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# OHIO COMMISSION ON HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS

*Ohio Latino Affairs: Advise. Connect. Build.*

## April 2007

### Director's Report

to the Honorable members of the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs



### Special Projects

**Global Ready Ohio for the Twenty-first Century (GROh-21):** Since the OCHLA budget testimony of 22 March, the Director has followed a two-fold strategy. First, work with OCHLA Chair Gonzalez and OCHLA Finance Chair Simms-Howell to refine the GROh-21 plan within the framework of the Governor's two-year, \$1.4 million proposal for the Commission. This is critical to address any discrepancy between the original GROh proposal and the Executive Recommendation. Second, to meet with as many members of the House Finance committee, and as many leaders of the House, to clarify any concerns, address any issues, and secure commitments to preserve the full amount of the Commission's budget.

It seems that the first step, refining the plan in the form of a response to House Finance Chair Schlichter, has successfully addressed his concerns, and the shared concerns of all the legislators and staffers the Director met with in April. A full listing of meetings with legislators may be found in the "Director's Calendar" section of this report.

It should be noted that House Republican caucus members and leaders (including Speaker Husted) and House Democratic caucus members (including Ranking Minority Member of the Finance Committee Skindell) have offered their support and blessing. A vote in the House should take place the first week of May.

The Director – with the approval of OCHLA Finance Chair Simms-Howell – introduced the Biennium Budget Plan for OCHLA at the 20 April meeting of the Board

for discussion and approval. This document, which began as the response to Chairman Schlichter, will be the master plan from which the Director will execute the operations of the Office, should the full budget of \$1.4 million be approved by the full legislature and signed into effect by Governor Strickland at the end of June.

The budget plan was unanimously adopted by the Commission on 20 April 2007.

On 5 April 2007, the Director attended the monthly meeting of the Latino Empowerment Outreach Network (LEON) in Columbus. The purpose of the meeting was to serve as guest speaker, and introduce the GROh proposal to a group of Latino community members and leaders. This first-ever public presentation of GROh-21 was very useful in order to garner some feedback and gauge community reaction to the proposal. All in all, the proposal was very well received, and various community members expressed their interest in contacting their state legislators and asking for their support of the Commission throughout the budget process.

## Strategic Initiatives

**Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan:** On 20 April, the Distinguished Hispanic Ohioan Awards Gala was a complete success. At a meeting with Wade Rakes on Tuesday, 17 April, the Director received confirmation that Governor Ted Strickland would attend the awards gala. This is the first attendance by a sitting Governor of Ohio since then Governor George Voinovich participated at the DHO in the late 1990's.

Other than reporting that numerous meetings and calls took place between DHO committee members, caterers, sponsors, and other persons related to the event, the Director will defer to the DHO committee to make its final report to the Board.



**Soluciones Education Campaign:** There is nothing new to report at this time.

**West Side Fire Initiatives:** There is nothing new to report at this time.

**National Council on Latino Affairs:** There is nothing new to report at this time.

## Tactical Initiatives

**OLAnet:** There is nothing new to report at this time.

## Short Term Projects

**Multi-Party Agreement for Emergency Death Fund:** Carol Valdez of Schoedinger Funeral Home came to the Office seeking assistance in establishing an Emergency Death Fund to help offset the high cost of transporting deceased family members of immigrants in the event of an untimely death. Ms. Valdez attended the April meeting of LEON, and heard about the GROh-21 proposal.

Although the Director shared that funds from GROh-21 would likely not be a good fit for such a fund, Office assistance was offered to help broker a multi-party agreement between a (1) local Latino community organization, (2) a local “mainstream”

community services or community-relief agency, and (3) willing participants of the local faith-based community.

The ability of the Office to negotiate such an endeavor will be critical should GROh funding come through. As such, the Director determined that this exercise would be a valuable for the following reasons:

- 1 – With a successful arrangement, OCHLA will have helped address a critical community need.
- 2 – An effective agreement can be used as a template to be proposed and implemented in various Latino communities state wide.
- 3 – The exercise will prove to be a valuable one in coordinating organizations, securing assistance from other state agencies, and synthesizing parallel concerns into a singular compact between organizations in a problem-solving way.

OCHLA Annual Report 2006: There is nothing new to report at this time.

## Terminated Projects

The following projects & initiatives are either completed or are no longer pertinent to the Director: Unpaid/Underpaid Wages Task with Ohio Department of Commerce.



## Director's Calendar

Meetings with Policy Makers – “Advise”: The Director participated in meetings the following with Legislators, Officials & Government Agencies:

- Meet with Ohio House Speaker Pro Tem. DeWine (R-Fairborn) (3 April)
- Tentative meeting with the First Lady of Ohio (4 April)
- Attend ODPS Budget Hearing (4 April)
- Meet with Leonard Hubert (4 April)
- Review budget with CSA Manager Cunningham (5 April)
- Meet with Jarrod Weiss of the office of Rep. Courtney Combs (6 April)
- Meet with Jerry Pettit, Department of Health (9 April)
- Meet with Director Guzman, ODPS (10 April)
- Meet with Ohio House Speaker Husted (R-Kettering) (11 April)
- Meet with Wade Rakes, Office of the Governor (17 April)

Community Outreach – “Connect”: The Director attended/participated in the following events:

- Attend with Latino Empowerment Outreach Network (LEON) Monthly Meeting (5 April)
- Meet with Herrera & Velasquez (6 April)
- Meet with Carol Valdez of Schoedinger Funeral Home (9 April)
- Meet with Karen Saldaña of the American Diabetes Association (11 April)
- Meet with Mike Hartley of the American Red Cross (12 April)

- Meet with Publisher Alex Flores and photographer Juan Miranda of *La Voz Hispana* newspaper (12 April)
- Meet with Juan Jose Perez, Ohio Republican Hispanic Assembly (18 April)
- Speak at the Spanish Language Outreach Program of the State Library of Ohio (26 April – Westerville)

**Community Investment – “Build”:** The Director continues to work directly with the following organizations to assist in the various organizations’ development and capacity building as it relates to serving their respective Latino communities. This work is in lieu of the Organizations Development Center’s establishment, and provides important practical experience for the Office and the Director for when the resources become available to begin operations of the ODC.

- Board of Trustees of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio
- Alpha Psi Lambda Co-ed Latino-interest Fraternity at The Ohio State University
- Community Advisory Board of Huntington Bank
- Advisory Committee of CAPA (Columbus Association for the Performing Arts)
- Citizens’ Academy of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

Submitted by Ezra C. Escudero, OCHLA Director, 15 June 2007

