

Latino Forum moves forward with Central Iowa Latino center feasibility study

For immediate release
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DES MOINES – The Latino Forum of the Urban Core has awarded the Latino center feasibility study contract to RDG Planning & Design. The purpose of the feasibility study is to determine how to establish a community center for the Latino community in Central Iowa.

The community center initiative is part of the Latino Forum of the Urban Core, which was formed through the Capital Crossroads strategic plan effort (<http://www.capitalcrossroadsvision.com>) to ensure the Des Moines metro has the right balance of workforce, community and economic components to make it the best in the nation. The forum is composed up of members and supporters of the Latino community, business owners and professionals, government representatives, advocacy groups and service organizations.

The Latino Forum wants to work with central Iowans to explore the possibility of creating and opening a new center. The Des Moines area previously had a center in the 1980s, and another one closed earlier this year because of lack of financial support. Forum members believe a new center would give Latinos a place of social and cultural identity. It also would serve as a communication bridge with the greater Des Moines community, be a place where community efforts could be coordinated, and would provide leadership and developmental programming.

As the consultant for the study, RDG will study the Latino community and the community center concept. The firm's study will examine and consider all of the current social, economic and cultural resources available to the Latino community. As part of the study, RDG is expected to hold at least two community forums to gather public input. The work is expected to be completed within six months.

Over 22 Latino Businesses and 43 individual members of the DSM Latino community contributed financially to this project. Several corporate sponsors which include: the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, Pioneer Hi-Bred, Bankers Trust, Polk County, Principal Financial Group, and Veridian Credit Union have also provided financial support to pay for RDG's work.

There will be a celebration to thank sponsors for their support at 6 p.m. Jan. 19, 2013, at Isla Cozumel Restaurant, 2743 86th St. in Urbandale.

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