



Calabarzon RDC holds reorganizational meeting



RDC members strike a pose with Laguna Gov. George 'E.R.' Ejercito (seated, middle), Sta. Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arcillas (seated, middle), and Bacoor City Mayor Strike Revilla.

The Calabarzon Regional Development Council (RDC IV-A) conducted its Reorganizational Meeting on September 26, 2013 at the Technopark Hotel, Sta. Rosa City, Laguna. The meeting was hosted by the City Government of Sta. Rosa through Mayor Arlene Arcillas and, was presided by RDC

IV-A Acting Chairperson and NEDA IV-A OIC-Regional Director Agnes M. Espinas.

Guided by Executive Order No. 325, the reorganization of the RDC is being done every three (3) years, following the election of the local chief executives (LCEs).

The fully constituted RDC is composed of the LCEs of the provinces and cities, directors of the regional line agencies, presidents of the state universities and colleges SUCs, and private sector representatives (PSRs).

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Top 50 Most Competitive include Calabarzon Pilot LGUs

Based from the Overall Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Ranking released by the National Competitiveness Council this year, 10 out of 15 pilot municipalities and 5 out of 6 pilot cities from Calabarzon made it to the Top 50.

The Regional Competitiveness Councils (RCC) identified from among the 122 cities and 163 first class municipalities nationwide the most competitive LGUs. The selection was based on 30 weighted indicators measuring: (a) economic dynamism; (b) government efficiency; and (c) infrastructure.

Specifically, these indicators included rankings on the number of business registrations; power and water rates and con-

nections; travel time to airports and seaports; percentage of households with landline and Internet connections; number of hotel rooms, cell sites, hospital beds, among others; and the ease of business permits and licensing systems in a particular area.

The pilot LGUs from Calabarzon that made it in the Top 50 competitive municipalities were: Carmona, Cavite (3rd); General Trias, Cavite (5th); Taytay, Rizal (9th); San Mateo, Rizal (16th); Rosario, Cavite (17th); Sta. Cruz, Laguna (22nd); San Pedro, Laguna (31st); Gumaca, Quezon (37th); Candelaria, Quezon (39th); and Cainta, Rizal (46th).

For the city level: Antipolo City, Rizal

(18th); Lucena City, Quezon (19th); Sta. Rosa City, Laguna (21st); Lipa City, Batangas (24th); and Batangas City, Batangas (34th).

The result was presented to the pilot LGUs during the 3rd quarter Calabarzon RCC meeting held last September 16, 2013.

According to the DTI IV-A, some pilot LGUs that were not included in the ranking either submitted incomplete information or did not submit any data at all. The top municipalities and cities in Calabarzon will be recognized during the RDC Full Council Meeting to be held December 19, 2013.



Calabarzon RDC elects Private Sector Representatives



Oath-taking of the newly-elected PSRs. (From L-R) Bacoor City Mayor Strike Revilla, Sta. Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arcillas, Laguna Governor George 'E.R.' Ejercito Estregan, NEDA Director Agnes M. Espinas, Ms. Teresita M. Leabres, Ms. Josephine C. Parilla, Ms. Aileen Constantino-Peñas, Mr. Emerson B. Atanacio, Ms. Jocelyn Rosemarie Cris C. Garcia, Mr. Joselito B. Rodriguez, Jr., Mr. Rodrigo M. Camia, Mr. Eduardo R. Nicolas III, Ms. Gillian Joyce G. Virata, Ms. Victoria V. Wieneke, Dr. Felino SM. Angeles, Jr., Mr. Victor S. Marasigan, Ms. Remedios Baclea-An, Engr. Ladislao L. Andal.

Adherence to Executive Order No. 325 which is the Reorganization of the Regional Development Council (RDC) and with the guidelines approved and prescribed by the NEDA Board, the RDC Secretariat conducted the election of the Private Sector Representatives (PSRs) to the Council. The EO provides that twenty five percent (25%) of the fully constituted RDC shall be composed of PSRs. For Calabarzon RDC, a total of twenty one (21) PSRs is required to represent the social, economic, development administration, and infrastructure sectors (15), geographic/provincial (5), and labor sector (1).

The election for the sectoral representatives was held last September 19, 2013 at TESDA Women's Center, Taguig City. The PSRs who participated in the election were nominated by their respective Private Sector Organizations (PSOs) that qualified based on the legal personality,

socio economic activities, regional operation, and is registered as a Filipino organization.

The election for provincial/geographic representatives is underway in coordination with the respective Provincial Development Councils (PDCs) of the Calabarzon provinces. The PSRs whose PSOs are duly accredited by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and are members of the PDC are qualified to vie for geographic representation. The election shall be held in the respective provinces upon the organization of the PDCs. Meanwhile, for the labor sector, the representative shall be endorsed by the Department of Labor and Employment subject to the compliance of requirements prescribed in the selection guidelines. The provincial and labor sector representatives shall also be confirmed by the RDC.

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The newly elected PSRs took their oath of office before Dir. Espinas, witnessed by Gov. George "E.R." Ejercito Estregan of Laguna, Mayor Arlene Arcillas of Santa Rosa City, and Mayor Strike Revilla of Bacoor City. The RDC also confirmed its members and selected the nominees for the positions of Chairperson and Co-Chairperson. The names will be submitted to the Office of the President for his official appointment. Also during the meeting, the terms and reference of the RDC was revisited to further strengthen the RDC.

Another matter taken up during the meeting was the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)'s presentation of the

Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards). The project is part of the efforts of the government to prevent and mitigate the effects of natural disasters and risks associated with it. The project NOAH also aims to help people by working with various warning agencies and disseminating disaster-related information as early as possible. It contains the following information: weather outlook (probability of rain in a particular area); flood map (location or areas prone to flood, including flood height); and weather stations (amount of rainfall, temperature, wind speed and direction, air pressure, and humidity in an area). The Project NOAH website can be accessed through www.noah.dost.gov.ph.

Who
are the Private Sector Representatives
to the RDC?

Sectoral Committee on Economic Development

Ms. Jocelyn Rosemarie Cris C. Garcia

Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, Inc.

Ms. Teresita M. Leabres

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)
South Luzon

Ms. Aileen Constantino-Peñas

Atikha Overseas Workers & Communities Initiative, Inc.

Mr. Joselito B. Rodriguez, Jr.

Enrique Zobel Foundation

Ms. Gillian Joyce G. Virata

Information Technology and Business Process
Association of the Philippines

Sectoral Committee on Infrastructure Development

Engr. Ladislao L. Andal

Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers-Batangas Chapter

Mr. Emerson B. Atanacio

Cavite Technical Vocational Educators, Inc.

Mr. Victor S. Marasigan

First Cavite Industrial Estate Association, Inc.

Sectoral Committee on Macroeconomy and Development Administration

Dr. Felino SM. Angeles, Jr.

Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines

Mr. Rodrigo M. Camia

Cavite Metro Credit Cooperative

Mr. Eduardo R. Nicolas III

Employers Confederation of the Philippines
South Luzon

Sectoral Committee on Social Development

Ms. Remedios Baclea-An

Shoreline Kabalik sa Kaunlaran, Inc.

Ms. Hyacinth T. Oblea

Sinag Kalinga Foundation, Inc.

Ms. Josephine C. Parilla

PATAMABA-Workers in the Informal

Sector Enterprise (WISE)

Ms. Victoria V. Wieneke

Kabisig ng Kalahi, Inc.

Calabarzon- RSCC launches Regional Social and Economic Trends

In time for the celebration of the 24th National Statistics Month, the Regional Development Council (RDC), through the Regional Statistical Coordination Committee (RSCC), launched the Regional Social and Economic Trends (RSET) for 2007 to 2013. It was held last October 29, 2013 at the TESDA Women's Center, Taguig City. Other selected statistical products from various other agencies were also launched at the event.

RSET is a publication of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) containing data from various sectors with annual series that captures the social and economic climate of the region. In her message, RSCC Chairperson and NEDA Director Agnes M. Espinas said, "Our decision and our planning should be evidence-based, and what best evidence do we have but the data itself, the statistics that cover all sectors."

She added, "we wish that through the RSET, we would effectively achieve the development goals of the Calabarzon Region by providing vital statistics as we march towards the attainment of inclusive growth".

Looking back, the latest publication of the RSET was in 2007, thus, Director Candido J. Astrologo, Jr. of the NSCB mentioned that the revival of the RSET 2007-2013 is special since it is an initiative of the RSCC.

Driven by the call for evidence-based decision-making, the RSCC Technical Working Group composed of NSCB, NEDA, NSO, DENR, BAS, DOT, DOH, DepEd, DSWD, DOTC-LTO, DOE, BLGF, BSP, and PNP, collaborated to provide updated and relevant data for all users. Other data sources are BFP, BIR, CDA, CHED, COMELEC, DAR, DPWH, DTI, NEA, NIA, NTC, and Phil-

Post.

Other presentations during the said event include the following: 2012 Input-Output Survey of Philippine Business and Industry by NSO IV-A Director Rosalinda P. Bautista; the 2012 List of Establishments and Selected Statistics by Ms. Maria Agnes B. Lindo; and the statistics available at the BSP website presented by Ms. Melanie M. Condes of BSP.

Meanwhile, other statistical products were also distributed, including the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction of DSWD, Financial Literacy materials of BSP, Summary of Census of Household Population of NSO and Statistics in Brief of NSCB.

The RSET was made available in CD form and has been distributed to all member agencies.

Those who attended the event were the Regional Line Agencies, Local Government Units, and State Universities and Colleges.



The participants spearheaded by RSCC Chair and NEDA IV-A Director Agnes M. Espinas (seated, 4th from left), and RSCC Co-Chair and NSO Director Rosalinda P. Bautista (in yellow). Inset: NSCB Director Candido J. Astrologo, Jr. presented the contents of the updated RSET.



RDC conducts RDP Consultation

The Regional Development Council (RDC) conducted a Regional Consultation for the Calabarzon Regional Development Plan (RDP) Mid-term Update last October 22, 2013 at the Harana Pavilion, Splash Mountain Resort, Los Baños, Laguna. It was attended by various stakeholders from both the government and private sectors and was aimed at validating and generating inputs

and comments on the draft RDP.

The Plan spells out the goals and strategies to attain the thrusts of President Benigno S. Aquino III's Social Contract with the Filipino People and his agenda to promote good governance. It focuses on three (3) broad strategies, namely: rapid and sustained economic growth; creation of quality employment; and pov-

erty reduction for the remaining plan period.

NEDA IV-A, in collaboration with the regional line agencies and local government units in the region, prepared the Plan. It has undergone a series of Planning Committee Consultations to deliberately translate and integrate the regional framework to specific strategies that the government agencies and the private sector can work on together towards its realization.

NEDA conducts Calabarzon RDIP consultation

The NEDA IV-A held a 2-day consultation on the Calabarzon Regional Development Investment Program (RDIP) 2011-2016 on September 16 and 17, 2013 at the Tagaytay International Convention Center, Tagaytay City, Cavite. The RDIP is the translation

of the Regional Development Plan into programs and projects (P/Ps) to charter the region into an inclusive and livable industrial region.

The consultation aimed to revalidate and consolidate the investments programs of the RLAs/LGUs/SUCs, and at the same time, to harmonize and integrate the strategic P/Ps in the region. Participating entities include DTI, DAR, NIA, DENR, DOT, DOLE, DOST, POPCOM, DepEd, DSWD, DA, DPWH, Trece Martires City, Calamba City and Batan-

gas City CPDOs, Cavite and Batangas PPDOs, CVSU, SLSU, and LSPU.

The consolidated Calabarzon RDIP 2011-2016, which involves 28 RLAs/LGUs/SUCs, amounted to PhP 80.99 billion. The RLAs took the lion's share of 61.05 per cent, followed by the Cities with 27.92, Provinces 9.38 and SUCs with 1.65 percent.

The consolidated RDIP shall be presented to the RDC Full Council on November 2013 for approval.

Cavite: A frontrunner on human development

Cavite, once again, was recognized by the Human Development Network during the 6th Gawad sa Makataong Pag-Unlad for its outstanding rating in the Human Development Indices.



Trophy awarded to Cavite Province during the 6th Gawad sa Makataong Pag-Unlad in recognition for its outstanding rating in the Human Development Indices.

In aggregate, Cavite Province improved its rank from Top 5 in 1997 up to Top 4 in the 2009. Cavite came after Benguet (1), Batanes (2) and Rizal (3).

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a tool that measures the overall achievements of a province in three basic dimensions of human development such as longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.

Longevity is the Life Expectancy Index or the length of years that a resident of a particular province is expected to live. Nationwide, Cavite ranked second in the life expectancy with a score of 75.8 years next to La Union (76.4 years). This results to a Life Expectancy Index of 0.883 which rose from 0.780 in 1997. Cavite is the 6th largest gainer from 1997 to 2009.

In terms of Knowledge or the Education Index, Cavite ranked 4th in terms of mean years of schooling at 9.8 years. In this parameter, Batanes ranked first with 11.5 years. In 2009, the education index of Cavite is 0.901.

The last indicator is the Income Index that measures the standard of living or purchasing power of people. The income index of the province decreased from 0.476 in 1997 down to 0.449 in 2009.

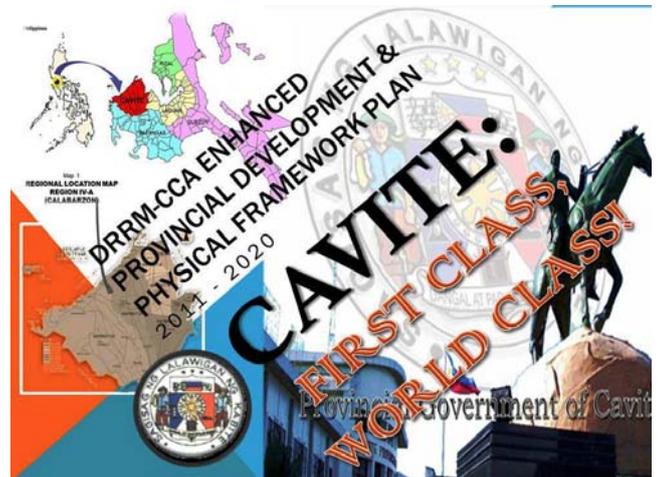
(PPDO Cavite)

Cavite: First to have DRR-CCA-enhanced PDPFP

The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC) IV-A s recognized Cavite as the first province to have a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) – Enhanced Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan (PDPFP) during the 1st Regional Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) for Local Chief Executives held last August 6-7, 2013 at the Heritage Hotel, Pasay City.

Cavite's PDPFP has already been approved by the Regional Land Use Committee and by the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan*. Also, part of the recognition is their provincial government's relentless efforts in providing technical and logistical assistance to its component cities and municipalities for the completion of their respective DRR-CCA-enhanced Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs).

The RDRRMC also acknowledged Cavite's determination to fully implement RA 10121 or the "Philippine DRRM Act of 2010", as manifested by the Provincial DRRM Council chaired by Governor Jonvic Remulla. Cavite was also lauded for the creation of its DRR Division under the Cavite Office of Public Safety (COPS), and for the continuing partnerships with national line



agencies and the private sector organizations in climate proofing its programs and projects.

Similarly, other selected LGUs were recognized during the event for their notable accomplishments in the implementation of their respective DRRM and CCA activities.

Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator Mr. Jesus Barrera and COPS Head Ms. Cecil Miranda were among the representatives of the Provincial Government of Cavite (PGC) present in the said summit. The PGC featured its best DRR-CCA practices through an audio-visual presentation shown during the awarding ceremony and a poster exhibited at the venue.

(Claudette Trixia M. Flores)

ER Mobile Computer School launch in Bay and Majayjay

The Education Revolution (ER) Mobile Computer School of the Provincial Government of Laguna (PGL) was launched last October 20 and 23 in the Municipalities of Bay and Majayjay, respectively

The event was launched the ER Mobile Computer School – a mobile training center offering basic Computer and



Internet Literacy Course (CILC) to out-of-school youth (OSY) and adults. It is Technical Education Skills and Developmental Authority or TESDA - accredited and those who will finish the course offered by

the ER Mobile Computer School will be given a certificate from TESDA. The program is jointly managed by the Office of Provincial Governor (OPG), the Youth Development Affairs Office (YDA), and the Management Information Systems Office (MISO).

On October 20, YDA Head Fatima Villaseñor and Mayor Bruno Ramos, as representatives of the PGL and the Mu-

nicipal Government of Bay, signed a Memorandum of Agreement for the implementation of the program in the municipality.

The team returned to the municipality last October 23 to orient 36 OSY participants who will be the students for 20 days starting November 4. The Management Information Systems Office IT instructors - Rowena Palacol and Henry John Sablan, will facilitate free computer training classes for Bay students.

On that same day, the launching and MOA signing for the ER Mobile Computer School in Majayjay was also held as requested by Dr. Edith Esquinas, Majayjay Agro Industrial Development (MAID AGRO) President.

PGL and MAID AGRO agreed to give free computer lectures and hands-on training also to 36 beneficiaries for 20 days. Starting November 4, Mr. Eugene Delos Santos and Mr. Ralph Ramille Halili will be handling the training of the students.

Governor George "E.R." Ejercito Estregan, with the help of YDA and MISO, aims to increase the computer literacy rate of Laguneños.

(Mark Joseph A. Porca/Edward C. Aquino)

Laguna to host the Palarong Pambansa 2014

The Provincial Government of Laguna won the bidding to host the 2014 Palarong Pambansa. This was announced by DepEd Secretary Armin Luistro and Assistant Secretary Tonisito Umalion last October 24 at the Department of Education (DepEd) Central Office in Pasig City.

The Palarong Pambansa is the biggest annual sports competitions in the country where athletes from all 17 regions compete in various events. It is facilitated by DepEd with its partner agency, the Philippine Sports Commission.

For 2014, a total of 21 sporting events will take place in the Palaro, namely: archery, arnis, athletics, badminton, baseball, basketball, billiards, boxing, chess, football, futsal, gymnastics, sepak takraw, softball, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, volleyball, wrestling, and wushu.

Another bidder for the said sports event is the City of Marikina represented by City Mayor Del de Guzman. Against Marikina, Laguna had a total of 14 out of 21 votes from the National Screening and Accreditation Committee (NSAC) of the Palarong Pambansa.

Together with Governor Ejercito were Provincial Administrator Atty. Leonardo M. Ragaza, Jr.; Provincial Sports and Games



From L-R: Governor Ejercito's Chief-of-Staff Carlos Dolendo; Laguna Tourism, Culture, Arts and Trade Officer-International Relations and Trade Division Chief Gregorio Arcangel; DepEd Secretary Br. Armin Luistro; Governor George 'E.R.' Ejercito Estregan; Mayor Girlie 'Maita' Ejercito; Provincial Administrator Atty. Leonardo M. Ragaza, Jr.; Provincial Architect Mansley Kimhoko.

Development Head Albert Abarquez; and Laguna Tourism, Culture, Arts and Trade Officer Delto Abarquez, Jr.

According to Mr. Delto Abarquez, "That was an overwhelming win because after the presentation, Secretary Luistro addressed Governor Ejercito's presentation as very comprehensive and passionate."

He added that it was the "construction of billeting quarters to accommodate athletes and new modern sports facilities" which won for Laguna the hosting rights.

Governor Ejercito also distributed Tourism Kits of Laguna to show what the delegates can experience if Laguna hosts the event.

(Clarisse Reyes/Edward C. Aquino)

A farmer...a woman?

“I believe farming will remain an asset in this country of ours... The farmers are our food producers.”

Writer’s Note: *This is a story of an emerging farmer who was touched by the unrelenting assistance, technical or otherwise of the Department of Agriculture Region IV-A (DA IV-A) headed by OIC-Regional Executive Director Vilma M. Dimaculangan. To date, many farmers of this region are reaping the benefits that this office is giving them. One way of saying that indeed this office under the untiring efforts of RED Dimaculangan is serious in implementing all Agri-Pinoy Programs with the foremost interest of providing service.*

Farmers are about to be considered ‘endangered species’ as revealed by several studies. Data revealed that the average age of farmers is 55-57 years old. Considering the life span of Filipinos which is 70 years old, they concluded that 15 years from now, farmers may well be gone. The results of which is food insecurity in the real sense of the word.

This scenario can already be observed based from the number of enrollees in colleges and universities. As years pass, there is an obvious decrease of the students in agriculture and its allied fields. In the Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC), four or five years ago, the enrollees for agriculture courses was between 400 to 500 students. But in this last school year, it was only about 300. According to Dr. Eduardo Bagtang, KASC President, the youth today shun farming because of perceived hardships.

Can we still abate this on-going problem?

In an interview with one emerging farmer from Batangas, I was placed in a very different dimension as to who is a real farmer and where is the farmer’s standing in society. This emerging farmer denied the concept of farmers being gone in 15 years.

“I believe farming will remain an asset in this country of ours. If studies were made that our farmers are aging and there is continuous dwindling in the number of enrollees in agriculture courses, I firmly espoused the idea that it will never go out of style. The farmers are our food producers. What are we going to eat, if we have no farmers? For sure, the government will never abandon our farmers, not in the presence of the Department of Agriculture,” she said.

This positive outlook came from someone who is young, educated and a mother of three beautiful children. No words can describe this woman’s passion for agriculture. Young people should follow her footsteps, for her ultimate dream is to see the agriculture sector in a very enviable state. That is Ms. Catherine “Kate” Tee, a woman terribly obsessed to make agriculture everyone’s word of mouth.

At first, I was not sure of all the things she was telling me about agriculture. In fact, I had that inkling that perhaps she was just taking me for a ride for some reason or another. However, after seeing her farm, I said to myself, it must be real. Indeed, her passion is not only to make good on this field but also to assist other people who are planning to make good in farming

“As a Business Administration major in Marketing Management graduate at De la Salle University, Dasmariñas, Cavite, I learned everything about marketing. I am really good at it. Now, I wonder why is it that the farmers who produce the products are poor and yet middle men without shelling out even a penny are the ones raking good money? It is on this note that I began to realize that I need to go on farming and really try this venture. At first, it was just a let me know thing, but soon I realized that I am into it seriously,” Kate said.

According to Kate, it was actually her husband, a Seafarer by profession, who prompted her to get serious in farming and be passionate about it. “I considered him an agri-buff,” she said.



Ms. Tee shows part of her farm.

Moreso, her children are all inclined to food production, like her youngest who would like to go into swine production, the second child wants poultry, while the eldest wants to become a restaurant owner. She was very happy that all members of her family are making farming not only a hobby but a business as well.

“Imagine, my two kids who although at a very young age, are already interested in farming while my eldest is the one who will use their produce in a restaurant business that he would want to establish in the future. With the picture that my small kids are painting right now as well as my husband’s dream to be a successful farmer in the near future, what else can I ask for?,” she said as she smiled.

As we were walking through a portion of their six (6) hectare farm located at Barangay San Isidro, Rosario, Batangas, I saw her grinning upon seeing that the “*sili panigang*” that they planted are showing some fruits. It is indeed a happy sight to see someone see the fruits of her labor. She said that at first she had zero knowledge in farming. However, her being inquisitive and insistent to know the ins and outs of it led her to the research people of the Southern Tagalog Integrated Agriculture Research Center (STIARC) at Lipa City, Batangas.

“When I first started farming last May of this year, I had so many losses and I almost backed out, but I said to myself this is



A portion of 6 hectare land of Ms. Kate Tee. On the left side is her goat house and on the right side is her plantation.

a challenge to me. I simply shrugged it off and said, if before a doctor can't find the cure for tuberculosis and now it is just an ordinary disease, so much so in farming. If before I was not successful, now it is my time to shine," Kate shared with much optimism.

Kate believes that a farmer need not be poor. In fact, according to her, they should be the ones reaping the fruits of their labor. In her continuous search for better and progressive farming she found herself mingling with DA IV-A personnel assigned in the province of Batangas, particularly in the STIARC. Being friends with technical people of DA made things easy for Ms. Kate to hone her skills in farming.

"Farmers should not be hesitant to look for avenues to better their craft. God gave us mouth to talk and feet to walk. In my experience, I never stopped searching for the right people to teach me the right way to plant and all the intricacies surrounding the same. I do read and research for valuable information. Never did I stop learning and educating myself," she said.

"Farmers need not be poor because crops, livestock and fisheries are products that are profitable in reality. Without us, food will not be available. Hence, as a farmer, let us give muscles to our profession for we are feeding the people. In doing so, let us use all the available opportunities afforded to us by the govern-

ment," she further said empathically.

This young farmer, only in her mid 30's, at first wanted to be a lawyer, but opted to become a farmer instead but not just a farmer but a "farmer with entrepreneurial skills".

I asked her what she thinks is the reason why the younger generation are not into farming. She said, there is a need for a complete make-over of what a farmer should be. In the first place, farmers should be knowledgeable in all its facets of farming.

"The youth today have a wrong notion as what farming is all about. However, the farmers themselves are to be blamed for this wrong impression about farming. They would always say – *mahirap ang magsasaka, mag-aral kang doctor o abogasya anak*. In so doing, young people's mindset is leaning towards white collar jobs," she explained.

"The best tool for me as farmer is planning. From day one up to the last stage of the cropping season, I usually see to it that everything should be within the calendared activities that I planned. *Hindi basta tanim ng tanim, dapat isaalang-alang ang klima, akma ba ang pananim ko sa pagtatamnan kong lupa at saan ang merkado nito,*" Kate added.

She also clarified that market is really a key factor to consider. "I heard so many disgruntled farmers because of the lack of market to bring their produce. Hence, at the end of the day, they incurred losses beyond their imagination. Likewise, farmers should know some technologies about value adding. Thus, in the event there will be surplus in their production, they can easily make it into another product," Kate added.

There you have it, a woman, an emerging farmer whose vision is to turn farming into a more reliable and dependable sector of the society. I believe, there are other farmers of Kate's calibre, let your breed continue to multiply for the world needs you now and tomorrow. We salute you!

(Ms. Pat T. Bulanhagui, RAFID DA IV-A)



Ms. Tee personally inspects her Sili Plants.

Geotagging as transparency tool for successful PRDP implementation

The Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP) served as a model in the implementation of agricultural infrastructure projects and the precursor of the Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP).

PRDP is the nationwide replication of the MRDP, with improvements focusing on the value chain, enterprise/cluster development, and vertical integration from production to processing and marketing. It is a six-year program (2013-2018) which will showcase a strong link between the national strategic objectives of the Agriculture and Fishery Modernization Plan (AFMP) with the regional plan, as well as the local stakeholders' interest. It aims to contribute to the National Development Goals of poverty reduction, inclusive growth, and job creation.

PRDP will initially cover six regions, namely: Calabarzon (Region 4A); MIMAROPA (Region 4B); Bicol (Region 5); Western Visayas (Region 6); Central Visayas (Region 7); and Eastern Visayas (Region 8). To make infrastructure projects more transparent and cost-efficient, the Department of Agriculture (DA), through its experience in the success of MRDP, has tapped the use of the geotagging technology. According to DA Secretary Proceso Alcala, "Geotagging would be a big help in project implementation which the WB suggests to be done in other projects, too."

Geotagging is a basic digital Global Positioning System (GPS) technology used as a tool to promote accountability and trans-

parency on all PRDP subprojects and transactions. It is also called Geolocation, where digital resources are associated with physical locations through photos with corresponding coordinates. It is now used for subproject identification and validation, progress monitoring, and supervision in PRDP projects, even without actual site visit. The technology provides location information in terms of latitude and longitude with a high degree of precision and can pinpoint any place in the planet.

Aside from promoting transparency and accountability, applied geotagging technology is also a tool for subproject management and planning. The province can also benefit much with the technology since it can be used even outside PRDP. Other uses of Geotagging include measuring distances, reading elevations, organizing and preserving photo documents, and mapping out barangay profiles. Products of geotagging can also be used in the marketing and site development of eco-tourism areas and the establishment of geo-hazard maps, among others.

The DA has chosen Batangas as the pilot province for the implementation of PRDP in the Calabarzon region. And to familiarize the Technical Staff of Provincial Program Management Implementing Unit (PPMIU) of Batangas, a four-day training on Applied Geo-Tagging Technology was conducted at Venezia Hotel in Subic, Zambales last October 22-25, 2013.

Two personnel from the province, one representing I-PLAN and one representing I-BUILD, attended the said training.

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Aboitiz Cleanergy Science Center and Museum now open

The Aboitiz Cleanergy Science Center and Museum had its formal opening last [date]. It is currently located within the Makban Geothermal Plant in Sto. Tomas, Batangas and Bay, Laguna. Present during the opening ceremonies were Governor Vilma Santos Recto of Batangas, Governor E.R. Ejercito of Laguna, Department of Energy Secretary Carlos Jericho Petilla, members of the Aboitiz family and different government officials and guests.

According to Mr. Warren Maralit, Makban Geothermal Power Manager, the center aims to provide vital information for students about the use of clean, renewable and sustainable energy and how to keep up the balance and the sustainable relationship between the environment and industry.

The Cleanergy Center includes a walk around Museum to showcase the legacy of the Aboitiz Family. This portion highlights Engr. Ernie Aboitiz' efforts in advocating the use of clean energy in our country. It also has a modern amphitheatre "tailor faces it" where presentations on the birth of energy industry in our country will be made. Most of all, the museum boasts of an Interactive Science Center which showcases the process of energy conversion through science models. This is only made possible through the available facilities and resources in the hydroelectric power plant.

Sec. Petilla congratulated the management of Makban Geothermal Power Plant in advocating the renewable energy in the Philippines.



Batangas Governor Vilma Santos-Recto and representatives of the Aboitiz family looks on as the Cleanergy Center is being unveiled.

Renewable energy sources serve as alternative to non-renewable energy sources such as bunker fuel and coal which has proven to have a negative impact in the environment. Sec. Petilla also commended the plant's efforts to use renewable energy to increase capacities in providing energy in the Philippines.

Furthermore, he suggested that a partnership with the Province of Batangas, through the leadership of Gov. Vilma Santos-Recto can lead to progress as Batangas is known to be the most powerful province in terms of Electric Power Generation because of its gigantic power plants in the province.

(Edwin Zabarte Batangas PIO)

Rizal home to more than 17,000 scholars

For school year 2013-2014, the Rizal Provincial Government's Scholarship Office reported that there are 2,706 new scholars. This was an addition to the province's list of 14,593 scholars since 2007. Among the scholars, 1,592 scholars (11%) received full scholarship amounting to Php 10,000.00 per academic period (semester) while the remaining 13,001 (89%)



scholars received student assistance amounting to Php 2,500.00 per academic period.

Since 2007, a total budget of Php 250.686 million has been allotted by the provincial government to

finance the studies of these scholars. The scholarship program, started in 1996 by former Gov. Ito Ynares under the then Rizal College Scholarship Program (RCSP). It has increased dramatically in 2007 and has since expanded to include the Student Assistance Program (SAP) for students who did not reach the cut off score for RCSP in the qualifying examination.

Education is one of the priorities of Gov. Ynares' administration, thus the expanded scholarship program to cater to the needs of economically-challenged students. Other programs were added to the existing RCSP and SAP to include scholarships for teaching and non-teaching personnel who want to pursue post graduate studies, technical-vocational courses, or ecclesiastical courses for those who want to be pastors, priests and nuns. The program also covers those who want to take up medicine and law, working students, differently-abled persons, and students from poorest of the poor families who do informal job to finance their studies. Recently, the scholarship program for Overseas Filipino (OFs) workers was added to the long list of scholarship grants.

At the close of the previous school year, 396 new scholars were included in the RCSP roster while 3,406 were admitted under the SAP. Total budget allocation for the last school year stood at Php 12 million. Due to the expanded scholarship program of the provincial government and the additional 2,706 new scholars for school year 2013-2014, the number of beneficiaries of the "Iskolar ni Gob" program now stood at 17,299 scholars, a record high increase of more than 3,000 percent in six years.

(Rizal Province)

Environment tops Rizal government agenda

Promising to continue the programs, which has earned local and international recognitions for the province, initiated by her son and now Antipolo City Mayor Jun Ynares, Rizal Gov. Rebecca Ynares announced during her inaugural message recently, that at the top of her administration's agenda is environmental management and protection.

Gov. Ynares pointed out that the revived "Ynares Eco System" (YES) will be the anchor of her flagship program which is divided into three components: cleaning, greening and recycling.

She emphasized the need to clean the environment to avert the loss of lives and properties due to flooding. The program highlights de-clogging major and minor tributaries leading to Laguna Lake, which has silted this second largest fresh water basin in Asia and affected the livelihood of people who depend on fishing for their living

First among the projects of the Governor's office, in partnership with other stakeholders, is the tree planting program to avoid erosion of mountain slopes that causes landslides and flooding and to clean the air.

Secondly, the dictum "mayroong pera sa basura" rings



true for Gov. Ynares as she sees recycling as a major component in waste management; thus, she intends to build, in partnership with local governments, more Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to help clean the environment and reduce risks of calamities and disasters as well as ultimately alleviate poverty.

Meanwhile, Gov. Ynares pointed out that other programs and projects on health, education, housing and resettlement, agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, welfare of women and children, and good governance, among others, will also be continued and pursued vigorously to attain the highest standard of public service for the province's constituents.

(Rizal Province)

Quezon holds disaster preparedness capability demonstration

For the first time, Quezon Province engaged in a disaster preparedness capability exercise held at Brgy. Dalahican last September 12, 2013. The exercise was to test their readiness and responsiveness in disaster situations.

According to Regional Dir. Vicente Tomazar of the Office of Civil Defense, IV-A, this capability exercise differs from an ordinary drill as it includes ocean/sea disaster scenarios as well as terrorism and hostage-taking. The combined forces of public and private institutions showcased their specialized procedures to neutralize the simulated situations using air, water, and land assets like a helicopter, rescue boats, bomb dispersal units, hazardous materials and K9 teams, as well as special operation units of AFP, PNP, PCG, BFP, and disaster task groups of LGUs.



Quezon Province's experts on disaster risk reduction and response also displayed their competence in handling mass casualty evacuation using Incident Command System - a systematic tool used for the command, control, and coordination of emergency response. According to Lt.Gen. Caesar

Ronnie Ordoyo, Commanding General of Southern Luzon Command, the capability demonstration provides an accurate estimate of a concerned agency's response time.



Dr. Henry Buzar, Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction (PDRRMC) and Management



Council Action Officer, added that besides being virtually ready 24/7, Quezon's PDRRM Office and rescue team are ready to provide assistance not only to those affected by calamity in the province, but in nearby regions as well. Dr. Buzar also said that they placed a particular focus on catastrophe that could happen in oceans, like the MV Carmela tragedy. He also highlighted the importance of proper coordination between agencies as communication is a key component to save lives and control disaster situations.

(Quezon PIO)

Canadian Government, PCW commend Quezon Province

For its programs and projects promoting the empowerment of women, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development (DFATD), and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) honored the Provincial Government of Quezon through its Gender and Development Office (PGAD) during the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Forum last September 19-20, 2013 held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Mandaluyong City.

Quezon Province received the following recognition from the forum: two plaques - Extra Mile Award, WEE Responsive LGU Partner; and five citations - Outstanding WEE Champion, Outstanding WEE Partnership, WEE Responsive Policy, WEE Responsive Programs and Services, and Functional WEE Structures and Systems. The said forum was held in relation to the recently

concluded Gender-Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project, where the Canadian Government, through DFATD, provided technical funding and support. The GREAT Women Project is a governance and capacity development project that aims to promote and support a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, particularly those in microenterprises.

According to Ofelia Palayan, PGAD Focal Person, the province would not have won its awards and citations without the support of Quezon Governor David C. Suarez, who staunchly believes in providing every Quezonian with equal opportunity.

Quezon received the Extra Mile Award for pushing beyond the GREAT Women Project's target by making the project available to 15 municipalities instead of the required 3. Quezon is also the first province in the country to officially create a Gender and Development Office.

(Quezon PIO)

Batangueño teachers upgrade computer skills through K-ITO

Teacher from the Batangas City District once again had a chance to be students. This is through the Department of Labor and Employment's Kabataan Information Technology Opportunities (K-ITO) Project.

Lyceum of the Philippines (LPU)-Batangas College of Computer Studies headed by Dean Rose Alday and University PESO Manager and Linkages, Alumni and International Affairs Office Executive Director Leon R. Ramos Jr. recognized the need to upgrade the teachers' knowledge and skills on computer use and operation to help them face the challenges of modern technology and become more effective and efficient in the performance of their duties.

The 5-day session included lessons on computer hardware – parts of the computer such as CPU, monitor, keyboard, etc; computer software - word processing applications using MS Word; and Internet use and navigation. Those who served as the teacher's teachers were

Jessa Catilo, Stefanie Jara, Apple Babes Salazar and Marc Christian Dy, all BS Computer Science graduating students from LPU.

“Nagpapasalamat ako sa DOLE at Lyceum dahil makakasama na ako sa training sa Baguio at Cebu dahil computer literate na ako”, said Mrs. Loida Delgado, a Grade 1 teacher and one of the 32 participants for this first batch of training.

They all learned that the knowledge and skills they gained from this training will make their work easier. IT skills would help them in the preparation of their lesson plans and in the computation of grades of their students, among others. Prior to the start of the session, the teachers were given a pre-test to evaluate their level of IT awareness. A Certificate of Completion was given to each participant after they have passed the post test.

The K-ITO is an earning and learning project of DOLE in relation to EO No.

788, “Promoting A Youth National Service”, which aims to improve information technology literacy among out-of-school youths and other disadvantaged sectors. The project gives opportunities for unemployed IT-literate youth to earn an hourly stipend and to receive a Certificate of Recognition by serving as mentors. For its beneficiaries, this will serve as venue to learn skills in ICT necessary to have access to government programs and services, thus bringing the government closer to the people.

(DOLE IV-A)



A teacher is being assisted by BS Computer Science student in her IT training.

Calabarzon Newly-Elected Officials' orientation held

DILG IV-A spearheaded the two-day orientation with the objective of capacitating the 2013 newly-elected City and Municipal Mayors in the CALABARZON Region. It was held at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) in Tagaytay City.



DILG IV-A Personnel and the 2013 Newly-elected (Newly-minted) Mayors of CALABARZON during the 2013 NEO Program held last July 18-19, 2013 at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) in Tagaytay City.

Dubbed as the NEO (Newly-Elected Officials) Program, the activity was attended by 37 Local Chief Executives (LCEs) as well as LCE representatives from the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon. DILG IV-A RD Josefina E. Castilla-Go welcomed the participants by sharing the “essence of public service”.

Through the NEO, LCEs will be capacitated in order for them to translate the national agenda into their own LGU's vision and agenda that can be implemented over the course of their term. As a capacity building program, the NEO focuses on three areas:

1) Improving the knowledge of local officials on the operations and development challenges of their respective local governments;

- 2) Sharpening their management competencies and leadership skills; and
- 3) Enhancing their awareness of the social and political environment, at the same time, enabling them to build alliances with national government agencies and other LGUs to ensure that their development agenda are consistent with the Social Contract of President Aquino and with the priorities at the national, regional, and local levels.

Its ultimate objective is to sharpen the capacities of LGUs to achieve inclusive growth and reduce poverty in the communities.

The following topics were discussed and presented during the NEO: President Aquino's Social Contract on the Ground;

the Common Pitfalls in LGU Management; Knowing my Tasks and Responsibilities; the DILG LG Sector Conceptual Framework and Programs; the Local Governance Performance Management System (LGPMS); the Executive-Legislative Agenda (ELA); Understanding My Environment; and My First 100 Days in Office.

Presenters and discussants who facilitated in the activities as well as the workshop were the DILG IV-A Regional and Field Officers.

Oversight and sectoral agencies were also invited to dialogue with the participants as they presented their PPAs

Next page please

Calabarzon Regional Government Center: Updates

Engr. Isaac S. David, President of MTD Philippines, Inc. and City Engineer Irwin Pacada, representing Calamba City Mayor Justin Marc SB Chipeco, said, as of last August 30, 2013, that they have already “topped off” the roof deck of the 5th floor of Building 1 of the Calabarzon Regional Government Center (CRGC) located at Brgy. Mapagong, Calamba City, Laguna.

This is in line with the expected inauguration of the country’s first every-one-stop-shop RGC for Calabarzon on January 2014, one year after the Joint Venture Agreement was signed between Calamba City and MTD Philippines, Inc., David added.

Last January 23, 2013, the public-private partnership through a Joint Venture Agreement between Calamba City and MTD Philippines, Inc was witnessed by the Board of Directors of the Alloy Mtd Group from Malaysia, the Calamba City Council and Calabarzon officials and by Director General Lilia de Lima of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Engr. David, said that construction is

in full swing and even ahead of schedule. Phase 1, which includes the site development, Building 1, and the Podium of the Calabarzon RGC is scheduled to be finished by December 2013 and shall be ready for occupancy by January 2014.

Three other buildings will soon rise within the next 18 months, hopefully to be finished by June 2015. By then, it can accommodate at least 5,000 government employees from 50 different agencies which will be within the Equus Hub—a 25-ha commercial facility envisioned to be a “complete city” to be simultaneously developed.

Mayor Timmy Chipeco said that the DOTC Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) had already issued the go signal through its provisional notice to proceed with the construction of an access road from the CRGC to SLEX, as approved by the TRB Board. According to former Calamba City Mayor and current Cong. Joaquin Chipeco of the 2nd District of Laguna, this world-class government facility will benefit millions of Filipinos by making government services more convenient and accessible to the public.

"By way of policy, the government should make a shift in three years and should not be renting office spaces anymore", according to Senator Chiz Escudero, Chairman of the Finance Committee in the



Building Construction as of October 2013



Senate. The senator said renting spaces at a cost is like throwing money down the drain. "Yes, we need spaces and buildings to operate and function properly. But renting is a short term solution with no long term gains in terms of helping us to efficiently allocate scarce resources." (Source: Manila Bulletin, Aug.9, 2013).

(Alloy MTD)

Geotagging ... from page 8

The training focused on teaching the participants on how to do to offline and online geotagging using different applied geotagging tools like Google Earth, Picasa, PicasaWeb and MyTracks, and their salient features. Engr. Arnel V. de Mesa, Deputy Program Director of PRDP, emphasized that subprojects that are not properly geotagged will not be approved to show that the Department of Agriculture is serious in eliminating ghost projects and making program implementation a success.

(Batangas PPDO)

Orientation ... from previous page

(Programs, Projects, and Activities).

The agencies which presented were the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF), the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Commission on Audit (COA), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Police Regional Office (PRO4A), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Health – Center for Health Development (DOH – CHD), and the Philippine Army’s (PA) 202nd Infantry Division (IB).

(DILG IV-A)

**Honesty
is the Best Policy;
It Begins with me**

-Sabtang, Batanes

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