

MEDIA RELEASE

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UMOS HOSTS ANNUAL FARMWORKER APPRECIATION DAY, PUBLIC HEARING

The Annual UMOs Farmworker Appreciation Day Picnic took place on Sunday, August 6 at the UMOs Aurora Housing Center in Berlin, from 12:00 -5:00 p.m.

Corn on the cobb, hot dogs, rice and beans with beef, informational exhibits, music, and children's games, were provided free of charge. Between 350-400 were in attendance.

Every year 3,000 to 4,000 individuals and families migrate to Wisconsin, mainly from Texas and Florida, to supplement the agricultural workforce, food processing, meat packing, tobacco, lawn care, and other industries, including dairy. "Agricultural workers are vital to Wisconsin's workforce and the state's economy," says Lupe Martinez, President and CEO, UMOs, and interim chairman of the Governor's Council on Migrant Labor. "The picnic is just one small way we show appreciation to those that help put food on our tables."

Also, on that day, the Governor's Council on Migrant Labor, a legislative statutory council, held its annual public hearing from 11:00 a.m. to noon.

The Council is comprised of both republican and democratic legislators, The Department of Workforce Development, Job Service and other state government agencies, migrant farmworker advocacy organizations, agricultural employers and private citizens.

The purpose of the public hearing is to take testimony from the migrant farmworkers that travel from other states to work in Wisconsin, as well as from agricultural industry employers, advocacy agencies, the general public, health organizations, and others with an interest in the state's agricultural workforce.

Issues discussed included the need for additional safe, affordable, seasonal housing, the need for additional migrant child care funding, unemployment insurance, as well as immigration and its impact on the workforce.

After the public hearing, tours were provided of the UMOS Aurora Housing Center and the UMOS Migrant Head Star and Migrant Day Care facility.

Crops harvested by migrant farmworkers include apples, cabbage, carrots, cherries, corn, cucumbers, onions, peppers, and potatoes, to name a few.

UMOS operates 40 plus programs divided into 3 major divisions: Workforce Development, Child Development and Social Services. UMOS is headquartered in Milwaukee, with operations in Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, and Texas, as well as throughout the state of Wisconsin.

UMOS is a non-profit, advocacy organization that provides programs and services which improves the employment, educational, health, and housing opportunities for under-served populations.