



LATINOS UNIDOS OF IOWA, INC.,
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Third-Quarter Newsletter, 2006

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✚ Special Events

Annual Latinos Unidos Scholarship Award Dinner

About fifty family, friends, LU members, & supporters turned out for the Annual Scholarship Awards Dinner, held at the Catholic Pastoral Center in downtown Des Moines on Sept. 16. With several sponsor representatives present, fourteen Latinas & Latinos were recognized for their academic promise with scholarships of \$1,000 each. Latinos Unidos extends its congratulations & best wishes to the fourteen recipients and their families.

Attending a four-year institution in Iowa are: Juan Carlos Cadenillas, Liliana Carbajal, Rebeca Martin, Virginia McKinney, Andrea Neri, Esperanza Pintor, Chelah Ryan, Daniella Bermeo Torres, Taja Will, & Anibal Ybarra-Rojas. These recipients are attending a two-year institution: Abraham Cardenas, Maria Cecilia Gutierrez, Luis Meza, & Mikel Benedicto Morris.

Latinos Unidos extends its heartfelt thanks to the sponsoring individuals & organizations that made this year's scholarships possible. Without you, these deserving young men & women would have faced even greater challenges in furthering their educations.

Dr. Jose and Betty Olivencia (Iowa Vein Center)	\$5,000
Bankers Trust (Alex Orozco, Noemi Oyarzabal)	\$2,500
Principal Financial (Jodi Murphy, Claudia Schabel)	\$2,000
Wells Fargo Financial (Kathy Murphy, Eric Idehen)	\$2,000
United Parcel Service (Karen Gonzales, Maria Heidebrecht)	\$1,500
Regions Bank (Michele Howell)	\$ 500

In addition, Latinos Unidos added \$1,000 to make the total, \$14,000.

There are many thanks to give to all who made this possible for 2006. Without doubt, the three scholarship application judges had their hands full in evaluating applications: Chairperson Ewa Pratt (Des Moines Area Community College), Jennifer Nostrala (Simpson College), & Coralee Turner (Grandview College). In addition, Ewa spoke at the ceremony & oversaw the giving of the awards. Noemi Oyarzabal performed yeoman work, as she always does, in creating the award certificates & the table flags. Kara Perez (Wells Fargo) provided the banking support. Ann Morris deserves thanks for her work in photographing the event, & in writing, translating, & distributing press releases.

Look for photos of the dinner & recipients throughout the newsletter.

Inside This Issue: Recent Latinos Unidos Events

- Pictures from Scholarship Award Dinner & Latino Heritage Festival
- **Special Feature:** Unleashing the Power of Hispanic Entrepreneurship in Iowa
- Latino HIV/AIDS Prevention & the Aids Project of Iowa
- Events & Opportunities: The 8th Latino Conference
- *And more!!*

Recent Latinos Unidos Events

↳ Latino Heritage Festival Booth, September 8 & 9

September has been a month beyond merely busy for many of us. Latinos Unidos organized a booth at the Latino Heritage Festival, along with the annual Scholarship Award Ceremony & another session of strategic planning to chart the future of the organization.

On Saturday, our booth at the Heritage Festival was visited steadily until weather threatened in the evening. We gave out many flyers, membership forms, & other materials, and there were conversations with potential scholarship applicants, members of the community seeking jobs & other assistance, & associates, friends, & sponsors. Thanks to Juan Carlos Cadenillas, Amy Campos (DM Public Schools), Andrea Laug (UPS), Ann Morris (IA Workforce Development), Walter (“dancing with bears”) Perez (IA Dept. of Human Services) Antonio Richter, Lee Searles (DMACC), Carmela Shaw, & Jerry Tormey, for staffing or, in Amy’s, Carmela’s, & Juan’s cases, being willing to staff the booth on Sunday, which was canceled due to rain. Thanks as well to all those who put something in Jesus Estrada’s hat to pay for the space.

The Story Time at the Bankers Trust tent was a resounding success, with Bertha DeSouza, Nina Givens, Ann Morris, Rosa Rodriguez, & Jerry Tormey telling tales to adults & children alike. Our partnership with Noemi Oyarzabal & Bankers Trust has been very rewarding for everyone. A big thanks to Noemi for her efforts in organizing the country booths, making the Story Time sign, & all else.



Scenes from the Latino Heritage Festival, Blank Park Zoo: Above left: Two of many colorful dress styles in the Festival Parade. Above right: This picture says a lot: a display of Latinos Unidos activities next to a small child who, we hope, will benefit directly or indirectly from the community-building & educational work we support. Immediate right: Ann Morris & Antonio Richter at the Latinos Unidos Unidos booth. Tony busily engages a visitor in conversation.





Five Scholarship Recipients, left to right: Juan Cadenillas, Virginia McKinney, Mikel Morris, Luis Meza, & Liliana Carbajal.

↪ **Strategic Planning Meeting, September 23**

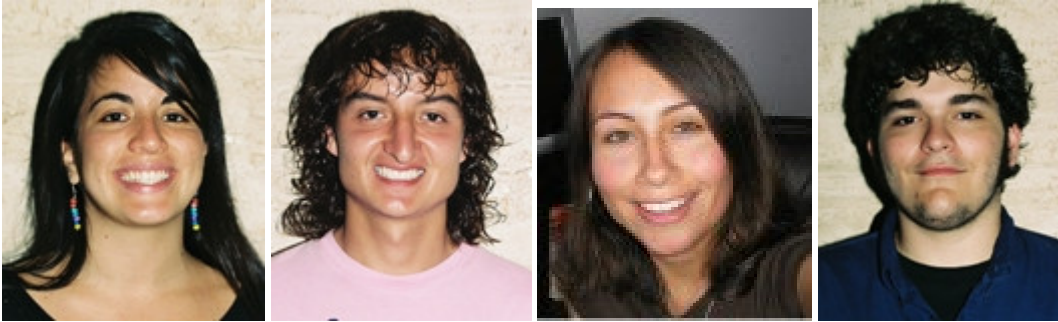
Four of us were able to break away from busy lives for a very productive & thoughtful strategic planning session. Maria Heidebrecht & Jerry Tormey represented the Board of Directors, while Nicole Bleckwehl & Lee Searles represented the officers. At this point, a new mission statement is so close to being final that some of us can smell & taste it. We also considered numerous changes in the By-Laws to reflect changes in organizational process.

The tentative mission statement & by-law changes will be presented & discussed at the next monthly meeting, on October 19, from 6 p.m. to about 7:30 p.m., in Building 3, DMACC Urban Campus.

Thanks to Frank Owens, Iowa State Extension Service, for all his help in meetings leading up to this point, & to the Des Moines Higher Education Collaborative for allowing us to meet at the John & Mary Pappajohn Higher Education Center.

↪ **Change in the Membership Year**

We have decided to make the membership year go from January 1 to December 31 of each year. It has become confusing to keep track of who has paid dues when each individual's year begins on the date of payment. This will also make it easier for us to send out notices. We hope that you won't mind paying an overlapping membership if you already paid after January, 2006. If this presents a hardship, please let us know, & we'll try to accommodate your need.



Four Scholarship Recipients, left to right: Daniela Bermeo Torres, Abraham Cardenas, Becca Martin, & Anibal Ybarra-Rojas. Not shown: Esperanza Pintor, Taja Will, Andrea Neri, Chelah Ryan, Maria Gutierrez

Unleashing The Power of Hispanic Entrepreneurship in Iowa

My name is Max Cardenas and I recently started a new company that will specialize in what I believe is one of the most interesting jobs in the world: helping immigrant entrepreneurs from all over Latin American start and grow their companies in Central Iowa.

I am also an immigrant entrepreneur. I was born in Lima, Peru, and had the amazing opportunity to attend Grinnell College here in Iowa. As a college student I witnessed the tremendous growth of the Latino population in nearby cities like Des Moines and Marshalltown and became very conscious of the lack of services and unmet needs. In partnership with Warren Morrow, a fellow student who is originally from Mexico City, we started a non-profit dedicated to the leadership training and college preparation of Latino students. After years of similar community development work in Central Iowa, Warren and I realized the importance of economic self-sufficiency for Latino families to improve their households and neighborhoods, and to acquire political and professional representation in the larger community.

Warren and I are now partners on a business that aims to boost the number of Latino-owned businesses through one-on-one technical assistance and training for existing and aspiring Latino immigrant entrepreneurs. We work with a wide variety of Hispanic businesses, from a Mexican grocery store in Des Moines' East Grand district to a Tejano clothing store in rural communities like Marshalltown.

Fueled by a rapidly expanding Hispanic consumer market, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that US Hispanic consumers spend \$700 billion a year and are predicted to surpass a \$1 trillion by the end of the decade. Hispanic-owned businesses outpace the national growth rate for other companies by over 20%.

In the past 10 years, Hispanic entrepreneurship has grown tremendously in Iowa, becoming a powerful economic force. According to the US Census Bureau there are currently over 1,500 Latino-owned businesses in Iowa, up 20%, from the previous count in the year 2000. In partnership with the Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce our company researched local Hispanic-owned businesses and found that solely 11 businesses produced over \$3 million in sales per year and created 65 full time and part time jobs. These numbers generate significant contributions for the larger community in terms of employment, and tax revenues that benefit schools, roads, and local police departments.

Immigration in Iowa has truly fueled this level of business growth. When you are starting from scratch in a new community the risk of starting your own business is almost second nature. Latino immigrants are not afraid to take on the entrepreneurship risk and see the growth of their businesses as vital to their families' future. I also believe that as the success of Iowa's immigrant-owned businesses becomes more visible, it will have a positive long term impact on mainstream public opinion. The growth of Latino-owned businesses directly affects the health of our local economies while indirectly ensuring social integration and equality in the future.

Max Cardenas
cardenas@divsolutions.com
www.divsolutions.com



Scenes from the July Latinos Unidos Picnic: Singing the piñata song before taking a few swings at it. Elia Cardenas & others enjoying the food, with water balloons handy just in case...

Events & Opportunities

The 8th Strengthening and Valuing Latina/o Communities in Iowa Conference (the “Latino Conference”) has put together an exciting assortment of keynote speakers, entertainers, and workshops for its Youth Summit (Friday, October 27, at the Des Moines Central Library), Pre-Conference Institute (Friday, Oct. 27, at the John & Mary Pappajohn Education Center), and main Conference (Saturday, October 28, Hotel Fort Des Moines). This year’s theme is “Raices/Roots: Honoring Our Past to Build Our Future.” The Latino Conference has been planned by the University of Iowa School of Social Work & a dedicated planning committee from several institutions.

Among the special features are:

- Los Angeles Times reporter Sonia Nazario, the keynote speaker, whose book, *Enrique’s Journey* (La Travesía de Enrique) tells of a Honduran boy’s harrowing journey north to find his mother in the U.S.
- Maestro Ocelocoatl, leader of a calpulli dance group from Mexico & promoter of indigenous Aztec/Mexica cultural rights.
- Teatro del Pueblo from St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Jorge Zeballos, who will speak about how Latino cultural identity is shaped.
- Ricardo Levins Morales, the featured artist, originally from Puerto Rico.

Of special note this year is Dia de los Muertos/Day of the Dead Community Celebration, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 27, with a procession from 826 Dunham to the Latino Heritage Museum at 801 Scott Ave. in Des Moines. The procession begins at 6:30. About 14 community groups, representing Latinos and non-Latinos, will build altars at the Heritage Museum on Oct. 21.

Every program event is designed to provoke thought about the many roles and opportunities that Hispanics/Latinos have in Iowa and the U.S., about the personal and community needs that exist, and the many problems of and reasons for immigration. Latinos Unidos Vice President Lee Searles is a member of the Latino Conference Workshop Committee, just one of many hats that he wears.

For registration brochures, contact Lee Searles at lsearles@att.net, or visit the Conference Web site at <http://www.uiowa.edu/%uEsocialwk/Conference.html>. For questions about registration or scholarships to attend, contact Kate Kemp, School of Social Work, Univ. of Iowa, 319-335-1254 or kate-kemp@uiowa.edu. If you would like to join the other sponsors of the Conference, contact Diane Finnerty at 319-335-4933 or diane-finnerty@uiowa.edu.

Latino HIV/AIDS Prevention & The AIDS Project of Central Iowa

Ernesto Perez from the Border Health Foundation in Tuscon, Arizona spent the afternoon at the AIDS Project of Central Iowa on July 18 discussing the issue of HIV prevention in the Latino community. Mr. Perez provides capacity building assistance to HIV prevention providers throughout the United States. With years of experience, Mr. Perez was able to provide valuable tools and ideas to help Project staff expand and improve the HIV prevention program for Latinos. Mr. Perez highlighted the importance of creativity to engage people in prevention activities. For example, he talked about using piñatas stuffed with condoms and lubricant to spice up an event. Mr. Perez also stressed the need for community-building. It is through collaboration that referrals can be made for HIV testing, case management, and prevention counseling services.

The timing of this program worked well since The Project’s newest staff member, Ricky Quijano, was able to participate. Ricky will be responsible for providing HIV prevention, testing, and outreach services in the Latino community. Expect to hear from Ricky in the upcoming weeks, and always feel free to contact him to refer clients to testing or counseling services. He is also available to come to your site to offer outreach, education, and testing services and to provide free HIV prevention supplies. Ricky can be reached at rickyq@aidsprojectci.org, 515/284-0245. *Submitted by Jordan Selha, The Project.*

Attention Members: Upcoming General Meetings

The October, November, & December general business meetings will take place on October 12, November 9, & December 14. The meetings begin at 6 pm in Building 3, DMACC Urban Campus. There is parking near Building 3, between 7th & 9th Streets.

The meeting dates for 2007 will appear in the next newsletter.

Educational Issues & News

LEGAL NEWS

After about a year of legislative debates, townhall meetings, visits with constituents, and input from government agencies and leaders, the U.S. Congress sent a bill to President Bush that authorizes the construction of 700 miles of fence along the Mexico-U.S. border. The bill, H.R. 6061, is called the Secure Fence Act of 2006, & it was passed by both the House of Representatives & the Senate. No compromise was reached on earlier bills that each house of Congress had drafted earlier. H.R. 4437 has gained some notoriety, especially among activists & human rights advocates, because of the harshness of its provisions, including felony convictions for almost anyone caught aiding an undocumented immigrant. The Senate attempted to craft a comprehensive bill that was much less stringent, but its opponents successfully labeled it an "amnesty" and compared it to the 1986 Immigration Reform & Control Act. The 1986 "amnesty" allowed several million Mexicans & Central Americans to apply for legal status, but some of its provisions also opened the way for document forgery. The forged identification problem became the reason many politicians have described it as a "failure."

Fearing problems from any attempt at comprehensive immigration reform, many representatives & Senators backed away from any legislation that would address undocumented immigration directly. Instead, the Secure Fence Act was passed almost at the last moment as Congress prepared to adjourn before the election campaign break.

Critics of a 700-mile fence point to several issues. Once completed, this fence leaves about 1,300 miles of border protected by barbed wire fence, which is easily crossed or cut. The authorized fence would force border crossers into the harsher environments, where deaths & injuries may claim even more lives. Almost half of the undocumented from Latin American sources enter legally with shopping permits or visas of one kind or another, but they overstay their visas & permits. This last group would not be stopped by a fence.

On the southern side of the border, a virtual industry has been created to move people to the north. The coyotes, or guides, are only one part of a complex, informal economy that stretches across several national borders. The coyotes sometimes abandon groups of crossers when trouble appears, or they allow groups on the U.S. side to be robbed by U.S. citizens. All along the journey the stories of corrupt officials, beatings, murders, rapes, and other horrible acts are commonplace. Occasionally there are acts of kindness & mercy, such as the man who patrols the border in a private airplane & drops bottled water for crossers in dry terrain. In the Mexican city of Nogales there have been stories about local residents setting up shelters for people who tried to cross but were sent back south, penniless & unable to pay even for a phone call to relatives at home.

Time will tell if the U.S. government attempts any kind of comprehensive & humane solution to the estimated 13 million undocumented (just under 10% are from Asian countries, by the way). For now, some are convinced that the 700 miles of high technology fence, funded by \$1.3 billion dollars of taxpayer money, is a satisfactory started, but others think that the fence only will aggravate an already terrible situation.

***IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN IOWA & THE U.S.,
THE MIDTERM ELECTION IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7.
OCTOBER 28 IS THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN PERSON.
Information, including voter registration forms in English, Spanish, & other
languages, are available at the Secretary of State's Web site:
http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/voterreg/reg_to_vote.html***

DMACC's Interpretation & Translation Program

The Iowa Department of Education has given its stamp of approval to the new Interpretation and Translation Program at Des Moines Area Community College. The program recognizes the increasing language diversity of Iowa's residents because of economic and political immigration. It also is intended to provide certification to those who want to pursue a four-year degree, or develop translation skills specific to certain professions, such as judicial work or health care.

There is increased demand for bilingual speakers, of Spanish and English, to be sure, but of English and several other languages from diverse parts of the world. If you want more information, contact Michael Piper at mjpiper@dmac.edu or 515-697-7774.

The program is coordinating closely with the Iowa Division of Latino Affairs to start a set number of students each semester for several semesters, in order to meet the growing needs for bilingual Spanish translation. However, the program is not specific to Spanish, and there are needs for bilingual speakers of English & a very large number of languages. The need bears witness to the changing cultural & ethnic landscape of Iowa, & to the opportunities the state will have in the near future for intercultural understanding.



A Little History Lesson: NATIVE PEOPLES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & MIGRATION

When we hear the word "Amazon" we often think of rainforests and the country of Brazil. It is true that much of the Amazon rainforest lies within Brazil's borders, but not all of it. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela all share part of this large and varied forest system.

Each of these countries has discovered that the rainforest yields many valuable resources—agricultural land, gold & silver, hydroelectric power, lumber, oil, pasture—and the attempts to develop these resources often endanger the Amerindians who live there, and threaten the native animal and plant species. Some Amerindian groups in Brazil, for example, have demanded their rights, not as national citizens, but as the original inhabitants. Scientists fear that cutting the rainforests will affect global climate and the nonhuman residents of the region.

These cultural, environmental, & humanitarian conflicts exist in almost every nation. Recently I read about Muslims in France & other European nations, & the problems that non-Muslim Europeans have in welcoming Muslim immigrants, or even Muslim Europeans of many generations. A result has been the spread of Islamic fundamentalism & the use of terror tactics among Muslims in Europe.

Countries in the Amazon region are like other nations in facing these issues of diversity. Similar, ongoing conflicts occur in Asia, the Pacific Islands, Central & North America, Africa, & even Europe. Lack of acceptance often leads to political & social isolation, anger, & a resort to violence.

Few Amerindians—people who still identify themselves as being from one indigenous group or another—come from South America come to the United States as migrants. However, there are settlements of Maya from Guatemala and the state of Chiapas, Mexico, in the southern U.S. They, too, come from environments that include rainforests, especially in Chiapas. The world is getting to be very mixed up because of dominant economic and political forces. There is a lot of sadness and loss involved, but also hope and new opportunity.

The receiving locations & nations cannot help these worldwide processes of migration within & across their borders. The best policies probably are not the ones that ban or isolate immigrants, but the ones that welcome & assist new arrivals, offering them opportunities to advance educationally & economically. This may be the most effective method of fighting terror, because it reduces or eliminates the reasons that give justification to these tactics of angry frustration. *By Lee Searles*

A Very Special Thank-You...

... to **Noemi Oyarzabal** for all that you do and have done and will ever do for Latinos Unidos. You are an often unsung worker. Lena would have been proud to see all your work at the Scholarship Award Dinner.

Noemi indispensably represents Bankers Trust for Latinos Unidos. At Bankers Trust she works in Marketing, and she has brought her talents to the posters & tickets for the Books in Spanish dinner for the Des Moines Public Library, to the bookmarks for the Celebrate Learning check presentation to the Library, and, more than once, to the certificates for students and sponsors at the Scholarship Dinners. Her art is original, her signs are colorful, and the extra details are fantastic. Noemi believes in what we do.

Hailing from Argentina, Noemi helps us understand that "Latina/o" is more than about Mexico. She helped us arrange the Story Time at the Bankers Trust booth at this year's Latino Heritage Festival. Our collaboration with Noemi and Bankers Trust deserves our profuse thanks, as they continue to play a vital part not only in Latinos Unidos, but in the goals that our organization stands for on behalf of the Hispanics/Latinos and many diverse cultures of central Iowa.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IOWA'S CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

Iowa's history in race relations indicates that there has long been a positive attitude expressed by Iowans. This attitude has been partly due to the relatively small number of minority, ethnic, & racial groups residing in the state, but it also has been a product of a well established & widespread "equalitarian" sentiment in Iowa that has long demanded equal opportunity for all.

Almost 90 years before the 1964 U.S. Supreme Court declared that segregation in public schools was not permissible in this country, the Iowa Supreme Court held that Negroes could not be denied equal access to Iowa schools. In the case, *Clark v. Board of Directors, 24 Iowa 266* (1868), the Court said, "The Board of Directors may exercise a uniform discretion equally operative upon all . . . but the Board cannot, in their discretion, or otherwise, deny a youth admission to any particular (public) school because of his or her nationality, religion, color, clothing or the like." Similarly, in *Coger v. Northwest Union Packet Company* (1873), Iowa's highest tribunal held that a provision of the Iowa Constitution, that "all men are, by nature, free and equal" entitled Negroes to the same rights & privileges on common carriers as whites.

This long-standing Iowa dedication to equal opportunity was re-emphasized in 1884, when the legislature enacted a law making it a crime to deny any individual equal access to specified business establishments, "except for reasons by law applicable to all persons." Only Massachusetts, New York, & Kansas enacted statutes that guaranteed Negroes & other minority groups equal opportunity in "places of public accommodation" prior to 1884. On April 14, 1958, the Governor's Commission on Human Relations was established by a proclamation of Governor Herschel C. Loveless. In his opening address to the Commission, the Governor outlined in part the functions & fields of activity for the Commission. He noted,

"The fundamental purpose of this Commission, as I envisioned it, is to help enable citizens of our state . . . whatever their religious, national, racial or economic background may be . . . to enjoy, to the fullest extent, the privileges and benefits of citizenship. We seek to guarantee our citizens the right to employment, to education, to housing, to the use of public accommodations, to health and welfare services and to the right to live in peace and dignity."

The chairman of that Commission, Dr. Donald Boles, and the secretary, Mrs. David Kruidenier, Jr., presently serve on the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

Subsequent Governor's Commissions on Human Relations brought to the public's attention the inadequacies on Iowa's 1884 "Civil Rights Act." The statute barred discrimination on the basis of such factors as race, religion, or ethnic background in specifically enumerated establishments. The 1884 law, as amended provides that "All persons within this state shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, restaurants, chophouses, eating houses, lunch counters, and all other places where refreshments are served, public conveyances, barber shops, bathhouses, theaters, and all other places of amusement.

(continues on next page)

“Any person who shall violate the provisions . . . (of the' preceding section) by denying to any person, except for reason by law applicable to all persons, the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges enumerated therein, or by aiding or inciting such denial, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor . . .”

The Iowa Supreme Court decided, in *State v. Katz*, 241 Iowa 115, 40 N.W. 2d 41 (1949), that the 1884 statute could be applied to an enterprise not expressly listed therein. The tendency of Iowa courts has been, however, to interpret narrowly the legislative intent of the 1884 Civil Rights Act. Because, therefore, the public accommodations provision specifically enumerated "all . . . places where refreshments are served, public conveyances, barber shops, bathhouses . . . and all . . . places of amusement," the courts held that the law intended to exclude from its coverage those facilities not so listed. Consequently, many kinds of establishments catering to the public were left untouched. They retained an unfettered discretion to discriminate among their patrons on such bases as race, religion, or ethnic background. Among these places open to the general public for a fee that were exempt from the 1884 Civil Rights Act were retail stores of all kinds, reducing salons, beauty shops, parking lots, gas stations, schools, health clinics, doctors' & dentists' offices, hospitals, banks, loan companies, lawyers' offices, real estate brokers' offices, employment agency offices, & many, many others.

The Governor's Commission on Human Relations recognized the deficiencies of the 1884 "Civil Rights Act" and due in large part to the efforts of the advisory Commission members, the Fair Employment Practices Act of 1963 was passed by the state legislature. Governor Harold E. Hughes noted in 1963 that "discrimination retards the growth of Iowa's economy. It leads to a dismal and distressing squandering of human resources. It does not allow many Iowans to fulfill their economic potential; thus making all Iowa the poorer for it."

The 61st General Assembly under the able leadership of Governor Harold E. Hughes enacted Iowa's Civil Rights Act of 1965 providing for administrative enforcement of the legislation which prohibits discrimination in public accommodations, employment, apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training programs, vocational schools, employment agencies, or by the employees, agents, or members thereof.

The Commission created by the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 held its first meeting with Governor Hughes in July, 1965. Since then, the Commission has been actively involved in problems throughout the State of Iowa. This report reflects the fact that the present Iowa Commission is carrying on the fine Iowa tradition of



Get Well Soon!

Lena, we are getting along pretty well without your presence at our recent activities, but we would like to get along very well with your presence. Please rest up, get well, & join us as soon as you can.

From all of us who make up the other half of Latinos Unidos

Voter Information for Latino Youth

The Web site VotoLatino (<http://www.votolatino.org/>) is geared toward Latino youth who can vote & who take an interest in casting a ballot. By putting in an email address & your state of residence, the Web site directs you to the GoVote site, from which you can register. You will need a form of identification to fill out the registration form, & a link from the form describes what forms of ID are acceptable in Iowa.

The Upcoming Midterm Elections, Tuesday, November 7

According to a Pew Hispanic Center Fact Sheet, "Hispanics and the 2006 Election," the percentage of eligible Hispanic/Latino voters in the U.S. has grown from 7.4 % of the total population to 8.6% in 2006, or over 17 million Latino voters. Of these, 25% are naturalized citizens, & 75% are native-born Hispanic Americans of the second & third generations.

Hispanic/Latino voters have the most influence on local and statewide elections in the communities & states of greatest concentration. However, the trends in Iowa are worthy of note. Of Iowa's 2,862,541 people (based on U.S. Census Bureau figures), 106,052 are Latinos, and of that number, 37,162 are eligible to vote. Eligible Latino voters in Iowa represent 1.7% of all persons who are eligible to vote.

The Pew Center data breaks down Latino voters by Iowa's five Congressional Districts. District 1 has 6,089 Hispanic voters, or 1.4% of that district's total eligible voters. In District 2, there are 7,701 eligible Latino voters (1.8% of that district's voters). About 8,402 Hispanic/Latino voters live in District 3, accounting for 1.9% of voters in that region. District 4 has the smallest number, 5,832 Latino voters, or 1.4% of voters in that district. In what might be a strange twist of fate, District 5 (western Iowa) has the highest number of eligible Latino voters, 9,138, which is also the highest percentage of the five districts, at 2.2%.

Of course these numbers & percentages are small compared to states like Arizona, California, Florida, New Mexico, New York, Texas, but there is a clear trend in Iowa that, in proportion to the overall population, is changing more rapidly than the "traditional" states with large Hispanic/Latino populations.

More Events & Opportunities

Hispanic Educational Resources, directed by Christina Fernandez-Morrow, is hosting a *Mis Quince*, a Quinceañera Fashion Show, to coincide with the 8th Strengthening & Valuing Latina/o Communities Conference. There will be gowns, tuxedos, tiaras, & flowers, all of which are part of the longstanding celebration of a young Latina's fifteenth birthday. The quinceañera continues to be a significant event for a young woman coming of age & her family. In the United States, the quinceañera thrives, which some adjustments to its new setting in a consumer society.

The event takes place at the Hotel Fort Des Moines on Saturday, October 28, beginning at 6 p.m., with the fashion show at 7 p.m., followed by dancing until midnight to music provided by DJ Sergio of Latin Rhythmx. There is a \$12 cover charge at the door. Cake and coffee are provided.

Proceeds benefit Hispanic Educational Resources (HER), which is a nonprofit organization that serves over 150 families every day through one of its three programs: the Xochipilli Children's Center, Family Services, & Outreach. HER encourages bilingualism, cultural affirmation in its educational services, & success in education & life. The organization is well worth our support.

If you have an idea for something you'd like to see in an upcoming issue of the Latinos Unidos Newsletter, please contact any of following: Lee Searles, 515-979-6457, lsearles@att.net. Ann Morris, morrisad6812@msn.com. Lena Robison, IowaLatina@aol.com.