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Ohio Latino Affairs: Advise. Connect. Build.

August 2008

Director's Report

to the Honorable members of the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission



Strategic Initiatives

Project OPEN Launch & HCC Executive Director Selection

After many iterations and meetings, the working team comprised of staff from the Ohio Business Connection (OBC), the Hispanic Chamber of Columbus (HCC), the Centro Empresarial Latino (CEL), the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission, was able to finalize the necessary framework documents for Project OPEN to begin. Said iterations also included proper review and approval by the Office of the Attorney General.

The preconditions for launch having been satisfied, the initial meeting of the Director's Advisory Committee on Economic Development took place on 12 August 2008, with Jim Ackley & Kim Kollig from the OBC, Mercedes Sanchez of the CEL, Mariangee Merino & Ramona Reyes of the HCC, and the Director of the Commission. The purpose of the meeting was to begin establishing some preliminary rules of engagement between the HCC and the CEL vis-à-vis sponsorship and programming opportunities. The rules of engagement were established early-on as a requirement for a successful Project OPEN – as early as February 2008.

In parallel with the Project OPEN pre-launch steps, the HCC concluded its search process for its first full-time Executive Director. The first round yielded approximately half-a-dozen candidates. The Director of Latino Affairs was kept apprised of all steps, and had privy to the search criteria, job description, and other search steps along the way. In addition, the Director was invited to participate as an interviewer during the second round, which included in-person interviews.

Having selected two final candidates for Executive Director of the HCC, a final round was conducted by the HCC Board of Directors. Members of the OBC and the Director of Latino Affairs were invited to participate in the final round, however, both parties willingly yielded to the HCC Board. At a mixer on Thursday, 21 August 2008, the HCC announced its selection of Tom Lianez as HCC Executive Director.

Grassroots Initiative Mini-Grant Presentations

During the first two weeks of August, staff from the Office of Latino Affairs made presentations in Youngstown, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Cleveland for the ceremonial mini grant awards of the Grassroots Initiative. State and local elected officials participated in the ceremonies in Youngstown, Cincinnati and Dayton. Members of the Commission participated in Cincinnati and Dayton.

In addition, meetings with keystone organizations in Lorain and Youngstown were conducted to discuss the Grassroots Mini-Match proposal during the same timeframes. Overall, the presentations were very well received, well attended, and varying degrees of media coverage was enjoyed.

A critical challenge remains in the actual awarding of the mini grants. Conversations are still underway between the Office of Latino Affairs and the Dayton Foundation. The initial proposed instrument – a “Charitable Checking Account” – was deemed to be an inappropriate vehicle for grant distribution purposes by the Office of the Attorney General. Therefore, a separate contract must be negotiated. This matter has the full attention of the Office of Latino Affairs so as to avoid any unnecessary delays in the mini grant awards.



Directors' Calendar

Meetings with Policy Makers – “Advise”: The Director and/or the Policy Liaison (Program Director of the Public Policy Center) participated in meetings the following with Legislators, Officials & Government Agencies:

- Meet with Representative Strahorn (4 August)
- Meet with Representative Wagner (5 August)
- Meet with Senator Roberts (6 August)
- Meet with Noah Browning of OBM (6 August)
- Meet with Michele Abraham of Development (6 August)
- Meet with Benito Lucio of Jobs & Family Services (6 August)
- Meet with Heather Mann of the Office of the Speaker (11 August)
- Initial meeting of the Director's Advisory Committee on Economic Development (12 August)

Community Outreach – “Connect”: The Director and/or Community Liaison (Program Director of the Latino Community Network) attended the following community oriented meetings and events:

- Meet with Mercedes Sanchez of the Centro Empresarial Latino (1 August)
- HCC Executive Director Interviews (1 August)
- ROI Farmworkers' Appreciation Day Event (Fremont - 2 August)
- Meet with Victor Leandry of El Centro (Lorain - 7 August)

- Presentation of Grassroots Mini Grant to Youngstown State University (Youngstown - 8 August)
- Meet with Mary Isa Garayua of OCCHA (Youngstown - 8 August)
- Presentation of Grassroots Mini Grant to Terra State Community College (Fremont - 11 August)
- Presentation of Grassroots Mini Grants (Cincinnati & Dayton - 13 August)
- Chair meeting of the United States Council on Latino Affairs, hosted by the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (Chicago, IL - 14 August)
- Presentation of Grassroots Mini Grant to the Hispanic Business Association (Cleveland - 15 August)
- Meet with Ruben Herrera (19 August)
- Meet with Bob Doyle & Rich Bitonte of Strategic Government Initiatives (19 August)
- Meet with Marco Satala (19 August)
- Hispanic Chamber of Columbus Mixer Event (21 August)
- Meet with Victor Mora of The Ohio State University (22 August)

Submitted by Ezra C. Escudero, Director, 9 September 2008

