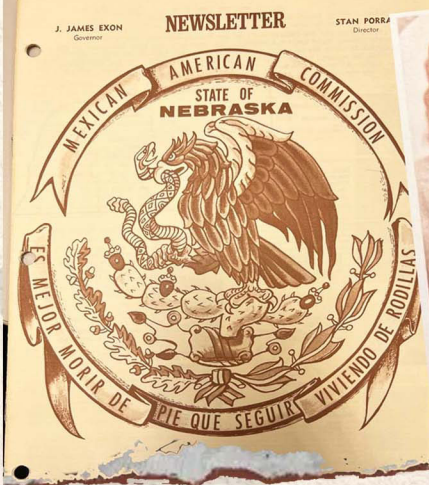


The Bill was introduced, signed by Senator Terry Carpenter, and co-signed by Senator Eugene Mahoney. The identification of the Bill is LB 1081 for an act to create a Commission on Mexican-Americans; to provide for an Executive Director and to provide for election of members and fix their terms and compensation.

...d for the first time on January 4, 1972 -



Mr. Ryan ... of the TAA ...





NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON LATINO- AMERICANS

OUR MISSION:

Our Mission is to serve as a link between the Nebraska State Government and the Hispanic/Latino Community.

OUR VISION:

Our Vision is to empower the Hispanic/Latino Community through a proactive approach to issues that affect their access to education, social political, and economic opportunities in Nebraska.

HISTORY:

The Mexican American Commission was first established with the passage of LB1081 during the 1972 Legislature. On July 15, 2010, LB139 officially changed our name to the Nebraska Commission on Latino-Americans.

The Commission is comprised of ten commissioners from across the State of Nebraska, one of which serves as the Governor's representative.

Commissioners are selected by the Governor to represent the diversity of the Hispanic/Latino population in Nebraska.

The Commission joins forces with other organizations to identify, and work to resolve, issues that affect Nebraska's Hispanic/Latino population. We support and promote annual events with many of these organizations to encourage education and inspire Hispanic/Latino youth.

Created

81-8,262. Commission on Latino-Americans; created; term, defined. There is hereby created the Commission on Latino-Americans. For purposes of sections 81-8,262 to 81-8,271.01, commission means the Commission on Latino-Americans. Source:Laws 1972, LB 1081, § 1; Laws 2010, LB139, § 1. Effective Date: July 15, 2010

Functions

81-8,265. Commission; functions. The functions of the commission shall be to:

(1) Gather and disseminate information and conduct hearings, conferences, and special studies on problems and programs concerning Latino-Americans;

(2) Serve the needs of Latino-Americans, especially in the fields of education, employment, health, housing, welfare, and recreation by offering such services as it may establish for the translation of documents and for the direct assistance of clients, exclusive of legal representation, in matters relating to any federal department or agency or any department or agency of the state or a political subdivision thereof;

(3) Develop, coordinate, and assist public and private organizations and coordinate and assist the efforts of state departments and agencies to serve the needs of Latino-Americans;

(4) Propose new programs concerning Latino-Americans;

(5) Evaluate existing programs and proposed legislation concerning Latino-Americans;

(6) Stimulate public awareness of the problems of Latino-Americans by conducting a program of public education and encourage the Governor and the Legislature to develop programs to deal with these problems; and
(7) Conduct training programs for community leadership and service project staff.

Source: Laws 1972, LB 1081, § 4; Laws 1983, LB 83, § 1; Laws 2010, LB139, § 2. Effective Date: July 15, 2010.

Our Commissioners Nuestros Comisionados



Yesenia Peck (Chair)
Omaha, NE
mypeck@nppd.com



Aida Evans (Vice-Chair)
Hastings
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**Leticia Rodriguez
(Secretary)**
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Lali Sage
Lincoln, NE
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Patricia Castro
Columbus, NE
npcastro@columbushosp.org



Maria Arriaga
Executive Director

Dora Lima
Office Specialist

Abril Garcia
Public Information Officer

State Capitol
Sixth Floor
PO BOX 94965
Lincoln NE 68509

Tel. 402-471-2791
latino.info@nebraska.gov

GOVERNOR APPOINTS NEW COMMISSIONERS

Governor J. James Exon appointed Yolanda Chavez Nuncio of Alda, Nebraska as Commissioner for the Mexican-American Commission. Ms. Nuncio replaces Ygnasio Valdez of Grand Island. Governor Exon also appointed Ms.

Rose Carmen Martinez of Gering, Nebraska as Commissioner to replace Jesse Quijas of Scottsbluff. Previously appointed to the Commission is Anthony Mandujano of Scottsbluff, Nebraska.



Yolanda Chavez Nuncio, Commissioner



Rose Carmen Martinez, Commissioner



Anthony Mandujano, Commissioner

Governor James Exon appointed Yolanda Chavez- Nuncio of Alda Nebraska, Rose Carmen Martinez of Gering, and Anthony Mandujano of Scottsbluff as Commissioners.



Stanley Porras, Director of the Mexican American Commission from 1972-1979 with the Honorable Fernando E.C. de Baca, during a trip to Washington D.C. attending the Forum of National Hispanic Organization. (1976)

REGION 1

Mrs. Mary J. Cardona
Route 2
Henry, Nebraska 69358
Home: 69358
Office:

David Leon
419 Mississippi
Allamore, Nebraska 69301
Home: 308-762-2371
Office:

Jess Quijas
1007 9th Avenue
Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69361
Home: 308-632-6563
Office: 308-632-2187

REGION 2

Edward Castillo
110 East 10th
North Platte, Nebraska 69101
Home: 308-532-5142
Office:

REGION 3

Atanacio Carranza, Secretary
3912 Avenue "G"
Kearney, Nebraska 68947
Home: 308-237-5504
Office:

Ygnacio Valdez
515 North Vine Street
Grand Island, Nebraska 68801
Home: 308-382-9668
Office:

Region 1 (Panhandle)
Three (3) Commissioners

Region 2
One (1) Commissioner

Region 3
Two (2) Commissioners

Region 4 (Eastern)
Three (3) Commissioners*

B. N. Garcia
3027 South 48th
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506
Home: 402-488-5840
Office: 402-488-0376

Joseph J. Juarez, Chairman
6312 South 30th
Omaha, Nebraska 68107
Home: 402-733-4450
Office:

Joseph Ramirez
5236 South 19th
Omaha, Nebraska 68107
Home: 402-733-0721
Office: 402-345-7714

*Ex Officio Member

Glen Soukup
Governor's Representative
300 South 17th
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
Home: 402-471-2306
Office:

Here is a list of Commissioners whose terms expired in 1973, 1974, and 1975. Glen Soukup was the Governor's Representative.

Governors Office
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68508

Commissioners:	City:	Exp. Term:
Glen Soukup	Governors Rep.	
B. N Garcia	Lnc.	5/16/75
Joseph J. Juarez	Omaha	5/16/75
Raymond Ramirez	G.I.	5/16/75
Jesse Quijas	Scb.	5/16/74
Rachel Rodriguez	Scb.	5/16/74
Ignacio Valdez	G.I.	5/16/74
Louisa Garcia	Brule	5/16/73*
Simon Orta	Lnc.	5/16/73*
Father Valdez	Scb.	5/16/73*

Listed above are the Commissioners of the Mexican American Commission who served in the early '70s and their specified regions.



HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE LINCOLN OFFICE
COMMISSION STAFF!!

Juan Bautista—Virginia Ortiz—Juan Suarez
Pete Urdiales—Jerry Lee Fredrickson—Stan Porras

In the above photo, the Commission Staff for the Lincoln Office is sending a Happy New Year message. During those years, the commission had two different offices: one that served the Scottsbluff area and another one serving the Lincoln community.

Report Cards Translated Into Spanish

Scottsbluff Public Schools, Scottsbluff, Nebraska, issued report cards in Spanish for the first time during the 1977-78 school term. The Spanish translations of the District's four report cards (kindergarten, grades 1-3, grades 4-6, secondary) are attached to the English form to provide translation experience for families of Mexican-American students. Scottsbluff Schools is one of the few systems in the state to issue report cards in Spanish.

The report cards are a part of many school notices, booklets and forms that were translated during the summer of 1977 to be used to communicate with parents whose primary language is Spanish. Building handbooks and students rights information are a part of the materials now offered to parents. About forty-two families were identified through assessment as having requested bilingual notices.

All families in the Roosevelt elementary attendance area receive bilingual materials. Also, a bilingual home-school liaison position has been started in the schools to assist families with additional communication problems. The translation project was a part of the school district's effort to meet the requests of the U.S. Office of Civil Rights.

A transitional bilingual program for Mexican-American students who have limited English speaking ability has also been started in the District. The program is a continuation of efforts to meet the needs of limited English speaking students. Program staff members are undergoing a series of monthly in-service activities to increase their abilities and gain new ideas for the program. A project visitation to the Bilingual Education Program in Johnstown, Colorado and participation in the 2nd Annual Wyoming Multicultural Conference in Torrington, Wyoming, along with several consultants in the area of Language Arts, have been a part of the staff's activities. □

For the first time, Scottsbluff Public Schools issued report cards in Spanish, Grades K-8 for families of Mexican American students. The Mexican American Commission highlighted this accomplishment in our monthly newsletter.

Substance Abuse Training Underway



Salvador A. Rios, Training Coordinator, and needs assessment workshop participants.



On December 7, 1978, at the Lincoln Center Building, Salvador A. Rios II conducted the first front-line counseling needs assessment workshop for the Southwest Training Institute in El Paso, Texas. This project is the recent continuation of the special grant that was awarded to the State Mexican American Commission through HEW in Washington, D.C. via the Southwest Training Institute. The project will provide training in the area of substance abuse to individuals throughout Hispanic communities in Nebraska.

The training needs assessment workshop identified training areas that will be covered in the special training program. Despite weather conditions, twenty-five individuals attended the training workshop, although many individuals from distant communities were unable to attend.

Salvador A. Rios, the training Coordinator, along with the Assistant Regional Training Director, Eddie Lozada, recently met with the Nebraska Drug Commission and Southeast Community College to further coordinate the implementation of the local program which is slated to start in February. □

In the '70s the Mexican American Commission conducted the First Front-line Counseling Needs Assessment workshop, a continuation of a grant awarded to the Mexican American Commission in Washington.

INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE SOBRE LA VACUNA CONTRA LA INFLUENZA PORCINA (SWINE FLU) Y INFLUENZA A-VICTORIA (BIVALENTE)

La enfermedad

La influenza es causada por virus. Las personas que contraen esta enfermedad generalmente sufren fiebre, escalofríos, dolores de cabeza, tos seca o dolores musculares. La enfermedad puede durar unos días o hasta más de una semana, y por lo general la recuperación es completa. Sin embargo, las complicaciones que surgen de esta enfermedad pueden causar neumonía o hasta muerte en algunos casos. Para las personas mayores o las que padecen diabetes o enfermedades del corazón, pulmón o riñón la influenza puede ser especialmente grave.

Es muy poco probable que Ud. haya desarrollado suficiente inmunidad contra la influenza porcina (swine flu), ya que durante los últimos 45 años no han ocurrido brotes extensos de esta enfermedad entre la población humana. Usted puede o no tener suficiente inmunidad contra la influenza A-Victoria, aunque muchos norteamericanos contrajeron esta enfermedad el pasado invierno, cuando causó más de 12,000 muertes.

La vacuna

La vacuna no puede producirle la influenza porque se prepara con virus muertos. Las vacunas que se usan en la actualidad producen menos efectos secundarios que las que se usaban en el pasado. En contraste con algunas otras vacunas, la vacuna contra la influenza se puede administrar sin peligro durante el embarazo.

La mayoría de las personas necesitarán sólo una inyección para quedar protegidas contra la influenza porcina (swine flu) y la influenza A-Victoria durante la próxima temporada de influenza. Sin embargo, es posible que las personas menores de 25 años de edad necesiten una segunda inyección o una dosis diferente. Si Ud. tiene menos de 25 años de edad y no recibe anexo a esta hoja un aviso referente a esa información, entonces la recibirá en el lugar donde vaya a vacunarse.

Since its inception, the Commission created different ways to keep the community informed about health issues. Important information about the Swine Flu Vaccine was shared in our newsletter in the '70s.

COALITION OF HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS FORMED IN OMAHA

For the last year, various Mexican American groups within Omaha have discussed the possibility of uniting to present a concerted effort to city, county, state and federal entities to demonstrate the needs of the Chicano community.

Informal discussion was finally put into action after representatives from the American G. I. Forum and the Chicano Awareness Center met across the table to discuss common concerns. From these meetings a consensus was reached and the group developed an organizational structure for the coalition and the following preamble:

If we as Chicanos are to guarantee a better life for ourselves and for future generations to come, we must remain in common bondage, stipulating from our differences and similarities so that we become one. When we suffer, we suffer as Raza, one. When we are oppressed, we are oppressed as Mexicans. When we are disenfranchised, we are disenfranchised as Mexicans. When we are poisoned, by a disrespectful, insensitive, and uncompromising educational system, we are poisoned as Mexican. But when we aspire, we aspire as one Raza. When we dream of a better life for our children our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, we dream as one Raza. No one ever desires or dreams of a better life for the G. I. Forum, or perhaps the Chicano Awareness Center or even the East Side Human Resource Center. But we all dream in terms of Raza. The organizations in Omaha, made up of individual Raza, have come together in common bondage to form the "United Hispanic Council of Omaha." Dedicated to the advancement of all Hispanos of Omaha. Tomorrow belongs to us.

With these thoughts in mind, a coalition was created to pursue and fulfill the aspirations and dreams which for so long have been unattainable for many. The coalition consists of:

- American G.I. Forum
- SER Project
- Guadalupe Parish Council
- La Raza Federal Credit Union
- Chicano Awareness Center
- Mexican American Club
- Mexican American Commission

During this decade a coalition of Hispanic organizations formed in Omaha to discuss the possibility of uniting to present a concerted effort demonstrating the needs of the Mexican American community.

The Mexican American Commission was part of this coalition.

GOVERNOR NAMES NEW COMMISSIONERS

Three new members have been appointed to the Mexican American Commission by Governor J. James Exon. Serving three year terms will be Clemente Aguilar of Lincoln, Rita Frost of South Sioux City, and Jonas Rodriguez of Kearney. Their terms will end in May of 1981. The new commissioners are replacing Nick Garcia, Joseph Juarez and Atanacio Carranza. □

EL GOBERNADOR NOMBRA NUEVOS MIEMBROS A LA COMISION

Tres miembros nuevos han sido designados a la Comisión Mexicana Americana por el Gobernador J. James Exon. Cumpliendo plazas de tres años serán: Clemente Aguilar de Lincoln, Rita Frost de South Sioux City, y Jonas Rodriguez de Kearney. Sus plazas se terminarán en mayo de 1981. Ellos toman los lugares de Nick Garcia, Joseph Juarez, y Atanacio Carranza. □



CLEMENTE AGUILAR, COMMISSIONER



JONAS RODRIGUEZ, COMMISSIONER



RITA FROST, COMMISSIONER

In 1978 Governor Exon named new Commissioners: Clemente Aguilar, Jonas Rodriguez, and Rita Frost. All of their terms were set to expire in 1981.



Pete Urdiales, our second Executive delivered a testimony against the bill LB51. He said: "...in its attempt to penalize the employer for hiring undocumented workers, would open the door to blatant discrimination by the same employer against the Nebraska Mexican residents".

FIRST INDIVIDUALLY-OWNED

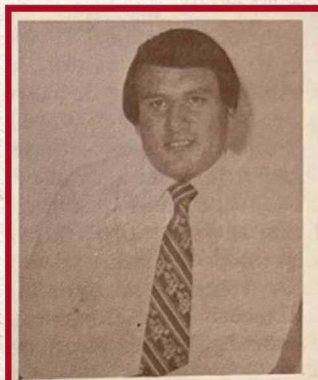


In the '70s the Commission highlighted Susie Gonzalez as having the first individually owned Mexican restaurant in Grand Island.

Honors Outstanding Individuals

From left to right: Mrs. Roland Leudtke, Mrs. Edward Binder, Major-General Edward Binder, and Lieutenant Governor-elect, Roland Leudtke.

The First Annual Hispanic Awards Banquet was enjoyed by all!



SALVADOR A. RIOS, II
 Research Analyst
Analista de Investigaciones
 Lincoln Office
Oficina de Lincoln

In the '70s the Commission hired a research analyst for the Lincoln office.

Western Office Presenting Radio Program in Spanish on Station KMOR — FM

The Scottsbluff Office, in cooperation with radio station KMOR - FM is presenting a 30 minute radio program in Spanish on Sundays to broadcast information that the Commission has gathered and other announcements of interest to the Spanish speaking community. The program which includes announcements and music will also in the future, have guest speakers. In addition to the Sunday program, spot announcements through the week will be broadcast in Spanish. Maria Elena Pedroza, the Western Office Secretary who translates the information into Spanish for broadcasting is currently the announcer for the program.

The Mexican American Commission had a second office in Scottsbluff and this office presented a 30-minute radio program in Spanish on Sundays to broadcast information relevant to the Latino community.

GOVERNOR CHARLES THONE ISSUES PROCLAMATION

Left to right: Clem Aguilar, Chairman; Governor Charles Thone; Peter Urdiales, Executive Director; Jesse Casanovi, Assistant Director. NOTE: Guadalupe Livingston, from the Lincoln G.I. Forum, presented Governor Thone with the Mexican doll pictured.

On August 31, 1979, approximately 50 Hispanics mostly from the Lincoln and Omaha areas, gathered in the State Capitol Building to witness the Governor's signing of the Hispanic Heritage Week Proclamation. After signing the Proclamation, the Governor spent some time answering questions from the audience relating to State employment for Mexican Americans, bilingual education, and Affirmative Action for the Chicana in education and employment among other topics.

BILINGUAL PROGRAMS THREATENED

"Lau Remedies" is the popular name for a federal document which charges school districts with providing bilingual programs for students who need them. In early March, MALDEF discovered that some HEW officials, in revising Lau Remedies, were trying to withdraw the national mandate for bilingual education. A campaign of meetings and letter-writing supported by key senators seems to have stemmed the anti-bilingual education tide at HEW for the time being. Much more work is needed, however, to see that the programs are not seriously threatened.

If you want to take part in that effort, contact Peter D. Roos at MALDEF for further information or write directly to Secretary Joseph Califano, HEW, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202 expressing your support for bilingual education. Copies of all correspondence should go to Vice President Mondale, c/o The White House, Washington, D.C.

OMAHA SITE OF NATIONAL G.I. FORUM MID YEAR CONFERENCE

At the National G.I. Forum Convention held in Detroit, the Omaha Chapter of the American G.I. Forum of Nebraska was selected to host the National American G.I. Forum of the U.S. Mid Year Conference tentatively scheduled to be held on February 15 & 16, 1980 at the Holiday Inn at 72nd and Grover in Omaha, Nebraska.

For further information, you may contact Mr. I. C. Plaza at 4409 south 19th Street in Omaha, phone 733-1049.



DANIA J. INGUANZO
 Public Information Officer
Oficial de Informacion Publica
 Lincoln Office
Oficina de Lincoln

Diana Inguanzo was the Public Information Officer from the Lincoln office in 1979.

In 1979, Governor Thone signed the Hispanic Heritage Week Proclamation. On the right side is the proclamation signed by Governor Thone.

Executive Director	\$14,000.00
Secretary	4,700.00
Fringe	1,780.00
Travel	2,000.00
Per Diem	3,000.00
Printing Costs	1,500.00
Telephone	1,500.00
Equipment	600.00
Office space	2,500.00
Office supplies	600.00
Postage	300.00
Miscellaneous	500.00
TOTAL	\$32,980.00

The first proposed budget for the Mexican American Commission was \$32,980 for the fiscal year 1972-1973.

MINUTES
MEXICAN-AMERICAN COMMISSION MEETING
December 10, 1971

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. B. N. Garcia
Mr. Ignacio Valdez
Mr. Jesse Quijas
Mr. Joseph J. Juarez
Mr. Sam Franco
Mr. Raymond Ramirez

GUESTS PRESENT: Governor J. J. Exon
Mr. John Sullivan
Mr. Glen Soukup
Mr. Rudy Peralez
Mr. Jerry Kromberg

On December 10, 1971 the Commission members assembled at 1:30 P. M. in the Governor's Hearing Room for the first meeting of the Mexican-American Commission.

Mr. John Sullivan, Administrative Assistant to the Governor, introduced himself and indicated that he would be the representative from the Governor's Office that will be working closely with the Commission. He also stated that the Governor's Office would cooperate in any possible way with the Commission in helping the plight of all of the Mexican-American people of the State. Mr. Sullivan ended by saying that the Governor's office would like an annual report from the Commission in which the members would sit down with the Governor and explore the areas of advance, concern, etc.

Mr. Sam Franco then advised Mr. Sullivan that the Commission felt that they should be more meaningful than just an advisory committee. He indicated that this will be a Commission with "some drive behind it." Mr. Franco stated that the members would strive to get legislative action in order to get the law behind the Commission.

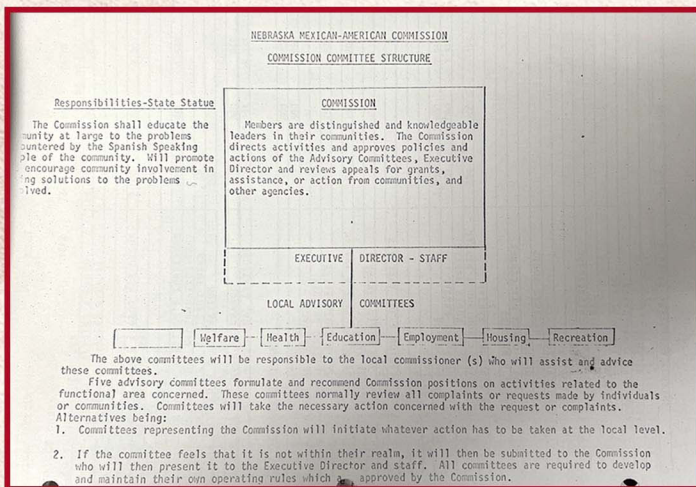
Mr. Sullivan then suggested that one of the Commission's priorities be to work on the drop-out rate of Mexican-American's in the educational system (over 70%). He stated that this project should be launched on immediately and that the Governor's office would help.

The Governor then arrived at the meeting and discussed several of the Mexican-American problems (health, education, migrant problem, etc.) throughout the State of Nebraska with the Commissioners. He wished them luck and pledged his continual support.

Next on the agenda was the election of the Chairman of the Commission. Mr. Nick Garcia was nominated by Mr. Sam Franco. There were no other nominations. Mr. Garcia was elected by a unanimous vote.

Mr. C. G. Garcia from the President's Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish Speaking People, suggested that the Chairman (Mr. Garcia) be a part of the Governor's senior staff meetings, that they adopt a program of public education in order to make the public aware of this Commission and that they conduct training programs in order to develop competent administrators in policy making positions.


Mr. Glen Soukup indicated here that the University, in all probability, would be willing to help the Commission in the training area. He also explained that through a grant from OEO he can provide a STAP person to do




In the above photo the Commission Committee structure in the '70s.

In the '70s, the Commission held its first annual Hispanic awards banquet. A group of 150 individuals across Nebraska gathered at the Lincoln Hilton Ballroom.

First Annual Hispanic Awards Banquet



Josie Porras accepts the award for her husband, Stan Porras.




Guest Speakers and Special Guests. From left to right Alejandro Cabrales, Mrs. Roland Luedtke, Don Pacheco, Sam Franco, Roland Luedtke, Joan Cabrales

These are the minutes of the first meeting of the Mexican American Commission held on December 10th, 1971, months before the presentation of the bill in the legislature. John Sullivan, Administrative Assistant to the Governor, was present as a representative of the Governor.

Governor Charles Thone announced the formation of a special task force for the development of a Nebraska Minority Business Enterprise Program. The task force will be headed by Lt. Governor Roland Luedtke and Archie Godnor. Also included on the task force is a cross section of individuals who have demonstrated leadership in their area of expertise and a desire to insure the future success of minority and women owned businesses in Nebraska.

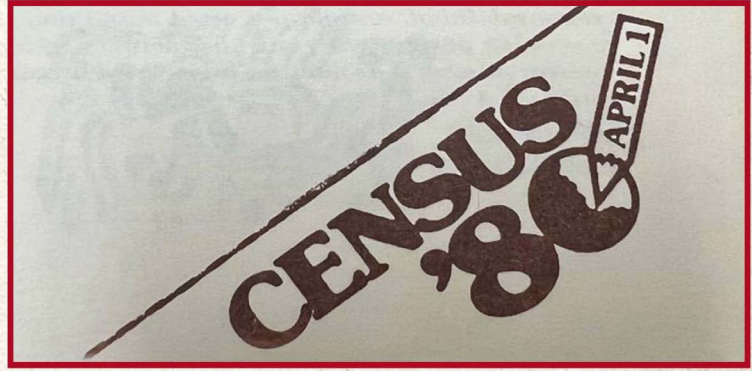
The objectives of the task force will be to:

1. Determine the economic state of minority and women owned businesses within Nebraska.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan to increase the dollar volume of purchases with minority and women vendors.
3. Evaluate programs sponsored by...







Pictured with Governor Thone are left to right: Paul Guterrez, Jesse Cervantes, John Hanlon, Larry Gomez, Lt. Governor Luedtke.

Governor Thone announced the formation of a special task force for the Nebraska Minority Business Enterprise Program. Jesse Cervantes, our executive director back then, was present.




The Commission has recognized the importance of the Census and since the '80s has been part of the awareness campaign of the benefits of being counted.

MEET THE STAFF OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMISSION

 JESSE CERVANTES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	 GLORIA MEDINA DE REIFERNATH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 N. STEVEN KING RESEARCH ANALYST	 HECTOR D. MOTA PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
 JERRY LEE JENSEN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	 HOPE ACEVEDO STAFF ASSISTANT
 FRANK GOLLAS STAFF ASSISTANT <small>(* Located in Scottsbluff Office)</small>	 OLGA DOERING SECRETARY/TRANSLATOR

Some of the staff that helped the Commission during the '80s.

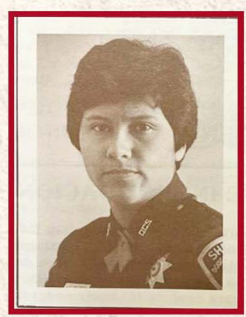
COMMISSION AWARDS PRESENTED



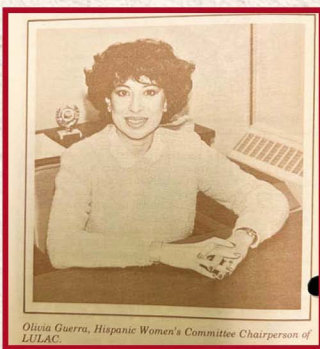
At the Commission Meeting held in Omaha on June 14th, Chairman Aguilar presented awards on behalf of the Mexican American Commission to past Commissioners: Joseph Ramirez—Omaha, David Leon—Alliance, Tony Mandujano—Scottsbluff, Rose Martinez Bindschadler—Scottsbluff and Yolanda Nuncio—Grand Island.

An Award was also presented to Alvaro "Gypsy" Escamilla for his continued involvement and leadership role in the development of youth programs and prison rehabilitation efforts for Mexican Americans in Nebraska. Mr. Escamilla is presently President of the MATA (Mexican Awareness Through Association) Club at the State Penitentiary in Lincoln.

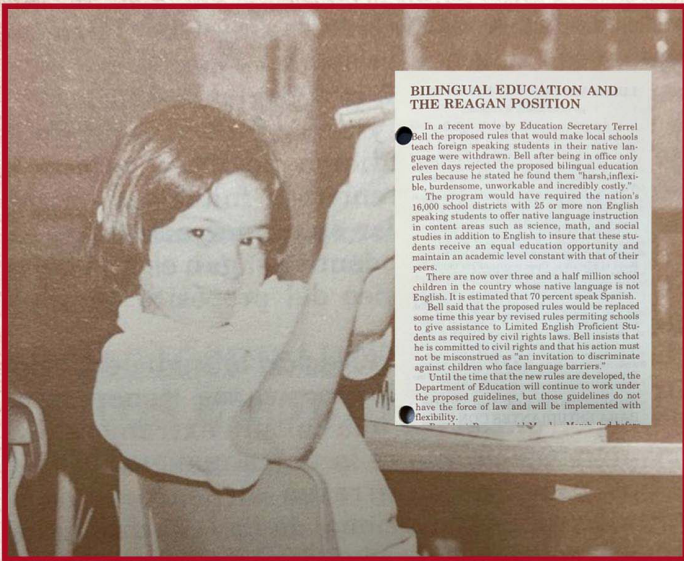
The Commission presented an award to Alvaro Gypsy Escamilla for his involvement and leadership role in the development of youth.



The '80s were times for change for women leadership. Linda Valencia was the first Deputy Sheriff in Douglas County. She graduated in 1975 with a degree in Social Work, her story was featured in our monthly newsletter.



In the '80s, the Hispanic Women's Committee of LULAC was formed. Olivia Guerra was the chairperson, her story was featured in our monthly newsletter.



BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND THE REAGAN POSITION

In a recent move by Education Secretary Terrel Bell the proposed rules that would make local schools teach foreign speaking students in their native language were withdrawn. Bell after being in office only eleven days rejected the proposed bilingual education rules because he stated he found them "harsh, inflexible, burdensome, unworkable and incredibly costly."

The program would have required the nation's 10,000 school districts with 25 or more non English speaking students to offer native language instruction in content areas such as science, math, and social studies in addition to English to insure that these students receive an equal education opportunity and maintain an academic level constant with that of their peers.

There are now over three and a half million school children in the country whose native language is not English. It is estimated that 70 percent speak Spanish. Bell said that the proposed rules would be replaced some time this year by revised rules permitting schools to give assistance to Limited English Proficient Students as required by civil rights laws. Bell insists that he is committed to civil rights and that his action must not be misconstrued as "an invitation to discriminate against children who face language barriers."

Until the time that the new rules are developed, the Department of Education will continue to work under the proposed guidelines, but those guidelines do not have the force of law and will be implemented with flexibility.

Bilingual education was a priority for the Mexican American Commission. In the '80s, our newsletter highlighted the ups and downs of the proposed bilingual education during the Reagan administration.

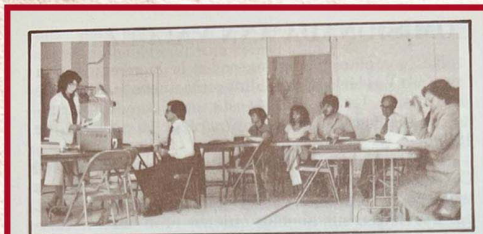


Members - Omaha Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

OMAHA HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FORMS

A number of Hispanic businessmen gathered recently in Omaha to form a steering committee for the creation of a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The advantages inherent in such an organization and technical assistance was provided by Marcus Rincón, Field Representative of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce based in Kansas City.

The Mexican American Commission announced the first Omaha Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. A number of Hispanic businessmen gathered to form a committee for the creation of a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Gloria Reifenrath presenting data at Omaha Elderly Workshop

ELDERLY WORKSHOP

On July 30, 1981 the Commission held its second workshop on Hispanic Elderly as part of the Commission's continued program on a national, state and local level. The workshop was targeted to the Omaha Metropolitan Area. Over 200 agencies, service providers and individuals were invited. Again, as with the Scottsbluff Workshop, attendance was poor, only 9 people attended. This in itself is illustrative of one of the many problems facing the Hispanic Elderly on a social service level.

The workshop was given by N. Steven King, Gloria Reifenrath, and Héctor Mota. It included a discussion of base-line data which was hoped would enable many of the service providers to obtain a profile of the Hispanic Elderly, as to include them more in the delivery of human services.

Statistical data shows that on a nationwide basis the Hispanic Elderly are one of the most seriously deprived groups. The Omaha study concurs with national statistics; the participation rate of Older Hispanics is far less than expected. As the study points out, the financial and residential programs for which there is the greatest need where those programs least utilized.

The Mexican American Commission was very active in creating workshops for unrepresented communities. In the '80s, the Commission held its second workshop for the Hispanic Elderly.

COMMISSION DISCUSSES DEATHS

On Saturday, January 9, 1982, the Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting. One of the topics of concern was with two known fatal accidents at the Iowa Beef Processing Plant in Dakota City, Nebraska. The Commission was particularly concerned about this situation because the Service Company that does the cleaning at the plant employs a workforce that is approximately 70 percent Hispanic, many of whom speak only Spanish.

The grave nature of these incidents were brought to Commissioner Antonio Gomez of South Sioux City, and in turn brought to the Commission meeting. The type of accident which has caught the attention of the Commission has occurred twice within the past five months, in apparently the same area and on the night shift which is primarily comprised of Mexican Americans.

Some work accidents from our constituents have been brought up to the attention of the Commission over our years of service. In the '80s, two fatal accidents at the IBP Plant in Dakota City were known. The Commission made sure the rights of the workers were enforced.

NEW COMMISSIONER SANCHEZ TAPPE

Governor Robert Kerrey announced the appointment of Olga Sanchez Tappe of Wakefield to the Mexican American Commission.

The 36 year old Tappe is a Spanish and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at the Wakefield Community schools. She is a former ESL and Spanish teacher for the Northeast Technical Community College; a house parent-instructor for Lancaster County Office of Mental Retardation; and counselor for Hispanic students at the University of Nebraska.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska with a B.S. in education and a Foreign Language Endorsement from Wayne State, Olga is also a student working on her Masters at Wayne State.

"I am one of twelve children born to Jesus Sanchez and Micaela Garivay who used to bring us to Lincoln from Lytle, Texas to work in the asparagus farm," she proudly says. "Most of us ended up staying in the Lincoln area, in fact, my mother still lives in Lincoln."

"My appointment to the Commission is a great honor and I am excited to serve the community."



Olga Sanchez Tappe

In the 80's Governor Robert Kerrey announced the appointment of Olga Sanchez Tappe, Ann Valdez, and Antonio Gomez as Commissioners. Lazaro Flores was hired as the new Public Information Officer.



Commissioner I.C. Plaza and Senator Karen Kilgarin, both of Omaha, displaying plaque presented to the Senator for her commitment to improve the lives of the Hispanic community

NEW PUBLIC INFORMATION

Lazaro Flores has been hired as the new Public Information Officer for the Commission. He replaces Hector Mota who is now the director of SER-Jobs for Progress in Omaha. Flores is a graduate of Falfurrias High School in Falfurrias, Texas. He attended McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas where he received his degree in Spanish in 1972.



As the new PIO, Lazaro will be responsible for the dissemination of information for the Commission. He will be in charge of public information including media relations, developing and disseminating informational brochures and bulletins on a regular basis. In addition, he will be publishing our bilingual newsletter.

Flores previously was an area coordinator for the Kansas Council of Agricultural Workers and Low Income Families in Garden City, Kansas in 1972. In 1973, he moved to Lincoln where he began working for Goodwill Industries. He also was an instructor of Career Development for the High School Equivalency Program at the University of Nebraska. Lazaro also comes to the Commission with a strong background in public relations. He was responsible for brochures, tours and agency contacts while at Goodwill in addition to supervising the Department of Rehabilitation.

Lazaro is a former chairman of the American GI Forum of Lincoln, former Lincoln CETA Manpower Planning Council member, former Commissioner of the Nebraska Drug Commission, member of the Citizens Advisory Group to the Airport Authority Planning Commission, former treasurer of the Rehabilitation Association of Nebraska and the Rehabilitation Counseling Association of Nebraska and present board member for Lincoln Opportunities Industrialization Center, Inc.

COMMISSIONER ANTONIO GOMEZ



The Commission would like to welcome Mr. Antonio Gomez of South Sioux City as a new member. Mr. Gomez was appointed by Governor Charles Thone to serve a three year term to expire May 16, 1984.

Commissioner Gomez was born in Matanzas, Jalisco where he resided until 1971. When asked why he came to the United States, he said, "Just like everyone else, I was looking for a better opportunity." Mr. Gomez has done very well, first working bees, then trucking tomatoes, and finally working at a meat packing plant in Sioux City, Iowa. Mr. Gomez also runs a store in partnership with his brother-in-law. The business is called, La Mexicana Incorporation, and of course sells Mexican goods ranging from canned peppers to pinatas.

COMMISSIONER ANN VALDEZ



We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Ann Valdez of Scottsbluff as a new member of the Commission. Mrs. Valdez will be completing the term of a vacancy which expires May 16, 1982.

Mrs. Valdez was born in El Paso, Texas, she is the daughter of Joe Castaneda, now of Scottsbluff. Her family moved to Nebraska when she was four years old in order to be with her grandparents who were farm laborers in western Nebraska.

HISPANIC ART EXHIBITION

The Storz Mansion of Omaha was the site for the First Annual Hispanic Art Exhibition on October 21, 1984. The exhibition was so successful that it is being considered as a future major event for the Hispanic community.

The mansion located at 3708 Farnam Street in Omaha is a stately, cream-colored brick edifice that was built in 1907 by brewing magnate Gottlieb Storz. The mansion is presently operated by Arthur C. Storz, Jr., grandson of Gottlieb, and the Friends of the Storz Home Commission who conduct daily tours so people can enjoy its prized Old World ornaments, paintings, furniture, stained glass, and many other attractions.



Ana Sparta, a Bellevue sculptor and a self-employed skin care consultant, organized the art exhibition as a means of introducing Hispanic culture to the community and to share it with all the other ethnic groups.

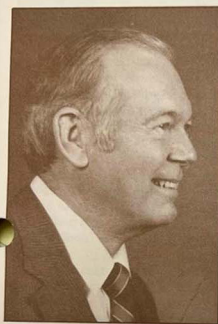
"When we started out," she told us, "we weren't sure how we were going to do this. The League of United Latin Americans Citizens Council 503 provided us with the support and sponsorship," she said. David Catalan, a Mexican American executive for Union Pacific, assisted her in getting the Storz mansion. "I started advertising for artists and soon after I began to interview and select the Hispanic artists," she added. "I wanted us to start with a nice program," she said, "and so I selected five artists that I personally visited. Then we sent out over 500 invitations and you can see the results," she said, pointing to the packed rooms of the mansion.

Besides Sparta's Aztec influenced sculptures, other artists displaying their works were Linda Garcia, Alice Gutierrez, David Manriquez and Victor Garcia. Their themes differed in styles and compositions ranging from water colors, to pastels and oils.

"Our ancestry has a lot to do with art" Sparta pointed out. "In fact, what we know about our ancestors is through art. You can see their playfulness with color, their movement, etc. Our whole history is told by art," she added.

The commission presented the First Annual Hispanic Art Exhibition in the 80's. This exhibition was held at the Storz Mansion of Omaha. The Mexican American Commission presented the First Annual Hispanic Art Exhibition in the '80s. This exhibition was held at the Storz Mansion of Omaha. The work of sculptor Ana Sparta was shown at the Storz Mansion.

COMMISSION RECEIVES COMMENDATION ON ASSISTING MEAT PACKING PLANT



Senator William Nichol

At a news conference held Saturday August 18, 1984 at the Scottsbluff City Council Conference Room, State Senator William Nichols announced the awarding of a \$300,000 grant to the city of Scottsbluff who in turn will lend it to Western Valley Packing Company for their re-opening plans.

Western Valley Packing previously known as Flannery Packing had been closed since February of 1982, a victim of economic times and poor markets. With its closing, many people of the Mexican American Community were out of jobs.

Rudy Peralez, Executive Director of the Mexican American Commission, was asked in March of this year by Scottsbluff Hispanic residents to look into the situation of the plant closing. It was hoped by the citizens that something could be done to re-open the packing plant. With this in mind, Director Peralez began contacting different people, such as Dick Flannery, principal stockholder of the packing plant, the Department of Economic Development and the City of Scottsbluff with the intent of generating interest in the re-opening of the plant.

The Mexican American Commission through his Executive Director was instrumental in the reopening of a plant in Scottsbluff. Rudy Peralez contacted the Department of Economic Development and the city of Scottsbluff with the intent of generating interest in the reopening of the plant.

MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER

"A PUBLICATION FOR NEBRASKA'S HISPANICS"

VOLUME XVII NUMBER 4
WINTER 1984

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR LOCAL AIDS TASK FORCES

AIDS is an epidemic of global proportion. As individuals, as members of a community, as a nation, and as a world must come to grips with the future which lies ahead. There is no cure for AIDS, and the number of people stricken with the disease is going to continue to grow, until some sort of cure is found. It is frightening to think about...TRUE. What is even more frightening though is how we as individuals are going to deal with the disease on a personal level. We can react with fear tactics, with reprisals of hate and discrimination towards those already stricken with the disease; or we can react with compassion, common sense, and determination.

AIDS is contracted by engaging in high-risk behavior, namely: sharing IV needles (be it for illicit drugs or taking steroids...sharing needles is dangerous), and unsafe sex practices (IE: multiple partners, anal intercourse, sex with anyone you don't know, and sex without the use of a latex condom which has spermiocidal jelly Non Oxy1 9). Other ways in which AIDS has been contracted is that it has been passed to unborn children from their mothers who are infected with AIDS, and from blood transfusion of contaminated blood (blood is now screened for the virus).

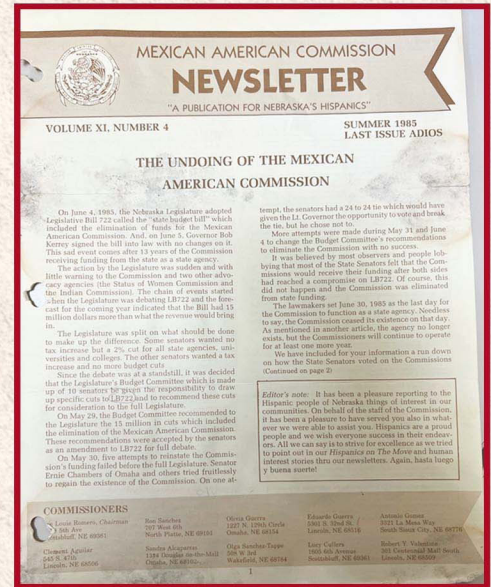
Avoid high-risk behavior and you avoid AIDS.

The best thing that we can do as individuals is to educate ourselves, our children, and our community about the avoidance of high risk behavior. One of the best ways to become educated about the AIDS epidemic is to become involved in your community's AIDS Task Force. If there isn't one in your community, contact the state health department and ask for their assistance in starting one.

In the '80s, the Mexican American Commission joined thousands of health organizations to create awareness about AIDS when the virus began to spread throughout the United States. It was important for the Commission to keep our community informed.

In June 4, 1985, the Commission was defunded. The Legislature adopted Legislative Bill 722 called "The State Budget Bill" which included eliminating funds for the Mexican American Commission. Governor Bob Kerrey signed the bill into law within changes to it.

On July 1st, 1986, the Mexican American Commission was refunded and became fully operational once again.



MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMISSION
NEWSLETTER
"A PUBLICATION FOR NEBRASKA'S HISPANICS"

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 1

WINTER 1986

COMMISSION REFUNDED!!

On July 1, 1986, the Nebraska Mexican American Commission became fully operational once again after being awarded funding from the Nebraska State Legislature. The Commission was defunded last year on June 4, and ceased to be functional on June 30, 1985. Between the time that the Commission was defunded and the time that its funds were restored, it was granted only enough funding to keep the Board of Commissioners functional. It did not, however, have an office nor a staff during this period. A year later after picking itself up and dusting itself off, the Commission has been working diligently to get itself back in the swing of things again.

The first in the series of events which led to the refunding of the Commission was the March 20 proposed amendment to LB725 (known as the Budget Bill) by Omaha Senator Ernie Chambers which would include the Mexican American Commission, the Indian Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women in the 1986-87 budget. On March 24, Senator Chambers requested a vote on this amendment. The Legislature voted down the amendment by a vote of 27-21.

Unsatisfied with the results of the vote, Senator Chambers renewed the pending amendment to refund the three commissions on April 2, and once again the Legislature voted. This time, the vote was 25-19 in favor of the

Continued on page 2

COMISIÓN REESTABLECIDA

El primero de julio de 1986, la Comisión Mexicana Americana del estado de Nebraska comenzó sus operaciones funcionales nuevamente después de haber sido otorgada fondos monetarios por la Legislatura del estado de Nebraska. La Comisión fue suspendida el 4 de junio del año pasado, y cesó sus operaciones completamente el 30 de junio del 1985. Durante el tiempo que la Comisión fue suspendida hasta el tiempo que fue restaurada nuevamente, mantuvo fondos suficientes para mantener las operaciones de los miembros de la mesa directiva. Sin embargo, no contaba con oficina o personal administrativo. Un año después, después de haberse sacudido el polvo resultado de la quietud, la Comisión ha estado trabajando diligentemente para devolver todo a un estado normal.

El primero en la serie de cuentas que condujo a la restitución de la Comisión fue la enmienda propuesta el 20 de marzo (conocido como el "budget bill") por el Senador Ernie Chambers de Omaha que incluía a la Comisión Mexicana Americana, la Comisión de Indios y la Comisión de la Condición de la Mujer en el presupuesto de 1986-87. El Senador Chambers pidió un voto sobre esta enmienda el 24 de marzo. La Legislación votó en contra de la enmienda con votos de 27-21.

Insatisfecho con el resultado del voto, el Senador

Continúa en la página 2

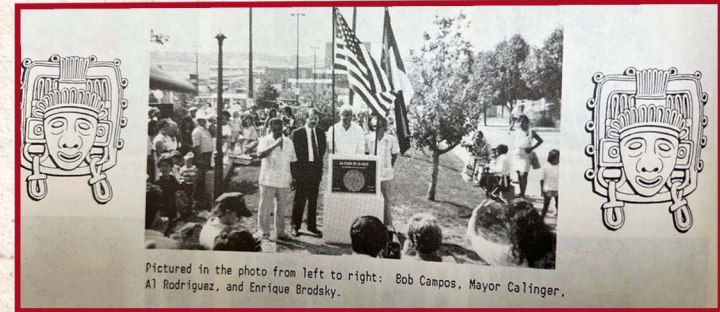


Marty Ramirez, Tomasa Salas, Con Sanchez, Lucy Cullers, and Olivia Guerrero served as Commissioners during the '80s.

NEW COMMISSIONER

Con Sanchez of Minatare, Nebraska has been appointed by Governor Kay Orr to the Commission. Con works as a self-employed building contractor. Currently in his ninth year as a City Councilman, he brings valuable public service experience to the Commission.

Con Sanchez



Pictured in the photo from left to right: Bob Campos, Mayor Calinger, Al Rodriguez, and Enrique Brodsky.


A dedication ceremony to the Plaza de la Raza was held to recognize the Hispanic presence in 1988. The name, La Plaza de la Raza, was selected because of South Omaha's diverse ethnic population, and Hispanics have used the plaza the most since its development in 1982. The symbol on the plaque is the Aztec calendar. This event was also featured in our newsletter.



NEBRASKALAND DAYS Mexican Fiesta Queen and Royalty posing with Fiesta's Guest of Honor. L to R Laura Kosiol of Omaha, Regina Velasquez of Omaha (1984 Fiesta Queen), Connie Martinez of Sutherland, All-american football star for the University of Oklahoma Sooners and Guest of Honor, Tony Casillas, Tammy Gaudreault (1985 Fiesta Queen) of Cozad, Josefina Casillas of North Platte and Isabelle Moreno of Ogallala.



NEBRASKALAND DAYS statewide Mexican Fiesta Hispanic Woman and Hispanic Man of the Year: Jennie Gutierrez of Lexington and Alfred Martinez of Omaha.



MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMISSION

NEWSLETTER

"A PUBLICATION FOR NEBRASKA'S HISPANICS"

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 2
APRIL 1996

"Latino Vote USA - Campaign '96"

The most ambitious nonpartisan voter registration campaign in the political history of Latinos in the United States, *Latino Vote USA*, was launched at the United States Hispanic Leadership Conference (USHLC) in a joint announcement by Antonio Gonzalez, President of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP), and Juan Andrade, Jr., President of the Midwest-Northeast Voter Registration Education Project (MNVREP). The announcement to register one million new Latino voters to vote in the 1996 presidential election was made in a press conference at the USHLC in Chicago, Illinois.

The nonpartisan national campaign is co-sponsored by the Midwest-Northeast Voter Registration Education Project (MNVREP), with offices in Chicago and New York, and the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP), with offices in San Antonio and Los Angeles. Combined the two organizations have organized and conducted over 3,000 nonpartisan campaigns to date, registered over 3,000,000 voters and trained over 60,000 grass-roots community leaders.

Latino Vote USA - Campaign '96 has three main goals: (1) to recruit, organize, and train 20,000 volunteers; (2) to conduct 1,000 voter registration and education campaigns to register one million new voters; and (3) to turn five million Latinos out to vote on November 5, 1996.

In Nebraska, *Latino Vote USA* kicked off its campaign with a strategy and information session in Lincoln on February 23. The enthusiasm and support which the campaign received in Lincoln is a good indication of even better things to come in the months ahead. Plans are currently being looked at to coordinate a state-wide *Latino Vote USA* voter registration day. Tentatively set for late spring or early summer, this event will be held simultaneously in each city/town in Nebraska that is taking part in the *Latino Vote USA* campaign. For more information about the "Nebraska Latino Vote USA Campaign '96", contact the Mexican-American Commission at (402) 471-3128 or MNVREP in Chicago at 1-(800)959-5151.

Since its inception, the Mexican American Commission has spread information about voting rights. In 1996, we dedicated the front cover to the Latino Vote in the USA - Campaign 1996.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Legal immigrants are going to take a big hit as federal welfare reform continues. Despite their need they will be cut of all sorts of public assistance. The new federal welfare reform law totally terminates most legal immigrants from eligibility for both food stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (monthly payments for poor elderly and disabled people). Starting in April, and by the end of August of this year, legal immigrants will find themselves without this federal assistance.

LB 633 - introduced by Senator Ernie Chambers, of Omaha, would extend food stamps to legal immigrants.

LB 864 - introduced by Senator Don Wesely of Lincoln, at the request of the governor, would extend certain state welfare benefits to legal immigrants who lost federal aid under the Federal Welfare Reform Act.

FOOD STAMP ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL IMMIGRANTS: LB 633 GIVES NEBRASKA THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

What is the problem?


Under the new federal welfare law, most legal immigrants will no longer be able to receive food stamps until they become citizens. People will begin losing their food stamps starting in April, 1997, with a completion of this cutoff set for August, 1997. There are some exceptions (for

GLORIA MEDINA BEST has been nominated for the 1991 Nebraska Teacher of the Year. Ms. Best is a University of Nebraska graduate and received her Masters of Education in 1979. She has worked as a bilingual teacher and a bilingual consultant for the Nebraska State Department of Education. She is presently employed by the Lincoln Public Schools. Ms. Best teaches fifth grade at Park Elementary.

Since the inception of the National Teacher of the Year in 1952, thousands of excellent classroom teachers have been honored at local, state and national levels. Each honored teacher is not chosen as "The best," but as a representative of all dedicated teachers.

Ms. Best is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gerardo Medina of Mitchell, Nebraska. She, her husband, Bill, and their three children, Isaac, Ana and Lucas reside in Lincoln.

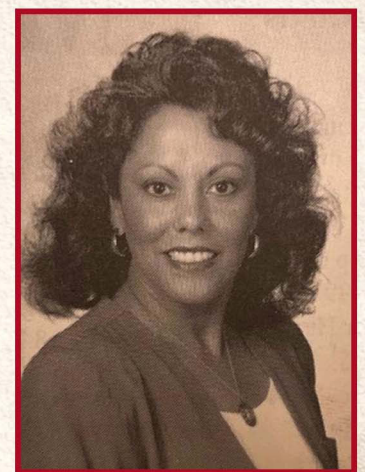
Ms. Best was nominated by Radius Guess, Multicultural School/Community Specialist for Lincoln Public Schools.



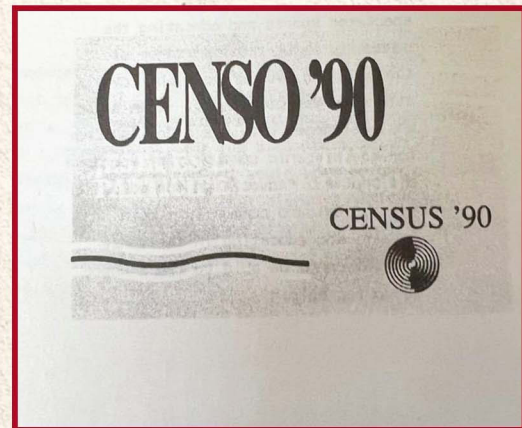
Gloria Medina was featured in the Mexican American newsletter, she was nominated for the 1991 Nebraska Teacher of the Year.



Cecilia Olivarez Huerta was named Executive Director in the '90s, the first woman to ever occupy an Executive Director position in the Commission.



The Mexican American Commission presented Natalie Martinez as the Administrative Assistant.



The 90's Census was also a priority for the Commission and the newsletter promoted the importance of being counted.



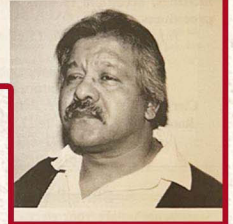
Our former Executive Director Cecilia Olivarez Huerta visited the White House while President Bill Clinton was in office. She expressed to the former President how immigration impacts race relations and how the majority of the non-Hispanic community views Hispanics.

As we pass Thanksgiving and enter the Christmas holidays, we have many things to be thankful for and wishes to come true.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve those who are in need via the Mexican-American Commission. The road from the early 70's to the present has not been easy for the Commission. We have experienced administrative changes, and an ever growing anti-Latino movement, racism, and lack of support by our own state Latino community. Yet the Commission has endured.

I will admit that the priorities of the Commission have never before been clear. As the new Chair, my pledge will be to help develop and strengthen the Commission's priorities. I believe the Commission needs to be more focused, and we definitely need to reach out into the Latino community and establish a dialogue with all concerned. We further need to support local organizations as they struggle to confront the issues facing Latinos in Nebraska.

Finally, my wish for the Commission would be to respect our individual differences and to place helping Latinos/Mexican-Americans/Chicanos as a high priority. We need to be vigilant about helping our government and our country understand that the health, welfare, and education of Latinos should be one of the highest priorities for our nation and state.



In the photo above, a column by Marty Ramirez when he was elected Chair of the Commission. "As the new Chair my pledge will be to help develop and strengthen the commission priorities," he said.

A MEMORIAL TO EDUARDO GUERRA OF LINCOLN

Eduardo Guerra, owner of the Rio Grande Restaurant, died Sunday, April 16th, 1990. He was 45.

Guerra, opened the Rio Grande Restaurant in 1978 with his wife, Ana Maria. It has specialized in Tex-Mex cooking that originated in Northern Mexico and southern Texas.

He served as a past commissioner of the Mexican-American Commission and was an admiral in the mythical Nebraska Navy. He was also a member of the Cathedral of the Risen Christ, the American Legion Post 3, the Veteran of Foreign Wars and the American GI Forum, as well as a member of the National Restaurant Association, the Lincoln Beverage Association, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, and the National Federation of Independent Business.

Survivors, in addition to his wife, include: a son, Omar G.A., of Lincoln; his mother, Leonor, of Morrill, NE.; two sisters, Patricia Guerra and Esther Narquiz, both of Denver, CO; and a brother, Romeo Javier Guerra, of Lincoln.

BIENVENIDOS, NUEVOS CIUDADANOS DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMERICA - Raul Santos (México), Alba Coto (El Salvador), Luz Eucharme (Honduras), Jacqueline Rivera (Honduras), Roberto Rivera, Jr. (Honduras), todos de Lincoln; José Reyes (Mexico) de Tecumseh; y Agustín Escutia (Mexico) de Grand Island.

- Que agradezcan la libertad y los derechos que su nueva ciudadanía les impone.**
- Como nuevo ciudadano, usted puede considerar el voto como un privilegio y como un deber.**

On several occasions, the Mexican American Commission recognized individuals that take the oath to our country. Raul Santos, Alba Coto, Luz Eucharme, Jacqueline Rivera, Roberto Rivera, Jose Reyes, and Agustin Escutia became U.S. citizens and were featured in our newsletter.

The Commission honored Eduardo Guerra of Lincoln who passed away in the '90s. He was a Latino entrepreneur and owner of Rio Grande Restaurant. Eduardo served as a past Commissioner of the Mexican American Commission and was an admiral in the Nebraska Navy.

NAF-Multicultural Human Development Corporation CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

NAF-MHDC held its 20th Anniversary Conference in Omaha in late October of this year. The theme, "Collaborative Strategies for the 21st Century," represents NAF's commitment to work with the many other agencies and groups committed to improving the lives of Nebraska citizens. With seven offices—North Platte, Omaha, Grand Island, Scottsbluff, Lincoln, Columbus, and South Sioux City—NAF is truly a state-wide resource. Ella Ochoa, one of the founders of NAF in 1979, is the Executive Director. NAF operates Agricultural Labor Programs, Employment Training Programs, and Health Programs.

The Mexican American Commission recognized the 20th anniversary of NAF - Multicultural Human Development Corporation. In the 90's NAF had seven different offices from North Platte to South Sioux City, Nebraska.

The photo exhibit Un Tesoro de Nebraska/Nebraska's Treasure was dedicated at the cultural fair in Scottsbluff in the '90s. This exhibit was a cooperative partnership with the Mexican American Commission and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

EXHIBIT DEDICATION

"Un Tesoro De Nebraska/Nebraska's Treasure" was dedicated at the annual cultural fair held in Scottsbluff on September 6. The event began with a fundraiser breakfast sponsored by the Mexican American Historical Society (MAHS). The keynote address was given by Dr. Miguel A. Bretos, Counselor for Latino Affairs for the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Cecilia Olivarez Huerta, Executive Director of the Mexican American Commission and Gwen Meister, Nebraska State Historical Society joined Dr. Bretos in bringing a message of history, cultural awareness and pride to our community.

The photo exhibit, after having traveled across the state, is now permanently housed at the Museum in Scottsbluff. It will be available for check out by schools or organizations who assume financial responsibility for delivery and return to the Museum. For more information contact Olga Olivares, MAHS Director at (308) 635-1044. "Un Tesoro de Nebraska/Nebraska's Treasure" was a cooperative partnership with the Mexican American Commission and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Mexican-American Commission Newsletter

"A PUBLICATION FOR NEBRASKA'S LATINOS"

Census 2000: What You Need to Know

Beginning mid-March, everyone living in the United States will receive something very important in the mail: a questionnaire for the 2000 census. The census provides information to various groups and can have a direct impact on the community that you live in. The census numbers can help define public improvement strategies in neighborhoods with a lot of traffic congestion, elderly people living alone or over crowded schools.

The numbers obtained through the census help communities in times of need. Many 911 emergency systems are based on maps developed for the last census. Census information helps health providers predict the spread of disease through communities with children or elderly people. When floods, tornadoes or earthquakes hit, the census tell rescuers how many people will need their help.

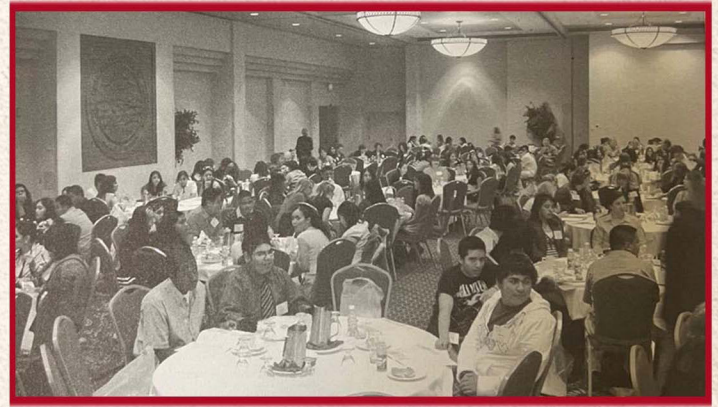
The census makes the government work for you. It's a good way to tell our leaders who we are and what we need.

documentation for future generations. Individual records are held confidential for 72 years, but you can request a certificate from past censuses that can be used as proof to establish your age, residence or relationship, information that could help you qualify for a pension, establish citizenship or obtain an inheritance. In 2072, your great-grandchildren may want to use census information to research family history. Right now, your children may be using census information to do their homework.

The 2000 census will help decision-makers understand which neighborhoods need new schools and which ones need greater services for the elderly. But they won't be able to tell what your community needs if you and your neighbors don't fill out your census forms and mail them back.

How the Census Bureau Protects Your Privacy

By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your answers with the IRS, FBI, Welfare, Immigration - or



More than 300 Nebraska high school students participated in the fourth Hispanic Student Summit, setting an attendance record from previous years. The students also participated in the plenary sessions dedicated to informing the student body about the possibilities and potentialities of higher education.

Important information about the Census 2000 was shared in our newsletter about the protection of privacy and how the numbers obtained through the Census help communities in times of need.

Legislación Nueva: LB 1363

El Senador Matt Connealy, del distrito 16 (Decatur), ha presentado LB 1363. Esta legislación crea un grupo de 16 personas, bajo la Comisión México-Americana con una misión especial. La misión es investigar y estudiar el impacto de inmigrantes en las comunidades de Nebraska en los siguientes áreas: educación, alojamiento, transportación, el sistema de justicia, los servicios de salud y el crecimiento y desarrollo económico.

El grupo identificará el papel del estado en ayudando los trabajadores inmigrantes mientras estos trabajadores se integran en las comunidades locales y la mano de obra. Además el grupo examinará el impacto que tienen programas federales en la industria de la empaquetación de carne y la economía del estado.

Los miembros de este grupo serán designados por el Gobernador, el grupo ejecutivo de la junta legislativa y el director ejecutivo de la Comisión México-Americana.

LB 1363 ha sido designado como legislación con prioridad y está en primer nivel (general file). Otro proyecto de ley de asignación para \$25,000 también ha sido presentado.

Los que están interesados en copias o más información acerca de LB 1363 deben ponerse en contacto con la Comisión México-Americana en (402) 471-2791 o la Legislatura en (402) 471-2877 o visitar a su web site en : www.unicam.state.ne.us/bills.htm.

Upcoming Events

- 1. Cinco de Mayo Celebration in Scottsbluff on May 6. Performance by Ballet Folklórico at Western Nebraska Community College from 7:30-9:30 p.m. Business After Hours 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Our newsletter presented information about LB 1363. This legislation was meant to create a group of 16 people under the Mexican American Commission with a special mission. The mission was to research and study the impact of immigrants in Nebraska communities in the areas of education, housing, transportation, the justice system, health services, economic growth and economic development.

"EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS" CELEBRATION

The Mexican-American Commission in partnership with Sheldon Art Gallery in Lincoln and many community agencies and advisors hosted the "Day of the Death-Día de los Muertos" celebration. This event was the first at Sheldon and included an "ofrenda" designed by Martin Ramirez of Mexico along with Linda Garcia and Jose Garcia Rios of Omaha. Featured also were Mariachi Luna y Sol from Omaha and Grupo Folklorico Sangre Azteca from Lincoln. Congratulations to all. Check out our web page for updates and activities. Over 1200 people attended the afternoon event.

Photos: Courtesy of Sheldon Art Gallery



Linda & Jose Garcia



Mariachi "Luna y Sol"

COMMISSION'S NOTE-

The Mexican American Commission in partnership with Sheldon Art Gallery in Lincoln and many community agencies hosted the Day of the Death celebration.



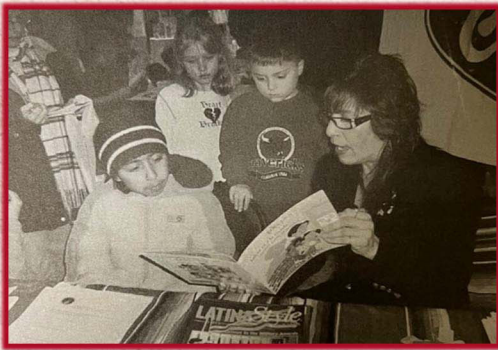
Essay Contest's Sponsor, Arturo DeAnda (DeAnda Auto Sales- South Sioux City, NE), congratulates the winners.

The Mexican American Commission has sponsored over the years essay contests along with different organizations/businesses supporting education and Latino youth. Arturo de Anda, owner and founder of De Anda Auto Sales in South Sioux City, Nebraska was a huge supporter in the '90s.

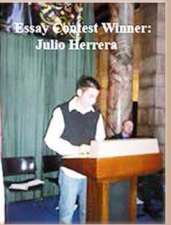
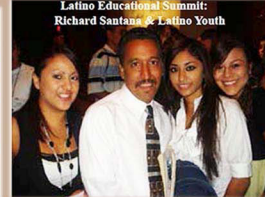
MAC'S GALLERY OF LATINO AFFAIRS



In the 2000s, the Mexican American Commission launched a tv show. "Diversity TV" was a new bilingual television program, dedicated to exploring and promoting diversity from different points of view. Diversity TV was broadcasted in the cities of Lincoln, Crete, and Seward.



Commissioner Theresa Palacios participated in a reading activity with several Norfolk children.



STATE LEGISLATURE 2008: MAC'S INVOLVEMENT

On February 28th 2008, the Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee voted down two controversial legislative proposals that would have affected the lives of approximately 45,000 (LATIN)

In 2008, the Mexican American Commission newsletter featured LB 963, a controversial legislative proposal that would have affected the lives of approximately 45,000 undocumented immigrants in the state of Nebraska. The bill was introduced by Sen. Mike Friend of Omaha on behalf of Governor Dave Heinemann, intended to deny state and local benefits to undocumented immigrants, including in-state tuition assistance. LB 963 was killed in committee on a 5-1 vote.

IMMIGRANT RALLY / MARCHA DE INMIGRANTES

Can Non-US Citizens Receive In-state Tuition Rates?
YES

In addition to the above conditions, Non-US citizens who do not have either a permanent resident or naturalization application pending with Immigration and Naturalization Services can submit an affidavit to the post secondary school, attesting that he or she intends to apply for permanent residency at the earliest opportunity.

RALLY

Thousands of people, forming an ocean of white t-shirts, rallied in many Nebraska cities several months ago waving Mexican, American, Guatemalan, Spanish and other various flags while shouting "¡Si se puede!" (Spanish for "yes, we can!").

These rallies were in response to a bill passed in the House that would speed up deportations, tighten border security and criminalize illegal immigrants. A proposal that would have given most illegal immigrants a chance to become citizens collapsed in the Senate.

¿Pueden los que no son Ciudadanos Americanos Recibir Matricula de Residencia? SÍ

Además de las condiciones anteriores, los que no son ciudadanos Americanos y que no tienen una solicitud de residencia permanente o de naturalización en proceso con los Servicios de Inmigración y Naturalización, pueden entregar una declaración jurada a la escuela postsecundaria atestiguando que intentan aplicar para la residencia permanente lo más pronto posible.

MARCHA

Miles de personas que formaron un océano de camisetas blancas, marcharon en diferentes ciudades de Nebraska hace varios meses atrás cargando banderas Mejicanas, Americanas, Guatemaltecas, Españolas y otras más mientras cantaban "¡Si se puede!".

Estas marchas nacieron como respuesta a un decreto que fue aprobado por la Cámara de Representantes el cual aceleraría el proceso de deportación, incrementaría la seguridad en las fronteras y trataría como criminales a los inmigrantes ilegales. La propuesta que daba la oportunidad a los inmigrantes ilegales de convertirse en ciudadanos colapsó en el Senado.

2006

During his time as Commissioner, Jose Santos worked with the Attorney General, Mexican Consulate, US Department of Labor, Nebraska Workforce Development, and OSHA on compensation issues brought to various entities' attention regarding contract workers.

Cecilia Olivarez Huerta, the former Executive Director, received recognition for 15 years of working for the State. She also received the Government Leadership Award from the Heartland Leadership Conference.

In 2006, Commissioner Norma de la O worked on plenty of issues. One issue that made the news was about the County Attorney's office. The office publicly said that his office was going to initiate some plan to curve illegal immigration in Dakota County.

Commissioner Yolanda Nuncio spoke about a study conducted by NCLR, regarding the immigration raids which took place in Grand Island meatpacking plants back in December 2006. Commissioner Nuncio made copies of the study available to the Commissioners.

2007

Executive Director commented on the newly created Community Outreach, a consortium is a group that involves other government agencies including the Legal Aid of Nebraska, Equal Opportunity Commission, State Attorney General Office, Mexican-American Commission, and other agencies.

Jose Garcia from Omaha wrote a letter of support to the press regarding the Commission's name change stating the name should reflect the state demographics changes. . He expressed his unconditional support for the Commission on this.

2008

The Commission felt the need to keep the Latino community informed about the international driver's license scam that happened during 2008 and sent a press release to all Spanish media about this situation to protect the community.

2009

On May 26th, Angel Freytez, Acting Executive Director, testified in favor of LR 223, a resolution that intended to urge the members of Nebraska's Congressional Delegation to pass immigration reform legislation.

2010s

Because of the demographic changes of the Latino community in the state, on July 15, 2010 the LB139 officially went into effect and changed the Commission's name for the first time to "Nebraska Commission on Latino-Americans".

2015 Day of the Dead Events in Nebraska



(Above, from left to right) A retablo at the West Nebraska Arts Center was part of a Dia de los Muertos presentation and exhibition in Scottsbluff, photo by Travis Sell of the Scottsbluff Star-Herald. NLAC's Day of the Dead exhibit at the Capitol Building from Oct. 26-Nov. 6 featured artwork from high school students at Hastings Catholic School and the LPS Arts & Humanities Program. Mexican Consul Guadalupe Sanchez Salazar gives a public presentation on Dia de los Muertos with the ofrenda at the Consulado de Mexico en Omaha. (Left) The Latino Public Health Advisory Committee hosted a Dia de los Muertos celebration with an ofrenda and presentation at the UNMC College of Public Health in Omaha. (Right) The Multicultural Coalition of Grand Island hosted the Day of the Dead Festival with a 5K run, vendors, workshops and performances by the Aztec Fire Dancers on Oct. 24, photos by Mike Herod. (Below & Below Left, Right) The Mexican American Historical Society of the Midlands presented a series of Dia de los Muertos events with exhibitions, performances, and ofrendas, including one honoring soldiers, at St. Cecilia's Cathedral in Omaha, photos by MAHSM Director Jose Garcia, below right photo by Elite Studio Photography. (All photos reprinted with permission.)

The celebration of the Day of the Dead has become a tradition for the Commission. Our newsletter features every year different presentations and exhibitions across Nebraska of this celebration.

2015 Latino Summit in Kearney



On Oct. 27, NLAC and the Dept. of Education presented the 12th Annual Latino Summit for 600 Latino students from 30 school districts. College recruiter tables like UNO (Above) answered questions and provided financial aid information. Keynote Speaker Lina Traslavina (Left) shared the importance of self-confidence. Multiple breakout sessions included Carmen Montes and NET (Below Left) and Ross Pesek (Below Right). (Bottom Left to Right) The Gallery of Stars shared student biographies. Students enjoyed a trivia game at lunch.

The 12th Annual Latino Summit reunited 600 Latino students from 30 school districts. College recruiter tables answered questions and provided financial aid information. Keynote speaker Lina Traslavina shared the importance of self-confidence.



Jose Santos was recognized by Chair Adrian Sanchez for his many years of dedication and service. Santos retired as a commissioner in 2015.



Dora Lima, staff member, was recognized for her years of serving the Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans.

Latina Leader Honored in South Sioux City



The Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans featured a sculpture in Sioux City, honoring the late Tomasa Salas from South Sioux City who was a Commissioner in the '80s. She was one of the four community leaders to be recognized as a most dedicated lifelong community advocate.

NLAC Seeks Information on Adobe Houses

On Oct. 30, the Nebraska State Historical Society and NLAC held a Public Forum at the Guadalupe Center in Scottsbluff requesting the community's help in finding information on adobe houses.

Historically, Latino agricultural workers who traveled to the Scottsbluff area prior to the 1950s would build adobe houses to live with their family for the duration of their work. Many families chose to settle in the area permanently and the adobe houses became permanent homes and new neighborhoods. As time passed, many of the houses were sold and demolished. NLAC and the Historical Society is working together to locate, identify, document and preserve the remaining adobe houses.

Once identified, the buildings may be placed in the National Historic Registry and included in publications on immigrant and settler dwellings. State historical markers are another possibility for the homes.

The Historical Society and NLAC agree that recognizing and preserving these early adobe houses are important for the state's history and culture.

The Forum was hosted by Rep. Sorenson and NLAC Commissioner Chabella Guzman. Several members of the community attended including family members such as Charlette and Enedina Saucedo who have lived in the neighborhood for decades and shared local history and their memories with Society and NLAC staff.

Local resident Lorraine Huerta came forward as a community member who still lives in an adobe house built by her father. The house has been upgraded and renovated over the years, but it is still a historic adobe house.

Lorraine and other community members allowed NLAC and Society staff to take photographs of their homes (photos at right), described floor plans and shared the history of their homes.

Members of the public who live in an adobe house, know someone who lives in an adobe house or know someone who has lived in an adobe house, please contact the Historical Society at 402-474-1234.



(Above, Top) These are two identified adobe houses on 14th Avenue and H Avenue in Scottsbluff, showing how the surviving houses appear today. (Right) Many adobe houses built in the 1920s have been demolished, these houses in Minnesota are no longer there.



Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler with middle school essay winners Noah Randolhp and Divith Rajagopal. Also, with high school winner Pamela Cante and middle school winner Yair Garcia.

2010s



The Commission donated several items to the Nebraska History Museum including the top 10 essays for Hispanic Heritage Month.



Dr. Spindola was present at a signing Proclamation ceremony observing April of 2015 as Minority Health Month in Nebraska.

Human Trafficking Awareness Month Proclamation



Governor Ricketts signed a proclamation observing January of 2016 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Jasel Cantu and Adrian Sanchez from the Commission were present.



Teachers from Mexico visit our state every year. The Commission assists the Department of Education with the logistics of the ceremony of appreciation.



Our former Executive Director, Dr. Arturo Lazaro Spindola testified in front of the legislature supporting a law that now provides prenatal healthcare for Latino women, regardless of their immigration status. He also testified for legislation allowing driver's and professional licenses for "Dreamers," young people brought to this country illegally when they were children.

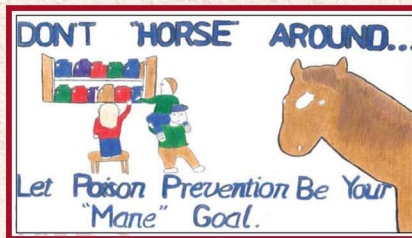


Antoinette Caudillo and Brenda Gallardo were two of the legislative pages in 2016 working with the legislative session and the only Latinas to serve as pages that year.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day Proclamation



Every year the Governor's office presents a proclamation signed by the Governor observing July 26th as Dr. Hector Garcia Day in Nebraska.



The Nebraska Department of Agriculture announced the winners of their annual youth poster contest in observance of National Ag Day. Bryana Vargas, a Latina student, was the winner of the contest.

2010s

2010

In 2010, the Mexican American Commission recognized Severiano Franco, former Interim Executive Director, for his superior service to the Commission since its early beginnings.

Interim Director Franco stated that LB139 was adopted and passed by the Legislature in regards the name change of the Commission. Now, the official name of the Commission is the Commission on Latino Americans. The justification used on the floor was that the name of the agency should reflect demographics statewide.

2011

In 2011, the Commission joined an immigration task force. The first meeting was held on March 5th in Lincoln and the second meeting on April 4th in Grand Island. The Commission was asked to join due to its expertise and involvement in the Legislature.

2012

On April 11, the Commission took part in a vigil raising awareness for LB 599, the Prenatal Care Bill. The Commission supported LB 599 since it will benefit all pregnant women, including Latinas.

2015

On January 21st, a press conference was held at the Capitol Rotunda where Senator Nordquist announced the introduction of a Bill to grant driver's licenses to DACA beneficiaries. Several organizations were present, including the Commission.

2017

Adriana Carvajal-Rodriguez and Adolfo "Danny" Reynaga were appointed by the Governor as Commissioners in 2017.

Executive Director Dr. Arturo Spindola expressed his support in the name of the Commission to DACA. He said DACA beneficiaries bring about \$80 billion to the US economy every year. This means that morally, economically, and legally there is justification for this program. He said the Commission would keep educating the public about the facts that DACA individuals bring into this country.

CORONAVIRUS

In 2020, COVID-19 was everywhere. Its spread and impact led to a global crisis of unprecedented proportions. Nebraska was no exception. The pandemic disrupted most legislative activities. The Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans had to change how business was handled. The staff telecommuted, but there was still one staff present at the office on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Director Spindola and Governor Pete Ricketts provided information in Spanish during the governor's weekly press conferences in regards to the pandemic.



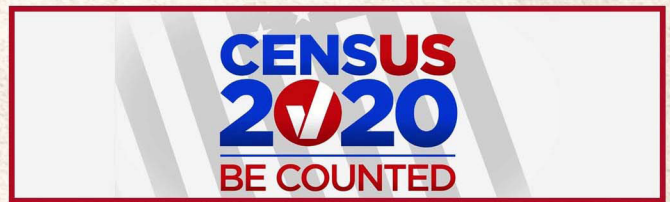
COVID 19 also affected the way we communicated with our constituents. In the "screenshot," Nebraska Hispanic of Chamber Commerce members and partners in Madison and Grand Island, with Dr. Lazaro Spindola communicating via zoom.



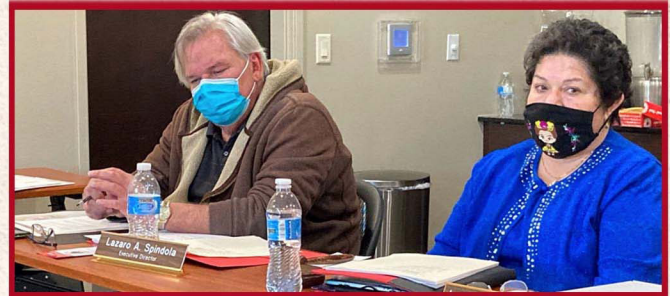
In one of our 2021 Quarterly Meetings, the commissioners visited Latino businesses in Hastings, Nebraska.



Governor Pete Ricketts appointed Maria Whitmore, Cristina Castro Matukewicz, Lali Sage and Patricia Castro as Commissioners.



Census operations during COVID 19 were a challenge. The Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans played an important role in supporting the campaign and spreading information via social media about how important community engagement was. This information was shared in English and Spanish.



In 2020, the Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans spread information about the use of masks, and the importance of vaccination and supported health organizations to outreach the Latino community in the state.



At the beginning of the pandemic, the meat packing plants were the first places to experience COVID 19 outbreaks. The Commission through our Executive Director, joined other organizations to demand protection for essential workers during the crisis. Hand sanitizers, dividers to enhance social distance, use of masks, and more measures to reduce the risk among these vulnerable populations. Former Public information officer Victoria Morehead, attended a community rally in support of meatpacking workers.

Director Spindola expressed that LR 292-CA is a constitutional amendment to require verification of identity before voting introduced by La Grone. The Commission has been opposing this type of legislation for the last 12 years. Director Spindola stated that voter fraud is a non-existing problem in Nebraska and will lead to disenfranchising voters.

2020s



In 2022, the Governor of Nebraska, Pete Ricketts, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Commission on Latino Americans by signing a proclamation at the Governor's Courtroom located at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Commissioners and staff were part of the Beam Signing ceremony at the Columbus Fieldhouse, a Columbus Community Hospital project.



Governor Pete Ricketts proclaimed July 26th as Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day, urging all Nebraskans to note the observance and educate themselves and others about the legacy of Dr. Hector P. Garcia.



In an effort to support entrepreneurship and Latino small businesses, Chair Yesenia Peck and Vice-chair Aida Evans were part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony of "Limon con Chile" a new restaurant in Grand Island.

Because of our 50th anniversary, the Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans is interviewing former commissioners with the purpose to highlight their service to our organization.

Dr. Lazaro Spindola, who served as the Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans for 11 years, retired on December 31st, 2021.

He served as an external consultant providing training to the current staff until May of 2022.

