

NEWS AND PROFILES CONNECTING THE LATINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

March 2020 Issue 391
**Latino
American
Today**
www.latinoamericantoday.com



EL CENSO 2020

*Todos debemos
ser contados*



CENSUS 2020: We Need to Be Counted

Usted puede responder al Censo del 2020 en español.



Todos los hogares tendrán la opción de responder en **español por internet o por teléfono**. A partir de mediados de marzo, los hogares recibirán una invitación para participar en el censo. La invitación incluirá instrucciones en español sobre cómo responder en español por internet o por teléfono usando una línea directa gratuita en español.

A mediados de abril, todos los hogares que todavía no hayan respondido recibirán un cuestionario impreso. (Algunos hogares recibirán un cuestionario impreso junto con la primera invitación en marzo). Los hogares en áreas selectas que necesiten asistencia en español recibirán un **cuestionario bilingüe en inglés/español**.

A partir de mediados de mayo, los censistas visitarán todos los hogares que no hayan respondido. Estamos contratando miembros de la comunidad para garantizar que los censistas disponibles hablen los idiomas que se hablan en la comunidad. Si el censista que visita el hogar no habla español, se puede solicitar una nueva visita de un **censista que hable español**.

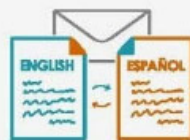
Nuestra promoción está en español.

- Nuestra campaña de comunicaciones incluye anuncios y materiales totalmente en español.
- Tenemos **personal bilingüe** que colabora con organizaciones de la comunidad para explicar qué tan fácil, seguro e importante es responder al censo.
- El **sitio web del Censo del 2020** está disponible por internet en español en <2020census.gov/es>.

¹ El número y el porcentaje se aplican a los hogares en el área del tipo de enumeración de autorrespuesta, es decir, hogares que recibirán su invitación del censo por correo.

² Según la Encuesta sobre la Comunidad Estadounidense (ACS) de 2013-2017, estimaciones de 5 años.

2020CENSUS.GOV



Invitaciones Bilingües

Aproximadamente **13 millones de hogares en toda la nación** (más o menos el **9 por ciento**) recibirán invitaciones bilingües en inglés/español.¹

Enviaremos invitaciones bilingües a todos los hogares en "sectores censales" (áreas con aproximadamente 4,000 hogares) en los que el **20 por ciento o más** de los hogares necesite asistencia en español. En estos hogares hay, al menos, una persona de 15 años o más que **habla español y no habla inglés "muy bien"**.²

Todos los hogares— independientemente de que estén en áreas que reciben invitaciones bilingües en inglés/español para responder— **recibirán información sobre cómo responder en español por internet o por teléfono**.

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**United States*
Census
2020**

NEWS AND PROFILES CONNECTING THE LATINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA



EL CENSO 2020

Todos debemos ser contados



CENSUS 2020: We Need to Be Counted

On The Cover

Census 2020: We Need to Be Counted
Todos debemos ser contados en el Censo 2020

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¿Cómo ser una buena persona?



Por Saúl Carranza

Es difícil responder a esa pregunta porque los valores y virtudes que identifican la bondad son diferentes para cada cultura y generación. La descripción de una buena persona que se usaba en los 80s o 90s por ejemplo, ha cambiado mucho en nuestros días. La cultura de fines del siglo XX se guiaba por el modernismo y la actual responde a otra forma de pensamiento llamado la posmodernidad.

Sin embargo, en cada persona siempre debe haber ese deseo de superación y conocimiento propio que nos inspire a ser mejores para nosotros mismos, para la familia y para con todos. Lo difícil de iniciar un proyecto de remodelación de nuestra persona es que debemos saber qué debemos cambiar. El filósofo Heráclito decía “conócete a ti mismo”. El problema es que siempre estamos dispuestos a reconocer lo mejor de nosotros, pero nos cuesta aceptar lo que no nos gusta o sabemos que no es bueno.

Necesitamos entonces una guía que en si misma sea autoridad, que se haya probado por el paso del tiempo y que no se parcialice. Una guía que pueda mostrarnos la bondad en su más pura expresión. Para mí, la Biblia cumple esos requisitos y nos da algunos consejos sanos que pueden ayudarnos a cumplir con nuestro objetivo, Ser mejores personas,

Aunque las áreas a trabajar son muchas y diferentes en cada persona quiero mencionar cinco que la Biblia anota para todos. 1 Dejar a un lado el Egoísmo: “Hebreos 13:16 Nunca se olviden de hacer lo bueno, ni de compartir lo que tienen con los que no tienen nada. Esos son los sacrificios que agradan a Dios.”

2 El respeto a las leyes y autoridades: Tito 3:1 ... recuérdales que deben obedecer a los gobernantes y a las autoridades del país. Recuérdales también que deben ser obedientes en todo y estar siempre dispuestos a hacer el bien.” 3 Aprender a amar: “1 Corintios 13:4y5 El que ama tiene paciencia en todo, y siempre es amable. El que ama no es envidioso, ni se cree más que nadie. No es orgulloso. No es grosero ni egoísta. No se enoja por cualquier cosa. No se pasa la vida recordando lo malo que otros le han hecho.” 4 Saber perdonar: “Mat 6:12 y perdona nuestras deudas, como también nosotros perdonamos a nuestros deudores;” 5 Ser agradecidos: “1 Tes. 5:18 Dad gracias en todo, porque esta es la voluntad de Dios para con vosotros en Cristo Jesús.

Creo que hacer esto intencionalmente es un buen comienzo en nuestro esfuerzo para ser mejores personas. Por supuesto hay muchas cosas más. Y a veces las demás personas no cooperan con nosotros para alcanzar la meta. Sin embargo, tenemos toda la vida para practicar y obtener el fruto de nuestro esfuerzo. La Biblia es como una lámpara que ilumina nuestra vida y nos muestra lo bueno y lo malo que hacemos. También que en aquello que nosotros solos no podemos cambiar, Dios está a nuestro lado para ayudarnos, Por eso nos dice: Gál 6:9 “Así que no nos cansemos de hacer el bien porque, si seguimos haciéndolo, Dios nos premiará a su debido tiempo”.

Dios te bendiga y ayude a ser hoy mejor que ayer y mañana mejor que hoy. Jesús puede ayudarte a lograrlo, búscalo.

El Rev. Saúl Carranza es el Pastor de la Iglesia Cristo Para Todas las Naciones en Crystal MN. Por favor contáctelo por email a pastorcarranza@gmail.com o llámelo al 763-245-2378.

How to Be a Good Person?

By Saúl Carranza

It is difficult to answer that question because the values and virtues that identify goodness are different for each culture and generation. The description of a good person that was used in the 80s or 90s for example, has changed a lot in our days. The culture of the late twentieth century was guided by modernism and the current responds to another form of thinking called postmodernity.

However, in each person there must always be that desire for self-improvement and self-knowledge that inspires us to be better for ourselves, for the family and for everyone. The difficult thing to start a remodeling project of our person is that we must know what we should change. The philosopher Heraclitus said “know yourself”. The problem is that we are always willing to recognize the best of ourselves, but it is hard for us to accept what we do not like or we know that it is not good.

We need then a guide that in itself is authority, that has been proven by the passage of time and that is not biased. A guide that can show us kindness in its purest expression. For me, the Bible meets these requirements and gives us some healthy advice that can help us meet our goal, Be better people,

Although the areas to work are many and different in each person I want to mention five that the Bible writes for everyone. 1 Put aside Egoism: “Hebrews 13:16 Never forget to do good, or to share what you have with those who have nothing. These are the sacrifices that please God.” 2 Respect

for the laws and authorities: Titus 3:1 ... remind them that they must obey the rulers and the authorities of the country. Remind them also that they must be obedient in everything and always be willing to do good.” 3 Learning to love:” 1 Corinthians 13: 4y5 He who loves has patience in everything, and is always kind. The one who loves is not envious, nor believes more than anyone. He is not proud. It is not rude or selfish. Do not be angry about anything. He does not spend his life remembering how bad others have done him.” 4 Knowing how to forgive:” Mat 6:12 and forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors;” 5 Be grateful:” 1 Tes. 5:18 Give thanks in all things, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

I think doing this intentionally is a good start in our effort to be better people. Of course there are many more things. And sometimes other people do not cooperate with us to reach the goal. However, we have all our lives to practice and obtain the fruit of our effort. The Bible is like a lamp that illuminates our life and shows us the good and the bad that we do. Also that in what we cannot change alone, God is at our side to help us, that's why he says: Gal 6: 9 “So let's not get tired of doing good because, if we keep doing it, God will reward us in his due weather”.

God bless you and help you to be better today than yesterday and tomorrow better than today. Jesus can help you achieve it, look for him.

Rev. Saúl Carranza is the Pastor of the Church “Cristo Para Todas las Naciones” in Crystal MN. Please contact him by email at pastorcarranza@gmail.com or call him at 763-245-2378.

Leadership and Generosity



Marci Malzahn

By Marci Malzahn

Most successful and influential leaders that I know of across generations, across industries, and regardless of backgrounds, have one thing in common: They practice generosity. But many of them are not wealthy as one would imagine when we talk about generosity.

You see, generosity is not about money. Dictionary.com defines generosity as “readiness or liberality in giving, freedom from meanness or smallness of mind or character; largeness or fullness; amplitude.”

There are four main avenues of generosity you can choose to experience:

- 1) Time
- 2) Talent
- 3) Touch
- 4) Treasure

Let’s explore each one:

Time: From all the resources we have, time is the most valuable because once it’s gone, you can never take it back. You can be generous with your time in various ways:

- Mentor a youth outside of work or a younger worker without expecting anything in return.
- Spend quality time with your loved ones: your children, parents and grandparents (if you still have them), your spouse or significant other (if you have one).
- Nurture your friendships and spend time listening. Some times all your friend needs is a listening ear.
- Volunteer your time to help others in need.

Question: How are you investing your time?

Talent: We all have been given many talents—the natural ability to do certain things well. But guess what? These talents are not for your own consumption. They are meant to help others who don’t possess the talents you have. You can share your talents in various ways:

- Use your talents to entertain others. Singing, playing an instrument, dancing, acting, writing, etc. are examples of those talents.
- Use your talents to educate and inspire others (writing, speaking, teaching, etc.) This is what I’m doing as I write this article for you.
- Volunteer in the community to use talents you don’t get to use in your job.
- Help a coworker on a project or in a area that comes easy for you but your coworker is not very talented in that area.

Question: Who are you helping with your talents?

Touch: If you are in the marketplace, you most likely have a network of people that includes coworkers, other business professionals, vendors, customers, and industry contacts.

You can be generous with your connections by:

- Introducing a colleague to a manager who is looking to hire a person with your friend’s skills.
- Sponsoring a younger worker and recommend him/her for a specific job. Sponsoring is beyond an introduction. It’s putting your

own reputation on the line for this person.

- Connecting two people you think may benefit from knowing each other either at the personal level or potentially doing business together, or even referring business to each other.
- Referring business to your friends without expecting reciprocity (no quid pro quo).
- Connecting nonprofit organizations with similar causes so they can maximize resources and help more people.

Question: How are you using your connections?

Treasure: Notice I put treasure last because it is not the most important way that you can be generous. Even when money has the capacity or potential to change nations and feed the poor, being with the people—person to person, human helping human—is what changes lives.

Poor people want to and need to be treated with dignity. If given a choice, they would rather be taught the skill and given the opportunity to learn and work, than receive everything for free (a hand up versus a hand out). There is an excellent book on this concept called “Toxic Charity” by Robert D. Lipton.

Nevertheless, the world operates with money and if you have been blessed with it, there are many ways you can be generous with your money:

- Give to nonprofits whose mission aligns with your core values and desire to help others. There are thousands of nonprofits so there will most likely be one you can choose to support.
- Give money to a family member or friend in need without expecting anything in return. And yes, some people are ungrateful and you may not even get a “thank you.” That’s okay. You did the right thing.
- Give to the homeless, maybe not every homeless person you encounter, but as you feel led.
- If you have been blessed with incredible amounts of wealth, then you have the opportunity (and choice) to make a difference in the world in a massive scale. Be wise, do your research, and ask God for guidance.
- Donate an organ. I put this type of generosity under the “treasure” category because our organs are a treasure! When you donate an organ to someone, you are saving that person’s life—and that is priceless.

Question: How are you being generous with your money?

So you see, there are many ways you can be a generous person, which in turn can make you a more successful and influential leader. I will leave you with one final question: How are you practicing generosity in your life?

Marci Malzahn is president and founder of Malzahn Strategic a community financial institution consultancy focused on strategic planning, enterprise risk management, treasury management, and talent management. Marci is also a professional speaker and published author of four books.

You can contact Marci for speaking engagements through her website at <https://marciamalzahn.com> or email her at marcia@marciamalzahn.com. You can purchase Marci’s books at Malzahn Publishing (<https://malzahnpublishing.com>) or Amazon.

United States of America, Mrs. Minnesota 2020!



The Latino Community in Minnesota was excited to support our United States of America's Mrs. Minnesota 2020, Maricella Herrera. She is the first Mexican American selected to represent the state of Minnesota in this competition.

Maricella competed in the National Pageant in Las Vegas, NV February 14-16. Although Maricella did not win the competition, she represented Minnesota with class, professionalism and pride.

Her Community Outreach Platform was Diversity & Inclusion of Women Empowerment and we can't wait to see what adventures her upcoming year of service will bring! Congratulations again to Maricella Herrera! Well done!

Maricella Herrera, 2020 Mrs. Minnesota, the first Mexican American representing the state of Minnesota.

Direct from Broadway

The Color Purple is the 2016 Tony Award winner for Best Musical Revival! Hailed as "a direct hit to the heart" (*The Hollywood Reporter*), this joyous American classic has conquered Broadway in an all-new "ravishingly reconceived production that is a glory to behold," (*The New York Times*).

With a soul-raising, Grammy-winning score of jazz, gospel, ragtime and blues, *The Color Purple* gives an exhilarating new spirit to this Pulitzer Prize-winning story.

Don't miss this stunning re-imagining of an epic story about a young woman's journey to love and triumph in the American South. Experience the exhilarating power of this Tony-winning triumph that *New York Magazine* calls "one of the greatest revivals ever."

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The morality play, performed in English, is written in sharp contemporary language but nevertheless explores the eternal questions posed by Calderón: What are humans—angels or animals? What is honor? What is freedom? If life is a dream, who is dreaming us?

Tickets to *Sueño* are \$18 in advance and \$22 at the door. Discounts are available for students and seniors. Tickets can be purchased online at The Lab Theater Box Office: www.thelabtheater.org or by phone at 612-333-7977.



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CARMEN ROBLES and ASSOCIATES

Present

The 101 of Opioids

Inspiring conversations with the community and leaders about opioid, SUD (Substance Use Disorder) and other health issues affecting the Latino/LatinX community and the community at large

Esperanza para nuestra comunidad 2.0 Simposio
Hope for our community 2.0 Symposium

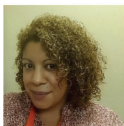
In preparation for the May 5th follow-up symposium with ORN-TA Assistant, Dr. Hector Colon-Rivera MD, CMRO, Carmen Robles will be conducting a series of one-on-one conversational video interviews that will be held at:

SPNN (St. Paul Neighborhood Network) Pubic TV
550 Vandalia Street, Suite 170
St. Paul 55114

Interview schedule Tuesday, March 24th, 2020 6:00pm-8:00pm
Guest Panel



Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher – *A Matter of the Heart*



Elizabeth Burgos, MSW, LICSW



MN Teen Challenge – *Know The Truth Prevention Program*



Neri R. Diaz, MSW, LICSW

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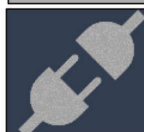


!Reciba ayuda con sus cuentas de calefacción y energía!

Ninguna familia debería pasar el invierno sin calefacción. Community Action Partnership de Hennepin County (CAP-HC) puede ayudarle. El Programa de Asistencia de Energía (EAP por sus siglas en ingles) de CAP-HC le brinda asistencia financiera a los residentes del Condado de Hennepin, incluyendo a la ciudad de Minneapolis, para ayudarles con el costo de energía en su hogar.

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Las oficinas para la ayuda de la Asistencia de Energía están abiertas en St. Louis Park, Minnesota Council of Churches, Sabathani Community Center, LSS y Minneapolis Urban League.



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Cómo encontrar información médica correcta en línea

¿Alguna vez una amistad o un familiar le ha dado un consejo médico y ha querido comprobarlo en Internet? ¿Alguna vez ha tenido dudas sobre vacunas y ha buscado información en Internet? Si bien hay mucha información disponible en línea, algunos datos pueden ser incorrectos y crear confusión. ¿Cómo se puede saber qué sitios informativos son adecuados y qué sitios deberían evitarse? Estos son algunos consejos para ayudarle a buscar en Internet.



Para obtener información correcta y de confianza sobre vacunas, hable con su proveedor de atención médica. También encontrará información fiable en nuestra web: www.health.state.mn.us/immunize.



1. Acuda a los expertos. De la misma manera que usted no contrataría a un mecánico de automóviles para arreglar un problema eléctrico en el hogar, necesitamos que encuentre los expertos médicos adecuados para obtener información médica fiable. Observe quién patrocina el sitio web. Esto podría darle una pista acerca del objetivo de la misma. Las páginas web de hospitales y clínicas, agencias gubernamentales y sistemas educativos son un buen punto de partida. Busque direcciones web que acaben en .edu o .gov.

2. Preste atención si hay signos que indican que la información no es fiable. Si el sitio web le intenta vender algo, tenga cuidado. Es posible que la información esté escrita para que compre el producto. Si el consejo es algo que contradice lo que había escuchado hasta ahora, la información podría hacerle creer algo que no es cierto. Si el sitio web no incluye pruebas de lo que se afirma, busque otras fuentes adecuadas de información.

3. Tenga en cuenta que una historia personal puede ser emotiva y hacernos creer lo que se dice en la misma. Sin embargo, es posible que la información no tenga una base científica. Hay muchas historias en YouTube y otras redes sociales, pero estos no son siempre los lugares adecuados para encontrar información objetiva. Ya que desconocemos el historial médico de la persona

que cuenta su historia, únicamente estamos escuchando una pequeña parte de una situación mucho más amplia. Se necesita una persona experta para presentar los datos en conjunto y establecer una conclusión correcta.

Entonces, ¿dónde puede comenzar cuando desea obtener información fiable y de confianza sobre vacunas u otros asuntos médicos? Puede preguntarle a su proveedor de atención médica en todo momento. Su proveedor tiene las respuestas y puede orientarle para obtener información adicional en la que puede confiar. La biblioteca es otro lugar que puede ayudarle a encontrar información correcta. Pida ayuda al personal bibliotecario para acceder a sitios web fiables. Minnesota Department of Health tiene a su disposición un listado de fuentes de confianza con información sobre vacunas. Puede acceder a este listado a través de www.health.state.mn.us/immunize y buscar “información fiable”.

How to Find Accurate Health Information Online

Have you ever gotten health advice from a friend or relative and wanted to check it out on the internet? Have you ever had questions about vaccines and searched for information on the internet? There is plenty of health information online, but some of the information is not accurate or can be confusing. How can you tell what information sites are good and what sites you should avoid? Here are a few tips to guide your internet searches.

1. Go to the experts. Just as you would not have a car mechanic fix an electrical problem in your house, we need to find the right health experts for reliable health information. Look at who is sponsoring the website. It might give you a clue about their goal. Hospitals and clinics, government agencies, and education systems are a good place to start. Look for web addresses that end in .edu or .gov.

2. Watch for signs that the information cannot be trusted. If the website is trying to sell you something, be careful. The information may be written to get you to buy their product. If the advice is something that goes against what you have heard before, the information may lead you to something that is not true. If the website does not provide proof of what they say, look for some other good sources of information.

3. Be aware that a person's story can be emotional and persuade us to believe what they say, but their information may not be based on science. YouTube and social media sites have many stories but it is not always the place to find factual information. Because we do not know the medical background of the person telling the story, we are only hearing a small part of a larger situation. It takes an expert to put the facts together and come to an accurate conclusion.

So where can you start when you want trustworthy and reliable information about vaccines or another health topic? You can always ask your health care provider. They may have the answers and can direct you to additional information you can trust. The library is another place that can help you find accurate information. Ask the librarian to assist you to get to reliable websites. The Minnesota Department of Health has a list of trusted sources of immunization information. You can find that list at www.health.state.mn.us/immunize – search for “reliable information.”

Archery in Minnesota

By Claud Santiago

Timothy Lopez of St. Paul was recently presented with his Archery Instructor Certificate at a recent archery tournament that was held at Johnson High School in St. Paul. His student group has a 75% multicultural membership. Lopez was also a winner of the Minnesota State Archery Association State Indoor Championship Flight Award 1st Place in 2019. Congratulations to Mr. Lopez!



Timothy Lopez receiving his Archery Instructor Certificate



The archery tournament held at Johnson High School in St. Paul



1st Place: State Indoor Championship Flight Award

How Latino Owned Businesses Can Use A CRM To Revolutionize Their Business

By Creed Hostetter



*Louis Garcia
CEO of Media Garcia*

According to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), it is predicted that in 2020 there will be more than 4-million Latino owned businesses bringing in more than \$700 billion dollars to the US economy. Shedding light on the importance of Latino owned businesses, not just to their local communities but their increasing necessity to economies around the world. As the number of Latino owned businesses grow every year it has become increasingly important that they look for new ways to run more efficiently and effectively. One of the tools that small Latino owned businesses can use is a CRM.

A customer relationship management system, or more commonly called a CRM, is an online-based centralized system for businesses to use to manage all types of business information. But that definition only scratches the surface when speaking about a CRM. Among the plethora of reasons for having a CRM in place, is its ability to empower business owners to understand their customers, by the collection of data. This supports businesses in reaching a broader array of potential customers and creates a central hub for all their business information and customer data. Latino owned businesses that are looking to grow easier can use a CRM to accelerate their progress towards their growth goals. A CRM provides tools to reach specific customers with targeted campaigns, whether it's for ads targeted for expecting moms in Puerto Rico or ads targeted for college students in New York, through the

CRM, businesses are given the tools to better gather the necessary customer information to help market and advertise their businesses across all segments in a more effective manner.

Another major benefit for a business to have a CRM system in place is the ability to automate several business processes that have previously required significant time and resources to complete when no CRM was in place. A CRM cuts costs by automating several business processes. These processes include gathering customer and business data, email marketing, and recording customer contacts and interactions. A CRM tracks, logs, and manages new leads within their growing customer base. Automation provides businesses the ability to stay lean while also being able to see real-time customer feedback on ad campaigns or even the open rate on promotional emails. Information from a CRM can give business owners the much-needed edge over competitors. **Louis Garcia, CEO of Media Garcia**, a Saint Paul, Minnesota based Growth Agency adds that, **"Media Garcia works with small businesses who aren't using a CRM or aren't happy with the one they are on. We are a HubSpot Solution Partner and use HubSpot as our CRM of choice for small businesses that need to start tracking their relationships. A CRM is one of the most popular sales tools."**

The USHCC reported the number of Latino owned businesses increased by over 30 percent over the past 5 years, and with predictions pointing at the same growth rate moving forward, it has become ever more important for Latino business owners to implement a CRM system to help automate their business processes. With a growing diverse customer base, the benefits of a CRM to Latino owned businesses are almost immeasurable, luckily that's precisely the reason for having a CRM in place. With more and more users choosing to browse, shop, price compare, and more, from all types of devices from all parts of the world, having a CRM system in place to gather customer data and assist in the creation of a formulated plan to reach these different customers, is a necessity.

BLACK IN SPACE: BREAKING THE COLOR BARRIER



COMCAST, SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL AND BELL MUSEUM HOST PREMIERE SCREENING OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL



WHO: Panelists:
Laurens Grant, Director and Producer, *Black in Space: Breaking the Color Barrier*

Moderator:
Reg Chapman, Reporter, WCCO-TV

Premiere screening of **BLACK IN SPACE: BREAKING THE COLOR BARRIER**

Reg Chapman and Laurens Grant on the panel



Kids from the Westside Boys & Girls Club with Reg Chapman and Allyson Hartle



Charles Poe, Allyson Hartle, and Rick Aguilar at the premiere

Comcast, Smithsonian Channel and the Bell Museum presented a private screening of *BLACK IN SPACE: BREAKING THE COLOR BARRIER*. The race to get to space is long over, but buried in time is the revelatory story of the world's first black astronauts. For many Americans, the 20th-century Space Race was a Cold War competition over rocketry and technological feats, but the world's two superpowers were also engaged in another high-stakes race – one whose impact is still being felt today.

Cleansed by Fire: State Park and Trail Prescribed Burn Season Starts in March

By Deborah Locke, DNR Information Officer
Photos by DNR staff photo



Lake Bedmidji Park prescribed fire

Fire, a destructive force, or a rejuvenating tool?

In the hands of trained parks and trails professionals, fire is a restoration tool that leads to new plant growth, open views, increased sunlight, and the containment and even elimination of invasive species.

Prescribed fires occur on a rotating basis each spring and fall at Minnesota state parks, said Shawn Fritcher, a nearly 30-year veteran of prescriptive burning. He's been with the Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails division for about 20 years, and has a "Burn Boss" designation which means he can oversee prescribed burns.

It takes time and repeated burns to see results, but a 450-acre burn at Great River Bluffs State Park one year succeeded in decreasing large swaths of invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle, leading Fritcher to conclude that a lot of good occurred in a single day of work.

"If we had done that by hand, it would have taken weeks," he said.

Planning for a burn starts months in advance, and can vary from a few acres to hundreds of acres, said Ed Quinn, the Parks and Trails natural resource program supervisor. Each year Parks and Trails staff burn about 3,900 acres of prairie land, and 2,500 acres of forest. The work starts in March and most of it is completed in April. Prescribed fires destroy brush but trees and plant roots survive.

Fire prediction software helps calculate when the burn takes place. Considerations include temperature, humidity and wind speed. Location, the makeup of adjacent land, and other factors determine the burn's parameters, the equipment needed including water tanks, the number of staff need (usually at least six), a burn permit, and notification of local fire departments.

Burn areas are mapped out and include the location of burn breaks that act like a barrier against the fire leaping into a non-designated burn area, the locations of "igniters" who actually light the fire in several places. The maps also delineate the location of equipment and fire fighters. After the fire stops burning, fire fighters remain at the site, sometimes throughout the night, to ensure that the flames do not flare up.

Shawn Fritcher said the burn work is hard, uncomfortable and intense, requiring constant running up and down bluffs. Stress also plays a role. Safety is imperative.

"It can be a physical and mental drain, but it's worth it in the end when you see the impact," he said. The wait may take 10 to 15 years of burning before invasive species are reduced. Following a burn, the prairie responds immediately with lush growth, Fritcher said.



Afton State Park prescribed fire

Ed Quinn agreed, describing the way the bison herd at Minneopa State Park reacts to the new green plant growth following a prairie fire. After a winter of sparse prairie foraging, the spring offers lush greens, a welcomed diet change.

Prescribed fires are not new to Minnesota: For hundreds and even thousands of years, American Indians used prescribed fire to improve the habitat for a game species or to improve their ability to travel and see long distances.

Today burn experts use fire to restore fire-dependent forests, woodlands, and prairies, and to stimulate prairie seed production. Following a burn, the prairie produces massive amounts of seed that are collected in the fall and re-planted.

The 2020 state parks and trails fire crew is deep in the planning stage for prescribed burns as of the end of February. It won't be long before one of the crew members, like Shawn Fritcher, examines a blackened post-burn site to see the results.

More sunlight. Less buckthorn. The promise of new growth.

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