



DIRECCIONES

Newsletter of the Arkansas-East Bolivia Partners of the Americas

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Editor's Note

As you can tell, this "summer" issue of *Direcciones* is hopelessly late, for which situation your Editor takes full responsibility. In fact, there probably would not even have been such an issue had not President Swegle requested that we try to get out some communication to you. Therefore, most of the content of the following is from him, in the form of his President's Message. Thanks Wayne!

President's Message

Introduction: This will be a sort of expanded President's Message, which regularly appears in our Partners of the Americas (POA) newsletter. Our esteemed *Direcciones* editor, Bob Frans, tells me he doesn't have enough news to construct an issue of our newsletter, hence this little attempt. He promises us he will have a third issue for this year after our annual meeting on October 11. So I'll collect some thoughts and observations to try to send something my pronto.

Annual Meeting. Speaking of our annual meeting at beautiful Mt. Sequoyah on October 11, I urge you to make your reservation now. I just talked with **Margaret Clark** and she assures us that there is plenty of room. And she has a fine program planned. Here are highlights:

Bolivian Political Actions & Perspectives -
Dr. Steven Neuse, Professor Emeritus,
Political Science, University of Arkansas

Partners of the Americas: Current Actions & Visions - **Stephen Vetter**, President, Partners of the Americas, Washington, DC

Youth Ambassadors; Actions and Visions - **Elizabeth Auciello**, Program Coordinator, POA, Washington, DC

Personal Impressions of Bolivia - Dr. **Dan Ferritor**, Ex-Chancellor, U of A Fayetteville

Bolivian Insights, Impressions, Perspectives - Panel of Bolivian Students at U of A

Call Margaret at 479.8188 if you've lost the flyer about the meeting.

Youth Ambassadors 2009. The latest issue of POA's international newsletter at the www.partners.net website, announced that Partners has been awarded the 2009 Youth Ambassadors program grant through the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. The program is awarded after competitive responses to the proposal.

The new grant will allow Partners (presumably including our chapter) to provide a life-changing opportunity to more outstanding youth from several countries, including Bolivia. We have enjoyed this opportunity in recent years—many Partners members have met these young people, provided growth experiences for them, and several families have hosted the youths in their homes.

Bolivia's Youth Ambassadors met recently to discuss plans to use their knowledge for the betterment of other youths in the country. They also have developed a website.

Partners Monitored Bolivia's National Recall Referendum. The recent issue of Partners' online newsletter also reported that 3,000 volunteers observed a sample of 1,770 precincts in nine Bolivian departments (states) during the National Recall Referendum this past Sunday. This was accomplished through Partners of the Americas' project *Bolivia Transparente*, of which our Santa Cruz Partners took an active role.

Bolivia Transparente is designed to empower citizens to monitor national and local elections by calling on various NGOs across the country to: 1) mobilize volunteer observers for the election process; and 2) to ensure understanding of and legitimacy in the election process. Its priority is to oversee a transparent election process before, during, and after the election takes place.

The Partners newsletter reported that, where the volunteer citizen observers oversaw the voting process, few irregularities and violations were reported.

Funding for the *Bolivia Transparente* project originated from USAID and was administered by Partners of the Americas for the first two processes of electoral observation.

Again, for more information about Partners' activities, click on www.partners.net.

I look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting on October 11 and members of the board of directors at our business meeting after the annual meeting program.

Cheers,
Wayne

Board Meeting

Just a few words about the last Board Meeting. The Board met in Russellville for its regular quarterly meeting on July 19, 2008. Several items of interest were discussed.

It was reported that the Santa Cruz chapter had completed their requirements for re-chartering.

Some of their plans for the following year were discussed. In particular they wished to have an active program in arts and culture with some emphasis on both music and dance. They also hoped to start an exchange in art education and wished to strengthen their work with youth, with emphasis on street children, and attempting to reduce the need for young children working.

Discussions were also held on the teacher-in-residence program (on hold) and the very successful Youth Ambassador program held earlier in the year.

It was noted that the next Board meeting would be held at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, October 11.

Conclusion

And that's the news for now. We'll try to have a more expanded newsletter following the Annual Meeting. Hope to see you there!