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Latino Education Summit

Kicks Off on October 12

Goal: To provide a forum for community, government and school districts to address factors which impact the attainment of a quality education and high school completion by Latino youth.

On June 29th, the first Latino Education Summit brought together over 250 parents, educators, community members, students, government and community-based organizations that shared similar concerns about Latino student academic and social success. The idea was borne of talks between Dr. Ben Canada, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, and Commissioner Serena Cruz about why Latino youth drop-out rate in Portland Public Schools was disproportionately higher than other groups. Rather than solely addressing the problem at a bureaucratic level, an idea emerged of convening a gathering, or "summit" of community members to have the opportunity to share

their ideas, concerns and suggestions. Superintendent and Commissioner Cruz felt that it was their duty to take it to the community — they may have concerns or see solutions yet unexplored. Another important purpose of the Summit was also to create partnerships among local government, school districts, and communities that other districts and regions may model.

The summit provided venues in which to identify areas of concern within four groups responsible for Latino's student success: Student Responsibility, School Responsibility, Parent Responsibility and Community Responsibility. Participants were asked to brainstorm ideas and suggestions that specifically address key areas of concern.

Another aspect of community involvement that was key was the individual commitments made by participants. Over 45 individual commitments were made by Summit participants in which they pledged volunteer efforts, programs and other

resources toward the shared goal of the Summit.

This fall, Part Two of the Latino Education Summit, the Kick-off, will further review key recommendations and strategies of implementation that can be used in our schools. The Kick-off is scheduled for October 12th; time and location will be determined in the upcoming weeks. Our planning committee and research subcommittee are now working to ensure that the fall Kick-off is just as beneficial to our mission as our summer Work-session. Dr. Canada and Commissioner Cruz are committed to changing and modifying systems in order to make sure they work for our youth and community.

We invite you to become part of this very important process. If you are interested in participating in one of our four work groups, are requesting more information or to be added to our Summit database, please call me at 503/248-5239 or email me at carmen.c.rubio@co.multnomah.

Hit by Worldwide Headlines, Chavez Launches Campaign to Counter

By BART JONES

CARACAS, VENEZUELA (AP) — Wildly popular at home, but weathering criticism abroad that he may be taking Venezuela toward dictatorship, President Hugo Chavez acknowledges he has an image problem.

The former coup leader is launching a campaign to counter the critics. Democracy in Venezuela can't be in danger, he says, because it never really existed.

Venezuela "is coming out of its tomb," Chavez told reporters in Manaus, Brazil, on Saturday after meeting with Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Old-style politicians "transformed the country into a tyranny. They robbed, they looted, they humiliated, they massacred the Venezuelan people."

Chavez is ordering the country's embassies to step-up efforts to spread the government's viewpoint, and has brought in a well-known local reporter who specializes in international news, Walter Martinez, to help handle the foreign media. Once reserved Cabinet members suddenly are loquacious and accessible.

Controversy has broken out in Venezuela over a constitutional assembly that was elected in July to write a new constitution. Last month the pro-

Chavez assembly declared itself the supreme power of the nation, giving itself the power to fire judges and overhaul the justice system.

Last week, the assembly virtually shut down Congress, provoking a street melee outside the Capitol building between pro- and anti-Chavez demonstrators. About a half-dozen opposition lawmakers climbed over a fence to try to retake their chambers.

Critics charged that Chavez, a former paratrooper who led a failed 1992 coup attempt and was elected president in December, is taking Venezuela toward dictatorship by abolishing its other government bodies.

During an interview with foreign correspondents aboard the presidential jet as he returned from Brazil on Saturday, Chavez insisted that the assembly is provoking criticism mainly because it is attacking the interests of Venezuela's corrupt oligarchy.

"The world is coming to realize that I'm not the tyrant they said, the monster, the Hitler, the Mussolini," he said.

He said the referendum voters approved in April to create the assembly instructed it to reform Venezuela's public institutions, which are riddled with some of the worst political corruption in the world. Venezuela sits atop the world's largest oil reserves

outside the Middle East, but more than half the population lives in poverty.

The assembly is helping push through long-delayed investigations of the nation's judges, some 80 percent of whom are accused of corruption, Chavez said. The Supreme Court has backed the move, though its president resigned in protest and the court earlier ruled that the assembly's mission is to write a constitution.

Chavez, who enjoys a 70 percent approval rating, said new, more democratic institutions will soon be created: a national referendum on the new constitution is likely in November, with congressional elections likely to follow a month later. Congress and the assembly are close to reaching an agreement through Catholic Church-mediated talks to coexist peacefully in the meantime, he said.

Chavez got a boost on Friday when Venezuela's richest businessman, Gustavo Cisneros, met with assembly leaders and said he supported their work. Critics warn that Chavez may find ways to pack the new courts and congress with supporters, and that his move to give the military a bigger role in society — he's appointed many soldiers to top government posts — raises the specter of a return to the days of repressive military regimes in Latin America.

Consulado de Mexico Portland, Oregon

The Consulate General of Mexico in Portland, Oregon has the pleasure to invite the Portland community to attend the official ceremony of the 189th anniversary of the Mexican Independence Day, "The Grito", which this year will

be held at the World Trade Center explanade, located at 121 SW Salmon St. in downtown, Portland on Wednesday, September 15th, from 5 - 7 PM.

To make this a special occasion, we will be presenting the interna-

tionally and well-acclaimed "Compañia Regional de Danza de Puebla," a group that is the second best in our country, after the Folklorico Ballet of Guadalajara.

For more information, please call the Consulate at 503/274-1442.

DMV and Community Partners Join to Aid Hispanic Drivers

On a summer evening in a Hillsboro classroom, 25 students listen to a guest speaker from the Washington County Sheriff's Office explain his role in enforcing certain traffic laws. On another evening the same students might have another guest speaker — from the insurance industry, a judge, or an employee of the DMV.

The class is the result of the Hispanic Education and Licensing Program, also known as HELP. The partnership includes Oregon DMV, the Washington County Sheriff's Office, and Centro Cultural, an advocacy group for the Washington County Hispanic community.

HELP allows students to receive 24 hours of classroom instruction with the intent of having graduates pass the knowledge tests on their way to receiving driver licenses. The six-week course involves an in-depth study of the Oregon Driver Manual, group discussions and guest speakers. During the final two-hour session, DMV representatives administer a group.

"Our partnership has three goals with this program," said Bob Oliver, manager of the Hillsboro DMV office and a member of HELP's steering committee. "We want to improve highway safety by providing an understanding of Oregon's laws. We want to build trust in law enforcement and government agencies. And we want to reduce the disparate number of Hispanic surnames appearing on traffic-related court dockets."

The program currently operates on a grant through the Washington County Sheriff. Only two years old, HELP is already showing signs of success.

The fifth and sixth groups of stu-

dents are just getting ready to graduate. More than 70 percent of the students who completed the course have passed the DMV knowledge test on their first try, Oliver said.

"For the demographic, there was only about a 40 percent success rate before the program," Oliver said.

In addition to being beneficial to the students, the program also helps the community and the DMV. It fits right in with many of DMV's goals, Oliver said. The Hillsboro office is already seeing a payoff.

"We're fostering an understanding about DMV and what we're here for," Oliver said. "Word of mouth is also helping to educate the public about how we fit into the community, and we're seeing increased aware-

ness of what we require as far as legal documentation."

As an example of that awareness, Oliver said that fewer people are bringing in unacceptable identification papers.

HELP is also beginning to evolve, Oliver said. More people are becoming interested in participating — there is a waiting list for upcoming classes. Currently there are two instructors, and the group is looking for another teacher to handle the demand.

"We really hope the program expands," Oliver said. "This is a great partnership, and we're having some good results. Our current funding source goes away September 30 of this year. We really hope we can find continued funding to keep the program going."

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EL ZOCALO

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Carne Asada
Broiled Steak.....\$7.95
Carnita De Puerco
Pork Steak.....\$7.95
Camarones Con Aros
Shrimp with Rice.....\$7.95

SALVADOREN MENU SAMPLE:

Pupusa De Queso
Cheese Pupusa.....\$2.50
Pupusa De Chicon Y Queso
Cheese and Pork Pupusa.....\$2.50
Yuca Sancochada
Boiled Yuca.....\$2.50
Plantanos Fritos Con Crema
Fried Plantain with Cream.....\$3.75

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Piense: Su hijo es inteligente, saludable y encabeza la lista para ir a la universidad. Le encanta la trayectoria que su carrera ha tomado. Está haciendo muchas de las cosas

que planeó y hasta otras que no había planeado. Vivir la vida en plenitud es fácil cuando tiene una familia que lo respalda. American Family Mutual Insurance. Llame ahora mismo y platique con nuestros agentes amables.

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