

Cambio de Colores – “Latinos in the Heartland”

May 18-20, 2009

Millennium Student Center

University of Missouri - St. Louis

A Multi-State Conference about Integration of Immigrants

Organized by the University of Missouri’s Cambio Center

In cooperation with the Multistate Research Project "Latinos and Immigrants in Midwestern Communities" – North Central Regional Center for Rural Development.

Conference Description and Highlights

Websites: www.cambiodecolores.org
 www.latinosintheheartland.com

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CAMBIO DE COLORES (CHANGE OF COLORS) 2009—LATINOS IN THE HEARTLAND EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

“Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors)” is an annual three-day conference about Latinos in the Midwest region of the United States, with a special attention given to recently arrived immigrants and the communities where they are settling. It is the premier event focusing on the Heartland’s most important demographic and cultural change of the last three decades. The goal of this conference is to contribute to the smooth and sustainable integration of the new population, which will benefit all the people in the states of the Midwest.

The Hispanic population in the United States has more than doubled since 1990. The growth has been quite larger in the Midwest—137 percent between 1990 and 2007—while the total population has increased by only 11.3 percent. According to census data, Latinos or Hispanics in 2007 comprised 6.2 percent of the Midwestern population, up from 2.9 percent back in 1990. It is also remarkable how widely distributed this process is, as it includes most of the urban and rural counties of the region. In absolute numbers, Latinos are now approaching 5 million in the Midwest, with that number growing twelve times as fast as the general population’s.

The multi-state conference “Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors) – Latinos in the Heartland” will take place from Monday May 18 to Wednesday May 20, 2009, at the Millennium Student Center, in the campus of the University of Missouri – St. Louis. The conference will draw between 150 and 250 participants from states in the region and beyond, including academic researchers and extension specialists, public and private service providers, grassroots organizers, professionals from state, local, and federal government institutions, politicians, and newcomers themselves.

The main topics of the conference are: change and integration; civil rights and political participation; education; health; and youth, families, and communities. Around fifty presentations and workshops by

speakers of nine states, will cover issues of special relevance to explaining and making this widespread change beneficial to everyone; for example: regional immigrant pull factors, Latino mobility, the immigration legal system, integration in several states, best practices for Latino youth, language acquisition and success in children, health disparities data and consequences, adolescents, social capital and networking, bridging and bonding, K-12 educational best practices, domestic violence, health outreach, the effects of I.C.E. raids in rural communities, among others.

The 2009 conference underlines the need for every stakeholder—newcomer and long-established resident alike—to get involved into the complex and vibrant process of social, economic, and cultural change, to develop a sustainable, richer, diverse, and harmonic community, especially for the benefit of the incoming generations.

The conference chair is Domingo Martínez Castilla, of the University of Missouri-Columbia's Cambio Center. The co-Chair is Jan. L. Flora, from Iowa State University. The conference planning committee includes more than thirty volunteers from state public and private institutions across the Midwest, and had the support of the inter-university North Central Region Center for Rural Development (NCRCD).

Plenary speakers include Lori T. Chesser, an immigration lawyer from Des Moines, Iowa; Ryan Barker, of the Missouri Foundation for Health, and Benjamin Mueller, from the University of Illinois National Center for Rural Health Professions; Elena Morales of El Centro Inc., Kansas City, Kansas; and Mario A. Magaña, from Oregon State University. There will also be a plenary research panel composed by Georgeanne Artz, Corinne Valdivia, and Stephen Jeanetta, of the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The closing session will feature three honored guests from St. Louis. They are outstanding examples of Latino integration, who will speak of their own experiences and from their different perspectives: the Hon. María Chappelle-Nadal, District 72 (University City), Missouri House of Representatives; Gilbert Bailón, Editor of the Editorial Page, St. Louis Post-Dispatch; and Linda M. Martínez, Director of the Department of Economic Development of the State of Missouri.

Special guests include Gary Forsee, President of the University of Missouri System; Thomas George, Chancellor of the University of Missouri –St. Louis; and other University of Missouri leaders. The conference is sponsored by the University of Missouri System and its Columbia and St. Louis campuses. Main external sponsors include the Missouri Foundation for Health.

For extensive and updated information regarding the conference, please access the conference website: www.cambiodecolores.org (also reachable from www.latinosintheheartland.com).

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