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Center Borrower Training Certified by FSA!!!!



A Message from the President & CEO:

WE DID IT!!!! RCDR's Center for Latino Farmers, a community based organization (CBO) was approved as a designated vendor

for the FSA Borrower Training Program (BTP) for the purpose of providing borrower training in Spanish and English to FSA loan applicants. FSA State Director Jim Fitzgerald visited the Center to sign the official agreement on April 26th and congratulate us for the success. The Center is the first CBO in the Northwest and one of a few throughout the United States to offer FSA Borrower Training workshops.

It is important to note, that the Center has been in the forefront of financial management training in Spanish for immigrant Latino farmers for the last four years. The work was a continuation of the overall RCDR's mission "to create wealth and empower disadvantaged entrepreneurs..by providing business assistance training and leadership development in rural counties..." That work transcended into the Center's philosophy when we submitted our first proposal to CSREES and received funding in late 2001.

During the last four years, many workshops have been sponsored by the Center with financial support and encouragement from RMA, FSA and CSREES grants. Regrettably, the only ones that understood the value of the workshops were the Latino farmers themselves. One farmer said, "We are learning that we need to work with our heads and not just our hands to be successful." However, our training was not FSA certified, so instead out of state college professors were brought in to do the trainings for 4 days and then depart, leaving the farmers more confused and frustrated with home work and no one to help them. We complained loud and clear!! FSA officials said "well then get certified."

We have to give credit to our financial consultant Hector Franco, MBA, who was the principal developer of the bor-



rower training guide and in providing the training. Based on his work with the RCDR's loan program, he was well versed on how to address the needs of immigrant farmers. He prepared the first training manual and trained Salvador Castaneda in all the material. Mr. Castaneda was adequately prepared to do the training and he continued to tweak the guide and make it more user friendly.

The final step to certification was taken when I hired Eric Alegria as the Center Manager. I said, "The borrower certification is priority #1, so let's get it done." He took the leadership and worked closely with Mr. Castaneda 's expertise in finalizing all required data for completion. " Now we will copyright ASAP. Great job Eric!!!

The Center plans to hold the first 15 hour certified borrower training workshop in June. The cost will be \$250 per student with discounts available for family members and those traveling to the workshop from outside a 20 miles radius. For more information call Eric Alegria at 509-453-3157.



FSA State Dir. Jim Fitzgerald, RCDR President Luz Bazan Gutierrez and Center Dir. Eric Alegria are all smiles as the contract and good news are received on 4/26/06

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Spanish Workshops in 2006

Workshop/Training	Date (s)	Time	Location
Borrower Financial Management Training	(PENDING)		
Intermediate Computer Training	(PENDING)		
FSA-Process	(PENDING)	6:00 - 8:00 pm	USDA - FSA Office - 1606 Perry St. Yakima WA
Pesticide Pre-License Classes WA State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)	1. April 24 - May 3	All Times 6:00 - 9:00 pm Exam on last day	1. Yakima, WSDA
*Monthly Radio Show	May 18	4:00 - 5:00 pm	Radio KDNA - FM 91.9

Space is limited, to register call (509) 453-3157 or (509) 453-5133

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Cooperatives—Push Direct Marketing

The Center completed and forwarded a grant proposal titled “Transcending Barriers; Cultivating Market Success for the Latino farmer” to the Washington State Department of Agriculture for a \$15,000 Marketing Promotion Grant. The proposals’ objectives are to increase the volume, the price and the market share of products sold by both

“United Growers” of Tonasket and “Manzaneros Mexicanos de Washington” of Yakima through the direct connection of Coop products to identified markets. Both Coops were established with the Center’s assistance. For more information about the Coops or interest in joining the Coops call Eric Alegria at 509-453-3157.

Computer 101 Training



Participants look on as Lupe Sotelo talks about computer hardware functions.

Fourteen farmers joyfully received Certificates of Completion for 20 hours of computer literacy training held from March 6 –16th at the Radio KDNA computer lab. Guadalupe Sotelo provided the training course. The participants learned the basics about computer hardware functions, emailing, Internet searches and different applications such as Microsoft Word and Excel. Gustavo Davila, Hipolito Serna, Manuel Rodriguez, Isabel Rodríguez, Javier Piña, Raul Robles, Rito Ibarra, Teresa Ibarra, Hilario Alvarez, Miguel Contreras, Primitivo Serna, Mario Mosso, Brenda Castillo, and Tim Castillo were the recipients of the certificates of completion.

All trainings are available to Center farmers. For more information on trainings please call Eric Alegria at 509-453-3157.

More FSA Loans Approved

The Center continues to take many requests for technical assistance in helping fill out and process FSA applications. As of March 31st it shows that:

- 12 different farmers applied for 22 loans
- 6 different farmers were approved for 8 different loans
- 3 loans were denied were denied to three different farmers

If you are interested in getting a loan please call the Center to receive a list of information needed for an appointment. No appointments will be made without the required information.

Center hosts

“How to Purchase a Farm”

Two experts on purchasing farm real estate in South Central Washington conducted a two hour workshop on “How to Purchase a Farm.” Pat Lawlar and Mike Gibbons of Coldwell Banker Associated Brokers instructed a class of eight future farmers on subjects such as real estate law, purchase and sales agreements and closing processes. The workshop came as a response by the Center to farmer interests in learning the ins and outs of farm purchasing.



Financial Management Key to Success



Consultant Salvador Castañeda instructs the financial management training class in Yakima.

The Center provided a 10 hour financial management training course from February 20th through February 23rd at RCDR's Small Business Incubator facility.

Salvador Castañeda provided the very successful financial management training that was attended by nine area farmers. The attendees learned to prepare personal financial statements and business financial statements. Systems of managing finances and systems of accounting were topics also covered. Those receiving Certificates of Completion were Hilario Alvarez, Jose Barajas, Miguel Contreras, Biliardo Lamas, Victoria Lopez and Mario Mosso.

Crop Insurance Inspections

The Agricultural Risk Protection act, signed in 2002, requires the Risk Management Agency (RMA) with the assistance of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to improve Federal Crop Insurance Program compliance. The FSA is now conducting reviews of insured crops during the growing season. The FSA will perform a minimum of two field inspections to randomly selected recipients: one within 30 days of the final planting and one before the general harvest date. Inspections will be documented and forwarded to the RMA (Source: USDA Newsletter March 2006).



Alegria, New Manager

Eric Alegria was hired as the Center Manager in March to replace Salvador Castañeda. He has previously been employed by the City Council of Los Angeles, as well as the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles. He holds a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Gonzaga University. He also has a family background in agriculture that has contrib-

uted to his passion for Washington State and all its rural communities.

His goal is to "facilitate the empowerment of the individual," which he believes will directly lead to "the strengthening of our family farms and our communities." His objectives are to build capacity for the Center, and to increase the number of Latino farmers being served.