



## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### HISPANIC CHAMBER ELECTS NEW BOARD MEMBER

**PORTLAND, OR.** The Board of Directors of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber (Hispanic Chamber) recently elected **Xavier Botana** to the board of directors. Botana is the Chief Academic Officer for Portland Public Schools. Botana is responsible for leading the design and implementation of instructional programs to meet the district's academic goals with a focus on closing the achievement gap.

"I am pleased to join the Hispanic Chamber's board because the Hispanic Chamber has been such a strong supporter of Latino students statewide. I want to strengthen the role of our district in their efforts and contribute in any other way that I can".

Before coming to Portland, Botana was the Chief Officer of Instructional Design and Assessment for the Chicago Public Schools.

#### **Background:**

The Hispanic Chamber was established in 1994 and is now the largest Hispanic Chamber in the Northwest and one of the 6<sup>th</sup> largest chambers of any type in Oregon. Unlike other "business" chambers, its mission is to "*work with all members of the community to support the economic advancement of Latino businesses*". As a result, the Hispanic Chamber's focus is to serve the Latino community while working with the greater community.

#### **Hispanic Chamber Programs:**

The Hispanic Chamber conducts a variety of programs which include:

- Technical assistance for new and existing Latino and other small businesses
- Scholarships for Latino students throughout Oregon
- A year long Latino Leadership Program conducted by university faculty and private sector organizations
- An Annual Trade Show, business workshops, industry training programs; and business luncheon/dinner events.

#### **Needs of the Latino Community**

Latinos in the U.S. and Oregon reflect demographic characteristics that contribute to barriers that prohibit their economic advancement compared to the general population: lower levels of education and lower earning capacity resulting in higher poverty rates.

### **Population:**

The 2006 census estimated that there are over 416,907 Latinos in Oregon that represent 11% of the state's population. **Latinos are the largest ethnic minority in Oregon** with a 236% growth between 1990- 2006. Oregon Latinos are also one of the fastest growing Latino populations in the United States.

### **Latinos are the largest ethnic minority in the US representing 12.5% of the US population.**

The following are key indicators of the status of Latinos in the U.S.:

- Latinos in the U.S. earn \$38,679 compared to \$50,740 for the general population (2007 US Census).
- The poverty rate for Latinos in the U.S. is 21.5%, up from 20.6% in 2006 compared to 13% for the general population.
- 60% of Hispanics 25 and older had a high school education in 2007 compared to 80.4% for the general population.
- 13% of the Hispanic population 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2007, compared to 24.4% for the general population.

### **Education:**

As the Latino population increases in Oregon, education remains a key issue. Nationally and locally, Latinos have the highest dropout rate. In Oregon, 13% of Latino students leave high school early compared to 6.3% for all Oregonians.

Despite the high drop out rate, the number of Latinos attending college has shown increases, but the percentage of Latino students attending college is still less than the general population (20% for Latinos vs. 37% for the general population). An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* identifies family income as a major obstacle to Latino college success.

Thirty years ago, the rate of Hispanic men with four or more years of college experience nearly doubled that of women, but this has changed. In 2008, a third of all college-age Hispanic women were enrolled in college, compared to just 21 percent of college-age Hispanic men, according to the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

In 2008, the US Census Bureau reported that the average salary earned by workers with a high school diploma is \$31,286 while those with a bachelors degree earned \$57,181. Given the high drop out rate of Latinos and the low level of graduation from college, compared to the general population, Latinos continue to lag in their family income compared to the general population.

25% of the nation's kindergartners are Hispanic, evidence of an accelerating trend that will see minority children become the majority by 2023.

### **Youth:**

The Latino population tends to be more youthful than other racial/ethnic groups. 34.8% are under the age of 18 years, compared to 25.7% of the entire U.S. population. Latino youth will continue to play an important role in the Oregon's economic potential.

Unfortunately, Latino youth are faced with many barriers to the development of their potential:

The National Council de la Raza (NCLR) conducted a study in Oregon in 2006 and found:

- 7 in 10 young Latino children have mothers with low levels of educational
- More than one half young Latino children's mothers do not speak English well
- Three quarter of young Latino children reside in low income households
- Two-thirds of young Latino children have at least one parent born outside of the United States, even though the children may be US citizens

The Human Rights Watch, in 2002 found:

- A disproportionate number of Latinos in the justice system
- Latino youth continue to be unjustly targeted for police stops, arrest, detention, transfer to adult court, and harsher sentencing.

The Center for Working Families found that many Latino youth work as a way to participate in and contribute to the family economy. Many of the working Latino youth are from Latino immigrant families. As a result, these young Latinos were devoting their time and energy working instead of studying or saving for college and ascending into the middle class.

For more information about the Hispanic Chamber programs and events interested persons can visit the Hispanic Chamber's website at [www.hmccoregon.com](http://www.hmccoregon.com). The public is welcome to attend all events and can RSVP by calling 503-222-0280, or e-mailing to: [nevarez@hmccoregon.com](mailto:nevarez@hmccoregon.com)