

Commissioner's Corner

Commissioner Gabriel Portugal organized a march in support of undocumented workers. He secured a City of Pasco permit, informed local media, and led the march of approximately 1500 participants from downtown Pasco to the Franklin County Court House...Participants were encouraged to march on Sunday with their families and advised to keep their kids in school during the week.

Commissioner Yvonne Lopez-Morton has been very busy in the last couple of months. She attended a reception for Washington State University Chancellor and Deans to foster better communication between CHA and Washington State University staff, faculty and students...She participated in a breakfast meeting with Sharon Ortiz, Washington Human Rights Commission, to provide updates on the respective committees...She met with Planned Parenthood Spokane Education Coordinator Margaret Mount to discuss challenges of providing services to Hispanic women and Spanish speaking staff issues. She attended the annual Anniversary Dinner for AHANA (Asian, Hispanic, African-American, Native American Business Professional Association)...A reception for the 2006 Eastern Washington University Chicano Ed Program scholarship recipients and assisted in awarding scholarships...At the Planning of Latino/a Student Education Summit she participated by teleconference with the summit planning committee...She was present at the Student/Higher Ed Outreach lunch reception for Dr. Rudolfo Arevalo, new President of Eastern Washington University and the first Latino President of a major Washington university, to foster better communication between EWU, local Hispanic organizations, and WA Commission on Hispanic...She attended the Governor's Ethnic Commissions Roundtable and discussed common and unique challenges for each of the State's ethnic communities. The participants agreed to respond to recommendations of Washington Learns Committees in May. Commission chairs agreed to meet on a regular basis in person or through teleconferencing... Commissioner Lopez-Morton was a speaker at the Spokane Community College Cultural Day event where she provided a history of the Hispanic community, demographics, update on Commission activities, and clarification of Governor's position on immigration reform. She met with Ophelia Araujo-Islas, Eastern Washington Director of ARMS-Abuse, where she discussed helping ARMS inform the Hispanic community about their services. She attended the Latino/a Youth Education Summit in Ellensburg where participants addressed a Hispanic Youth Plan developed by the Multi Ethnic Think Tank.....Good Job Commissioner Lopez-Morton!

Thanks to all the commissioners for their work. Keep the reports coming!

CLASSIFIEDS: The *Department of Health* is accepting applications to fill two appointments on the *Orthotic and Prosthetic Advisory Committee*.

Currently, there is a vacancy for a licensed Orthotist or Prosthetist and a consumer member. The department is looking for public-spirited individuals with diverse backgrounds willing to study the issues (including, licensure, examination approval, regulatory development) and make decisions in the best interest of the public. The consumer member must not be affiliated directly or indirectly with the profession, but to the extent possible, be a consumer of orthotic and prosthetic services. For more information please contact Doreen Beebe, at 360.236.4834 or Doreen.beebe@doh.wa.gov. Or visit our website at: <http://itserv.wa.gov/archives/wa-orthotic-prosthetic.html>.

Latino Summit

OSPI and the Commission On Hispanic Affairs joined forces to Sponsor a Latino summit in Ellensburg at Central Washington University on April 29th 2006.

The main purpose was to host a forum to update and revise the Washington State Education Plan for Hispanic Youth. The attendants included legislators, educators, students, parents, community based organizations and early childhood professionals and other stakeholders.

The day started with a historical perspective given by Dr. Antonio Sanchez and was followed by a legislative panel and a student panel. The participants then held breakout sessions to work on the revision of the Hispanic Plan.

The session closed after the groups reported out. The revisions will be incorporated into the plan and redistributed once that is done.

From all indications all the participants felt that the Summit was very successful.

Learning Steers Committee

In a letter to Dr. Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction and K-12 Advisory Committee Members, the representatives of the various K-12 education stakeholder groups wished to make clear their expectation for an opportunity to provide significant input on the work of the advisory committee prior to their formal recommendations to the Washington Learns Steering Committee.

It was their concern that an important step was being left out of the process/hearing from those whose work their efforts would impact.

Of primary concern they noted the lack of public participation in the process and the lack of sufficient time allotted for public comment, 15 minutes at the end of the meeting, when stakeholders are tasked with responding to complicated subject matters without an opportunity to have briefed the decision makers they represent.

For the benefit of the entire K-12 stakeholder community, stakeholders must be provided materials in advance of the meetings in order to consult with their organization and a significant block of time to receive stakeholder input on their findings prior to making formal recommendations to the Steering Committee. This will ensure that stakeholders can provide the appropriate feedback that will be most helpful to the committee and their important work.

Washington State COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS

Volume 1, Issue VI
2006

2nd QUARTER NEWSLETTER

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President Fox
Speech in Yakima

MEETING DATES 2006

February 9-11

Olympia

April 14-15

Mattawa

June 23-24

Yakima

August 18-19

Quincy

October 20-21

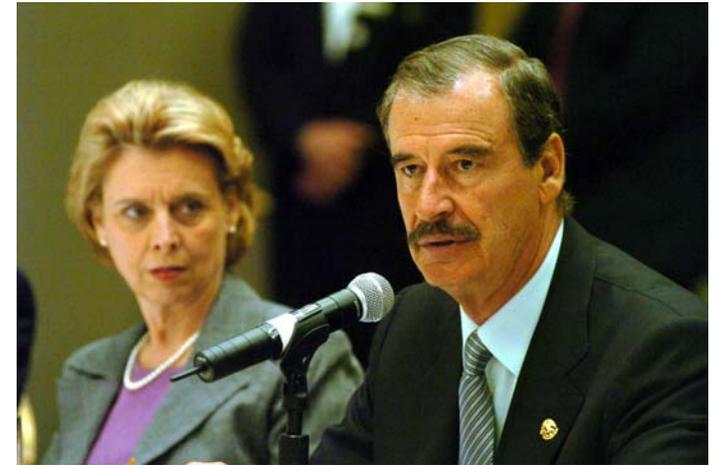
South Park, Seattle

December

Teleconference

**For more information
visit our website,
www.cha.wa.gov**

Washington State
Commission on Hispanic Affairs
P.O. Box 40924
Olympia, WA 98504-0924
Phone: (800)443-0294
(360)725-5661
Fax: (360)586-9501
Email: hispanic@cha.wa.gov



President of Mexico, Vicente Fox Quesada with Governor of Washington Christine Gregoire on his visit to Washington State.



The Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs Welcomes it's New Commissioner

Dr. Victor Chacon is a professional trainer and consultant on issues of diversity and cultural competence for business organizations, schools, and health and social service agencies. He holds advanced degrees in the arts from the University of Texas and the University of Washington. His background includes training educators and consulting with administrators, community leaders, and health professionals on issues of changing populations in the workplace and in the community. Since 2000, Dr. Chacon has served as Director of Multicultural Services at Walla Walla Community College. Among his credentials are teaching appointments at universities and colleges in Washington, California, Idaho, and Texas. Dr. Chacon heads Floriman Associates, a consulting firm committed to cross-cultural training and competence on issues of diversity.

Save the Date

Saturday, June 24,
9:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Yakima Community
Center
1211 South 7th St.,
Yakima, WA 98901

CHA/DSHS Community Forum:

"Enhancing Partnerships to Serve Diverse Community Needs"

This is a wonderful opportunity to get information and ask questions about DSHS services in the areas of Foster Care, Emergency Medical Services, and Juvenile Rehabilitation. This event is free. No registration or reservation is required. Lunch will be provided. For more information please contact Graciela Lopez, Commissioner for the Commission on Hispanic Affairs in Yakima at 509-728-2438.

This event is brought to you in partnership by the Commission on Hispanic Affairs and the Diversity Affairs Office of the Department of Social and Health Services.

Staff

Uriel Iniguez, Executive Director
Alicia Luna, Executive Assistant



Commissioners

Yvonne Lopez Morton, Chair, Spokane
Gabriel Portugal, Vice-Chair, Tri-Cities
Ruben Baca, Executive Committee, Bellingham
Victor Chacon, Education Committee, Walla Walla
Faviola Contreras, Education Committee, Wenatchee
Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Education Committee, Bellevue
Graciela Villanueva Lopez, Executive Committee, Yakima
Rebecca Villareal, Chair Economic Development Committee, Seattle
Félix L. Negrón, Education Committee Olympia

Message from the Director

The respect CHA is attending is beginning to pay off! In a recent Mattawa school district meeting (by far the most effective) the newly united and empowered Hispanic community raised many issues of concern with regards to the management of school funds. The school district was receptive to the meeting and provided the positive ambience required for a candid dialogue.

In a letter to the Mayor of Mattawa, we addressed several important issues that merit attention; the need for bilingual emergency personnel, counterproductive regulations passed by the council regarding small businesses, and safety concerns over a highway intersection where 10 fatalities have already occurred.

In a meeting with DSHS we were able to address modes of improving foster care services for Hispanics, how to increase the number of Hispanic foster parents in the area, and the need to improve services for Hispanic foster kids already in the system.

We recognize and acknowledge that follow-up is crucial to the success of our endeavors. CHA is, therefore, committed to following-up with the respective department(s) and or agency(s) that we connect with and working with them to keep an open dialogue. I envision CHA as an organization that connects people, empowers communities, engages existing organizations, and holds agencies accountable.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Governor Gregoire for her efforts in support of the Hispanic community. She is cognizant of the fact that our state depends on immigrant workers in the agriculture and service sectors. Equally important to the Governor is the need to increase awareness of promoting a healthy work environment equitable to all the citizens of Washington State.

Governor Chris Gregoire believes that government functions best when the public is engaged and informed. At the State of the State Address in January Governor Gregoire became the first Governor in the nation and the first in the history of Washington State to simulcast her address in Spanish to the people of Washington via print, radio, and TV.

In summary, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs is pleased to provide the 2006 Legislative update to inform you on the progress of issues expressed by our Hispanic communities during the Governor's tenure.

We hope that you will find this newsletter informative and of value. We look forward to working with you and your communities soon.

Sincerely,
Uriel Iniguez



2006 Legislative Update

Education has always been a priority issue for the Hispanic community. Organizations, community leadership, community members and commissioner's have urged Governor Gregoire to improve access to quality education and increase opportunities for higher education.

Governor Gregoire's accomplishments for education include:

Creating a system to rate quality of early learning opportunities. The department of early learning will develop a system to rate the quality of early learning providers. Eventually, providers whose clients receive subsidized childcare through the state will receive higher reimbursements based on their quality ratings.

Requiring school district accountability. Districts will fully report how WASL-assistance funds are used, the types of assistance selected by students, the number of students who take part in each option and the results achieved. Funds are set aside to reward districts that use unique programs shown to help struggling students succeed.

Establishing an early learning public-private partnership. The partnership will seek input from parents, community leaders and educators on what support systems are needed. Coordinated public-outreach campaigns will be developed for select audiences about the importance of early learning for children and society.

Helping struggling students pass the WASL. Funding is provided to help students who have been unsuccessful in one or more 10th grade WASL tests in reading, writing and mathematics. School districts will offer intensive instruction, including summer school, classes before or after school and on Saturdays, skill seminars, test preparation and tutoring. Activities may occur on school campus, or via the internet.

Help for students for whom English is a second language. Funding is provided for the office of the superintendent of public instruction to investigate how best to make sure language is not an obstacle to meeting standards in math.

Help for students furthest behind in math. New mathematics materials will be incorporated in a course presented as a series of learning experiences. Students will focus on one "bite" at a time, submitting math work samples or participating in mini-assessments. Student success with these options will eventually lead to meeting the math standard for high school graduation. New math tutorials will be developed and offered on the internet.

On March 9, Governor Gregoire signed into law a measure that removes a barrier to **Health Care** for children. House Bill 2376 moves the state one-step closer to the Governor's goal of health care for all Washington's children by 2010. The bill prohibits monthly premiums for children on state programs whose families are struggling to make ends meet. An additional 73,000 more children will have health care coverage in 2007 because of this bill and other health care reforms in the budget signed by Gregoire.

Additionally, there was widespread consensus on expansion of the **Basic Health Plan**. As many in our community know, the Basic Health Plan remains the only coverage for low-income working Hispanics in Washington.

In 2005, the Governor signed into law a measure that increases the Linked Deposit Program's **Lending** authority to \$100 million for certified women and minority owned business enterprises. The program encourages banks to make loans to these businesses at below-market rates.

The state treasurer is authorized to use up to \$100 million of short-term state treasury surplus funds. These funds are deposited with banks as certificate of deposits on the condition that the banks make "**Qualifying Loans**" under the program. The interest rate charged to the minority or women owned businesses receiving the loan are two percentage points below market interest rates.

(Continued on next column)

State Health Policy

The Washington State Commission of Hispanic Affairs (CHA) and the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA) have been tasked by the Governor to represent the needs of our respective communities in the State of Washington.

Therefore, on their behalf, we have urged the Board of Pharmacies to do everything in their power to ensure that pharmacist's refusals to sell lawfully prescribed products and services does not become a reality in this state. No one should be denied appropriate prescription drugs based on the personal, religious, or moral objection of individual pharmacists. It is our belief that such a policy would adversely affect Hispanics and Asians as they try to obtain the few healthcare pharmacy services accessible to them.

In a letter from the Governor's office, we were assured that the Governor herself feels strongly about the rights of patients to receive valid, legally prescribed prescriptions, just as she does.

The Board of Pharmacy is in the process of drafting a rule on this issue and the Governor asked her policy advisor, Christina Hulet, to attend upcoming board meetings.

If you or your designee are also interested in attending, please contact Doreen Beebe, with the Department of Health. She can be reached at 360-236-4834 or by email at Doreen.beebe@doh.wa.gov.

In the first week of the 2006 legislative session, Governor Gregoire signed into law a measure that provides \$7.6 million to boost the state's existing program to help low-income people pay **Heating and Lighting** costs this winter.

Governor Gregoire also took steps to strengthen the **Protection of Children** in state care by improving staffing levels to ensure that caseworkers are able to respond quickly to reports of child abuse and make more frequent visits to children protected by state child welfare laws.

She also restored balance, stability and equity into the **Unemployment Insurance** system by signing into law changes to the unemployment insurance system that will eliminate provisions that disproportionately reduced benefits for women, people of color and low-income workers.

President's Address

Speech given by PRESIDENT VICENTE FOX QUESADA during a gathering with Farmers and Mexican Producers of Apples, Pears and Cherries, at the G&G Orchards in the city of Yakima.

"Very many thanks to Governor Christine Gregoire for the idea of bringing us here, to this beautiful Yakima Valley, to reunite to us with the most beautiful people of the world, the Mexican men and women present here today. The best way for development, progress and family prosperity to take place is to act with responsibility, to act wisely, to work hard every day as we Mexicans know how to do. And when obstacles appear, as they will, they have to be surpassed by working in unity, working as a team.

We have worked, listened and constructed proposals, listening directly to those who work long days, to those who have arrived in this land of opportunity with sacrifice, risking their lives. We have all worked on this immigration topic with clear intention to reach an agreement that gives security, legality, and which creates order to the migratory flows so that these occur with absolute respect towards human rights and labor rights. And today it seems that we are already at the end of the long road. Today all these thoughts, proposals, and ideas are in the Congress of the United States and is our responsibility to respect the sovereignty of that Congress. They will make the best decision for their country, but also for our country, because immigration is a shared responsibility. And I believe that with respect, with true cooperation, and with a great capacity of understanding we are going to be able to reach our goals together for the benefit of the people and their families. And the authorities here in this great state of Washington, have been working to advance small things, but of great importance for you, our beloved countrymen and women here.

Small things like the driver's license, access to an establishment of higher learning, and equality of conditions for all residents. We are diligent people, a hard working people, we are people who appreciate those who treat us well, and we are loyal to those who open the doors of opportunity to us. The Mexican community is loyal towards this valley and towards this great state."

As for Health:

"Nobody likes to be ill, no one likes to lose his or her health, much less if the person is a son or daughter or loved one. Under these principles, in Mexico we created the Popular Insurance system that I now make available to all of you and your families so that when you visit Mexico there is a policy of medical insurance at your disposition, good at any hospital or institution of public health free of charge."

As for Jobs:

"We are working hard to generate jobs in Mexico, believe me, it is the number one priority of my Government and fortunately the economy has responded to the budgetary discipline and to the macro-economic stability. In the first trimester of the year our economy already grew five and a half percent, but more importantly than the numbers is the fact that 350,000 new jobs have been created and, at this moment, in the cities of the border, the industries there show a deficit of 100,000 jobs. And I know that there we have a problem because the jobs that are now being offered in the north of Mexico and at the border are jobs which require a high school degree and or a bachelor's degree. We have to accelerate our pace to prepare to our people, because we need to match those jobs to qualified people.

And there is a wise formula that I have heard President Bush repeat time and time again. We must respect, we must support all action and encounter between an employer and somebody who wants to work and that is the foundation of this immigration proposal that is in progress. Twenty thousand workers are going to be required here in the valley in a few months to work for a short period of time. It is not possible to leave those wonderful cherries to rot, as it is not possible to prevent someone from taking advantage of the opportunity to work to maintain his or her family. We have an obligation to find particular solutions to those opportunities. Mexico, certainly loses when her people leave; we lose talent, we lose work energy, that is why there is a great will and desire to engage all this energy and all this talent for the good of our country and we are not going to rest until we obtain it.

In conclusion, I come with much enthusiasm here to the United States, particularly to this State of Washington, my first intention to be with you; and secondly, to discuss the economic subjects of commerce, cultural and educative interchange. And finally, to work with people of good will, people full of humanity and good heart. But in the end what interests me more is to say we love you very much back in Mexico, and we know what you are worth, we know the sadness and nostalgia that you experience being far from your land, far from its music, its communities, and your families.

As a recommendation I wish to offer this piece of advice: study, study and study more, that is what is going to give your children a very special place at some future date."

Viva Mexico!