

National Organization  of Professional Hispanic  
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

# La Voz

Newsletter

July 2010

***In this Issue:***

- [President's Message](#)
- [Census Bureau Releases 2009 National and State Characteristics Population Estimates](#)
- [National Leadership Development Program Detail](#)
- [Spanish Language Publications Available](#)
- [NOPHNRCSE Making the Difference through Career Enhancement Opportunities](#)
- [2010 Career Fairs](#)
- [2011 Conference Planning Underway](#)

**President's Message**

*Angel Figueroa, President*



I have the honor to inform you that the NOPHNRCSE scholarships have been approved for two members. Mari Hrebik and Edwin Martinez have received awards for their educational goals. This is another service that NOPHNRCSE provides for its members in good standing and I encourage you to consider participating in the scholarship program in future awards.

I also wish to inform you that the National Council has reached Quorum in all of its teleconferences and the business of our Organization has run smoothly as a result. This speaks of their commitment to our Organization and should allow us to run a strong program for the duration of their tenure.

Ron Alvarado, Febe Ortiz, Rafael Guerrero, and your President have been working on our organizational Strategic Plan. They have been leading focus groups on issues of Leadership, Career Development, Outreach, Talent Management, and Recruitment and Retention. These

focus groups have defined their topics and developed goals for the organization to achieve in the 5 year planning period.

NRCS has appointed some of our members to leadership details in the National Office and other locations to include Luis Hernandez, Ron Alvarado, Salvador Salinas, Damaris Mortenson, Angel Figueroa, and others. The significance of this is that there are members poised to advance into the Leadership Positions that we have been seeking for Hispanics in NRCS.

Also, our members who are in Leadership positions have been communicating to develop our Organization issues for consideration by the Chief of NRCS. They include Ron Alvarado, Salvador Salinas, Carlos Suarez, Rosendo Trevino, Humberto Hernandez, Juan Carlos Hernandez, J.R. Flores, Xavier Montoya, Luis Hernandez, Febe Ortiz, Rafael Guerrero, Irma Hernandez, and others. We will develop a message for the Chief spelling out our needs and opportunities and offering solutions that the Agency can implement in the near and long term.

Finally, let's continue to be an active Organization and please consider joining Committees by notifying Kris Graham Chavez of your willingness to serve in any or specific committees. Have a great Summer and Fall with your loved ones.

Thanks.



[Back to top](#)

## **Census Bureau Releases 2009 National and State Characteristics Population Estimates**

The U.S. Census Bureau today released [population estimates](#) as of July 1, 2009, for the nation, each state and the District of Columbia by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin.

The new estimates are not 2010 Census population counts. Rather, they are based on 2000 Census data and updated by using administrative records to estimate components of population change — namely births, deaths, and domestic and international migration. Annual estimates for the 2000 to 2009 period are provided.

These are the last state estimates to use 2000 Census results as a base. The 2011 population estimates will be the first in the estimates series to be based on the 2010 Census population counts.

In December, the Census Bureau will deliver the 2010 Census state population counts to the president, to be used to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. By April 1, 2011, the Census Bureau must release counts by race and Hispanic origin for counties, cities and other small geographic areas so that states can proceed with redistricting, in accordance with Public Law 94-171.

“Census numbers govern the distribution of more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year and serve as the baseline for future post-census population estimates,” Census Bureau Director Robert Groves said. “The estimates allow us to track the changing population of states and smaller

jurisdictions between censuses. When an area's population ages or grows younger overall, for example, local officials can document the changes and address the possibility of special needs.”

Also released today were July 1, 2009, population estimates by age and sex for Puerto Rico.

[Back to top](#)

## **National Leadership Development Program Detail**

*Cori Calvert, District Conservationist, Escondido, California*



Cori Calvert arrives at the port of Viejo San Juan after a day of deep sea fishing on a weekend.

I remember thinking “*What am I doing! Why am I leaving my home and friends for 3 months???*” as my plane departed from San Diego, where I am a District Conservationist, to Puerto Rico where I would be on a 90 day detail. The detail was a requirement of the National Leadership Development Program (NLDP). I wasn’t very excited about leaving behind my family, home, and entire social circle for such an extended period of time but I knew that a detail would be an exciting learning opportunity and would increase my leadership abilities when I did return back to my field office in California. It turned out to be all that and so much more.

I began the detail after being asked by fellow NLDP cohort, Jose Castro – Assistant Director of the Caribbean Area. I was very eager to gain leadership experience in a smaller type “state” as well as to work with non-traditional Spanish speaking landowners in a cultural setting very different from the States. During the first month I organized the Rio Loco Watershed Project (RWLP), an area of significant concern for the United States Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF). The RWLP is a multi-agency, watershed-wide conservation planning effort that intends to reduce loss of coral reef cover through the promotion and application of integrated watershed and land use conservation practices on agricultural lands. I developed the plan of work as well as a list of timelines and responsibilities that were very much needed to get the project on task.

During the second month I assisted the Caribbean Area with their first enrollment of acres in a WRP easement. I had never previously worked with WRP so this was a learning experience for me as I navigated the program rules and tried to apply those to the special settings of the Caribbean Area. There had been a few obstacles to implementation such as a real estate issue that caused delays and required that I write my first “white paper” and work with OGC, local attorneys, and National program staff to rectify.

During the last month of my detail, I acted as the Assistant for Operations. As Assistant for Operations, I focused on increasing communication between leadership and the field, performing staffing planning, providing oversight of details and ACES employees, monitoring field progress toward obligation goals, and writing a bulletin regarding operations activities. I also received training from the budget officer on understanding financial management reports and activities.

During my detail I felt like I learned and grew immensely as a leader. My experience in the Caribbean Area was a delightful, culturally rich experience (I can Salsa now!) and one in which I will always value. It helped me clarify my desires for my future within NRCS of which previously I had been very unclear as to whether I wanted to continue being a DC or perhaps move to a State or Area office role. Not only did I fall in love with an island (La Isla Del Encanto!), the food, and people but I also better defined me and my future goals.

[Back to top](#)

## **Spanish Language Publications Available**

*Lisa A. Hokholt, Outreach Coordinator, California*

There are some new or newish on-line free SPANISH language publications that you and your agricultural clients might find useful – especially since there are also ENGLISH versions of the same. These products are produced by ATTRA-National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. They are:

[Organic Chronicles No. 1: Mysteries of Organic Farming Revealed](#)

(Also available in Spanish: [\\*Las Crónicas Orgánicas No. 1: No Tenga Pánico—Vuélvase Orgánico](#))

[Sustainable Soil Management](#)

(Also available in Spanish: [El Manejo Sostenible de Suelos](#))

[Cattle Production: Considerations for Pasture-Based Beef and Dairy Producers](#)

Also available in Spanish: [Producción de Bovinos: Consideraciones para Productores de Carne y de Leche Basada en Pastoreo](#)

[Finding Land to Farm: Six Ways to Secure Farmland](#)

Also available in Spanish: [Encontrando Tierra para Trabajar: Seis Maneras de Asegurar Tu Terreno Agrícola](#)

[Start a Farm in the City: Change Your Community by Growing What You Eat](#)

Also available in Spanish: [Comience una Granja en la Ciudad: Haga un Cambio en Su Comunidad al Cultivar Sus Alimentos](#)

To find more on-line resources go ATTRA's webpage: <http://attra.ncat.org/>

More Spanish-languages can be found there by clicking on “en Español”.

[Back to top](#)

## **NOPHNRCSE Making the Difference through Career Enhancement Opportunities**

Congratulations to Maria Hrebik (Design Engineer in Texas) and Edwin Martinez (District Conservationist in Michigan) for receiving the 2010 Career Enhancement Scholarships in the

amount of \$1,000 each. Both are members in good standing and have shown their commitment by being very active members of NOPHNRCSE.

Mari will be enrolling in a course in preparation for her Professional Engineer's Licensing Exam. She is currently the South Central Regional Rep and has been actively involved in various NOPHNRCSE committees and has participated as a speaker and moderator in past conferences. Obtaining her Professional Engineer's License is one of many challenging goals Mari plans to accomplish during her NRCS career.

Edwin is currently working on his PhD of Science at Michigan State University. Edwin is an active member of the Hispanic community and one of his passions is to educate and train others in his areas of expertise. Edwin's long term career goals include completing his doctorate degree at Michigan State University.

### **Great Opportunity for Career Enhancement**

We encourage all NOPHNRCSE members to look for the 2011 Career Enhancement Scholarship Grant announcement next year. This is an excellent opportunity for members to obtain financial assistance. Approved courses include training sessions, leadership development, educational classes and professional engineering courses. "We would like to see more members taking the challenge to improve their careers by furthering their education and applying for Career Enhancement Scholarships in the future. This would not only strengthen their careers, but also strengthen our Organization through their service." Angel Figueroa said.

Some guidelines that the committee will follow are:

- Applicants must be members in good standing. (Paid yearly dues)
- Applicant must be an active member and demonstrate participation and involvement within the organization.
- Awards will be distributed equally among the seven (7) regions.
- The National Council approves each year the total number of scholarships awarded.
- Upward mobility and series qualification, such as 457 series, will take precedence over personal development.
- A passing grade or a certificate of completion is required.
- There will be \$1,000 award limit per person per year.

#### **For more information please contact:**

Arturo Carvajal (chair) [arturo.carvajal@ca.usda.gov](mailto:arturo.carvajal@ca.usda.gov)

Tony Baeza (member) [tony.baeza@tx.usda.gov](mailto:tony.baeza@tx.usda.gov)

Pedro Ramos (member) [pedro.ramos@or.usda.gov](mailto:pedro.ramos@or.usda.gov)

Stella Santos (member) [Stella.santos@tx.usda.gov](mailto:Stella.santos@tx.usda.gov)

Carlos Morganti (member) [Carlos.Morganti@pr.usda.gov](mailto:Carlos.Morganti@pr.usda.gov)

[Back to top](#)

### **2010 Career Fairs**

*Jacqueline Padrón, National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager*

Are you interested in being part of an NRCS recruitment team at an upcoming career fair? This year, the Office of Outreach and Advocacy's National Hispanic Emphasis Program, in

partnership with Talent Management, are coordinating NRCS' participation at the following career fairs:

- New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM - Sept. 21-22, 2010
- University of Texas, El Paso, TX - Sept. 23-24, 2010
- University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, PR - Oct. 1-2, 2010
- Texas A&M University, Kingsville, TX - Oct. 5, 2010

The career fairs offer an excellent opportunity for candidates from all academic backgrounds, particularly, agricultural, engineering, and biology students, to speak directly with NRCS employees and learn about career opportunities with the agency. From these career fairs, and other diverse recruitment events, we will develop a student database listing qualified students. The database is provided to NRCS leadership in an effort to move us towards our goal of becoming an employer of choice and ensure that we are actively seeking the best talent from the diverse communities we serve.

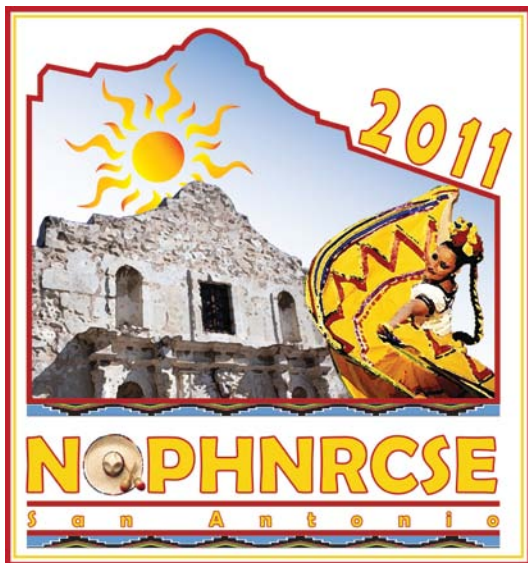
Employees interested in helping recruit at the career fairs must be approved and sponsored by their supervisor. We will be conducting onsite interviews; therefore, we are particularly interested in employees with Human Resources backgrounds and/or recruitment experience.

If you are interested in being part of the recruitment team or would like additional information, please contact Jacqueline Padrón, National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager, at 301-503-2336 or [jacqueline.padron@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:jacqueline.padron@wdc.usda.gov).

[Back to top](#)

## **2011 Conference Planning Underway**

*Bertha Venegas, Conference Planning Chairperson*



The 2011 National NOPHNRCSE Training Conference will be held in San Antonio, Texas, in June. Start planning today to join us for this historical event as we celebrate by meeting in San Antonio where the first NOPHNRCSE conference was held.