

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER ORGANIZATION

APRIL 2008

President's Message



April Showers, Colorado – The Joint Training Conference with the American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association and the Asian Pacific Islander Organization is progressing very quickly. I am very excited and impressed with the training and speakers our Conference group has already organized. Volunteers are still needed to help with several phases of the meeting. Please check with any National Council member, so we can guide you to our needs. We should see the preliminary agenda on our website sometime in April.

I was looking at the 2006 MD-715 report recently because of a question posed to me and our National Council. "What strides has our API members made in the last year and if any issues exist with the current NRCS status of API's?" I was discouraged and saddened to report that API's ranked last or non-existent in most of the major leadership positions. I now have to explain what has put us in this position. I also must show initiatives our organization is taking to help change our profile and state of affairs. I need your help and feedback.

One of the ways we can assist is to encourage APIs to pursue detail assignments. How many members have taken on a long detailed assignment outside your regional area? Having made my commitment in 2000, I am a firm believer in expanding our growth opportunities. There has been a lot of hit and miss with detail assignments. Here are some tips for those interested:

1. Tell your supervisor that you are interested.
2. Research the opportunity and correlate it with your career objectives.
3. Put the exposure to good use and highlight your activities.
4. Give feedback to your supervisor and an exit report.

Have fun, use any challenges to increase your management ability and bring a positive attitude to your work.

If you need a boost or names to network with on improving your skills/development, the National Council is here to help.

If you have a chance to attend the conference, it will be the 10th Anniversary of our professional organization. I have invited some of the old guards to have a panel discussion on issues, thoughts and stories. It will definitely be fun and worthwhile.

Keep up the great work in the field. I am finally getting acclimated in Colorado, it warmed up to 40 degrees and I was out working in shorts and a t-shirt! *Kent/APIO President*

Special Notes

- Please take time to read the Proposed Strategic Plan. Members will be voting on its adoption at the Annual Conference in August.
- Bylaws and Constitutional changes need to be in with final edits by June 1st.
- Any items to be included at the Conference's Business Meeting need to be submitted by July 1st to our Secretary.

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Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month: May 2008

Leadership, Diversity, Harmony - Gateway to Success

In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed on May 10, 1869. In 1992, Congress expanded the observance to a month long celebration.

Please note: Due to the late announcement of the theme for this year, NRCS will not have a poster contest. You may opt to order posters from Diversitystore.com or use one of the posters from last year.

NRCS's 2007 Winning Poster



Local Conservation Leaders

Highlighted in National Campaign

HONOLULU, February 4, 2008--The Ho family's commitment to conservation will be featured in a new national information campaign, "Conservation... Our Purpose. Our Passion." by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



"We are proud to highlight the accomplishments and conservation ethic of the Ho family in this campaign," said Arlen L. Lancaster, NRCS chief. "It is our hope that through the words and images of customers like these, other farmers and ranchers across the country will find a similar passion for natural resource conservation."

"We went out and found these farms, these families and these stories across America. There are hundreds more stories like these and even more that have yet to be written. That's what NRCS teams do—work with landowners who have a conservation problem or goal and make good things happen on the land," explains Lancaster.

Selected from hundreds of nominees nationwide, the Ho family is one of eight that will represent the breadth and depth of conservation successes resulting from their passion and partnership with NRCS. The campaign includes a five-minute video, displays, a web site, and brochure as well locally-developed materials which share the conservation successes of NRCS customers.

As a token of appreciation, the Ho Family is being presented with a framed portrait. The photo is one of many images that were documented on a photo shoot in September 2007. The film crew also took images from the NRCS Featured Customers in Connecticut, Florida, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington. (Of the eight families, this was the only Asian Family.)

The Ho Family has 40 acres on Oahu to farm Japanese cucumbers, long beans, squash, tomatoes, and eggplant. They've been passionate land stewards for over 20 years. The conservation plan they hold with NRCS is to address weeds, insects, and plant disease by following an integrated pest management system. By reducing the use of fertilizers and pesticides, they are being conscience of protecting and preserving our natural resources.

By Jolene Lau/HI

Wanted!

2008 Scholarship Applicants

APIO Members:

Each year, APIO awards up to 5 scholarships worth \$1000 each to deserving Asian or Pacific Islander students who wish to pursue, are currently enrolled in, or are admitted to an accredited 2 year or 4 year institution. High school and college seniors are eligible only if they are admitted to an accredited 4 year or 2 year academic institution during fall of the scholarship year. One of the goals of the APIO scholarship is to introduce students to the NRCS and encourage them to consider NRCS as a potential employer. Only Asian or Pacific Islander students who are **U.S. citizens** are eligible for the scholarship.



The APIO Scholarship is selected on the basis of academic achievement, personal strengths, leadership abilities, career goals, and work experience. The application deadline for this year is **June 30**.

Let's all help to encourage all eligible Asian and Pacific Islander students, in the agriculture, natural resources, computer science, and engineering fields to apply for the 2008 scholarship. The application and associated information can be accessed via the web at www.apio.org.

If you have any questions regarding the APIO Scholarship, please contact Terry Wang at (209) 472-7127 ext. 109 or terry.wang@ca.usda.gov.

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS AND POSTERS at the 2008 Joint Training Conference*

August 11-15, 2008
Spokane, Washington

Deadline for submitting Abstracts
is [July 14, 2008](#)

Please visit www.apio.org for registration forms and guidelines



**Additional volunteers are still wanted for the Conference Planning

NATIONAL BULLETIN 230-8-12

The National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC) is seeking to fill the upcoming FY09 vacancy for an ***Asian Pacific Islander male***.

The committee's vision is to be recognized as a guiding force, which strives for excellence in Civil Rights for all clients and employees of NRCS. Please consider this mission and vision of NCRC when responding to these vacancies. Committee members should be self-starters who are willing to volunteer to complete actions identified in the NCRC business plan.

Please submit nominations by ***June 9, 2008***, to Steve Cashman, Nomination Committee Chair, via fax (207) 834-6435 or steve.cashman@me.usda.gov. Line officers must concur in the nomination and agree to support the employee by granting up to 20 percent of their time for NCRC travel and work activities.

For more information, please see the actual National Bulletin and/or contact Joyce A. Swartzendruber, Chair, NCRC at (207) 990-9551, or by calling Steve Cashman at (207)-834-3311 Ext 3.

APIO Membership

If you are interested in becoming a new member or Life Member, please visit www.apio.org for the membership forms. Memberships are effective from January to December.

**Please help make our organization even stronger.
Get involved and become a member today!**

The costs for student membership is \$10, for new and renewals is \$25, and Life Membership is \$250. Life Membership payments can be made in 3 installments, totaling \$300.

Thanks!!!

Spotlighting our API Employees



Oliver Miranda is APIO's newly elected Eastern Regional Representative. He is a District Conservationist at the Upper Marlboro Field Service Center in Prince George's County, Maryland. Currently working with NRCS Maryland Civil Rights Advisory Committee, he is helping to develop a Conservation Partnership-Civil Rights and Workforce Diversity Award that includes partners, such as Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Soil Conservation Districts, and University of Maryland Extension Service.

This month, he will be outreaching to students at the Gaywood Elementary School's Career Day. This is to promote conservation careers to young minds, and conservationists of the future.

He had a tremendously busy year in 2007, having recently completed a Master of Business Administration and visited Argentina in July 2007 to see winter (yes in July). Interestingly, he saw Koreans and Japanese living in Buenos Aires.

Even more interesting is that Oliver loves to sing at Karaoke and has been enjoying it over the past five years. He has even sang at The Flamingo in Las Vegas, Nevada. If you have an opportunity to meet Oliver, you can listen to him sing or better yet, sing along with him.



He has been a member of APIO for several years, and looks forward to serving APIO and APIs. Please help extend a warm welcome to Oliver and feel free to contact him if you have questions or need assistance on API issues.

New Feature:

Starting with this edition of our newsletter, we will be spotlighting our NRCS employees. Some will be more familiar faces and names, such as the ones who are on the National Council, while others may be our members or future members. All in all, these folks are making great contributions in their fields, have great leadership, are interesting, or have stories to share... or all of the above. If you know of APIs that you would like to see spotlighted or acknowledged, please forward relevant information to your local APIO Regional Representative or to me. Thanks!

Justin Ly/CA API SEPM

Asian Pacific Islander Organization

Strategic Plan 2007-2012

Vision/Purpose: to provide focus on issues, such as employment, promotion, training, and career enhancement affecting Asian American/Pacific Islander (AA/PI) employees and applicants in NRCS.

Objectives:

- A. Increase the total number of Asian American/Pacific Islanders in all Professional, Administrative, Technical, Clerical, and Others (PATCO) categories, series, and grade levels.
 - 1. Evaluate the impact of personnel management policies and practices on AA/PIs in the areas of recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, training, counseling, and career development;
 - 2. Provide input on employment issues affecting AA/PIs in the service-wide affirmative employment program and Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) plans;
 - 3. Analyze and evaluate statistical reports of the workforce in areas, such as awards, workforce distribution, training, attrition, and under representation, to identify barriers to the recruitment, employment, and advancement of AA/PIs. Recommend corrective action, if needed;
 - 4. Participate in the development and implementation of Affirmative Employment Program and FEORP plans;

- B. Encourage the participation of Asian American/Pacific Islanders in all NRCS-sponsored programs and activities.
 - 1. Provide guidance and assistance to collateral-duty AA/PIPMs, supervisors, and managers concerning their AA/PIEP responsibilities;
 - 2. Provide information to employees on the AA/PIEP through AA/PIPMs located in each organizational unit;

- C. Provide a network of professional support for Asian American/Pacific Islanders.
 - 1. Coordinate the development of the service-wide AA/PIEP business plan which is incorporated into the business plan for the Civil Rights Staff
 - 2. Develop the AA/PI business plan and ensure that it is incorporated in the jurisdictional area's business plan;
 - 3. Serve as communication link between employees and the national AA/PIPM, keeping employees aware of AA/PIEP activities through memoranda, bulletins, newsletter, and other appropriate means; and

Asian Pacific Islander Organization

Strategic Plan 2007-2012

D. Ensure that the Asian American/Pacific Islander community receives equal treatment in every aspect of employment.

1. Participate in NRCS equal opportunity program appraisals and serve as a contact for providing input in appraisals or reviews conducted by the Department, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
2. Represent NRCS on AA/PI issues when dealing with the Department and special interest groups;
3. Serve as a local representative at national, regional, and state meetings concerning AA/PI issues;

E. Provide opportunities to participate in training and training programs such as career enhancement, graduate studies, and others.

1. Analyze and evaluate statistical reports of the workforce in areas, such as awards, workforce distribution, training, attrition, and under representation, to identify barriers to the recruitment, employment, and advancement of AA/Pis. Recommend corrective action, if needed;
2. Conduct training and provide training resources for equal employment workshops, seminars, and meetings;

Collateral-duty AA/PIPMs should apply sound program management practices in administering the program. These practices include:

- (1) Assessing the problems, needs, and opportunities critical to success;
- (2) Identifying available resources;
- (3) Establishing long-range and annual goals consistent with the objectives of the overall equal employment opportunity program;
- (4) Developing business plans of operations that deal with specific activities to be initiated and/or completed during the fiscal year;
- (5) Implementing plans of action with time frames for carrying out activities; and
- (6) Monitoring and evaluating progress in completing activities and meeting established objectives.

Development of Multi-Year Plans:

Multi-year plans for the AA/PIEP will reflect equal employment opportunity initiatives in recruitment, employment, and advancement of AA/Pis shown in the Affirmative Employment Program Multi-year Plans for the respective organizational units.

About Us

Asian Pacific Islander Organization (APIO)

The Asian Pacific Islander Organization, is a non-profit employee organization of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. APIO was founded by Mon S. Yee and Virginia C. Lewis in May 1998. The purpose of our organization is to provide a forum for employees to exchange ideas, network, mentor, train, and add value to the agency by being a linguistic, cultural and ethnic bridge to our communities and other employee organizations.

For more information, please visit our website at www.apio.org. Please contact your APIO Regional Representative if you have questions, suggestions, comments, or concerns.

Our new address is: ***P.O. Box 25936 Eugene, OR 97402***

APIO National Council

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