

# La Palabra

National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees

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**Volume 4  
July 2017**

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The newly improved Benefits and Retirement website makes it easier to find and access federal health, life, dental, vision, and other insurance information and services. It also includes additional guidance and answers on the retirement process to assist employees as they prepare for retirement. The Benefits Operations Center (BOC) was restructured to provide more efficient and consistent service to FAA employees. Employees with questions about their benefits may use new information resources, including an FAA-wide toll-free number, recently announced by the Benefits Operations Center (BOC).

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### National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees

**"Con Orgullo en Nuestra Hispanidad"**

NHCFAE  
PO Box 23276  
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#### Mission

The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees is a professional, diverse organization that focuses on advocating career placement and advancement through support, education and alliances.

#### History

Established in 1978 in an effort to provide a network for Hispanic employees of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Aviation Industry. It became a national organization in 1983. Today, the Coalition is the chief advocate for issues affecting Hispanics in the FAA. The Coalition derives its support from membership dues, corporate sponsorship and private donations.

#### Officers

President, David Dominguez  
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President's Representative East, Oscar Torres  
Director of Administration, Misty Pena  
Director of Education, Ida Marrero  
Director of Public Affairs, Susie Diaz  
Director of Resources, Erik Salazar

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Communications, Susie Diaz

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#### Editors

Susie Diaz, Misty Peña, Erik Salazar

#### Design

Chris Atkin

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thank you 

## Message from the President

Dear Friends,

**This is hello and goodbye—my final message to you in La Palabra, as I complete my second and final term as president of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE). Before I go, I have many people to thank, but first let me try to explain how I feel about my tenure as your president and the team I’ve led since 2013.**

Cast your minds back a few months to Houston in February and the NFL Super Bowl LI, where we saw an extraordinary display of determination, grit and team work. The New England Patriots were trailing the Atlanta Falcons by 25 points in the third quarter, all but written off when they delivered a jaw-dropping comeback, surging to defeat the Falcons in overtime, 34-28 and take their fifth Super Bowl. Whomever you support, no-one can ever deny that was an extraordinary victory. It was exhilarating watching a team overcome great odds. For me, the take-away was: no matter where you are in the game, there is a chance at victory if we strive hard enough, find the determination to win and above all, work as a team.

We know the feeling. Our organization started in the late 1970’s and faced enormous obstacles – always met with determination by past presidents. I credit former President Ron Lozano for having a vision of what we could accomplish with a serious campaign

of outreach to our agency and to Congress, in achieving greater diversity and inclusion in our workforce. His successor, Sadie Alvarado took up the challenge and persevered it with that goal before passing the mantle to me. But I’ll be honest with you, at times it felt like we were down 25 points in the third quarter. Old habits die hard and we were met with decades of entrenched ineffective hiring practices in our agency.

As an organization, we had no visibility on Capitol Hill, none with the OPM, nor the White House or any of the Hispanic affinity groups such as the Hispanic Council on Federal Hiring. This has all changed!

When we started, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was going to do almost no general public offerings for the Air Traffic Control Specialist position and essentially the agency would be mired in the bottom quarter of agencies for Hispanic hiring for the foreseeable future. We changed that.

All our hard work culminated in the FAA embracing diversity and inclusion in a way that, when we started this process, we could only have dreamed about.

FAA Administrator Michael Huerta purged a hiring practice that was inherently non-diverse and with the help of legislation instituted a hiring effort that included a combination of a public offering, CTI students, and Military. According to FAA data the very first cohort significantly improved the number of tentative offer letters issued to self-identified Hispanics. In the 2015 Presidential Hispanic Employment Report, Air Traffic Control Specialist (2152) and Transportation Specialist (2101) were specifically mentioned because of the improvement of Hispanic new hires.

It goes even further than that – Because of our work with Office of Personnel Management (OPM), now all federal agencies with at least 1000 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) are

required to conduct a barrier analysis on Hispanic employment. This analysis will focus on employees at the GS-12 through Senior Executive Service (SES) levels to identify and eradicate barriers to equal employment opportunity (EEO).

In the future, thousands more Hispanic families will know the value and security of a good federal job, thanks to our efforts.

These changes were the result of hard work by the leadership of this organization and by individual members who gave tirelessly and generously of their time, talent and treasure. I couldn't be more proud of where we are in 2017.

Yet, now is not the time to rest on our laurels. The specter of privatization is a direct threat to this association and everything we value. Government-sponsored enterprises such as the proposed Air Traffic Organization are not subject to OPM regulations, federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission mandates nor, largely, Congressional oversight. This could wind back all that we have worked so hard to achieve. Our Coalition needs to do what it does best – work as a team, this time with other employee associations and unions to stop the privatization.

To our Coalition team and members, you have my deepest gratitude for all that you do. More than a coalition, this is a family and I'm humbled and honored to have been your president these past four years.

To Vice President, Barbara Lindsay—thank you for your steady hand, your cerebral feedback and your commitment to recognize all sides of every issue. You always helped me see the bigger picture.

Ida Marrero, our Director of Education (DOE)—thank you for your humor and willingness to always strive for better—your eight-year commitment as an RCD and Executive Board member is a remarkable example of dedication and loyalty to our members.

Erik Salazar, our Director of Resources (DOR)—ever the voice of calm and reason, he has been a careful guardian of the members' investment in our organization. Technically savvy and responsible – any successful leader would be grateful to have him on their team.

Susie Diaz, our Director of Public Affairs (DOPA)—our wordsmith and social media guru, taking our interaction with members to new heights. The face of our organization is La Palabra and it has never looked better than under Susie's guidance. Well-known for her pursuit of deadlines and careful management of Coalition funds, Susie created a professional standard for all.

Oscar Torres, President Special Assistant—his commitment to members, RCDs, Executive Board and me is a testament of his dedication to the mission of our organization and the successes of our future. He worked with every RCD to help create an effective outreach and recruitment plan to increase our membership and give the Hispanic Coalition a stronger voice!

Misty Pena, our Director of Administration (DOA)—mission-oriented and the glue that held our team together. Misty listened to our Executive Committee and members, knowing when to bring an issue to the executive board and when to help resolve the issue directly, with the board's full confidence. A provider of invaluable counsel, Misty brought the views of our members to

Washington DC Executives, ensuring they were heard.

To all our RCD's and Chairs, thank you for your commitment and loyalty. You dedicated yourselves to ensuring our members were well represented and their contributions respected. I'm deeply appreciative.

My presidency could not have been successful without this team and their collaboration.

Last but not least, please keep in your hearts and prayers, our dear friend Cynthia Garcia, our former Director of Education, whose whereabouts are still unknown after many months. Our thoughts go to her family and friends.

In summary, I hope we set the bar high with expectations as the premier Hispanic organization and resource for FAA, Department of Transportation (DOT) and all federal agencies who value input and feedback. We have worked hard as a team to stage an extraordinary turnaround of our own and we will win. The next administration of our Coalition will enjoy respect and commitment from DOT and FAA leadership and the agencies know we will hold them accountable for safeguarding the strides we have made in achieving diversity and inclusion—a fairer workplace for all.

Thank you!

God Bless You and God Bless the Hispanic Coalition,



David Dominguez

# Editor's Message

Hola Familia!

Welcome to your Fourth Volume of La Palabra! Welcome Summer 2017! Have any exciting plans with family/friends? Share them with us for our next Volume of La Palabra magazine.

The weather here in California is beautiful, with that said I hope you join us this year for another exciting Annual Training Conference in Torrance, CA. Visit conference website to register: <http://nhcfaeconference.org/> The FAA has approved the NHCFAE National Training Conference as agency training.

Make sure to talk to your RCD for opportunities to help fund your conference attendance:

- **Southern**—Edward Cardenas: [so.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:so.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Great Lakes**—Brenden Villegas: [gl.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:gl.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Central**—Laurie Ortiz: [ce.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:ce.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Southwest**—Lydia Gomez-Martinez: [sw.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:sw.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Northwest Mountain**—Lora Singh: [nm.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:nm.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Western-Pacific**—Dolores Leyva: [wp.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:wp.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Alaska**—Sylvia Villa: [al.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:al.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **WJH Technical Center**—Roberto Villa: [ct.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:ct.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Capital Chapter (Washington D.C.)**—  
Bill Fernandez: [wa.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:wa.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC)**—  
John Espinosa: [ac.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:ac.rcd@nhcfae.org),
- **Eastern/New England**—  
Maritza Miranda: [ea.rcd@nhcfae.org](mailto:ea.rcd@nhcfae.org)

We will be having an exciting presidential election this year. Please make sure to update your e-mail address to receive your electronic ballots. If for some reason you did not receive the email to vote you can contact David Gonzales, Election chair at [elections@nhcfae.org](mailto:elections@nhcfae.org). Read the candidate's biographies on pages 12-14. Voting is Important! Please make sure you submit your ballot right away.

In this edition of La Palabra you will read some great articles that our members have shared. Read the great work Southwest Chapter has done and their events around their Region. Congrats on all of our members that have Retired from the FAA! A special shout out and a "Hip-Hip Hooray" to our NHCFAE Vice President Ida Marrero that has retired from the Air Force. Lastly, read how the Regions celebrated Cinco de Mayo.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of La Palabra, Volume 4. Remember, if you would like to share a story or event you can email me your articles to [dopa@nhcfae.org](mailto:dopa@nhcfae.org).

Un Abrazo! Hope to see you in August!

Susie Diaz  
National Director of Public Affairs



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# NHCFAE Familia Welcomes New Bundle of Joy!

Member Kristina Harris from Western-Pacific Region and Mindy Moreno from Southwest Region welcome a New Addition to their Families. NHCFAE Familia, want to wish them many Blessings and Welcome to the World Little Bundles of Joy!



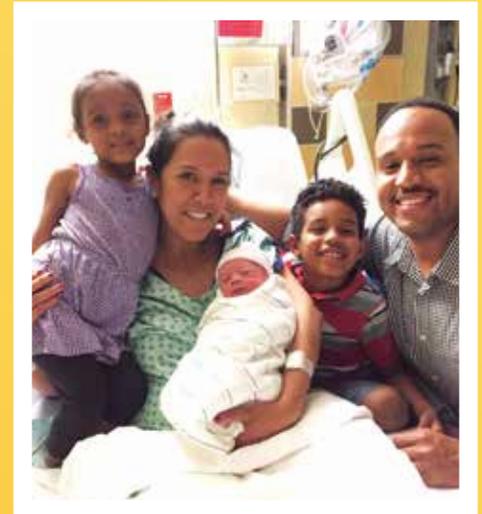
## Welcome Baby Evan F. Harris!

Words from Mommy:

Kristina and Joel welcomed baby Evan Fernando Harris into the world on April 20 at 5:09am. Baby Evan weighed 7lbs 10oz and was 21 inches.

Big brother Benjamin and big sister Lauryn love giving the baby kisses and “helping” mom with taking care of the baby.

They are all adjusting to life with a new baby in the house, but feel blessed and thankful to God for his good health and overall calm demeanor.



## Welcome Baby Dominic C. Moreno!

New Parents are doing great, enjoying the moments with their first born. Baby Dominic Charles Moreno, born May 1, 2017. Baby weighed 7lbs. 12 oz. and 20 inches.



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# The One Where The E-Comm Went Bigger!

By: Roberto Villa, Technical Center Chapter RCD

**S**aludos NHCFAE familia! Yes, another successful Executive Committee Meeting was held the week of February 20th, and this time we went to where everything is bigger...TEXAS! As always it was great to reconnect with other RCDs and the National Board. At the end of the week, we were all focused and determined to make this organization the best it can be!

Our National President, David Dominguez led the week's activities on the final stretch of his tenure, but always very engaged, committed and energized! David shared his continued commitments and participation of the ATO Career Development effort, the National Employee Forum that are always working on a variety of initiatives on Diversity and Inclusion, new HRPM 12-6 language, our right to exist and how to approach our managers. There's also been improvement how OPM does outreach and recruitment in different areas thanks to NHCFAE involvement providing data and feedback. NHCFAE was invited to the National Security Agency's (NSA) informational exhibit in March 2017. David talked about Hispanics in Government; he had reached out to other government agencies for other Hispanic employee resource groups for best practices and found very little presence of employee associations in other agencies. Hispanics in Government is starting up to assist all federal organizations' effort in Hispanic workforce recruitment and retention. A soft start is planned for May 2017 in 7 cities: DC, NY, Miami, Houston, Chicago, LA, and Dallas.

Volunteers are needed to assist and be part of the team in these cities.

The plan is to launch publicly about its existence during Hispanic Heritage Month with an annual membership of \$150.

Newly elected National Vice President, Barbara Lindsay, focused our attention on a revised Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) approach for all RCDs, and Strategic Plan so we can better accomplish NHCFAE's mission. Ed Cardenas briefed about the Airman Database Project when AVS asked NHCFAE to assist with the Aviation Inspector Registry pool to help replenish and get as many Hispanics and females in AVS. This effort involved a survey performed by NHCFAE (probably need more facts here). National Director of Education, Ida Marrero and National Director of Resources, Erik Salazar respectively presented a draft agenda of the 2017 training conference and the NHCFAE Scholarships, and the completed budget report for 2016 was presented. The 2017 budget report was reviewed and we are right on track! It is important for the membership to know that NHCFAE had signed up with American Airlines opening a Business Extra Account; this program allows the organization earn points to be used for travel, and anyone can use this business account number on ANY personal and/or professional trip you take with American Airlines; this will NOT affect or interfere with your personal dividend miles program with the airline, so please contact your chapter's RCD and/or Erik if you need more information.

Susie Díaz, National Director of Public Affairs, always working hard on improving the NHCFAE website, La Palabra Magazine and the Conference's own website. By the way, did you reach a milestone at work, or maybe you have an interesting story to share? Anyone can write an article for La Palabra, it is not just for RCDs, so get your writing going! The Conference Chair, Ed Cardenas and the Western-Pacific Chapter's RCD, Dolores Leyva updated the committee on the conference progress, which will be in Torrance, Redondo Beach, CA. The conference theme was agreed on by the hosting chapter and logo options submitted by members were narrowed down for chapter selection.

National Director of Administration, Misty Pena, keeps everyone on their toes always providing meeting minutes, keeping track of Officers' terms and pretty much making sure the organization runs smoothly. Bill Fernandez, Constitution & Bylaws Chair, shared proposals to be presented at the membership meeting. Raquel Ysasi-Huerta, Corporate Partners Chair, is always working hard to maintain our legacy sponsors and always finding new ways to get sponsors.

As you can see, the executive committee and board are committed in finding ways to better serve our members and make NHCFAE a solid, unified organization. We really spent quality time sharing ideas, laughing, and dining like a true "familia"! It was a great experience professionally & personally.

# 2017 NHCFAE Elections

## Bill Fernandez Candidate for National President

¡Hola! My name is Bill Fernandez, and I would like to announce that I will be running for the position of President of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE).

Currently, I serve you as the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws (C&BL) which has given me the unique perspective to understand the guiding rules and principles of this organization. In addition, I also serve as the Chairman of the NHCFAE legislative effort which along with my previous experience as a legislative representative in the Professional Aviation Safety Specialist (PASS) has given me a better understanding of the issues that both government employees and Hispanics face, especially in the current political climate. I also serve the wonderful members of the Capital Chapter as their Regional/Chapter Director (RCD).

Prior to this, I was the RCD for the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC). I joined the NHCFAE at the National Conference in San Diego. At my first MMAC Chapter meeting our RCD asked me if I could replace him as RCD. I was very nervous about taking over the soon to be "Chapter of the Year" less than a month after joining the NHCFAE. I was fortunate to have wonderful support from an amazing chapter.

Prior to joining the FAA in 2004, I taught Spanish and coached football at Chattahoochee High School in Alpharetta GA. for six years. I thoroughly enjoyed working with those young men and women who helped me develop an even more profound appreciation of the importance of education. Teaching was a very emotional experience for me, to see this freshman graduate in four very short years always made me so proud.

I have served this country for 20 years in the U.S. Air Force as an Air Traffic Controller. The Air Force provided the opportunity to attain a Master's Degree in Human Resources Development, not HR personnel, but learning to develop the human as a resource.

I joined the FAA at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC) in Oklahoma where I worked for 3 years designing approach and departure procedures that become Flight Information Publications (FLIPs) that pilots and controllers use. I specialized in Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures such as Area Navigation (RNAV) and Required Naviga-



tion Performance (RNP) procedures. My previous high school teacher experience prepared me to move into training. I was able to take very complex aviation concepts and explain them in simple terms.

After 7 years instructing at MMAC, I transferred to the PBN Policy and Programs office at the FAA Headquarters in Washington, DC. So now, I work on the policies and programs that are moving our National Airspace System (NAS) to PBN based NAS. If you would like to better understand how the FAA is doing this, please come to the breakout session I will be leading at our annual National Conference in Los Angeles on the FAA's NAS Navigation Strategy (Yes!, a shameless plug for the training class I will be giving!)

So why would I like to serve you as your President of the NHCFAE? Because I feel we as officers of the NHCFAE should serve our membership. You are the ones who make this Coalition



great. There is so much we can do as individuals but more importantly working together we can do even more. I believe we can make small contributions that can make big changes in people's lives. We as individuals can inspire. We as individuals can help one person get a job or an internship. We can raise awareness of opportunities within aviation. We can help a co-worker get ahead. I believe it is the little things, when we do them together, can make our organization better.

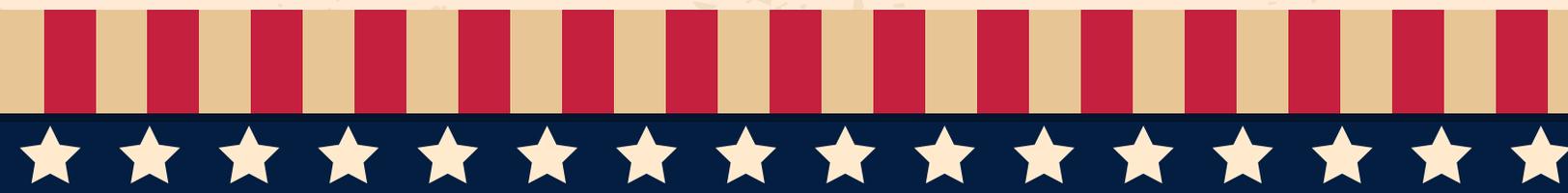
I joined this Coalition to try and make a difference, even if that is the difference in the life of just one person. I have had the opportunity to work with the Executive Board and committee for over 5 years, and I believe I see opportunities to save some of our dues and apply them to areas that will directly benefit our members. Through the Constitution and ByLaws, we have been able to move our organization away from paper. Ballots and amendments are no longer mailed to members saving over \$1,500 a year as well as the time required to prepare them. With the Director of Education we are moving our scholarship and member tuition assistance programs to automated format, again saving the Coalition funds.

I look forward to replacing the FEEA scholarship with an expanded program that directly provides better scholarship opportunities for the children of our members. I hope to reach out to former members who might have felt disenfranchised for whatever reason and bring back that knowledge base to our Coalition. We should enable our chapters to expand outreach to the local community and expand our reach to make ACE camps available to more deserving children generating an interest in aviation. I would like to see our National Training Conference continue to grow and use technology to expand the reach of that training to members who might not be able to attend.

At our conference last year, I was approached by several members who encouraged me to run for President. They felt my communication skills, patience, tenacity and my willingness to listen would make me a good leader for this organization.

We have an opportunity, to do wonderful things working together. The synergy of so many good people, we can do great things. I believe in service, and I would like to serve you as your National NHCFAE President!

Sincerely,  
Bill Fernandez  
Capital Chapter RCD  
Constitution and ByLaws Chair  
Legislative Chair  
Unofficial NHCFAE Mail boy (ok, Old Man!)  
Former MMAC RCD



## Faviola Garcia Candidate for National President

Saludos Familia,

My name is Faviola Garcia and it is with great pleasure that I announce my candidacy for President of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees.

I am currently a Special Programs Program Manager in the AWP/ARO Office of the Regional Administrator and I work a myriad of issues for the FAA. I am the Program Manager for the Runway Safety Governance Council and Regional Administrator's representative on the Runway Safety Team. I am also the Communications Co-Lead for Las Vegas Metroplex doing outreach with select officials and communities, and I serve as an International Steering Committee voting member, representing the ARO (Regions and Property Operations) organization. I also serve as the Program Manager for the Los Angeles International Airport Construction Projects Governance Council and alternate co-chair at the Senior Manager level of the same. All in all, I am classified as a Program Integrator. I cannot think of a better title to represent what I do. In every aspect of my work I do horizontal integration across the FAA major lines of business and staff offices, and up and down the chain of command from the Executive level in Headquarters to boots on ground in the field.

As for my experience with the NHCFAE, I have been an active member of the Coalition for well over a decade and am proud to share that I have held numerous positions both at the local and national level of our dynamic organization. My initial role with the Coalition

began as the Western-Pacific Regional Chapter Director (RCD); however, expanded to many other roles to include - National Chairperson for the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, original Legislative Committee member, National Director of Administration and Conference Committee Co-Chair. The last and most notable role was as Corporate Relations Chairperson and successfully establishing the NHCFAE Corporate Relations Program, making great strides for our organization and raising over \$250K during my tenure, but most importantly establishing long lasting corporate partnerships that we still enjoy today. I share all of this because I pride myself in intimately understanding the NHC and FAA organizations as a whole.

I have established relationships with many of you, who over the years have showed me your support. Due to my vast experience with the FAA and Coalition, I feel I am prepared to take our organization to the next level. I am counting on you and humbly ask your consideration and vote. Through my experience, I have seen efforts to bring awareness to address the underrepresentation of Hispanics, women and other minorities throughout the Agency. However, to this day, I sit in countless meetings, and work with numerous people, that I can't help but notice that there are still very few of



us at the table! We need to increase our numbers in representation and membership. I vow to do my best to fully integrate diversity but most importantly, integrate us, in all that we do at FAA. I want our presence felt and heard throughout the nation and together, we can do this. I can assure you this will be my personal commitment to you. Your voices will be heard! I will empower our NHC leadership team and will do my part to assist in developing and honing leadership skills. I look forward to your thoughts as we accomplish this together. I promise to bring a fresh outlook and give full consideration to current programs, but I assure you, we will take a closer look at everything that we do in all areas such as career development and Hispanics representation in SES ranks. I am committed to increasing STEM Outreach to reach kids at a younger age and to work more closely aligned with Agency goals so that together we can accomplish both the FAA and NHC missions. Finally, I will revisit our Legislative efforts to ensure that they are consistent with current organizational needs and that they meet the changes of our political climate.

I respectfully request your consideration and look forward to serving as your President.

Gracias,  
Faviola Garcia

## Susie Diaz

### Canidate for Director of Public Affairs

My name is Susie Diaz. I respectfully announce my candidacy for National Director of Public Affairs for the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE). I am currently serving as the appointed Director of Public Affairs.

It has been a pleasure to have served one elective term for Director of Public affairs in Oct.2013-Oct.2015 and one-appointed term by the President as Director of Public affairs Oct.2015–Oct.2017.

For those that do not know about me; my career with the FAA began almost 19 years ago. I reside in California. My coworkers have taught me to keep reaching for success in my career. I work for ATO-Engineering Services as a Drafting Coordinator. I also have served as the Regional Chapter Director for Western-Pacific Chapter. I understand the importance of communication as a means of disseminating information and giving a voice to everyone. That is why when I was RCD I began a quarterly newsletter for our Region; "Nuestra Voz." This newsletter gave our regional members a voice, a forum to share their experiences, voice their concerns, celebrate their success and get to know one another. I have been an active NHCFAE member since 2008, and as a member of NHCFAE, I have had the opportunity to meet wonderful professionals from other Latin American countries, including some that I directly identify with, Mexican-Americans. I was born and raised in Inglewood, California. Growing up in Los Angeles, you are immediately introduced to clashes of cultures and you admire all of the diversity. I

see this in the coalition. This diversity found within the NHCFAE members has given me a sense of home away from home.

During my journey as DOPA, I have learned and enjoyed so much I want to continue this journey with the members. I know having effectively communicated with all of the members it is a very important facet to uphold. I will also continue to exchange ideas with all members by emails, and continually making any revisions to our website ([www.nhcfae.org](http://www.nhcfae.org)). As DOPA, I have to constantly have discourse with our webmaster for any website issues. Our designer will be informed as to help us publish a successful magazine of La Palabra.

The position of the NHCFAE Director of Public Affairs will allow me to continue giving a voice and a forum to our members and the Organization; that is a top priority for me. Also, as members we look forward and enjoy the articles found in "In La Palabra," as one of the many avenues our members serve as story tellers. Therefore, as the Director of Public Affairs I hope to continue expanding our members' and Organization's voice by:

Continuing to promote transparency through strong and consistent communication, Corporate Sponsors, and the FAA.

Promoting the Organization as a strong and viable voice to our members; identify-



ing partnerships to promote collaboration through consistent and effective messages.

I hope you vote for me to continue my journey as your National Director of Public Affairs, to strengthen the voice of NHCFAE and its members.

Gracias,  
Susie Diaz



## Bienvenidos Familia! Welcome Members, Sponsors and Guests!

On behalf of the Western Pacific Conference Committee, we would like to invite you to the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE) 2017 National Training Conference in sunny Los Angeles, California. The NHCFAE conference is a great opportunity to reach out and get to know your fellow members, better understand the diversity within our coalition and build our future familia.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Conference Committee; we are well on our way to delivering what will be an exceptional conference. The Conference Committee selected our conference theme late November 2016: “Honoring our Past—Defining Our Future.” The goal of this theme is to show that, with pride, we honor our past and those who have paved the way for us. We renew our commitment as relentless individuals who value our culture and ancestors. We will honor them by working hard, breaking through stereotypes, and overcoming adversity with determination and resiliency, ultimately defining a successful future.

The 2017 NHCFAE conference logo design represents the city of Los Angeles which is the largest city in California and the second-largest urban area in the nation. Los Angeles (L.A.), known as “the city of angels” or “city of dreams,” is within close proximity to the South Bay and known for its warm temperatures, beautiful mountains and beaches., it is also the center of the nation’s film and television industry. Our

conference will take place in Torrance, CA which happens to be the eighth largest city in Los Angeles County. Torrance is located in the South Bay area, near the Pacific Ocean, surrounded by beach cities of Redondo, Hermosa and Manhattan Beach. L.A. is an enchanting city that offers an extensive array of activities to take part of. We hope you enjoy L.A.

We hope you take advantage of all the NHCFAE Training Conference has to offer. On behalf of the Western Pacific Region, we look forward to welcoming you to Los Angeles, California!!!

Abrazos,

NHCFAE Western Pacific Conference Committee  
Dolores Leyva, Conference Chair/Regional Chapter Director  
Edward Cardenas, Conference Coordinator





## How Attending NHCFAE Annual Training Conference Helped Me!

By: Justin R. Perez, Southwest Region Member

My name is Justin R. Perez and I have been working with the FAA going on 12 years now. I am assigned to the Southwest Region as a Human Resource Specialist, Flight Standards Staffing Specialist. I am currently on a detail to Headquarters in D.C. doing staffing for the Quality, Integration & Executive Services Human Capital Branch, AQS-510 .

In 2016, I attended my first National Hispanic Coalition Conference in Garden City, New York. My first experience is very hard to put in words. Everyone truly treats you like familia making sure you are actively engaged. As soon as I landed, the very first day everyone welcomed me with open arms and just like my grandma says every time I go over “Have you eaten or are you hungry?” The national committee ordered pizza and I was introduced to everyone. The whole week was full of informational meetings and training courses. It had all the -1’s from the different LOB’s as guest speakers each day. Since I work for AVS, I found that day most exciting since we are not as large as ATO and are sometimes forgotten about so it’s nice that the Coalition ensured AVS was represented. Sunny Lee-Fanning and Janette Ramos the AQS-1 and AQS-2 were the guest speakers for AVS since Margaret (Peggy) Gilligan had prior engagements. After each -1 spoke, there was a Q&A session where we were allowed to ask questions pertaining to the topic. I asked questions specifically since I have field knowledge with

Aviation Safety Inspectors (ASI’s). After Sunny and Janette spoke that day, we had a banquet and award dinner. Janette was in attendance so I wanted to ensure I introduced myself and thank her for sharing the Headquarters view point. It was during this conversation we discussed the opportunity of a detail at Headquarters. I was thrilled and honored, and I felt that this was once in a lifetime opportunity so of course I said YES! Since October 1, 2016, I have been on my detail and have gained vast knowledge on headquarters issues and the functions of AQS. Because of the Hispanic Coalition, I was afforded the opportunity to meet Janette and Sunny, which led to my next career opportunity. I was just happy I made the decision to attend my first national conference or none of this could have happened. Thank you NHC! Through the National Training Conference, I was able to receive valuable career building training, network amongst other FAA employees, and meet our executives.



## My Experience working on the 2016 Conference

By: Carisma Leyva, Western-Pacific Member's Daughter

Helping with registration at this past year's NCHFAE Conference was an experience I know I will never forget. I learned many valuable skills that I still use to this day, many of them having to deal with organization and management of tasks. I am so absolutely grateful for the chance to have gotten experience interning with such an amazing organization. The people I met were not only knowledgeable and outstanding in their careers, but were some of the kindest adults I've had the pleasure of meeting and working with. As this was one of my first internships, I know I will remember this experience for years to come and hope to volunteer my time for the NCHFAE later on as well. Besides being involved with the administration of the conference and registration, it was also such a great pleasure to witness and meet so many hardworking and accomplished Hispanic Americans in the aviation field. It was truly inspiring, and admiring the passion and readiness to learn I saw in everyone who attended the event. As I stated before, this conference was one of my best experiences in terms of interning and I hope to help out again later on in whatever way possible.



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# Cinco de Mayo

## Cinco De Mayo Salsa Competition in Northwest Mountain Chapter

By: Lora Singh, Northwest Regional Chapter Director

We had a wonderful turnout at both events that we hosted for the Cinco De Mayo Holiday. It has become a tradition for the salsa competition; it was started more than 5 years at the service center and regional office and has now spread to the Seattle Air Route Traffic Control Center, and hopefully we can continue the events more widespread.

We hosted our first salsa competition on Wednesday, May 3, 2017 at the Western Service Center located in Renton, Washington. We had six entries of salsa, including a very unique slaw salsa that was very tasty, some traditional salsa that tasted yummy, and some mango salsa. Everyone came down, chips were provided and our guests were to vote for their favorite salsa. We had a first place trophy along with a \$25 Amazon gift card donated by SkyOne Credit Union, and for second place, we had a \$10 gift card for Starbucks. Everyone had a great time sampling the salsa and putting in their vote. Kelly Johnson

took home first place with her tasty slaw salsa and Marianna Spiritakis took home second place with her very tasty traditional salsa.

On Friday, May 5, 2017 at the Seattle ARTCC, we hosted the second of the salsa competition, for its second year running. We had a fantastic turnout with eight entries. We had a tomatillo salsa, chipotle salsa, guacamole salsa, and few traditional salsa. Frank Diaz, last year's winner from the Seattle ARTCC, also came back to defend his title as 1st place winner from 2016 competition. Everyone had a blast coming down and taste testing the salsas and voting on their favorite ones. We had two new winners, Garon Hedberg won with his tasty salsa that had a really good bite at the end, and Leon Fullner won second place with his tasty chipotle salsa. We had a 1st place trophy with a \$25 gift to Amazon donated by SkyOne Credit Union and for 2nd place we had \$10 gift card for the cafeteria at the Seattle ARTCC.



1st Place Winner Western Service Center Kelly Johnson



2nd place Winner Western Service Center Marianna Spiritakis



1st place winner Seattle ARTCC Garon Hedberg



2nd Place Winner Seattle ARTCC Leon Fullner



WSC Contest Photo



WSC Contest Photo



Seattle ARTCC Contest Photos



## How Southwest Region does Cinco de Mayo

By: Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Southwest Regional Chapter Director

On May 5, 2017, the SW Chapter held a Cinco De Mayo Celebration at the Southwest Regional Office. The Regional Administrator, Kelvin Solco opened up the event by saying a few words about Cinco De Mayo. Our Keynote speaker Manuel DeReyes spoke on the Battle of Puebla . Ray Martinez, Senior Attorney for the FAA also spoke a few words. The Theme was “Two Nations Joined Together”. We ended with the performance of the JP Elder Middle School’s Mariachi Estrella Tejana which included 23 Mariachi’s. The SW Region had an overall attendance of 50 + employees and along with members of the coalition that came out to support us and also participated in singing along with the

mariachi. After the event we provided lunch for the students, Ray Martinez and Armando Armendariz spoke encouraging words to the students. After lunch the students were given a tour of the ROC where the Regional Administrator spoke to the students and pass out pencils and a brochure. They also got a tour of the Wellness Center. I would like to thank the following people for all their help: Priscilla Buschmann, Kendra Jacobs, Ray Martinez, Armando Armendariz (Attorneys), and SW Regional Chapter Board: Ralph Escobedo, Maria Gaytan, and Rose Dailey. Thank you all, I could not have done it without y’all!



# Celebrating Cinco de Mayo with Tamales in Western-Pacific

By: Susie Diaz, National Director of Public Affairs and Member from Western-Pacific

Member Cyndy Bradfish and I put together an event at the Regional Office in Hawthorne to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. This year we decided to do something different than our annual taco tasting and salsa contest.

Since Western-Pacific is hosting the conference this year we decided to make some extra funding for the conference. We raised funds by selling a plate of one tamale (beef, cheese or chicken) with rice and beans. We provided different types of salsas with chips for everyone to have. If they didn't want tamales, we

gave them a choice of Chile Verde. They had a choice to purchase extra tamales too. The line of crowds was already forming by 10:30am, we quickly had to get ready to serve even though we announced we started at 11:30am. By the time I looked at my watch it was already 12pm and we were already down to our last tamales. Employees that came to support us all seemed to enjoy the food, the company and the music. Since we had an awesome event and everyone was asking for more tamales, we do plan on having a similar event soon. Let the Tamales keep on coming!



## Alaska celebrates Cinco de Mayo

By: Sylvia Villa, Alaska Regional Chapter Director

For Cinco de Mayo, the Alaska Chapter hosted a luncheon on May 4, 2017 at the Anchorage Flight Standards District Office to commemorate the effect of the American Civil War on Latinos. The Mexican army held off French troops in the battle of Puebla on fifth of May of 1862.

One of our member's, Joe Montalvo, assisted to make the event a success!

An employee commented about how large our acronym NHCFAE is, which followed with a discussion of what we do. There was some management participation. The luncheon was also a morale booster. We received positive comments and more questions about NHCFAE afterwards.





## Praise Your Peers: Angela Ciuro

Angela Ciuro was recently recognized by the Department of Transportation for her service and contributions to the FAA. Below is the award nomination submitted by Madeleine Brennan, Miami District operations support manager.

Angela Ciuro has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to our organization. As a Management & Program Assistant (MPA) in the Operations Support Staff (OSS) for Technical Operations for Miami District, she volunteered for and took over a significant workload in budget. She funds certified travel, purchase card requests, PRISM (PR) and awards, and also tracked Safety & Hazmat funds. She also assisted the Budget Administrative Officer (AO) in analysis of district spending vice fiscal allocations. Later, when the Budget AO moved into an ATSS position, Angela was selected as the Budget AO. During her first year, Angela assisted the district MPAs with their budget responsibilities and tasks. She designs and presents monthly classes on Delphi, Regis, reconciliation, cuffing, record keeping, P-card processing, etc. She has been the "go-to" person for all budget and a significant amount of administrative assistance. This is especially vital since both the OSS

and the ARTCC have not been able to backfill two vacant MPA positions.

Angela is always welcoming and patient with all of the staff and the managers. She applies herself to master the most challenging tasks and then she provides both personal and group training to those who need the extra help. Angela's communication skill lends itself to her ability to teach and provide guidance and simplify budget concepts for those who are not as familiar and skillful in the budget arena.

As the district Budget AO, she serves and works individually with the 26 System Support Center Managers and 4 Technical Operations Managers to assist them with their budget tracking and to communicate agency guidance on spending. She is very sharp, organized, and methodical which makes her a valuable asset to all in our district.

Angela's contribution is a combination of expertise, dedication, and teamwork!





## Southern Region Member Scoops a DOT Outstanding Administrative Professionals Award!

In recognition of Administrative Professionals Week (April 24-28, 2017), the Department of Transportation (DOT), Office of the Secretary hosted a group of Administrative Professionals to say thank you for their service and contribution to the Department. Administrative Professionals across the DOT were nominated for this honor. Nominations were reviewed by a DOT panel of senior management.

Angela Ciuro was selected to receive the DOT Outstanding Administrative Professionals Award for her demonstrated exemplary performance in all aspects of her work within our organization. She was the only person to be selected out of Technical Operations, and one of two from the FAA. A total of ten DOT employee from various departments were selected to receive this

award and met with Elaine Chao, Secretary of Transportation.

Angela has been a member of the NHCFAE since February 28, 2011 and has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to our organization. With just six years with the FAA Angela has evolved from a Management & Program Assistant (MPA) in the Operations Support Staff (OSS) for Technical Operations for Miami District to her current position as the Miami District Budget A0.

Angela is always welcoming and patient with all of the staff and the managers. She applies herself to master the most challenging tasks and then she provides both personal and group training to those who need the extra help. Angela's communica-

tion skill lends itself to her ability to teach and provide guidance and simplify budget concepts for those who are not as familiar and skillful in the budget arena.

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Angela's contribution is a combination of expertise, dedication, and teamwork!



# “What’s there to do in Alaska?”

By: Sylvia Villa, Alaska Regional Chapter Director

**F**ISH! At least that’s how Sylvia Villa, Alaska RCD and longtime NHCFAE member would answer.

I was born in Arizona, but I have lived in Alaska for 33 years and love it. The last couple of years, I’ve spent my summers working on a commercial fishing boat in Bristol Bay, Alaska. The first year, I didn’t know what to expect, I excitedly packed up food and gear for 5 weeks. I boarded an aircraft and was off. Once landing, I took a 30 minute drive to “Fish Camp”. I saw and met people from various states and countries, all coming in to process and catch fish. Everyone was rushing around preparing their gear and waiting to hear the declaration that fishing is open.

I’ve never seen so many boats in one place. On the shore there are thousands of empty shipping containers ready to be filled with canned and frozen salmon that will be shipped out. The little remote town, just waking from winter time is bustling with

all-terrain-vehicles and people walking back and forth all over town.

Once we packed the boat and were put in the water, we waited for the radio announcement, fishing is open. In one day, it could be open from 6am to noon and again from 2pm to 9pm. The next day it could open from 2am to 3pm. You fish when you can. We gear up (rubber bibs, boots, gloves and flotation vests) and let out the 300 foot net into the water. Then you stay in the fishing parameter and wait. The fish start jumping and splashing. As the nets become weighted with fish, we roll it in and manually pick them off the net. You place the fish in canvas bags kept in hulls at the bottom of the boat. Once you cleaned the net of all fish, you let it out and start all over again.

You stop when either the time is up or your boat is full of fish. Then it’s time to run out to the floating Tender boat and unload your fish. The canvas bags are hoisted out and over your head, watch out for the shower



of slime! The bags can weigh up to 1000 pounds. Once empty, you clean the fish hulls and you point your boat out into the fish area and do it again. In between open fishing times, you clean, eat, and listen for the next opening, all in a short time. Did I mention sleep?

I really enjoy the breathtaking scenic views. We have about 21 hours of daylight! We share the area with the bears; well actually, they share with us! When it’s time to go home, we clean and put nets away and boat on ground. It’s a once in a lifetime experience, I feel lucky to be doing it again this year!



## MMAC Chapter Christmas for Sophia

By: Erik Salazar, National Director of Resources & MMAC Member

During the season of giving, one of the MMAC Chapter's favorite traditions is to adopt a family at Christmas and provide gifts to help make their holiday brighter. In honor of Cynthia Garcia, our member who has been missing since early summer 2016 and who had a passion for giving to families that were less fortunate, we decided that instead of adopting a family this year, we would collect gifts for Cynthia's eight year-old daughter, Sophia. In hopes of giving Sophia some Christmas cheer, Veronica Salazar reached out to Cynthia's family to come up with a wish list for Sophia.

Sophia's wish list included Playmobile toys, My Little Pony accessories, Legos, warm clothes and gift cards. This project was very popular with MMAC members, as we were able to collect a car full of gifts to deliver

to the family for Sophia. The family was overwhelmed with the outpouring of love and generosity from Cynthia's familia in the Coalition. Sophia enjoyed all of her presents and had a huge smile on her face this Christmas!





Pictured from left to right, Ralph Escobedo, Senator Strickland, Jerri, John, and Rosalie Escobedo.

## National Alliance Mental Illness (NAMI)

By: Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Southwest Regional Chapter Director

On February 8, 2017, our long time member Ralph Escobedo along with his family Jerri, Rosalie and John Escobedo, and many NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) members, traveled to Austin Texas to meet with our Senators while visiting the State Capitol. The Southwest Chapter has been a supporter of this organization and community for the past three years with many members coming out to support the event.

Senator Stickland and Senator Konni Burton, were among some of the Texas State Legislators willing to listen, and support NAMI. Senator Stickland and Burton are willing to support the families of the Vietnam, Middle East and other veterans that suffer from this Mental illness, and provide special treatment during the time of Mental Crisis. They are also willing to work on the Bill to provide and allocate funding for more Social Workers/Nurses for our citizens and U.S Veterans with Mental Illness. Both Legislators are aware of our Citizens/Military personnel that suffer with this disease of Mental Illness, and by introducing the bill will also be educating others, and making them aware of the Mental illness, and to treat our Mental Illness citizens with respect and professional treatment.



## Making my Rounds—Visiting Austin, Texas

By: Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Southwest Regional Chapter Director

On December 16, 2016, I drove to Austin, TX, to meet with our members at Austin Tower. There I meet Robert Peña, Nancy De La Rosa, and Carlos Reynoso. It's was a great pleasure to meet them. I sat and talked with Nancy who just transferred from Houston as the Operations Manager at Austin Tower. I had lunch with Carlos and Robert and got to know them a little better. They are very interested in doing outreach events and getting together with other members in Austin. Thank you all for taking the time to meet with me, it was a pleasure!

## Helping Out Our Familia In Corpus Christi, Texas

By: Lydia Gomez- Martinez, Southwest Regional Chapter Director

On December 15, 2016, it was brought to my attention that there was a water situation in Corpus Christi, TX. The city's water had been contaminated, and was not drinkable. The SouthWest Chapter sent a palate of water for our members, and their families that may have been affected. Adrian Rangel a Corpus Christi Technician, that happened to be working at Fort Worth Center at the time, offered to take the water back to Corpus. Hector Segundo a Supervisor at Corpus Christi Tower and member volunteered to receive and distribute the water as needed.

A BIG THANK YOU to Adrian and Hector!



## Houston Area Chapter Here We Come!

By: Lydia Gomez-Martinez, Southwest Regional Chapter Director

On December 1, 2016, I traveled to Houston Center. My main objective was to go meet our members face to face. I was lucky enough, with the help from Hilda Banda, to set up an event with our sponsors from First Command out of Houston. We had 3 people that came to the Financial Session and were very appreciative for the valuable information. It was such a great experience for me to have the opportunity to be able to actually meet them and talk to them face to face rather the over the phone or by email. It was such a rewarding feeling. At the end of the session we had three new members that had stepped up, to stand up the Houston Chapter! So Yes, HOUSTON WE HAVE A CHAPTER!



Pictured from left to right, Hilda Banda, William Vallejos, Misael Goicuria.

## Membership Updates

By: Mindy Moreno, Membership Chair

October 2016—April 2017

Name	Region	Position	Recruited By
Carlos Rodriguez	SO	Front Line Manager	David Dominguez
Carlos Franco	SW	Management Assistant	Misty Pena
Gina Brunson	SW	Management & Program Analyst	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Nohemi Rey	SW	Civil Engineer	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Paulette Lugo	SW	Resident Engineer	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Rose Dailey	SW	Administrative Specialist	Priscilla Buschmann
Noemi Cuevas	SW	Civil Engineer	Mindy Moreno/Robb Ramos
Priscilla Buschmann	SW	Administrative Officer	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Melanie Reyes-Upton	SW	Management & Program Analyst	Misty Pena
Misael Goicuria	SW	Airway Transportation Systems Specialist	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Hilda Banda	SW		Lydia Gomez-Martinez
William Vallejos	SW		Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Felix Acon-Chen	WA	General Engineer	David Dominguez
Christopher S. Kerrigan	GL	Operations Supervisor	John Espinosa
Brenda Bryant	SW	Management & Program Analyst	Lydia Gomez-Martinez
Mercedes Blanco	WA	Management & Program Analyst	Justin Perez
Richard Moreno	WP	Quality Assurance Specialist	Mindy Moreno
Peter Juanpere	WP	Air Traffic Control Specialist	Jonathan Eagle
Vicki Malesza	WP	Electronics Technician	Ofelia Medina
Deborah Stewart	SW	Air Traffic Control Specialist	Dolores Leyva
Erick Carlo	EA		Oscar Torres
Daniel Albo	WP	Air Traffic Control Specialist	Dolores Leyva
Stephen Smith	EA	Air Traffic Manager	Dolores Leyva



# ‘A Fantastic Ride’

By: Focus FAA

**B**enito De Leon watched pilots practice and perform aerobatic stunts in air shows during his childhood summers in Wisconsin. People traveled from all over the world to the annual EAA AirVenture fly-in and the International Aerobatic Competition in Oshkosh, located about 20 miles from De Leon’s home in Fond du Lac.



“It may have stayed with me,” De Leon said. “That started my walk down the path of aviation.” His interest in aviation developed into a decades-long career with the FAA that has spanned more than 30 years, culminating in his appointment as deputy associate administrator for the Office of Airports (ARP)

He retired Tuesday from his position after 32 years and five months of service with the agency. “That’s good enough,” De Leon said. “It has been a fantastic ride.”

His “ride” with the FAA began in the mid-1980s when he was hired in the Great Lakes regional office in Illinois. There he worked as an airports engineers, community planner, capacity manager, and manager of the Planning and Programming Branch. Some of his most challenging assignments included the management of environmental studies as part of the development of Chicago O’Hare International and Minneapolis-St. Paul

International airports. “Those were contentious environmental studies to build new runways,” he recalled. “They threw me into those positions. I carried that forward when I came to Headquarters.”

**“That’s good enough,”  
De Leon said. “It has  
been a fantastic ride.”**

His work on teams that successfully completed complicated multi-year projects, such as the construction of 17 runways at 30 airports across the nation during the 1990s, gave him the expertise for his Headquarters positions. He recalled a day when multiple runways were commissioned at airports at Dullies, Chicago, and Seattle, Wash.

“That was a big accomplishment which most likely will never happen again,” De Leon said. He applied his honed teamwork approach to his



service as ARP's director of airport planning and programming for seven years and then as deputy director for five years. In 2013, he was appointed as the office's deputy associate administrator.

He also drew from his earlier experience working with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) officials. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he worked as an assistant construction engineer for WDOT.

As an executive, he strived to foster an environment of camaraderie among employees. "I tried to share that experience with my managers and staff," De Leon said. "I'm lucky to have had that at the state and federal level."

An effective team approach is essential to ensuring success, he said. "You have to do that in order to achieve consensus and get things accomplished. You've got to be patient. You've got to give and take. You've got to listen to people and stakeholders."

"I don't go into meetings with the attitude that I have all the answers," De Leon said. "I do my homework ahead of time. You want to be as prepared as possible."

One of his proudest achievements was his participation on an inter-office FAA team — including Airports, Air Traffic Organization, and Office of Chief Counsel representatives — that coordinated an agreement in

2012 with the Taos Pueblo for the construction of a new runway at Taos Regional Airport in New Mexico. "The Taos Pueblo maintained the only living Heritage Site in the world and it was recognized by the United Nations," De Leon said. "It took a team effort and numerous meetings that led to a signed agreement which was a significant accomplishment. The runway is being built and the Heritage Site is being protected."

Working with a dedicated and professional work force is one of the aspects he'll miss most from his tenure with the agency. "I'll miss the people I work with," he said. "I have been blessed with so many professional and smart people. It's also nice seeing the quality of our new employees coming on board."

He set aside time to mentor younger staffers who came to him for guidance. "People came into my office and I chatted with them and helped them out where I could," De Leon said. You've got to find time for your people to try to help them improve. I developed that type of relationship with all my managers." During his retirement, he hopes to also extend a helping hand to others in need. "I definitely want to volunteer at the hospital and I would love to teach math to young kids," he said. "If a person is struggling and needs some help, I'd like to help them out. I want to give back. People gave me things when I was growing up."

He recalled the unexpected assistance he received after his father passed away and he struggled finan-



cially in college. "In college, I didn't have much money," he recalled. "I worked at the hospital every day. All of a sudden, I would see money come into my account. People I wasn't aware of would help me."

In addition to his community service plans, De Leon continues to support his son who is studying mechanical engineering in his second year at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. He encourages members of younger generations to pursue their dreams. "I never came into the FAA to become a manager or a senior executive," De Leon said. "I liked to work. I worked hard and I liked to learn new things." He continued, "I had a blessed career at the FAA. It has given me a lot as a person. I'm leaving it in good hands."



# The Retirement of a “True Gentleman”

By Leonixa Salcedo and Bill Fernandez

On January 31, 2017 Manuel “Manny” Vega retired from the FAA. The FAA lost a wonderful employee, manager, and visionary who had served his country for nearly 50 years. Fortunately, the NHCFAE and the Capital Chapter will still be able to call on his vision and leadership as he plans to stay active in promoting the ideals of the NHCFAE.

On February 9th the Capital Chapter held a celebration of Manny’s years of service to his country and to his culture. The room at La Tasca Spanish Restaurant was packed full of FAA professionals celebrating the remarkable career of this humble hardworking gentleman who has done so much for so many in the FAA.

As I listened to the stories from the people who Manny had so profoundly touched throughout his career it dawned on me, that this gentleman, is the epitome of what we could do in the NHCFAE by simply helping one person at time. Taking the simple initiative to help just one person find a career and/or expand their career.

This is has to be one of the most important accomplishments of Manny’s distinguished career. Manny has personally created opportunities for interns, many of them from Hispanic backgrounds,

and gave them the opportunity to show that they could be productive members of the Federal Aviation Administration.

Leonixa Salcedo who is the Program Manager of the high profile VOR Minimum Operating Network (MON) is one of those former interns who Manny mentored.

“Every year Manny would sponsor interns and if they were a good fit, would offer them a position in the FAA. I was one of those interns. He gave me the opportunity to work as an Assistant Engineer. He set his performance expectations clearly from the beginning. If I performed accordingly, he would offer me a position within his team; and he did.

He took a leap of faith with me. He could have hired one expert or two entry level employees. He decided to do the latter. He asked me for resumes from friends that graduated with me and he also hired one of them, John Varas.

I am grateful that Manny was my first FAA supervisor. After two years, he gave me the freedom to run my own program and he allowed me to learn the best way to do things when there was not a standard process in place. When mistakes were made he helped me to learn from them. He taught me how to hold people



accountable but never being rude. That is something I try to replicate daily in my program management work.”

The one phrase that became a common thread of everyone’s tribute to Manny was that everyone they all said he was “a true gentleman.” They spoke about how he was responsible and caring of his employees. It was an evening of heartfelt gratitude for a gentleman who touched so many people in the FAA.

For the FAA, the evening was a sad farewell, since there are so few people in the FAA like Manny Vega. For the rest of us, it was truly a celebration of a wonderful man who will continue to touch the lives of our members and promote all of us, one by one.

*“He took a leap of faith with me. He could have hired one expert or two entry level employees. He decided to do the latter.”*

-Leonixa Salcedo



# Ida Grisel Marrero Retires from the Military

920th ASTS, Health Service Management Craftsman

**T**echnical Sergeant Ida Grisel Marrero was born and grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico and graduated from High School in May of 1979. She started her military career with the U.S Coast Guard, serving three years of active duty. She later continued her military career as a Reservist in United States Air Force with the 920th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Patrick Air Force Base as a Health Service Management Journeyman. She later deployed to Afghanistan in January 2010 where she served 7 months in Camp Bastion, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Her deployed unit, 451 Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility (CASF) received the Presidential



Unit Citation for the movement of over 750 patients and the care of over 350 marines who were returned to duty during Operation MOSHTRAK.

In Technical Sergeant Marrero's civilian life she has a total of 30 years of Federal Service. She started her Feder-

al Career with the Internal Revenue Service as a Secretary. She later transferred to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a Secretary where she later entered upward mobility programs which helped her earn an associate degree in Electronic Engineer Technology. She has participated in various leadership programs which aided her in obtaining her current position as Manager, Miami Radar Air Traffic Control Tower.

She has been a Member of the National Hispanic Coalition of FAA Employees (NHCFAE) since she became employed with the FAA. The NHCFAE is a professional diverse organization that focuses on advocating career placement and advancement thru support, education and alliances. Her efforts serve over 600 members, providing annual educational conferences at various locations throughout the country.

Technical Sergeant Marrero has been married for over 36 years to her wonderful husband Frank Marrero. She has three children, Franchesca 31, Frank 30, and Fernando 29. She also has two grandkids, Fernandito and Frankie. She looks forward to spending time with her loving family and planning many a family gatherings as she retires.

## And off he goes to the Sunshine State... Happy Retirement!

By: Susie Diaz, National Director of Public Affairs

Flor Ramos, long time member from Western Pacific, retires after 35 years and 10 months of hard work and dedication. It was time to take a permanent vacation... and off he goes with his family to his new residency at Tampa, Florida. I had the pleasure of going to Flor's Retirement Luncheon and presented him with a gift card and a certificate by our Chapter.

Thank you Flor for always supporting our organization! Best Wishes!



# We the People

## Your Constitution and Bylaws

By: **Bill Fernandez**

**Constitution and Bylaws Chair**

Our Constitution and By-laws are the rules that govern the way we run the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE). These documents were established by our former leaders to be used as a guide to help us orderly and fairly conduct the business of this Coalition. The Constitution and By-Laws are not set in stone and sometimes they must adapt to the changes of our organization.

Articles X and XI (10 and 11 for those who don't count letters) of our Constitution state that the Constitution or By-Laws "may be amended, replaced, or repealed, in whole or in part, by a 2/3 vote at a regular or special meeting". The "regular" meeting would be at our Annual Conference which this year will be in Los Angeles in August. These articles also state that our members will get at least 45 days notice prior to any vote to make any change.

Now obviously we are not going to be able to get all 600 plus NHCFAE members together at the same time to vote on changes. So Article 6A Section

6 of our By-Laws tells us we will need to have a "Quorum for the transaction of business" A "Quorum" is just a fancy way of saying a percentage of the membership. Article 6A Section 6 tells us that percentage is 5%.

These rules have undergone several changes over the last couple of years to make us a more efficient and transparent organization. In 2013 we made a major change to our Constitution which allowed our members who retired from the FAA to remain active, productive members of our Coalition. This enables us to draw on their wonderful background and experiences so we can better move this organization forward.

Changes to our election process have allowed us to modernize our election process saving the Coalition significant funds on elections. Previous changes ensured the transparency of the election process and provided clear results. This removed the doubt that previously had left members confused about the final election results.

As the coalition moves to modernize our processes, our rules and guidelines have to evolve to serve this modern

world. And this is where you can come in. We read through our Constitution and By-laws periodically, but it is members like you that tend to find little loopholes in our C&BL that need to be updated. If you identify a part of the CB&L that needs changing, don't feel you need to figure out how to fix it, though suggestions will always be welcome. The main thing is to identify it so we can put all of our minds to trying to figure the best path to update the rules.

It is not very hard, simply cut and paste the part of either the Constitution or By-Laws that you feel needs to be changed. Please identify the article and section you feel needs to be changed. Then email [cbl@nhcfae.org](mailto:cbl@nhcfae.org) with your contact information and the Constitution and By-Laws Committee will reach out to you to verify we have received your submission and confirm your concerns with this portion of the C&BL.

Like I said before, most often it is members just like yourself that help keeps our Constitution and By-Laws evolving to best serve our Coalition.

Bill Fernandez



## Communicating for Safety (CFS)

By: Edward Cardenas, Southern Regional Chapter Director

The National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFAE) was an exhibitor at the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), Communicating for Safety (CFS) Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. This year's theme: 'Working Together to Improve Safety'. CFS is an aviation industry leading conference, focusing on safety, technology and building relationships. This three-day conference is unique in that it's the only conference of its kind to focus specifically on the air traffic needs of all members of the aviation community who are affected by the National Airspace System (NAS).

NHCFAE was one of several employee associations with a presence at this year's conference, an excellent platform for the NHC to be present. NHC was able to reach out to the over 1200 attendees at CFS. This was an excellent opportunity to connect with current and future NHC members. Several

NHC members approached the booth thanking us for all the hard work and effort. Additionally, we recruited 6 new members from across the U.S. Please welcome our new members: Erik Carlo, Deborah Stewart, Karen Illg, Stephen Smith and David L. Beck

This year's CFS conference had several great presenters and training sessions. As a pilot, Pilot/Controller Communications, Runway Safety, and Weather: Complete the Picture were just a few training sessions that peaked my interest. I enjoyed Keynote Speaker Gordon Graham's, a veteran to CFS, presentation. Gordon discussion included risk management, risk vs. frequency, emphasizing on key areas like High Risk Low Frequency, which is an area we cannot be complacent.

In addition to being an exhibitor at CFS, our National President, David Dominguez, presented a check to NATCA's National Vice-President Trish Gilbert for

the NATCA Charitable Foundation. The partnership of NHCFAE and NATCA has strengthened throughout the years and we continue to look forward to supporting NATCA's charitable foundation.

I'd like to thank the National Hispanic Coalition for the opportunity to represent our organization at this year's Communicating for Safety Conference.



