

# US government officials to celebrate Philippine Independence Day in Las Vegas

by DYMPHNA CALICA-LA PUTT  
AJPress

LAS VEGAS—Prominent officials from the federal and local governments are expected to take part in the first-ever celebration of Philippine independence in this city on Saturday, June 6.

The event, called the Fiesta Filipino Community of One, will be hosted by the National Federation of Filipino American Associations in Nevada (NaFFAA NV).

"Some of the (US) government officials we are expecting are from the offices of Sen. Harry Reid and Sen. John Ensign," NaFFAA NV state chair Jing Espiritu told *Asian Journal*.

Espiritu added that Congresswomen Dina Titus and Shelly Berkley, NV Gov. Jim Gibbons and Las Vegas City mayor Oscar Goodman were among the other officials that were also invited to the event.

Other guests that are expected to attend are officials from the US Census Bureau, the Department of Homeland Security, the Clark County Manager and the special agents in charge of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The 2009 Fiesta Filipino festivity in Las Vegas will be the biggest celebration in this city to commemorate the 111th Independence Day of the Philippines. The Philippines marks its Independence Day on June 12th. NaFFAA NV aims to

hold the Las Vegas event annually every month of June.

"The goal of the event is to create strong and long standing relationships between (Filipino) business establishments and organizations to impact many lives in our community," NaFFAA NV said in a statement.

But another aim of the event is to make the Filipino community and its culture more visible in the city of Las Vegas.

In an earlier NaFFAA forum, Espiritu told the audience, "(Filipino-American groups) need to coalesce together with Asians, and with other mainstream groups in the American community."

NaFFAA is a non-partisan, non-profit national

affiliation of more than five hundred Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations. Its core mission is to empower Filipinos in the United States.

It has been one of its aims to unify the various Filipino groups in each city in the United States and help integrate it with American society.

Last May 16, NaFFAA NV spearheaded nine Filipino organizations that participated in the decades-old Las Vegas tradition Helldorado Days Parade.

The group comprised the biggest delegation of Filipinos to participate in this city's local festival, which celebrated its 75th year this month.

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