



**Chicano Latino  
Affairs Council**  
State of Minnesota

# ¡El Minnesotano!

## *Civic engagement ...*

is a term used to describe the activities, which promote the collaboration of individuals in pursuit of social, economic and political ends. Community action in politics, service learning, activism and advocacy are all different facets of civic engagement that work towards enhancing our society by performing our responsibility as citizens.

Through civic engagement, you have the ability to change public policy and your community. As a citizen, you have the right to disagree when our government makes public policies that negatively affect your community. You have the right and the responsibility to participate in the effort to improve your schools, jobs, health and homes. You can participate in the process of civic engagement by promoting changes in public policy and your community in five distinct ways: (1) vote, (2) participate in the process of bill creation, (3) participate in community action, (4) volunteer and (5) serve in jury duty.

First: Your voice is your vote. Through your vote, you decide on the local, state and national leaders, who will make the decisions that will affect the way we live. By watching the news, reading about politicians' positions and going to the poll stations in your neighborhood, you can learn and then, choose the leaders that are best for your community.

Second, once leaders are in power, you have the ability to influence their decisions by participating in the process through which bills and laws are made. By writing letters or emails to your legislators, mayors, and governors calling by phone, signing petitions or providing testimony, you can express your concerns on public policy and impact results or actions. If enough citizens pressure politicians, these will make decisions that support the public interest.

Third: As citizens, you have an obligation to participate in your community. By attending city council meetings, school meetings and community events, you can make sure the voice of your community is heard. If you participate in your community, you can discover similarities with other community members and accomplish public change.

Fourth, as a citizen, you have a responsibility to volunteer. Numerous organizations in your community work to change lives, influence public policy, and improve the future. By contributing a few hours of your time to these organizations, you can help improve your community. Look online at CLAC's site [www.clac.state.mn.us](http://www.clac.state.mn.us) for organizations that need your help.

Finally, as a citizen, you have the responsibility to participate in jury duty. Responding to your jury duty summons allows the state to fairly evaluate civic and criminal offenses and gives you the opportunity to help the courts apply justice.

Within this process, CLAC can help you understand the democratic process, to present to legislators and the governor suggestions for creating new laws, to testify before the legislature, to identify organizations and programs that are appropriate for their intentions, and to hold community meetings.

As members of the community, we have responsibilities to improve our living conditions. By partaking in these actions of civic engagement, we can influence politics and make positive changes in our own lives, the lives of our families and the lives of our children.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

By Hector Garcia

## ***The Value of the Minnesota Chicano Latino Affairs Council and the other State Councils***

During the current legislative session, both the Senate and the House of Representatives have introduced bills to evaluate the merit of the ongoing existence of the Minnesota Chicano Latino Affairs Council (CLAC), the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, the Council on Black Minnesotans and other state agencies.

I consider it very important for readers of *El Minnesotano* to understand the added value that our and the other Councils bring to the communities we represent, to state government and to Minnesotans in general. If you agree with this article, I would appreciate your writing to or calling your representatives in the Senate and the House to express your opinion.

Over the last several years, there has been considerable media coverage on the disparities experienced by the Minnesota minority communities in the areas of education, workforce and business development, health, housing and incarceration in contrast to the majority community. These disparities are nearly the worst in the nation; they are paradoxical because Minnesota is recognized as one of the best states in the Union in terms of philanthropy and civic-mindedness.

In spite of the awareness raised by the media, the concern of government, corporations, nonprofits and the communities themselves and the resulting efforts to reduce the disparities, the latter remain and, in some cases, have increased. It is a complex dilemma, which is compounded by the demographic growth of the same communities, particularly Latinos who grew by 75% between 2000 and 2010 to a quarter of a million persons, according to US Census 2010. Since the numbers in the communities are growing, our impact on the future of the state will be greater; the ongoing presence of the disparities will then increasingly affect not only the communities but the whole state.

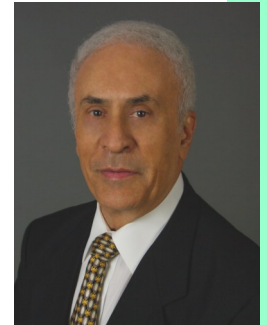
The solutions to the dilemma have escaped us thus far. There are, as in all chronic problems, a variety of causes behind it. The cultural differences between the majority and the minority communities, especially when considering those with large proportions of new immigrants, are a significant factor as are, in the same case, language differences.

Those differences can be turned from sources of problems into sources of solutions. Differences are a liability when we perceive them and manage them as if they were intrinsically so.

On the other hand, they can be perceived and managed as sources of synergy, creativity and attraction. For instance, innovation arises from the divergence of perspectives, which are then brought to converge on a useful application; this example is pertinent because innovation happens to be one of the essential requirements for improving the economy. Language differences, which unfortunately many see as a negative, can be a strength in a globalized reality in which trade with non-English speaking nations can become a vital source of additional revenue. Cultural differences can also lead to making the state more attractive to national and foreign tourists, knowledge workers and investors. To see this possibility, one need only study the practices of cities like New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Antonio, San Francisco and Seattle, among others throughout the U.S. and the world. These cities at some point chose to not perceive the language and cultural differences of their minority communities as blemishes to be overcome but as values to be prized, enhanced and promoted.

In order to envision the positive potential of the cultural and language differences of the minority communities and to apply it in practical ways, it is necessary to know those cultures and languages well, to understand the context of Minnesota's government and other institutions, and to be able to bridge the communication gap between them to bring about collaboration. Those are some of the functions of the State Councils as liaisons between our communities, on the one hand, and government and other institutions on the other.

In addition to these and many other potential benefits that CLAC and the other Councils can bring about, I believe we could play a key role in reducing the disparities, which ail our communities and threaten the future of the State. Of course, for this to be feasible, it would be first necessary for leaders in government and other Minnesota sectors to recognize our value and explore ways to tap the resources represented by the Councils and our communities.



## ***A PROUD MINNESOTAN: Elia Dimayuga Bruggeman, a Latina with a Passion for Education...!!!***

Born in Las Mesas, Guerrero, Mexico, Elia came to Minnesota with her family as migrant workers with the Bracero program a guest-worker contract between Mexico and United States. Later, she came back as a foreign exchange student to Sleepy Eye, MN in 1974. She began her career in education teaching Spanish at Worthington Community College while studying at Minnesota State University-Mankato. In 1985, she received her BS in Teaching Business Education, Spanish, and a minor in Business Administration. After obtaining her degree, she worked for St. James Public Schools where she taught Spanish, typing, and English as a Second Language.



In 1995, Mrs. Bruggeman began to teach night classes for Minnesota State University. In 1996, while studying Education Administration, Sleepy Eye Schools hired her as the Dean of Students. The following year, she completed her Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership/Education Administration and became the High School Principal at Sleepy Eye High School until 2006.

Elia worked for Shattuck-St. Mary's Preparatory School in Faribault, MN, as the World Language Department Chair and Academic Dean from 2006 to 2010. She was awarded a fellowship at MNSU in the area of Educational Leadership where she worked with Aspiring Principals and taught classes in Curriculum Supervision at MNSU-Mankato. She joined the Northwest Suburban Integration School District as the Director of Educational Services working with administrations from the eight member districts collaborative. Elia's current position is Assistant Commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Education.

After observing the influx of Latinos to Minnesota and their struggles in school, Mrs. Bruggeman started to develop programs in Sleepy Eye to embrace diverse students. The programs include courses to improve overall test scores and reduce the dropout rate. She organized and directed a K-12 migrant education curriculum program for students in the district and surrounding areas. Mrs. Bruggeman also directed the Summer Migrant Head Start Program. She coordinated and developed programs for the Integration Collaborative and coordinated the development of a Cultural Center for the community of Sleepy Eye. Furthermore, Elia continued to develop partnerships with business, community organizations, and post-secondary education to improve graduation rates for minority students in the NW metro area.

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As a Principal, citizen, educator, Board Director, and now as Assistant Commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Education, Elia has been involved in the development of programs at all levels in various districts to improve students' academic success. She is very active in the community in cultural programs and celebrations as well as with parental involvement and outreach of Hispanic students. Mrs. Bruggeman is a resource person, trainer, and speaker on diversity and techniques to help minority students succeed.

Mrs. Bruggeman was selected, Hometown County Leader by the New Ulm Journal. She was featured as a "Source of Strength" by the Girl Scouts. For her involvement in Addressing Diversity: Making a Difference in our Communities—a resource kit for Superintendents and school boards in the State of Minnesota, she was recognized by the Center for Rural Policy and Development. She is a recipient of the Clarence E. Harris Humanitarian Award at Minnesota State University. In 2001, Mrs. Bruggeman was appointed by the Governor to the Chicano Latino Affairs Council to advise the Legislature on Chicano/Latino issues, where she served until 2009 and was



Chair of its Board.

Last June 2011, Elia was honored by the Government of Mexico with the 2010 Stéén recognition award presented by the First Lady Margarita Zavala for her work in education. The ceremony, held in Mexico City, honored four teachers and officials, who distinguished themselves through the educational and integration programs they developed, achieving concrete results to improve quality and access to education for migrant children in the United States.

Elia and her husband Mark live in Sleepy Eye. They have four children--Vanessa, Erica, William and Brianna, and three grandchildren. Elia Bruggeman has made Minnesota and her county of origin, Mexico, proud!

## CLAC Community Notes

by Astrid Ollerenshaw



### Minnesota CLAC Community Engagement Forums

CLAC's community engagement plan pursues the following:

- ⇒ To explain and clarify CLACs activities and objectives;
- ⇒ To directly engage Latino community members in discussing their accomplishments and challenges;
- ⇒ To understand the Latino community's perspective on root causes of socio-economic challenges and solutions;
- ⇒ To provide Latino community members with information regarding the state legislative process, policies and budget programs that support their socio-economic situation;
- ⇒ To understand the perspectives on Latino community contributions and support them through government, employers, educators, faith-based leaders and service providers;
- ⇒ To identify individuals who may provide testimony in presenting issues and solutions to state government;
- ⇒ To identify individuals and organizations who can support CLAC recommendations;
- ⇒ To gather and integrate direct qualitative research into CLAC analysis.

CLAC wants to hear the voices of Latinos and non-Latinos in the cities we visit. These included leaders and community members who work for nonprofits, corporations, restaurants, government offices, universities, school districts and others. Our meetings are usually about 3 hours long; they have a specific agenda that includes information for the community about education, economic development, health, immigration and housing depending on the priority areas CLAC is focusing on. We also want participants to know about CLAC and our work. Most time is assigned to the "Open microphone;" segment during which we listen and learn about the Latino community's accomplishments and needs. The meetings are usually conducted in English or Spanish or in both languages.

Here our upcoming visits. We invite you to participate in the one nearest you:

Date 2011	Latino Cluster City	Place
September 20	Marshall	Western Community Action 1400 South Saratoga Street
September 22	St Cloud	St Cloud Public Library 1300 W St Germain St
September 27	Willmar	Oaks on Eagle Creek 1100 26th Ave NE
October 1	St. Paul	Neighborhood House 179 Robie St East
October 18	Minneapolis	Las Mojarras Restaurant 1501 East Lake Street

## From the Capitol

by Hector Garcia

### Government Shutdown

Due to impasse between the Republican majority in the Legislature and Governor Dayton over the State Budget, there was a government shutdown from June 30th to July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012. CLAC was consequently closed during that period and its staff was not permitted to work throughout the whole period. The only activity carried out by CLAC staff was the Executive Director's participation on conference calls, usually conducted by M&B Commissioner Schowalter, to inform all agencies on developments regarding the shutdown as well as plans to follow once the agencies returned to normal activities.

### Budget and Special Session State Government Finance Bill

CLAC and the other 3 Councils were under threat of being placed under the control of Humanities Center by the latter receiving our appropriations instead of the Councils directly, Chair of Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans Ilean Her and I testified before the Conference Committee that this system would not work well and would distort the agency status of the Councils. Jose Trejo, former Council Chair, and other community members also wrote to the Committee complaining about this change.

In spite of the changes to the SF1047 made in regards to the Humanities Center oversight, the text still called for a 20% cut in the Councils' budgets, a report on use of appropriation money by Jan 30, 2012 and for a Sunset Review in June 2012. This and other Bills were vetoed by Gov. Dayton.

During a Special Session, the text above was passed as Special Session State Government Finance Bill with the following modification: 20% cut was changed to 5% cut. We are still expected to submit a report to the Legislature on Jan 30, 2012 and are due for a Sunset Review by a Sunset Commission in June 2012.

### Job Training bill HF645

Rep. Mullery submitted to the House of Representatives a job-training bill recommended by CLAC, CAPM and CBM. This collaborative effort was put together by CLAC. Unfortunately the HF645 did not receive any support and failed to be approved. Nonetheless, it can be resubmitted in 2012.

CLAC was able to gain support and testimony from MnDOT that, if this training took place with the funding

requested from the Legislature, there would be jobs available for Latino and other minority workers. CLAC has also been talking with Met Council to gain additional support at the next legislative session.

### Education

ED was asked to be part of Commissioner Cassellius working group on state funding. Commissioner congratulated and thanked ED for CLAC's contribution to the understanding of Latino students' needs and potential contributions.

CLAC convened meeting of top education Latino experts in the Twin Cities to gather insights, which can help us recommend a bill at the Legislative session in January 2012. CLAC also identified best practices in both Minnesota and other states, which have been successful in reducing the achievement gap among Latino students, especially, as well as among other minority students.

These best practices (for instance Northfield's TORCH program has shown improvements in 2 years from a HS graduation rate of 35% to 90%) can substantiate a return on investment for legislators to consider if they were to approve such a bill.

### Redistricting

Governor Dayton vetoed HF 1425 and HF1426, the legislative and congressional redistricting bills that were passed through the legislature. The issue of setting legislative districts has now moved to the

courts, which has happened in the past, in order to avoid more partisan disagreements. A final ruling is expected to come in January or February of 2012.

CLAC is involved in this process, trying to ensure that Latino voters are given the best possible representation at the local and state levels. Executive Director Hector Garcia testified before the House and Senate committees (see attachments) and has attended hearing at the Judicial Center as well as other Redistricting meetings. The ED and other staff members have been working with several organizations including ONE MN, Common Cause, Education Minnesota and Women's League of Voters in proposing fair redistricting maps. We will keep you informed of developments.



## Sabor Latino

by Gladys Rodriguez

Enjoy!



### From El Salvador Central America



### Plantain Empanadas

#### Ingredients

1. 10 ripe plantains
2. ½ cup of sugar
3. 2 cinnamon sticks
4. 2 teaspoon of vanilla
5. ½ cup of milk
6. 4 spoons of cornstarch
7. 2 teaspoons of sugar
8. Oil

#### Preparation

Peel the plantains. Cut each plantain in four pieces. In a medium bowl, pour 5 cups of water, add the sugar, vanilla and the cinnamon sticks. Put on the stove and cook until plantains are fully cooked.

In another bowl, add the milk and slowly add the cornstarch. Stir until blended in. Add a little bit of sugar, one teaspoon of vanilla, and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon powder. Cook over medium fire and keep stirring until it is thick.

When it begins to boil, remove from heat. Let the milk cool off. Now that the plantains are cold, smash until it becomes a mixture.

Take 1 tablespoon of plantain mixture, pat it like a tortilla. Add 1 teaspoon of the milk that was previously cooked and fold one side over the filling and crimp the edges together to seal.

Place on a sheet of waxed paper and repeat with remaining filling and circles.

In a deep saucepan, fry the empanadas, turning over from time to time with a spoon, until crisp and golden brown. Sprinkle with sugar.

Alternate cooking method: the empanadas can be baked in a 350-degree oven for about 20 to 25 minutes.