

# PRESS RELEASE

## Department of Foreign Affairs

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### PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL, SAN FRANCISCO CONDUCTS SUCCESSFUL CONSULAR OUTREACH SERVICES IN OREGON, WASHINGTON STATES



Vice Consul Anthony Mandap administers the oath to 29 of the 68 successful dual citizenship applicants in Seattle on June 16, 2006. A total of 124 former Filipinos took their oath under R.A. 9225 during the five-day consular outreach activity in Portland, Seattle, and Wapato in the Yakima Valley, Washington State

30 June 2006 — Consul General Maria Rowena Mendoza Sanchez of the Philippine Consulate General in San Francisco reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that the Consulate conducted consular outreach services on 14 – 18 June 2006 in the cities of Portland, Oregon (14 & 15 June) and in Seattle and Wapato in Washington State (16 – 18 June) in coordination with various Filipino-American organizations in these areas.

Consul General Sanchez said that the bulk of consular services consisted of applications for dual

citizenship. "Demand for these services increased dramatically since November last year, when the requirements for application were relaxed to allow the submission of substitute documents in lieu of the birth certificate authenticated by the National Statistics Office," the Consul General stated.

The Consulate approved 68 applications in Seattle, 53 in Portland, and three in Wapato, in the Yakima Valley, Washington, for a total of 124 "new" Filipinos

Aside from dual citizenship services, the four-man consular team led by Vice Consul Anthony Mandap received a total of 101 applications for passport renewal/issuance (Portland 31, Seattle 64, Wapato 6); 52 applications for legal/notarial and civil registry services (Portland 9, Seattle 50, Wapato 2).

Other members of the team included Department of Tourism Director Rene de los Santos, Graciano Fernandez, Vilma Ancheta, and Luis Mendez.

Consul General Sanchez added that, for the first time, 79 qualified Filipinos residing in the areas visited were also able to register as overseas absentee voters for Philippine elections, with Portland signing up 38, Seattle 32, and Wapato, nine.

Filipino American community leaders in the three cities expressed their appreciation, and conveyed a request for more frequent visits by Consulate representatives.

For her part, Consul General Sanchez said visiting these areas gives the Filipino-American communities assurance that the Philippine government is present, concerned and working hard to attend to their needs. “We are looking to send at least one delegation to these cities every year in order to provide the much-needed consular services, “ she said.

The consular team noted that demand for consular services is becoming more pronounced as more expatriate Filipinos express a desire to apply for dual citizenship and avail themselves of its benefits.

“With the rise in dual citizenship applications, other services, such as passport, legal services and even overseas absentee voting, are bound to increase as a residual effect of having more Filipino citizens to serve,” Vice Consul Mandap said.

The team was likewise invited to the Independence Day Grand Banquet on Saturday, 17 June, organized by the Council of Filipino American Organizations (COFAO) of Seattle and its vicinity. Tourism Director de los Santos as guest speaker at the event spoke on tourism programs of the Philippine government. Some 300 Filipino American community leaders and members attended the event.

On Sunday, 18 June, the group traveled to Wapato, in the Yakima Valley, an Indian (Native American) reservation located more than 100 miles east of Seattle and home to over a thousand Filipinos who are mostly descendants or relatives of Ilocano farm workers who have migrated to the area since the 1920s.

Consular services in the city were held at the 50-year-old Filipino Community Center. In the afternoon, a program was held where Vice Consul Mandap and Tourism Director de los Santos spoke on trade and tourism opportunities in the Philippines, among other things.

The event, organized by Filipino Community of the Yakima Valley President Rey Pascua, was attended by Wapato Mayor Jesse Farias, County Commissioner Jesse Palacios, and Mr. Oscar Cerda of the Office of Gov. Christine Gregoire of Washington.

The Valley is best known as the source of the world-renowned Washington apples, which Filipino migrant farmhands have helped produce over the decades. END