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## President's Message



Hola, NOPHNCSE members!

I hope you had a great summer. I have some exciting news. NOPHNCSE has a Facebook page! You should've received an invitation to join the group page. If you haven't, please contact your regional representative and provide your personal email address and we will send you the invitation to join the group. This is a private page and only current members can have access to it. We will be using this Facebook page to post job vacancies, detail opportunities, publish stories, share efforts in your regions, and communicate with our members. Please join the page and see what's going on in our NOPHNCSE community.

We are planning our annual business meeting via VTC. We are looking for ideas and topics you would like to discuss, as well as provide training. Please send your ideas/suggestions/topics to your regional representative.

Other exciting news: NOPHNCSE will start a database of employees interested in doing details. If you are interested in doing a detail please send your regional representative your name, contact information, type of detail/details you are interested in, and length of time.

I want to take this opportunity and thank our outgoing council members Roney, Jorge, Carmen, Carolyn and Rick for their hard work and dedication to NOPHNCSE during their tenure. I want to welcome our new council members: Herman Garcia-Vice-President, Brunilda Velez-Treasurer, Flavio Garza-South Central Regional Representative, Luis Cruz-Arroyo-South East Regional Representative, and Mary Sanchez-West Regional Representative. I am looking forward to working with them. I would also like to thank the nominations and elections committee members, Michael Castillo (TX), Kristin Graham Chavez (AZ), Russell Castro (TX), Louie Gamboa (CO), and Tamara Buitenwerf (IA), for leading the election process.

Last but not least, I want to say farewell to Carmen Ortiz and offer our best wishes for her retirement. Carmen has served NOPHNCSE in many positions, not just in the council but as Conference Planning Chair. It is due to her hard work that we have a webpage today. Carmen, thank you for all that you have done for the organization. We all wish you well in your new journey.

Happy trails,

*Astrid Martinez*

# facebook

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# Proud NOPHNRCSE Member

by Edwin Martinez-Martinez



Greetings NOPHNRCSE members! My name is Edwin Martinez-Martinez.

**About Me:** I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, in “La Ciudad del Petate” Sabana Grande which is located in the southwest side of the island. Currently, I work at the St. Johns, Michigan NRCS Service Center as a district conservationist. As part of my career development, I am also pursuing a doctoral degree at Michigan State University, working as part of the Plant and Soils Sciences and Biosystems Engineering departments. I will be graduating this December! I joined the NOPHNRCSE family in 2006 and have been an active member ever since.

**Education and Work Experience:** In 2003 I earned a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Agricultural Mechanical Technology from the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR)-Mayaguez Campus. In 2006, I earned a Master’s of Science Degree in Soils from the Department of Soil Science at the same university. During these years, I participated in water quality research at the UPR as well as in various internship opportunities at Cornell University and at the University of Massachusetts. I worked as part of the Student Career Experience Program in North Platte, Neb., during the summer of 2005 and at the NRCS Service Center at Utuado, Puerto Rico, during the winter of 2006. In 2006, after earning my master’s degree, I started a fulltime career with NRCS as a soil conservationist working as part of the Klamath Basin conservation planning team in the Tulelake, California NRCS Service Center. While in California and under the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, I assisted the offices of San Bernardino and San Diego County during wildfire emergencies, conducting conservation planning and resource assessments. My main work and research experiences are in water quality modeling, best management practices (BMP), wetlands hydrology, and soil quality.

**Career Highlights:** As part of the agency, I have had the opportunity to participate in multiple special agency mission details and opportunities. I worked as a Conservation Boot Camp trainer with the National Education Development Center (NEDC) for the past two years (2012 and 2013) in North Carolina. This year, I provided leadership with GIS and Toolkit to the Michigan NRCS staff while working as acting Toolkit Coordinator. Also, in 2012 I assisted NEDC with the development of a proposal to redesign the Conservation Boot Camp to develop alternatives that will allow the agency to meet current and future training demands. In 2009, I was assigned to provide leadership and training during an international detail in Veracruz, Mexico related to mangrove conservation and restoration. In 2008 I worked as part of the National Recruitment and Retention Strategic Team with NHQ leadership staff members. Meanwhile, for the past five years, I have continued to work as a liaison between NRCS and Michigan State University to promote internships, scholarships, job opportunities and the Earth Team Volunteer program on campus.

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## NOPHNRCSE Is Now On Facebook!

The communications committee is pleased to announce a NOPHNRCSE group has been established on Facebook. The NOPHNRCSE group is not like a traditional Facebook page. Our group page is private and access is by invitation only. Invitations to the join the group have been sent to paid members’ personal email addresses. Once you accept the invitation and join the group, you can access the NOPHNRCSE group from the main icons on your Facebook personal page. Members can use this group to communicate with other members across the country, publish stories, and share information about activities in your regions.

The success of the Facebook group depends on its members. We are looking for individuals that have the time, skills, and interest to volunteer to manage the Facebook group. Duties will encompass working with the communications committee to maintain and manage an active Facebook presence and to provide a positive social media environment for our members.

If you are interested in assisting with the Facebook page, please contact Lori Valadez at [lori.valadez@mt.usda.gov](mailto:lori.valadez@mt.usda.gov).



Proud NOPHNRCS Member continued...

**NOPHNRCS Membership:** As a NOPHNRCS member I had the awesome opportunity of working as part of multiple committees including: Students Scholarship Committee (2008-2012), Career Enhancement Scholarship Committee (2009, 2011), and the Technical Papers Committee (2008-2009). Working as part of these committees was a great career enhancement opportunity for me and significantly increased my professional network within the agency. I was fortunate and blessed to be granted the Career Enhancement Scholarship in 2009 and 2010. During those years, I was starting my doctoral program at Michigan State University and I planned my class scheduled to be related to natural resources conservation and engineering. This allowed me to qualify for the career enhancement scholarship. This was a crucial scholarship for me because I was paying 100 percent of my tuition as a doctorate student and this opportunity was a combination of career enhancement and financial assistance for me.

The NOPHNRCS Career Enhancement Scholarship is a great opportunity for NOPHNRCS members to obtain training, complete courses and participate in workshops that will improve their professional careers while engaging members to work as part of NOPHNRCS committees.

I am very thankful to NOPHNRCS for the career enhancement opportunities and support they have provided to me and many other members. Muchas Gracias!

Remember my friends that:

*"All of life is a journey; which paths we take, what we look back on, and what we look forward to is up to us. We determine our destination, what kind of road we will take to get there, and how happy we are when we get there."*

- From A Little Book of Happiness -

## Members Elect Herman Garcia as Vice President



It is with great honor that I serve as your vice president and extend my time and effort to address any suggestions or concerns you may have of our employee organization. Our goal is to improve the service USDA-NRCS provides to our employees, retirees, and our Hispanic customer base. It is everyone's organization, Hispanic or not, NRCS employee or not, and with a simple acknowledgement that we support the efforts of NOPHNRCS, we become a member of this great organization.

I have been an employee of NRCS for many decades, an exact number I will not reveal or I will quickly fall into the "Abuelito"

category. As a plant man, I will say it rhymes with tree and then add a few more branches. I joined NOPHNRCS soon after it was formed and have enjoyed many years serving in it and receiving a network of like-minded individuals' intent in making NRCS a successful agency in USDA.

I look forward to serving as the VP and look forward to visiting with you.

### Herman's Background:

Herman B. Garcia currently serves as the regional ecological site specialist for NRCS Soil Survey and Resource Assessment covering regions 4 and 8. He is headquartered in Phoenix, Ariz., and is providing quality assurance, oversight, and leadership in the determination of ecological sites and development of ecological site descriptions across many different resource areas of the western United States. The states within his area of responsibility include in all or part of Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming, California, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

Herman was raised in Artesia; a southeastern New Mexico farming community, now turned an energy-rich industrial hub. After high school he attended New Mexico State University in Las Cruces and graduated with a bachelor's of science in range science in 1982. During his college years, Herman participated in the CO-OP program with USDA-Soil Conservation Service in Grants and Las Cruces, N.M., allowing him to gain on-the-ground experience in natural resource planning and application while still going to college. Herman has held rangeland management specialist positions in Las Vegas, N.M. and Fort Sumner, N.M., then promoted to the area rangeland management specialist position in Tucumcari and Rio Rancho, N.M. Deciding to expand his experience, Herman was promoted to the state rangeland management specialist position in Denver, Colorado from 1999 to 2010. During this period, Herman provided state-wide support in plant materials, forestry, and rangeland conservation. He also worked in the Emergency Watershed Protection Program providing assistance to Nicaragua and post fires in Colorado, including the largest fire at the time, The Hayman Fire.

In 2010, Herman was promoted to support the Soil Survey and Resource Assessment program in his current position with leadership in ecological site descriptions (ESDs). It was time to strengthen our inventory assessment supporting documents which have only undergone two major revisions—one in the 1970s and another in the 1990s.

Now that his kids have all left the nest, Herman enjoys traveling across the west with his wife, Mary. "Empty Nest Syndrome is nowhere near that bad as we stay busy working, traveling, and hunting," said Herman.

# 2013 Hispanic Heritage Month Theme Announced

by The National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers

The National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers (NCHEPM) announced the 2013 Hispanic Heritage Month theme: “Hispanics: Serving and Leading Our Nation with Pride and Honor.” The theme highlights the important roles and significant contributions Hispanics have made with pride and honor in all sectors of the American society.

NCHEPM members, associates, and partners from various federal agencies and affinity groups, including the general public, selected the theme through a voting process which started in April 2013 with more than 40 theme submissions.

Verónica Vázquez from the U.S. Navy, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) in California submitted the winning theme, stating “Hispanics have served our nation as soldiers, educators, field workers, politicians, doctors, [and more] since the U.S. was first declared a nation, and we continue to serve in these roles [...] everyday, making a mark on this great nation of ours. It is time to educate our nation on our many accomplishments, our capabilities, and how we do it with pride and honor.”

Ismael Martínez, chairman of the council, shared Miss Vázquez’s sentiment. “The theme calls not only for the recognition of the contributions Hispanics have made for our nation, but for the appreciation and respect of the individuals who have unreservedly championed these,” he stated. “It is time for us to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our brothers and sisters.”

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

The Hispanic Heritage observance began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988, on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

The NCHEPM is a membership-based organization consisting of an executive board, members, associates, and partners from multiple Federal agencies and other organizations from across the United States, advocating for the improvement of Hispanic participation in the Federal Government.

For more information about the council, please visit [www.nationalcouncilhepm.net](http://www.nationalcouncilhepm.net).

## New Census Bureau Interactive Map Shows Languages Spoken in America

Spanish, Chinese Top Non-English Languages Spoken; Most of Population is English Proficient

The U.S. Census Bureau released an interactive, online map pinpointing the wide array of languages spoken in homes across the nation, along with a detailed report on rates of English proficiency and the growing number of speakers of other languages.

The 2011 Language Mapper shows where people speaking specific languages other than English live, with dots representing how many people speak each of 15 different languages. For each language, the mapper shows the concentration of those who report that they speak English less than “very well,” a measure of English proficiency. The tool uses data collected through the American Community Survey from 2007 to 2011.

“This map makes it easy for anyone to plan language services in their community,” said Nancy Potok, the Census Bureau’s acting director. “Businesses can tailor communications to meet their customers’ needs. Emergency responders can use it to be sure they communicate with people who need help. Schools and libraries can offer courses to improve English proficiency and offer materials written in other languages.”

The languages available in the interactive map include Spanish, French, French Creole, Italian, Portuguese, German, Russian, Polish, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Arabic. After selecting one of these languages from the menu, users will see a national population density map, with each dot representing about 100 people who speak the language at home placed where these speakers are concentrated. The map also allows users to zoom in to a smaller geographic area, where each dot represents 10 people. The dots were placed in a random location within census tracts to protect the confidentiality of speakers.

[Click here to view the interactive map!](#)

## Helping People Help the Land

# The Rapid Carbon Assessment (RaCA) is Underway in the Caribbean Area

Courtesy of Soil Survey Division Update, July 16, 2013



*At left, Carmen L. Santiago, NRCs State Soil Scientist, describes the forested Humatas soil in Las Marias, Puerto Rico. At back, left to right, Dr. Erika Marin-Spiotta, UW, assists while UPR-Mayagüez students Yesmarie and Keila complete the RaCA soil description form. Samuel Rios, NRCs Soil Scientist, waits to collect samples for bulk density measurements.*

The NRCs Caribbean Area (CB) and its Soil Survey Division staff welcome the opportunity to be part of the effort to inventory soil carbon stocks nationwide. By the late 1800s, more than 90 percent of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands had been brought into agricultural production, mostly sugar cane. Today, much of the islands have returned to a predominately second growth forest following decrease in sugar cane production. The RaCA initiative will be a great opportunity for the NRCs-CB to inventory the effects of agricultural management and land use on soil carbon stocks and soil properties.

The Caribbean RaCA project will study a total of 30 sites throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The sites represent a diversity of soils from different Major Land Resources Areas and under different land uses including cropland, pastureland, forestland and wetlands. Dr. Erika Marin-Spiotta, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will analyze the soil samples. Dr. Marin-Spiotta is studying how environmental and historical factors affect the amount of turnover of organic carbon in tropical soils through a cooperative agreement with NRCs.

During the month of May 2013, the NRCs-CB soil's staff collected soil samples from six different sites in Puerto Rico. In June 2013, soil samples were collected from four sites in St. Croix and St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. Michael Jones, Soil Data Quality Specialist (SDQS) from West Virginia, provided training on the use of the visible and near-infrared (VNIR) spectrometer and procedure in completing sample datasheets in July. Michael and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative, and several University of Puerto Rico summer students participated in sample collection at the Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge.

The NRCs-CB soils staff wishes to acknowledge their partners for the support they have provided to the RaCA Project, which will increase information and the knowledge to manage soil carbon stocks. These include the Soil Science Division, Soil Survey Region 3, the professors and students of University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez, the NRCs field office staff, numerous local and federal agency personnel, the local land users, and the soil survey team. All are contributing to the success of this project.

## Brunilda Velez is Elected Treasurer

Since May 2013, Brunilda has worked as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Assistant State Conservationist for Programs and Field Operations in Warwick, RI. Brunilda began her career with the USDA NRCS in 2003 in the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) in Eau Claire, Wis. During her 9+ years with NRCS, Brunilda has worked as a soil conservationist in West Bend, Durand and Menomonie, Wis. She also worked as the area program specialist at the Northwest Wisconsin Area office and as the district conservationist in Dunn County, Wis.

During her career, Brunilda has had the opportunity to participate in several details; she has been part of the business tool team in Wis. She has worked as the state Conservation Stewardship Program and Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative coordinator in Wisconsin and most recently she was in NHQ working as the National Great Lakes Initiative Coordinator (GLRI) under the regional conservationists.

Born in Puerto Rico, Brunilda graduated with honors from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus, with a major from the Agricultural Engineering Department (Agricultural Technology Degree TMAG).

Read about the newly elected regional representatives in the [News from Around the Regions](#) section starting on [page 6](#).



## News from Around the Regions

In each issue of *La Voz* we would like to feature news from each region. Tell us about the exciting things happening in your area. Spotlight a new member. Share your volunteer experience. Tell us what is unique about your state. We want to hear from you! Work with your regional representative to ensure your region is featured in each issue of *La Voz*.

### CARIBBEAN AREA

*Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands*



Manuel Matos, MLRA leader, and Samuel Ríos, soil scientist collect bulk density samples for the Sion soil in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Rudy G. O' Reilly, Jr., NRCS St. Croix District Conservationist assists in identifying local vegetation and sampling.

### EAST REGION

*Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia*

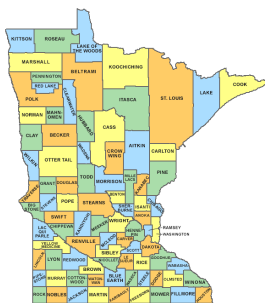
Maria Collazo, Edwin Muniz, and Rubén Pérez mentored Hispanic student-scholars at the New York City Minority Youth Environmental Training Institute. The event, sponsored by The National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC), was held August 14-20, 2013.

NHEC selected New York area students, ages 16-19, through a competitive process to attend the intensive, science-based, residential and highly educational 7-day environmental education and environmental career program.

Using classroom and outdoor settings, the Institute is designed to help build the environmental leaders and professionals of tomorrow by educating, engaging, and inspiring youth, especially Latinos/other minorities, on a range of environmental and natural resource issues. The Institute is also designed to give information on the many different college and career opportunities in the environment, and to assist students to pursue these careers in the future, especially at the U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### MIDWEST REGION

*Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin*



Did you know the number of Hispanics in Minnesota shot up 74.5 percent in the past decade?

The Census Bureau reported a 74.5 percent increase in the state's Hispanic population between 2000 and 2010. With slightly more than 250,000 people, it's the fastest-growing minority population in Minnesota.

The 2012 Census figures put Hispanics at 4.9 percent of state residents, up from 2.9 percent in 2000.

What is the Hispanic population in your state?

### NORTHERN PLAINS REGION

*Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming*

#### Ted Lucero to Complete Regional Representative Term

Charlene Lucero left the agency and resigned from her position as regional representative. Ted Lucero, resource conservationist in Colorado, has agreed to complete Charlene's term and serve as the regional representative for the Northern Plains.

Ted can be reached at 720-544-2810 ext. 2814 or [Ted.Lucero@co.usda.gov](mailto:Ted.Lucero@co.usda.gov).

## SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

*Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas*

### South Central Region Elects Flavio Garza as the Regional Representative



**Flavio Garza**  
District Conservationist/  
Resource Team Leader  
Laredo, Texas  
956-723-3222 ext. 3  
[flavio.garza@tx.usda.gov](mailto:flavio.garza@tx.usda.gov)

Hello Everyone! Saludos a todos! I am Flavio Garza Jr. and I am the new South Central regional representative for NOPHNCSE. I'm proud to say that I am a charter member of the NOPHNCSE organization. I have been working with SCS/NRCS for 24 years. I started as a soil conservationist student trainee while attending Texas A&I University in Kingsville, TX where I graduated with a bachelor's of science degree.

I have been part of several NOPHNCSE committees over the years, having served as chairman of the conference site selection ad-hoc committee in 1998-2000, vice-chairman of the Scholarship and Endowment Committee in 2004-2005, chairman of the Scholarship and Endowment Committee in 2005-2006. I also served on a couple of conference planning committees and assisted with coordinating professional development training/ breakout sessions at a couple of training conferences.

I am currently a district conservationist/resource team leader in Laredo, Texas, but I've worked at several offices throughout Texas. As the resource team leader, I oversee a multi-county area. The Laredo Resource Team is comprised of four counties which include Webb, Duval, LaSalle and McMullen counties.

I am also the Texas Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM), a position I have held since last year. This position has given me the opportunity to meet new people and has certainly opened my eyes to many civil rights issues.

I'm really excited to be the next South Central regional representative for NOPHNCSE. I look forward to working with the South Central regional members as well as the national council. I'd like to thank my predecessor, Rick Luna, for all his hard work and dedication to this organization.

## SOUTHEAST REGION

*Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia*

### Southeast Region Elects Luis Cruz-Arroyo as the Regional Representative



**Luis A. Cruz-Arroyo**  
Resource Conservationist  
Bay Minette, Ala  
1-251-937-3297  
[Luis.cruz-arroyo@al.usda.gov](mailto:Luis.cruz-arroyo@al.usda.gov)

Hello, everyone. My name is Luis Cruz-Arroyo. I have been with NRCS for three years. Born and raised in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, I always had a great interest in science and animals, and I wanted to become a veterinarian. I got accepted to the University of Puerto Rico as a pre-veterinary student. Like some college students, my interest shifted and I decided to transfer to the animal science major. I developed an interest in research and presented one abstract, four proceedings and one publication.

After graduation I pursued a master's degree in animal nutrition. During this time, I taught the Basic Animal Science, Small Ruminants, Animal Nutrition and Veterinary Physiology laboratories, and presented three more abstracts and three technical newsletters. While still pursuing my master's degree, I started a company and landed contracts with environmental engineering firms and other groups to do research in by-product recycling and management. I also worked for Pioneer Hi-Bred Seedling in their experimental facility in Salinas, Puerto Rico, mainly doing field work and managing laboratory personnel.

In 2010, I put my graduate studies on hold, applied for a job with NRCS, and was hired as a soil conservationist in Baldwin County, Ala. I worked as an acting district conservationist in Monroe County and as district conservationist in Clarke and Washington counties, Ala. Recently, I was appointed as the Resource Conservationist for the West Team in Alabama. I currently live in Jackson, Ala. with my wife, Erika, who also works with NRCS as an engineering technician. I look forward to serving as the South Central regional representative.

## WEST REGION

*Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho,  
New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington*

### Mary Sanchez is the Newly Elected Regional Representative

Hello, everyone. My name is Mary Sanchez. I am a rangeland management specialist at the Alamogordo New Mexico Field Office. I have been with SCS/NRCS since 1983 when I started in northern New Mexico as a student range conservationist for two years. In 1985, I graduated from New Mexico State University and worked in northern New Mexico as a range conservationist for three other offices until 1990. In the fall of 1990, I moved to south central Idaho as a range conservationist/ soil conservationist serving two offices and doing SNOTEL (short for snow telemetry) sites until 1993. In 1993, I became the District Conservationist for the Chandler field office in Arizona and later became a super district conservationist (area conservationist) for the Phoenix area. In 2000, I went back to southern New Mexico as a district conservationist, supervising as many as seven staff people. I am an active life member of NOPHNRCSE, and joined the organization after our first conference in 1993. I am also an active life member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Veteran of Foreign Wars Post 4384, and member of the Mesilla Valley and Otero County CowBelles of New Mexico. Joys in my life are taking care of my young 87 years of age mother, my 17.5 year old goddaughter who graduated this year, travelling, friends, and family gatherings.

**Editor's note:** Mary wrote this message on Friday, August 9, 2013. Sadly, Mary's mother, Amalia Sanchez, passed away that same day. Please keep Mary and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

## StrikeForce Initiative Aims to Reach Historically Underserved Groups

Last year, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack launched the StrikeForce Initiative, a cross-agency effort to accelerate assistance to historically underserved groups. Through this initiative, USDA is working to ensure all producers have access to programs that can help them thrive, including proven conservation programs.



Check out this excellent video featuring NRCS assistance in StrikeForce counties along the Texas/Mexico border.

Click on the image to the left to view the video.

## NOPHNRCSE Unveils New Process to Fund Regional Activities

by Frank Velazquez, Midwest Regional Representative

The national council and its members have been working on how to reach our members and its communities. NOPHNRCSE knows the importance of education to both NRCS customers and employees. It is our pleasure to inform you that NOPHNRCSE will be funding outreach activities in different states. In order for NOPHNRCSE to fund an activity, a member has to submit a proposal to the regional representatives for review and ranking. The most beneficial activity will be funded according to our ranking guidelines. Because we value our members' effort and time, the national council has developed a proposal and ranking form to distribute. The main purpose for this form is to engage in outreach activities to promote information about NRCS programs and trainings within NRCS.

- Proposals can be submitted all year around.
- The National Council will establish cutoff periods for ranking based on the availability of funds.
- Evaluations are based on the demands and volume.
- Incomplete applications will be returned to the sender and not considered for funding.
- Point of Contact (POC) must be an active NOPHNRCSE member.
- The request should reflect the most cost effective option available in the area, if applicable. Proof of payments will be required for accountability purposes and for future internal or external audits.
- The Regional Representatives will receive the applications and assist on obtaining the final approval.
- The recipient will receive a final determination in writing with instructions on the next steps.

The council is now accepting proposals for the first ranking period. The [proposal form](#) is available at the end of this newsletter and also on our website. The council has set a cutoff date of September 15, 2013 to submit the proposal for this ranking period. Our Midwest Representative Frank Velazquez has volunteered to assist any member with questions about the process. Please contact Frank Velazquez at [frank.velazquez@mi.usda.gov](mailto:frank.velazquez@mi.usda.gov) or 269-657-4220 x126.



# Mark your calendars!

## PBS to Air Landmark Documentary on Latinos and their Contributions to the Nation

PBS will be airing a landmark three-part documentary on Latinos (Hispanics) and their contributions to the nation beginning Sept. 17. Latino Americans documents the evolution of a new “Latino American” identity from the 1500s to the present day, featuring interviews with nearly 100 Latinos from the worlds of politics, business and pop culture — including Herman Badillo, Dolores Huerta, Gloria Estefan and Rita Moreno — as well as deeply personal portraits of lesser-known Latinos who lived through key chapters in American history.

**Premiering Tuesday, September 17, 8-10 p.m. ET on PBS**

Episode 1. “Foreigners in Their Own Land” spans the period from 1565-1880, as the first Spanish explorers enter North America, the U.S. expands into territories in the Southwest that had been home to Native Americans and English and Spanish colonies, and as the Mexican-American War strips Mexico of half its territories by 1848.

Episode 2. “Empire of Dreams” documents how the American population begins to be reshaped by the influx of people that began in 1880 and continues into the 1940s, as Cubans, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans begin arriving in the U.S. and start to build strong Latino-American communities in South Florida, Los Angeles and New York.

**Premiering Tuesday, September 24, 8-10 p.m. ET on PBS**

Episode 3. “War and Peace” moves into the World War II years and those that follow, as Latino Americans serve their new country by the hundreds of thousands — but still face discrimination and a fight for civil rights back in the United States.

Episode 4. “The New Latinos” highlights the swelling immigration from Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic that stretches from the post-World War II years into the early 1960s as the new arrivals seek economic opportunities.

**Premiering Tuesday, October 1, 8-10 p.m. ET on PBS**

Episode 5. “Prejudice and Pride” details the creation of the proud “Chicano” identity, as labor leaders organize farm workers in California, and as activists push for better education opportunities for Latinos, the inclusion of Latino studies and empowerment in the political process.

Episode 6. “Peril and Promise” takes viewers through the past 30 years, with a second wave of Cubans arriving in Miami during the Mariel exodus and with hundreds of thousands Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and Guatemalans fleeing civil wars, death squads and unrest to go north into a new land — transforming the United States along the way.

The debate over undocumented immigrants flares up, with a backlash that eventually includes calls for tightened borders, English-only laws and efforts to brand undocumented immigrants as a drain on public resources. Simultaneously, the Latino influence is booming in business, sports, media, politics and entertainment. The largest and youngest growing sector of the American population, Latino Americans will determine the success of the United States in the 21st century.

[Click here to check out a sneak peek of this landmark documentary.](#)

## 2013 - 2014 National Council

### *President*

Astrid Martinez, Wyoming

### *Executive Vice President*

Irma Hernández, NHQ

### *Vice President*

Herman Garcia, Arizona

### *Treasurer*

Brunilda Velez, Rhode Island

### *Secretary*

Tania Nanna, Louisiana

### *Caribbean Area Representative*

Ismael Matos, Puerto Rico

### *East Region Representative*

Kristina Wiley, Massachusetts

### *Midwest Region Representative*

Frank Velazquez, Michigan

### *Northern Plains Region Representative*

Ted Lucero, Colorado

### *South Central Region Representative*

Flavio Garza, Texas

### *Southeast Region Representative*

Luis Cruz-Arroyo, Alabama

### *West Region Representative*

Mary Sanchez, New Mexico

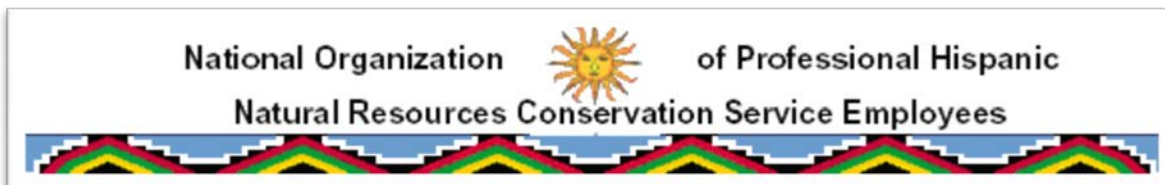
*La Voz* is the official newsletter for the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees. Your ideas, suggestions, comments, and articles are welcome.

Articles may be sent via email as either an MS Word attachment saved as text only, or pasted directly into your email message.

Photographs should be emailed as a separate jpg attachment. Please include a caption for each photo submitted.

Send items to: [kristie.wiley@charter.net](mailto:kristie.wiley@charter.net)

The deadline for submitting articles for the fall issue of *La Voz* is October 30, 2013.



### Activity Proposal Form

Regional Rep. Name:

Region:

Hosting State:

Contact Person Information:

Phone:

Date Form Submitted:

### Activity Description

Activity Title:

Date of Activity:

Description:

Target Audience:

Partners Involved:

### Estimated Cost

Description

Amount

Total Cost:

### National Council Use Only

Council Comments:

Ranking:

Approved: Yes

No

Authorized By:

Total Amount:

National Organization of Professional Hispanic  
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees



Additional Notes



The main purpose for this form is to engage in outreach activities to promote information about NRCS programs and trainings within NRCS.

Guidance on submitting the proposal;

- Proposals can be submitted all year around.
- National Council will establish cutoff periods for ranking based on the availability of funds.
- Evaluations are based on the demands and volume.
- ~~Any~~ Incomplete applications will be returned to the sender and not considered for funding.
- ~~Any~~ Point of Contact (POC) must be an active NOPHNRCSE member.
- The request should reflect the most cost effective option available in the area, if applicable. Proof of payments will be required for accountability purposes and for future internal or external audits.
- The Regional Representatives will receive the applications and assist on obtaining the final approval. The recipient will receive a final determination in writing with instructions on the next steps.

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#### Ranking questions

1. How many individuals are projected to attend this event? 0-20 (5 pts)    20-50 (10 pts)    >50 (15 pts)
2. Is this project addressing agency mission goals? (8 pts) Yes    No    N/A
3. Will this event target recruitment and retention? (7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
4. Is this event targeting minority farmers or ranchers? (7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
5. Is this event organized to provide technical and financial assistance available to producers?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
6. Is there additional financial support for this event?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
7. ~~Is~~ Are there external resources that need to be paid?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
8. ~~Is~~ Is NOPHNRCSE organizing this event?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
9. ~~Is~~ Is NRCS organizing this event? (7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
10. Is there Conservation District, or State Agency sponsorship?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
11. Will this event be during work hours?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
12. Is the State Conservationist or Regional Conservationist part of this event?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A
13. Will this project support cooperative efforts new for the agency or the organization?(7 pts) Yes    No    N/A

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Regional Rep Comments:

National Council Comments:

Approved:      Date:      Amount:      Region:      State:      POC: