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US Census says data is 'safe and secure'

by DYMPHNA CALICA-LA PUTT
AJPress

THE US Census Bureau wants to convince individuals that filling out census forms is safe and that data will be confidential.

In fact, it will be partnering with the Filipino-American community, among others, to attest to how safe and secure the census process will be.

"What we are looking to do is form relationships with organizations that are viewed as trusted voices in the local community," US Census Deputy Director Thomas Mesenbourg said.

"Some examples are leaders in the Filipino community or church groups," he told Asian Journal in an interview in Las Vegas last week.

The deputy director was in the city last week to meet with various community groups to send the "key message" that data gathered during the census process will be kept confidential and safe.

"One of the challenges with the census process is the growing distrust in government of some segments of the population," he said.

He cited immigration issues that make most individuals hesitant to give information or answer basic census questions.

"We want to convince people that all data is confidential. It will not be shared with other agencies like immigration, DHS (Department of Homeland Security), or

IRS (Internal Revenue Service)," he said.

"The 2010 census report form does not ask any question on citizenship," Mesenbourg said.

In addition, employees of the US Census bureau are committed to protect any data that is gathered since they take an oath of non-disclosure upon joining the bureau. Census employees who do not live up to this standard will face imprisonment or hefty fines.

But the US Census bureau wants to emphasize this message even more through its partnership with local community groups.

"We recognize that if we say it's safe, that may not carry the same weight as someone in the local community," he said during the interview.

As such, its 3,000 partnership specialists will start going to local communities nationwide to forge partnerships with "trusted voices" in these areas.

"We are also in the process of establishing 494 local census offices scattered in the US," he added.

Meanwhile, Mesenbourg said the 2010 census will be different because questions have been considerably reduced in number. "It is a ten-question form that is one of the easiest to fill out," he said.

The US Census Bureau is mandated to undertake a survey every ten years to determine the popu-



US Census Deputy Director Thomas Mesenbourg
AJPress photo by Robert Macabagdal

lation of the country. Results are used to allocate Congressional seats, electoral votes and government funding.

"It is the cornerstone of our democracy to get this count. If people don't get counted, they're costing their community both political representation and their fair share of funding," Mesenbourg said.

The bureau will be mailing out 2010 census questionnaire in March. Recipients need to fill out the ten-question form and mail it back to the US Census Bureau.

CamSur Gov. LRay...

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of the World, Tourism Entrepreneur of the Philippines, Parangal ng Bayan, and Ten Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines for Entrepreneurship.

Villar said, "Having Gov. LRay and the people of CamSur as formidable partners in our pursuit to improve the lives of our citizens empower our efforts and delivery of results needed by the nation. I am deeply grateful for your overwhelming support."

The governor further stressed, "The Nacionalista Party is the strongest and most organized in the province, fielding candidates from the provincial down to the precinct level in the forthcoming elections."

League of Municipalities president Nabua Mayor Ferdinand Simbulan, Vice-Mayors League president Nathaniel Capucan, and Councilors League president Antonio Olaño were among those who took oath. Also pres-

ent were delegations from Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Masbate, and Camarines Norte.

NP stalwarts Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano and Albay Rep. Al Francis Bichara (2nd district), spokesmen former Reps. Gilbert Remulla, Juan Pablo "Rimpy" Bondoc, and Atty. Adel Tamano, and Col. Ariel Querubin's stepson and spokesman Jose Martin Loon attended the oath-taking rites.

Villafuerte is credited for making Camarines Sur as the undisputed most favored tourist destination in the country today, with tourist arrivals reaching 902,202 in the first six months of the year, according to the Department of Tourism report.

Camarines Sur, the largest province in the Bicol region, has a voting population of over one million. It is Bicol's no. 1 and 10th placer in terms of net income as certified by the Commission on Audit 2008 report for the fiscal year 2007 as submitted by 80 provinces.

Estrada stars...

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"I swear to run in the coming elections so I can again be of service to the masses as president of the Philippines," Estrada said in Filipino. His audience broke into wild applause.

"Babalik si Erap (Erap will return)!" former Ambassador Ernesto Maceda, the candidate's campaign manager and senior political adviser, announced, sending the crowd into wilder chants of "Erap! Erap! Erap!"

Estrada's formal declaration makes him the third would-be candidate for president. The others who have formally declared their plans are Sen. Benigno "Noy" Aquino III of the Liberal Party and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro of the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

Reach out a helping hand...

for the immediate relief efforts in the wake of Typhoon Ondoy that hit the Philippines recently.

Please donate generously. Your donations will help purchase relief supplies and ration packs for distribution to heavily damaged areas with the help of local officials and volunteers.

Guidelines:

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- Mail checks payable to:
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150 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
- Pledges and inquiries can be made through the toll free number
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- Oct. 18 - Oakland CA**
Oakland Raiders Mabuhay Fiesta
- Benefit for Sagip Kapamilya
- Oct. 18 - Seattle WA**
Fund raising at the Filipino Community in Seattle
featuring Massive Monkees and Blue Scholars
- Oct. 18 - Vallejo, CA**
Brunch Fundraiser
at the Filipino Community Center
- Oct. 24 - Redwood City, CA**
"TINIG NG PINOY: Mas Malakas kay Ondoy"
- Fundraiser by ABS-CBN International employees
- Oct. 30 - Berkley CA**
Filipina Women's Network
100 Most Influential Filipinas Gala
- Nov. 13-15 - Las Vegas, NV**
Martin Nievera "For Always" Benefit Concert



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SAGIP KAPAMILYA

The ABS CBN Foundation is a registered 501 (c)(3) organization in the United States. All donations for Sagip Kapamilya (Saving Family Members) will be used for immediate relief and rescue operations. Photo courtesy of the Associated Press