



# Kansas Hispanic & Latino American Affairs Commission



Volume I, Issue III

November– December 2011

## A Letter from Executive Director Adrienne Foster

Feliz Navidad! As I am writing this letter it is exactly two months until Christmas. By the end of 2011, KHLAAC will have held its first Hispanic Business Forum in Southwest Kansas, launched a new website, held its first Commission meeting under my leadership, finalized an early childhood education grant through the Kellogg Foundation, partnered with Cerner to initiate Fitbit to fight childhood obesity, started work on a Hispanic Leadership Summit, started the Community Champions program, held proclamation ceremonies for Victor Ortiz, Hispanic Heritage Month and Suicide Prevention Week, initiated talks with the Mexican Consulate to encourage a satellite office in Southwest Kansas and started building partnerships throughout the State of Kansas with public, private and not-for-profit organizations to further our Mission. KHLAAC serves as a resource for not only the Hispanic community but also our Governor, the Legislature, Chambers of Commerce, businesses and all Kansans. KHLAAC is not exclusive but rather it is inclusive. Because of this, we welcome your thoughts, questions, concerns and needs.

In this issue you will read about our first two Community Champions. These two individuals are being recognized for the outstanding service they provide in their communities. I had the honor and privilege to work with both of these individuals. They were an incredible resource to KHLAAC as we held our first and very successful Hispanic Business Forum, which is also featured in this edition. We encourage everyone to nominate individuals for our Community Champion program. The Community Champions are those who make a positive impact in the communities where they live and work. It could be a social worker, a bank teller, the person who sacks your groceries, etc.

On Tuesday, October 11, 2011 The Kansas Minority Enterprise Development, recognized Neives's Mexican Restaurant as one of the Minority-Owned Business of the year. Owner Mercedes McCurry was excited and shocked to hear she was the award winner. The Restaurant opened April 16, 2001 in Winfield, Kansas and it has been a success. The community loves their family recipes and how the food is handmade. Congratulations Mercedes!

KHLAAC has a lot to accomplish and because funds are limited, just like they are in our households, continuing to build upon our partnerships is vital. We encourage you to submit email addresses of those you believe may want to receive our newsletter or attend one of our Commission meetings or serve on one of our Advisory committees. On behalf of KHLAAC, we wish you a safe and blessed Christmas. Sincerely,

*Adrienne Foster*

Some of you may know that I am the Mayor of my City when I am not working for the Governor. On October 27, I was invited along with other City and Municipal Leaders to a White House Briefing. We heard from Valerie Jarrett, Jason Furman, Cecilia Munoz, Bill Dailey, Anesh Chopra, Lisa Jackson, Secretary Ray LaHood and Secretary Shawn Donovan. We covered topics ranging from transportation to environmental protection. It was repeated several times that the job of the Federal Government is to regulate and control immigration, not the States. We need to all keep this mind as we all prepare for the 2012 State of Kansas Session begins in January.

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## Hispanic Business Forum

The first Hispanic Business Forum was hosted by KHLAAC in conjunction with the Dodge City Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 29. This was a great opportunity for the Hispanic business community to learn about the resources available for small businesses.

More than 100 attendees gathered at the Macgouirk Conference Center in Dodge City, Kan. Small businesses from Hugoton, Garden City, Dodge City, Liberal, Scott and Ulysses Kan. learned about marketing and branding their business, banking/finance, and utilizing information technology. After the seminars, the participants were introduced to Governor Brownback by Secretary of Commerce Pat George.

Governor Brownback spoke about the importance of small business for the economy and how government plays a key role in providing them with resources to support their growth.



Left to right: David Rebein, Secretary Pat George, Governor Brownback and Adrienne Foster



Governor Brownback and Pablo Palacios

Mr. Webber, an entrepreneur who only has a 9th grade education spoke about the great need of creating more technical schools. Governor Brownback has a plan to have more technical classes available for students while they finalize their academic curriculum. This plan will allow high school students at the time of graduation to graduate with a high school diploma and a technical certificate.

This certificate will provide them with an occupation right after graduation and the ability to earn a better income thereby reducing the amount of student loans. This will also provide a career for those who don't want to attend college.

Mayor John Doll, from Garden City thanked Governor Brownback for attending the Forum.



Martha Ruiz-Martinez, Governor Brownback and Lynn Ballinger



Left to right: Stephanie Frayre, Guadalupe Lozano, Governor Brownback, Pablo Palacios, Felicita Martinez, and Victoria Guzman

Attendees were invited to have lunch and a question and answer session with Governor Brownback. Two main topics were discussed at lunch:

1. Hispanic businesses are not taking advantage of social media
2. Business Loans/Banking

KHLAAC took these challenges and proposed that the local chambers of commerce offer more classes/seminars for their members to educate them about social media and the use of information technology. "We challenged Garden City and Dodge City to provide that service to their new chamber members. This will benefit the community and strengthen chamber participation," said Adrienne Foster.

Hispanic Businesses also wanted to learn more about banking and finance. In the Hispanic community, banks are not always trusted. "We challenged the banks and asked them about their plan on how they are going to earn the trust of the Hispanic business owners. I will send a letter to the banks who were in attendance and publish their response in our next newsletter" added Adrienne.

#### **Concerns From the Business Community**

Some business owners shared their concern regarding the content and language used by some Spanish speaking radio stations.

Governor Brownback mentioned that this is regulated by the Federal Government through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The State does not regulate the airwaves. For more information about the FCC visit [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov).

### **Hispanic Businesses**

Rosie Rodriguez and Omar Lopez were the two business owners featured at the Hispanic Business Forum held in Dodge City.

#### **Illusions Hair Salon in Garden City**

With over 100 fellow entrepreneurs, Rosie Rodriguez-Sick, owner of Illusions Hair Salon, shared her story about the struggles on her path to becoming a successful Hispanic



business woman. Illusions Hair Salon celebrated its fifth year in business this year. Rosie attributes her success to the willingness to give back to the community. "It is more than just a willingness to work hard," she said. "You have to be willing to learn. Education is the key to success, whether as a leader, a team member, or a business person."

#### **El Mexicano Auto in Dodge City**

Omar Lopez, owner of El Mexicano Auto, began in the car business in 1992 when he was 18 years old. Omar was not able to finish high school because his mother got ill and he had to support his family financially. Because Omar loved cars, he decided to try to make it in that business.

He was born in Durango, Mexico. Omar became a U.S. citizen in 2004. He attributes his success to his passion for cars. He says he has two loves, cars and his ranch. Every year during the Sept. 16 weekend he organizes a horse back ride from Cimarron to Dodge City. Between 300-500 people gather each year to ride with him.

With information from: <http://www.gctelegram.com/news/local-oil-spill-effort-5-12-10> and Vision Vanguard.

## Your Credit History

Creating a credit history when you don't already have one can be challenging at first. To establish credit, you have to have credit (i.e. have a good history of paying a loan, credit card, car payment, etc.). The tricky part is that if you don't have credit, most lenders are not willing to give you credit. It can be frustrating, but patience, and paying your bills on time will earn you the credit you need. Here are some tips to help you understand what lenders are looking for and help you get on the right path to establishing a good credit history.

### Your credit score is determined by:

1. Payment history
2. Time you have had credit
3. Other factors

When you are applying for a loan, lenders look at your FICO score (this is a score that determines how much of a risk you are to lend money to). Some factors that determine your level of risk:

- *Bank accounts:* you don't need credit to open a checking account, it is not reported

to the credit bureaus. Although it is not reported, it is essential to have a bank account, especially if you are trying to get your first credit card. When you open a bank account, you establish a relationship with your bank. Most banks offer credit cards. When trying to get a credit card, your bank should be your first stop.

- *Employment history and residence history:* Lenders want to see that you are reliable and you can hold a job. Having a steady job will help you in the process. It also helps your credit if you have a stable renter/home owner history.
- *Having utilities in your name:* Without credit, it is hard to open utility accounts under your name. But having at least one helps if you are a first-time borrower.

### Credit Cards and Department Store Cards

To get credit, you must have a credit card which is reported to



the credit bureau. Before you apply for a credit card, check to see if it will be reported. If the card won't be reported to the credit bureau, don't apply because it will not help your credit score. The difficult part is getting your first credit card. Don't get desperate and over apply—that affects your score negatively. Every time you apply and are denied, it is reported to the credit bureau.

Another option is to obtain a secure credit loan (this is an asset linked account). It is important to note that if you fail to pay, the lender will take your assets (i.e., a car, to cover the loan amount). Some banks issue secure credit cards where you deposit the amount you carry on the card.

It is as important to establish credit as it is to maintain it. In order to maintain it, you should follow these simple tips:

1. Have a budget
2. Don't spend more than you earn
3. Pay your bills on time
4. Pay your credit cards in full every month to avoid high interest rates
5. Talk with your family about money

Source: [www.myfico.com](http://www.myfico.com); [financialplan.about.com](http://financialplan.about.com)

## Work from the Heart

The Community Champions inspire others to do great things. We want to honor these individuals who create opportunities for their community's with their great efforts and make every day better for those who live and work around them.



**Martha Ruiz- Martinez** is a District Representative at U.S. Senator Pat Roberts' Dodge City Office. Her passion for helping empower others and doing what is right is an inspiration to all. Martha moved to Dodge City in 1994

from Southern California, and became part of Senator Robert's Team in 2001.

"I love people and enjoy working with everyone in the community. My goal everyday is to always greet everyone who comes into the office with a smile and a listening ear."

The Senator's office is located at 100 Military Plaza, Suite 203, Dodge City. Anyone who needs guidance in dealing with the federal government or help in cutting through bureaucracy can contact any of Senator Robert's Kansas or Washington DC offices. Martha has promoted the importance of good health, education, community involvement, and continued integration.

"It is so rewarding to see the many families, Veterans, students and seniors that our office has been able to help. It is a blessing to have a great boss and staff, who allow me to continue to grow every day" added Martha.

**Angelica Castillo** moved to Garden City when she was 13 years old from Chihuahua, Mexico.

"When my family decided to move here they saw it as an opportunity. I was a teenager and I didn't want to move—I had my world all figured out at home" Angelica said .



She remembers her ESL days, "I then became the translator for my

parents. Now, I can still see little kids translating for their parents" added Angelica.

Being a first generation immigrant has helped her understand first hand all the challenges immigrants experience when they arrive in the U.S. Those experiences made her want to help the community and make a difference in Garden City, her new home. Ten years ago, Angelica started working for the community through various volunteer opportunities. She got a position at the Chamber of Commerce to target Hispanic businesses, "I was immersed in the community, I got the opportunity to meet great people in the community and state," said Angelica.

Through the Hispanic Chamber, Angelica helped to develop programs to help low income families achieve their higher education dreams. She also helped to develop a youth leadership program through LULAC and the Hispanic Chamber to create internships for students of low income families.

In 2005 Angelica won the Kansas Minority Advocate of the year Award. "I am passionate about my city and about helping others who are in the same boat of being new to this country" said Angelica. Currently she is the President of Fiesta Mexicana in Garden City. The festival has been in the community for over 85 years. The goal of this festival is to create cultural awareness and to gather funds for scholarships for low income families. Angelica enjoys volunteering in the community and she tries to be as active as possible. She currently works at the Golden Plains Credit Union in Garden City.

Are you a Community Champion or do you know someone who is? Do you do your best every day and through your actions inspire others to do great things? If you are, we want to hear from you. Please email us your story at [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) and you could be featured in one of our newsletters.

## Preparing High School Seniors for Graduation

If you plan to attend college, or have a child graduating next year, your family needs to start making all the arrangements this Fall to be ready for college next Fall.

Here is a quick preview of the timelines and things to accomplish each season prior to graduation.

### Fall

- Learn and list all the deadlines and projects you need to complete to graduate.
- Talk to the school counselor to make sure you are taking all the classes required to graduate.
- Even if you're a step away from graduating; you still need to study since your grades will appear in the transcript you will send with your college application.
- Gather all admission forms from the colleges you are interested in applying to. You can apply with most colleges online. Keep copies of all the information you send with your application.
- Arrange a college visit to the schools you are applying to.
- Continue doing community service; keep good records of completed hours.

### Winter

- Ask your school to send your transcripts to the colleges you are applying to.
- Complete scholarship applications well in advance.
- You can apply for the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after January 1. The application can be completed online at [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov). You will need your parent's tax return information, so ask them to file early.
- Enjoy your time with your high school friends since you probably won't see most of them for several years, even decades.



### Spring

- Most colleges mail their acceptance letters by April. You can visit the schools to help you finalize your decision. Once you know what you want, make sure to return the acceptance letter to reserve your spot. If you need a dorm room, make the proper arrangements at this time.
- Financial aid letters usually arrive in May. You still have time to apply for a student loan.
- Submit your tuition deposit to your college of choice.
- Talk to your guidance counselor if you were not accepted to any colleges to see what other options are avail-

ble to you. If you are on the waiting list, don't get discouraged. Write or call the college to see what you can do to improve your chances to become accepted.

- Say goodbye to your high school friends and prepare for graduation, summer college courses, a summer internship or a summer job.

### Summer

- You can get a summer job to save some money for college.
- Open a bank account and get an ATM card.
- If you are moving away from home, pack all the special things you will need. Ask your school what will be provided for you, so you don't bring things you don't need.
- Update your Facebook account and stay connected with family and friends.
- Keep in touch with your parents (not only when you need money!). It will be as much of an adjustment for you as it will be for them.

Source: [ecampustours.com](http://ecampustours.com), [mappingyourfuture.org](http://mappingyourfuture.org), [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

## Help us keep kids safe and families strong in KC Metro!

**December 3, 2011**

**7:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
Jack Stack BBQ  
95th and Metcalf  
Overland Park, KS**



All proceeds benefit the Kansas Children's Service League's KC Metro-area prevention and education programs.

Tickets: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door  
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Lieutenant Commander Tracy Branch

U.S. DHHS Region VII

Office of Minority Health

816.426.3295

[Tracy.Branch@HHS.GOV](mailto:Tracy.Branch@HHS.GOV)

## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Student Day

On Sept. 30, Adrienne Foster spoke at the Annual Hispanic Student Day, sponsored by the Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO) and Garden City Community College. Over 130 students participated in the event. The purpose of this event was to encourage students to continue with their education.

"Attendees were very interested in learning how someone like me now works with the Governor" said Adrienne Foster. She shared her challenges as a student with the attendees. During her third year of college, Adrienne got married and started her family right away. Four years later, she obtained her degree after having three kids and commuting from Wichita to Topeka three times per week. Adrienne planned to attend law school, but her growing family responsibilities kept her from attending, so she decided to get her masters degree instead. She shared with students about how the road was difficult, but worth it. She challenged students to network and think about their future. Adrienne highlighted how all their possibilities broaden if they have a college degree. Adrienne shared the statistic that 51% of Hispanic students don't graduate from high school in Dodge City and Garden City. She asked them to network as much as they can, because connections and networking will play a key role in the development of their career.

### Commission Meetings

Date: Oct. 14, 2011

Time: 8 a.m.-noon  
Location: 900 SW Jackson

2nd floor, Topeka Kan.

Date: Feb. 10, 2012

Time: 8:30 a.m.-noon  
Location: 900 SW Jackson

2nd floor, Topeka Kan.

Date: March 1, 2012

Time: 9 a.m.-3p.m.  
Location: 900 SW Jackson

2nd floor, Topeka Kan.

Date: May 11, 2012

Time: 8:30a.m.-noon  
Location: TBD- Garden

City Kan.

The KHLAAC Newsletter is sent by email bi-monthly and printed twice a year. Subscribe to the KHLAAC bi-monthly publication by sending an email to [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov) or by visiting [www.khlaac.ks.gov](http://www.khlaac.ks.gov)

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### Calendar of Events

#### November 2011

**Event:** Veterans Day

**Date:** Friday, Nov. 11

**Contact:** search online and other media sources for information about this holiday.

**Event:** Wichita Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Monthly Luncheon

**Date:** Tuesday, Nov. 15

**Time:** 11:30a.m. – 1:00p.m.

**Speaker:** *Adrienne Foster of KHLAAC*

**Cost:** Chamber Members; \$7.00, Non-Members \$15.00

**Place:** TBA

**Contact:** The Chamber at: (316) 265-6334

**Event:** MANA de Topeka, Monthly Meeting and Social

**Date:** Wednesday, Nov. 16

**Time:** 5:30pm and stay as long as you want

**Cost:** Pay for your own food

**Place:** London's Jazz Cafe 115 SE 6 St, Topeka

**Event:** Email Basics

**Date:** Saturday, Nov. 19

**Time:** 10:15 a.m.

**Place:** Waldo Branch

**Cost:** FREE

**Contact:** <http://eventful.com>

Set up a free email account and learn how to create, send and receive email messages. Registration requested and basic computer skills a requirement. Attendees must take Computer Basics and Internet Basics before taking email Basics, or have significant Internet experience.

#### December 2011

Annual Festival of Lights Parade and Christmas Celebrations all over America

**Event:** Overland Park Career Fair

**Date:** Thursday, Dec. 1

**Time:** 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

**Place:** Holiday Inn Hotel, 8787 Reeder Rd., Overland Park, KS 66214

**Cost:** FREE

**Contact:** no registration required

**Event:** Online Job Searching

**Date:** Monday, Dec. 5

**Time:** 1:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.

**Place:** Evergreen Branch Library, 2601 N. Arkansas, Wichita

**Cost:** FREE

**Contact:** Go online to <http://eventful.com> and look under online job searching at Evergreen Branch Library

**Event:** Red Stocking Breakfast, Topeka KS

**Date:** Saturday, Dec. 10

**Place:** Carlos O'Kelly's

**Cost:** Donation requested

**Contact:** visit; [www.kcsl.org](http://www.kcsl.org) for times, and other dates and locations for this event.

**Do you have events for the community?**

**Call 785.296.3465 or email KHLAAC at [khlaac@ks.gov](mailto:khlaac@ks.gov).**