



## LA VOZ

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic  
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

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# December 2006 Newsletter

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## President's Message

*By Carlos Suarez*

NOPHNRCSE President



Holiday Greetings NOPHNRCSE Family!

Time goes by fast when you are having fun! It has been almost 6 months since the new national council was installed and many things have been accomplished in route to our National Training Conference scheduled for Bloomington, Minnesota, August 6-10, 2007. First, we recently received word from NHQ that our request for meeting approval has been approved by the Department. With the meeting approved, we have greater flexibility in developing and finalizing a great agenda. The conference planning committee and associated committees have been working very well to bring to all the membership a great training conference. Just recently, the program committee finalized and presented to the national council the draft agenda for the training conference, and we gave the green light to finalize the agenda. I am confident you will like what we will be offering in Minnesota!

As many of you know, I received word that the NRCS national leadership team won't be able to meet with us as originally planned. Nevertheless, with this new development, it

created new opportunities for us to adjust our agenda accordingly. Even with this change, I am sure we will have one of the best training conferences in many years.

Your national council members have been working very diligently in the past months promoting NOPHNRCSE at meetings with their respective state leadership, participating at outreach activities, and conducting membership drives. We have heard many of your comments about ways to improve the organization's services to its membership. I will be working with the national council to present some ideas for discussion and approval on ways to increase development opportunities to our members. Stay tuned!

Again, like I have repeated many times, feel free to contact your regional representatives or any board member of the national council with your questions, ideas, and suggestions. This is **your** organization and we look forward to your continuous support and participation.

Last but not least, I want to wish you and your families a happy holiday season full of peace and joy and that the upcoming 2007 brings abundance of health and prosperity!

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### **Photo Gallery on the Web**

*Carmen Ortiz*, Webmaster

The 2006 NOPHNRCSE Training Conference Photo Gallery is now available on our website:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/hispanic/>

Take a look and see if you see yourself there.

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### **Michigan NRCS Recognizes Hispanic Heritage Month**

In recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15), two Latino farmers in Michigan shared their stories with USDA employees in East Lansing. Armando Arrellano from Van Buren County and Juan Manuel Garza from Ingham County are both first-generation Michigan fruit growers. Arrellano sells much of his fruit in Chicago and has expanded his business to include his own market. Garza is relatively new to Michigan and sells fruit at area farmers markets.

Since purchasing his farm in Van Buren County, Arrellano has worked closely with NRCS to improve his farming and conservation methods. Garza works in partnership with an Ingham County landowner. Common to both farmers is the help of family, hard

work, and resourcefulness in finding success in a very competitive business. While Latino farmers make up a very small segment of Michigan growers, it is a growing one.

Latinos in the United States (from the U.S. Census Bureau):

- 42.7 million - The estimated Hispanic population of the United States as of July 1, 2005, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or race minority. Hispanics constituted 14 percent of the nation's total population.
- About 1 of every two people added to the nation's population between July 1, 2004, and July 1, 2005, were Hispanic.
- 3.3% - Percentage increase in the Hispanic population between July 1, 2004, and July 1, 2005, making Hispanics the fastest-growing minority group.
- 64% - The percentage of Hispanic origin people in households who are of Mexican background. Another approximately 10 percent are of Puerto Rican background, with about 3 percent each of Cuban, Salvadoran and Dominican origins. The remainders are of some other Central American, South American, or other Hispanic or Latino origin.
- 9.5 million - The number of Hispanic families who reside in the United States. Of these families, 63 percent include their children under 18 years old.

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## **Membership Drive**

*Irma Hernández*, Membership Committee Chairperson

Greetings!

One more year has come and gone. A successful annual training conference in Orlando, Florida. New changes in our organization, a new president with a new national council dedicated to work. Next year, challenges already start to find their course. The planning of the 14th annual training conference in Bloomington, Minnesota, is already in progress. Of course, it's the end of the year too and by December 31, 2006 membership dues will expire. This means that dues for the 2007 calendar year are due by January 1, 2007. It is important that we pay our annual dues to our organization. These dues help us to subsidize the cost of our conferences and other important activities carried out by NOPHNRCSE. By paying your dues you will be able to participate in the decision-making process of the organization. By being a member in good standing you can participate in the election and be eligible to hold any position in the national council. It is very important to be an active member if we want our organization to be a success. Our success depends on each one of us.

There are two ways you can submit your annual dues payment:

1. Submitting a check payable to NOPHNRCSE for the amount of the membership you chose along with a completed membership form to:

Irma Hernández  
1 Cobble Creek Curve  
Newark, DE 19702

2. For payroll deduction, fill out the form AD-1054 "Request for Payroll Deduction", which you can get from your HR personnel and it is also available along with the membership form at the NOPHNCRCSE website. If you decide to go with this option, please remember that I still need a completed membership form and a copy of the AD-1054. Please mail a copy to the address above. The original copy of the AD-1054 will go to your HR personnel.

If you are already in payroll deduction, please fill the membership form and mail it to me. In this case, you don't need to complete the AD-1054; this is a continuous deduction and will not stop unless you request it.

I also want to clarify that if you have not used payroll deduction before you must be aware of the following. If you start the payroll deduction in January of 2007 the deduction will be applied toward the 2008 dues. This means you will have to pay the 2007 dues by mailing a check to my attention.

Please fill and return the form with the payment by December 31, 2006.

Thanks and will see you next year in Minnesota.

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### **A Living History of NOPHNCRCSE (as told by its members)**

A proposal by *Sharyn Alvarez*, Virginia, National Federal Women's Program Manager

**Action:** Develop a history of NOPHNCRCSE through the words, thoughts and memories of its members.

**Purpose:** To capture information of the organization's beginnings as well as its accomplishments during its 14 years of existence from the people who know.

**Format:** Have each member interested write an essay (500 words maximum) about an aspect of the organization's history as they remember it. Essays can be written on topics such as:

#### **NOPHNCRCSE – The Beginning**

**The Officers** (written by those who served as):

President  
Vice President

Executive Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary

**The Committees:** Perspectives of Committee Chairs – how they developed the committee, the accomplishments

**Perspectives of Committee Members:** recalling their participation

**The Training Conferences:** Each writer can write an essay on a particular training conference of their choice.

**Membership:** what it has meant to be a member of NOPHNCSE

**Editing:** Please make sure that your composition submission is reviewed and proofread for content, clarity, and grammatical accuracy.

**Result:** We will have a collection of NOPHNCSE History as told by the members who experienced it. Everyone's voice would be heard. History is not the story of an event as told by one person. It must be an accurate reflection that includes the thoughts of all who experienced the events.

**Deadline:** January 31, 2007. There is plenty of time to get your composition in. Smile.

All who are interested in participating in this activity please send your composition to me by email at [sharyn.alvarez@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:sharyn.alvarez@wdc.usda.gov).

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## **Heads Up on Upcoming Call for Technical Papers, Posters**

**Arturo Carvajal**, Technical Presentations Committee Chairperson

The Natural Resources Committee will send all members a Call for Papers and Posters in early January. Start your homework now so you are on the agenda for our training conference in Bloomington, Minnesota. See you there!

To those interested in participating in the next training, I suggest you start planning as soon as possible. Get motivated and prepare yourself to be a winner by either making an oral presentation or presenting a poster. Both are excellent training opportunities. We need to communicate our own work to the audience and this is one of the best ways to do it. What is the reward for your hard work? Members submitting papers and/or posters often have one of the first priorities to attend the conference on government time and expense.

Topics for Upcoming 'Call for Papers and Posters':

- Communication methods and strategies for providing effective and equitable service to customers with multilingual and multicultural needs.
- Cooperative approaches for achieving watershed-based resource conservation management.
- Uses of market-based approaches for achieving sound resource management and conservation.
- Development and transfer of up-to-date technology (tools, techniques, standards) for resource assessment, conservation planning and implementation.
- Successful farm experiences in maximizing fuel efficiency, production of environmentally renewable energy sources, and protection of natural resources.

For more information, contact:

[Arturo Carvajal](#), Chair, (530) 792-5627

[Roney Gutierrez](#), Co-Chair, (530) 792-5649

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## **Training Opportunities**

Luis A. Hernández, Program Chairperson

The following NEDC training courses were selected to be offered in conjunction with the NOPHNRCSE 2007 annual training conference in Minnesota:

- Managing for Excellence
- Effective Instruction I
- Area-wide Conservation Planning
- Civil Rights in Program Delivery (optional)

The training will be offered from Tuesday afternoon through Friday morning. If you need any of the courses listed above, be sure to identify them on your training plan. There will be approximately 15 slots open for NOPHNRCSE members. Registration information will be available at a later date.