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CAMBIO DE COLORES (CHANGE OF COLORS) 2007—LATINOS IN MISSOURI SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: “EVERYONE TOGETHER – *TODOS JUNTOS*”

“Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors) - Latinos in Missouri” is an annual three-day conference that focuses on Latino immigration to the state in particular and the Midwest in general. It is the premier event focusing on the Heartland’s most important demographic and community change of the last two decades. The goal of this conference is to contribute to the smooth and sustainable integration of the new population for the benefit of all the people in the state of Missouri and neighboring states.

Similar to other states of the heartland, the Latino population in Missouri has more than doubled in the past fifteen years. According to recent census data, Latinos or Hispanics comprise now 2.7 percent of Missourians, distributed not only in the metropolitan areas, but in every county of our state. The neighboring state of Kansas has seen its Latino population grow from 3.8 percent in 1990 to 8.3 percent in 2005.

“Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors)—Latinos in Missouri: Everyone Together – *Todos juntos*” will take place from Monday April 2 to Wednesday April 4, 2007, at the Marriott Country Club Plaza Hotel, in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. The conference expects to draw approximately 300 participants, including academic researchers and extension specialists, public and private service providers, grassroots organizations, staff from state and local government institutions, politicians, and newcomers themselves. The main topics of the conference are: change and integration; civil rights; education; health; and youth, families, and communities. Presentations and workshops will cover topics of special relevance to make this process beneficial to everyone, for example: asset accumulation strategies for newcomers; inclusion and integration of Latino parents and students into school systems; best practices for prevention of diseases; cultural competency; changes in sending and receiving communities; the immigration legal and political climate; and many others.

This conference will have a bi-state flavor as the Kansas City Metropolitan Area spans five counties on both sides of the Missouri and Kansas state line. Kansas City is home to the largest and longest established Hispanic/Latino community in Missouri and has many Hispanic/Latino serving agencies that have operated for several decades. The conference will showcase some of these agencies through onsite visits, allowing participants the opportunity to learn about their history, successes and challenges, and approaches to accommodating the needs of newcomers and the receiving communities.

The 2007 conference underlines the need for every stakeholder—newcomer and long-established alike—to get involved into the complex and vibrant process of social,

economic, and cultural change, so as to develop a sustainable, richer, diverse, and harmonic community, especially for the benefit of the incoming generations.

The conference chair is Christina Vasquez-Case, of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Alianzas Program. The Executive Coordinator is Domingo Martínez Castilla, of MU's Cambio Center. The conference planning committee includes more than thirty volunteers from state public and private institutions.

Plenary speakers will be René Díaz-Lefevre, from Glendale Community College in Arizona, who received the 2006 Arizona Professor of the Year Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Sylvia Lazos, well known constitutional law and critical race scholar, of the University of Nevada-Las Vegas; Darcy Tromanhauser, an expert on immigrant integration, of the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest; a University of Illinois team working on disparities in rural health care, including Ben Mueller, Sergio Cristancho, Marcela Garcés, and Karen Peters; and Anne Dannerbeck-Janku, a researcher from the Juvenile and Adult Court Programs, Missouri Office of State Courts Administrator.

The closing session will feature Richard Santana, a well known motivational speaker that will tell about his life experiences moving from a street life with drugs and violence, to receiving a degree from Harvard's Graduate School. Mr. Santana offers a unique insight challenging audiences to think beyond perceptions and stereotypes and embrace the true character and contributions of a person.

Special guests include UM System President Elson S. Floyd, UMKC Chancellor Guy H. Bailey, and other University of Missouri leaders. Main sponsors are the University of Missouri System; UMKC Office of the Chancellor, Office of Community and Public Affairs, and Alianzas; MU Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Vice Provost for International Programs & Strategic Initiatives, Cambio Center, Hispanic and Latin American Faculty & Staff Association (HLAFSA); in cooperation with the MU Conference Office.

For more information regarding the conference, please access the conference website: <http://www.cambiodecolores.org>