



LA VOZ

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

October 2008 Newsletter

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President's Message

By *Luis Hernández*



NOPHNCSE President
Dear NOPHNCSE Friends,

¡Muchas gracias!, for giving me your vote of trust and confidence to be the president of NOPHNCSE. I am committed to give the best of my talents and lead our organization during the next two years.

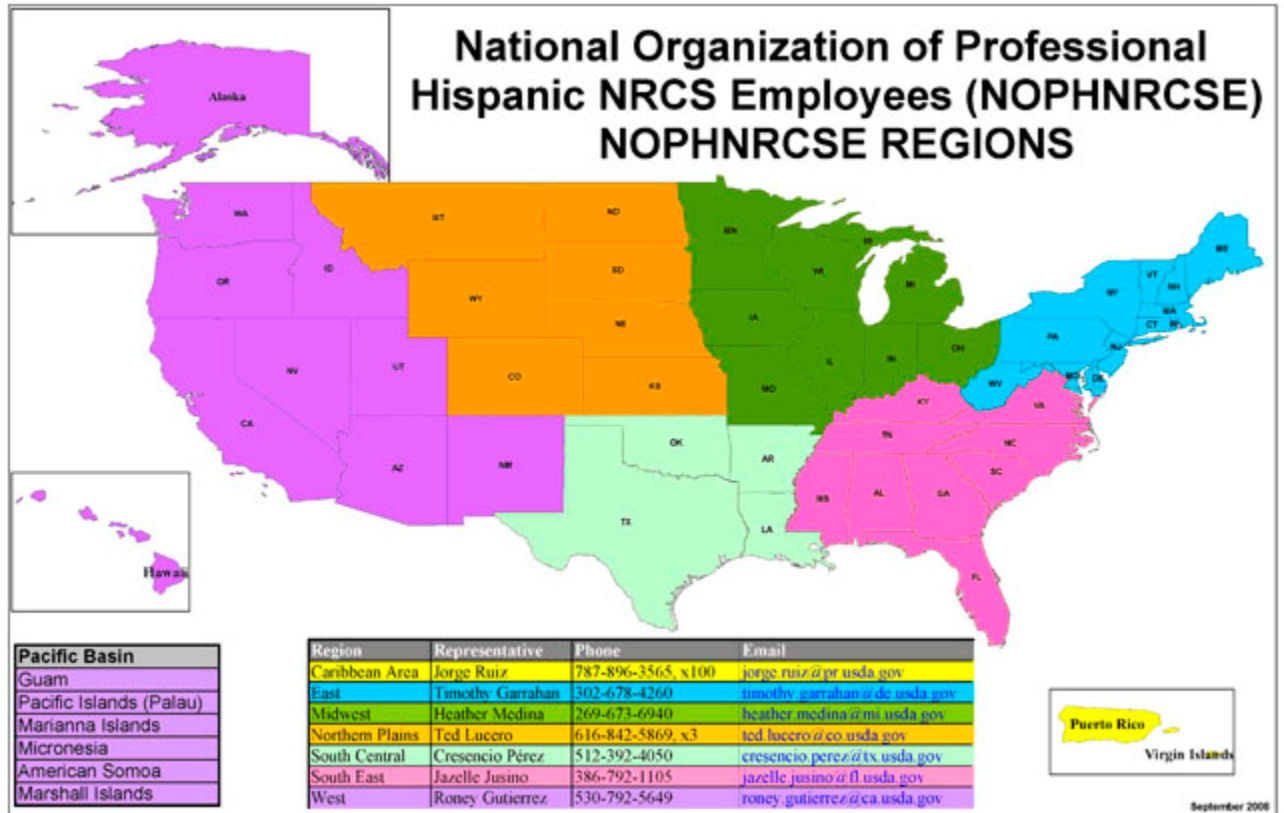
I would like to thank Carlos Suárez and the past National Council for their leadership, commitment, and hard work. They established a legacy and our job is to carry it out.

NOPHNCSE is celebrating its 15th birthday. It is appropriate to make a deep analysis, look back 15 years ago, and look to the future, 15 to 20 years from now. In that deep analysis, let's ask: What has our organization accomplished in the past 15 years? What can each of us do to take the organization to the next level and the future?

NOPHNCSE has achieved many accomplishments and success stories. As more Hispanics occupy leadership positions in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) there is a lot more to be done and every member needs to help. Please accept my invitation to become active and help the organization accomplish its mission.

Let me take this opportunity to introduce the National Council. Mario Morales (Texas) vice president; Astrid Martínez (Wyoming), executive vice president; Eileen Vale (Texas) secretary; Jorge Camacho (Caribbean) treasurer; regional representatives --

Jazelle Jusino (Florida), Ted Lucero (Colorado), Timothy Garrahan (Delaware), Heather Medina (Michigan), Jorge Ruiz (Caribbean), Roney Gutiérrez (California), and Cresencio Pérez (Texas). They are available to assist you. Below is a map that shows the regions and regional representatives contact information.



The 2009 NOPHNCSE Annual Training Conference will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The planning committee is diligently working on negotiations with hotels and making other arrangements. Tentatively, we are looking at the week of August 2, 2009. The planning committee is also working with the NRCS National Employment Development Center on potential opportunities to offer formal training at the conference. Please contact [Amanda Hasemeier](#), chair of the planning committee or [Irma Hernández](#), co-chair of the planning committee, if you have any suggestions or questions regarding next year's conference. I thank all conference committees for their commitment and dedication for the success of NOPHNCSE.

Some other ongoing activities and projects include:

- NOPHNCSE Website Re-design - The website will be modernized to current standards. Membership will be engaged in the re-design process.
- NOPHNCSE Directory - The membership committee is updating NOPHNCSE directory. The plan is to develop a directory that can be utilized as a marketing tool to showcase the talent and expertise available in the organization.

- 2008 Conference Proceedings CD-ROM - A CD that contains most 2008 conference presentations. It includes 2008 Farmer of the Year Conservation Award video. The CD-ROM will be distributed to the states.
- "Day in the Life" CD-ROM - A CD that contains three videos presented during 2008 annual conference "Day in the Life" session. An excellent tool for outreach and recruitment of Hispanics.
- NOPHNRCSE History - Objectives of this project include: capture the history of NOPHNRCSE in a professional document that will present the evolution and purpose of the organization; the sequence of events that took place for its birth; key players and contributors for its creation; accomplishments and contributions of NOPHNRCSE to our Nation's natural resources conservation, etc.
- New Partnerships - Communicating with other professional organizations and exploring opportunities to establish new partnerships. The objective is to provide professional development opportunities for the membership.
- Membership Drive - With the leadership of the regional representatives, a membership drive will take place in the near future. This project will focus on recruitment of new and former members.
- NRCS Professional Organizations - Working closely with other NRCS professional organizations.
- USDA Diversity & Inclusion Forum - Representing NOPHNRCSE on this forum. The forum is a standing meeting sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. It is a management diversity committee chaired by the chief of staff and membership is comprised of selected agency administrators, representatives from the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Human Capital Management, and members of officially recognized employee organizations. The objective is to continue a dialogue and progress for collaboratively strengthen diversity and equal opportunity in USDA.

The National Council thanks the membership for the continuous commitment and support to the organization.

My best regards and please spend time with your family during upcoming holidays!!

Honoring Our Members

Bertha Venegas, Awards Committee

Every year, during our annual meeting, we take the time to honor those members of our organization who make things happen. These members, some of whom serve unnoticed, have dedicated extra time and effort to advance the goals of our organization. Now is the time to be thinking about these members who have exceeded expectations in the advancement of the mission and vision of our organization.

I want to remind everyone that the Awards Team will be accepting nominations for awards in the coming months. Now is the time to gather information and prepare nominations. Take some time to write-up a member who deserves to be recognized.

The Awards Team will be accepting nominations for the Leadership, Visionary, Excellence in Natural Resources, Excellence in Hispanic Community Outreach, Outstanding Member and the Amigo/Amiga Awards.

Remember, everyone who is considered for an award has already been selected by someone as an outstanding individual even though only one award will be given per category.

Call or email any of the team members if you have any questions. Our team chair is Arturo Carvajal, California; co-chair Marina Barajas, California; and members Mary Sanchez, New Mexico; Manuel Matos, Minnesota; and Bertha Venegas, Texas. If you would like to be a part of this team, let us know as well!

NOPHNRCSE Award Categories

Leadership

The NOPHNRCSE Leadership Award recognizes the accomplishments of proactive and motivated men and women who are active members in the Hispanic Community. The award especially recognizes their participation in and support of NOPHNRCSE in addition to their contributions in their profession and Hispanic Communities. This Award is given in tribute to the forerunners and pacesetters of the organization whose dedication and leadership resulted in the founding of the organization. Only one Award will be presented each year.

Visionary

The NOPHNRCSE Visionary Award recognizes the accomplishments of forward looking and innovative men and women who are active members in the Hispanic Community. The Award especially recognizes their participation in and support of NOPHNRCSE in addition to their contributions to their profession and Hispanic Community. This Award is given in tribute to pioneers of the organization whose hard work and vision resulted in the founding of the organization. Only one Award will be presented each year.

Award of Excellence in Natural Resources Conservation

The NOPHNRCSE Award of Excellence is designed to recognize individuals who, over a period of time, have contributed substantially and creatively to our Natural Resources Conservation profession. The recipient should exemplify excellence in a particular discipline and, possibly, in multi-discipline efforts that promotes excellence and creativity. The recipient also should demonstrate leadership and involvement in

NOPHNRCSE. Awards of Excellence should not be given to members currently serving on the National Council or be a current chair of a standing committee. The Awards Team will decide the number of Award (s) presented each year.

Award of Excellence in Hispanic Community Outreach

The NOPHNRCSE Award of Excellence is designed to recognize individuals who, over a period of time have contributed substantially and creatively to Hispanic Communities. The recipient should exemplify excellence in a particular discipline and, possibly, in multi-discipline efforts that promotes excellence and creativity. The recipient also should demonstrate leadership and involvement in NOPHNRCSE. Awards of Excellence should not be given to members currently serving on the National Council or be a current chair of a standing or ad hoc committee. The Awards Team will decide the number of Award(s) presented each year.

Outstanding NOPHNRCSE Member Award

The NOPHNRCSE Outstanding Member Award is the highest recognition given by the members, themselves, to one of its members. The purpose of this Award is to recognize excellence in professionalism and leadership as a NOPHNRCSE member. It is based on achievements in NOPHNRCSE over an extended period of years and on participation and support of its mission. Only one Award will be presented each year.

Amiga/Amigo Award

The NOPHNRCSE Amiga/Amigo Award recognizes the activities of an individual(s) or organization, which have substantially contributed towards the improvement of the Organization and/or Hispanic Community at large, in regards to visibility, information dissemination and program accessibility. The recipient(s) should demonstrate an involvement with the Hispanic Community and by actions show support of NOPHNRCSE's vision and mission. Only one award will be presented each year.

NOPHNRCSE Members Making us Proud

Edwin Almódovar, Awards Committee Chairperson

Here are some of our NOPHNRCSE members that have taken the NRCS challenge onto new positions within the last eight months. Thanks for continuing to make us proud!

- Rocemi Morales was selected as district conservationist for Erie County, Ohio, in July.
- Mario Rodríguez was promoted and transferred to the Mott field office, North Dakota, in July.

- Irma Hernández was selected as a conservation program specialist with the CSP team at NHQ in September.
 - Gilbert Guerrero was selected as an assistant state conservationist for field operations in Stillwater, Oklahoma.
 - Edwin Martínez was selected as the district conservationist in St. Johns, Michigan, in September.
 - Carlos Suárez was selected as the Florida state conservationist in March.
 - Gregorio Cruz was selected as the national Conservation Innovation Grants program manager at NHQ, in June.
 - Edwin Almodóvar was selected as the assistant state conservationist for field operations in Batavia, New York, in March.
 - Brunilda Vélez was selected as the northwest Wisconsin area program specialist in March.
 - Heather Medina Saucedo was selected as the Grand Haven, Michigan, district conservationist in September.
 - Manuel Matos was selected as area resource soil scientist in Thief River Falls, Minnesota.
 - Juan Carlos Hernández was selected as an assistant state conservationist for field operations in Lincoln, Nebraska.
 - Astrid Martínez was selected as the Wyoming state soil scientist in March.
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2009 Training Conference - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Amanda Hasemeier, Planning Committee Chairperson

The "City of Brotherly Love" is next year's destination for the 2009 NOPHNRCSE training conference!! Co-hosts of the conference are the five states in the vicinity of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. The conference planning committee is in the beginning stages of their work to organize and make 2009 a memorable and valuable event to all who attend.

The membership is invited to submit suggestions for next year's theme. If any reader is interested in sharing ideas, the committee will welcome your input. Please submit your ideas to Edwin Almodóvar, Program Committee Chair.

Conference Planning Team:

Conference Chair: [Amanda Hasemeier](#)

Conference Co-Chair: [Irma Hernández](#)

Program Chair: [Edwin Almodóvar](#)

Pennsylvania Tour: [Cristina Clark-Cuadrado](#)

New Jersey Tour: [Edwin Muñiz](#)

Delaware Tour: [Timothy Garrahan](#)

Communications Chair: [Lori Valadez](#)

Awards Chair: [Arturo Carvajal](#)
Technical Papers/Poster Presentations Chair: [Tony Reséndez](#)
Registration: [Carmen Ortiz](#)
Moderators Chair: [Milton Cortés](#)
Exhibits Chair: [Ronnie Skala](#)
Hospitality Chair: [Juan Hernández](#)
Equipment and Technology Chair: [Luis Gamboa](#)

As the committee gets organized, they will be looking for assistance from the membership. There is a lot of enthusiasm for going to Philadelphia. A number of interested people have already come forward to volunteer and help with the different committees. Those names have been passed on to the committee chairs. Each committee will begin working on their business plans to identify the path leading to the 2009 training conference.

If there is a person who would like to assist in any aspect of planning for next year's conference, please contact any of the chairs listed above. More details will appear on the NOPHNRCSE website in due course. This will be a time to remember!