

Hispanic Heritage Month kicks off with voting theme

by **Claudia Koerner** - Sept. 19, 2008 09:44 AM
The Arizona Republic

Estrella Mountain Community College President Ernie Lara encouraged people to register to vote at Tuesday's opening ceremonies marking Hispanic Heritage Month.

About 50 students, staff and community members gathered to kick off the month with Mexican food, mariachi music and an art walk featuring Chicano artists.

"There's a lot more collaboration with the community and student organizations," Christina Izaguirre said of this year's festivities.

Izaguirre is a program specialist in the Student Life and Leadership Office and worked with Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan, a student organization known as MEChA, to plan the opening ceremony.

She said the event reflected the diversity of the college and community. MEChA members are not just Hispanic students, Izaguirre said, and clubs like the Black Student Union also lent a hand.

"It's driven by their desire to learn about

each other and support each other." she said.

This year's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month at the Avondale campus is themed "Usando Nuestra Voz," or "Using Our Voice." The theme is especially relevant in light of the Nov. 4 election, said Justine Garcia, co-chair of MEChA.

"Voting is using your voice," the journalism sophomore said.

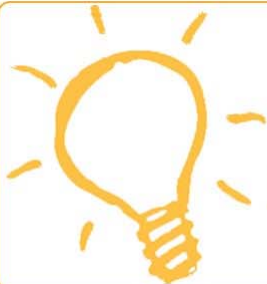
During the ceremony, Lara said the college will host speakers to talk about political situations in various Latin American countries throughout September to show the international meaning of Hispanic heritage.

He introduced Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, who highlighted the achievements of Hispanics in the U.S. as professionals, entrepreneurs and artists.

Hispanic Heritage Month also is a way to raise awareness about the different cultures within a community, said MEChA co-chair Jose Rios, a third-year communications student.

"We're not just promoting Hispanic Heritage," he said. "We're promoting diversity."

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™