



AMBISYON **NATIN** 2040

# RDC-1 CHRONICLE

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## UNITED TOWARDS



## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# RDC-NEDA Region 1

AMBISYON  
NATIN 2040

Regional Development Plan 2017-2022

Ilocos Norte

Ilocos Sur

La Union

Pangasinan

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## The Chronicle

The RDC-1 Chronicle is published on a quarterly basis by RDC-1. It highlights the region's economic performance, status of project proposals and project implementation as well as news and feature stories from the RDC members, particularly the local government units, line agencies and private sector.

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# REGION 1 POVERTY SITUATION IMPROVES IN 2018

Poverty situation in Region 1 improved as poverty incidence among families and population declined to 6.9 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively, based on the 2018 Official Poverty Statistics released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The good news was officially conveyed by no less than the National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the PSA, Undersecretary Dennis Claire S. Mapa during the dissemination forum held on January 24, 2020 at Marand Resort, Bauang, La Union.

Asst. Regional Director Donald James D. Gawe of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Regional Office 1 affirmed that the region already surpassed its 8.0 percent poverty incidence among families end of plan target in the Regional Development Plan 2017-2022. In the statement delivered by Dir. Gawe during the 2019 Poverty Statistics Data Dissemination Fo-

rum of PSA Region 1 on January 24, 2020 at Marand Resort, Bauang, La Union, he said that despite of the upsurge prices of commodities in 2018, particularly on food items, the food subsistence incidence among families and among population in the region decreased to 1.0 and 1.8 percent, respectively. This could be attributed to higher net take home pay of minimum wage earners due to their tax exemption under the TRAIN Law and increase in minimum wage rate in the region.

Dir. Gawe also stated that the improved economic condition of Region 1 in 2018 helped improved the poverty status of the people through provision of employment opportunities particularly in the construction and tourism industries. Similarly, Dir. Gawe said that among the major sources of income of households in the region were the receipts from family members abroad.

The sound policies and enabling mechanism for the welfare of the people, such as the expansion of coverage of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Pro-

gram, Regular Conditional Cash Transfer, Modified Conditional Cash Transfer, and social pension for senior citizens were also identified by Dir. Gawe as among the contributory factors in providing means for the people to sustain their basic needs.

Likewise, all the provinces in the region recorded decreased poverty incidence among population and among families in 2018. Ilocos Norte posted a 3.2 poverty incidence among families, 5.4 percent for Ilocos Sur, while 2.9 percent in La Union and 9.2 percent in Pangasinan.

“Let us continue to work together in attaining our targets laid in our Regional Development Plan 2017-2022 to alleviate poverty and realize our shared vision to provide a *matatag, maginhawa at panatag na buhay para sa lahat*,” Dir. Gawe ended.

/NEDA RO 1/  
Zenaida L. Garcillan



(L-R) Asst. National Statistician Wilma S. Guillen (PSA), National Statistician Claire Dennis Mapa (PSA), Asst. Regional Director Donald James D. Gawe (NEDA) serve as resource speakers during the 2018 Poverty Statistics Data Dissemination Forum.

## RDC-1 CAPACITATES PSRs AND COMMITTEE SECRETARIATS

The Regional Development Council 1 (RDC-1) conducted Training and Team Building for Private Sector Representatives (PSRs) and Committee Secretariats on January 30-31, 2020 at OveMar Resort, Sta. Catalina, Ilocos Sur.

Dir. Nestor G. Rillon, RDC-1 Vice-Chairperson and NEDA Regional Director, welcomed the participants during the first day. He encouraged them to take the opportunity to learn new things and bond with other secretariats and PSRs of RDC-1.

Around 40 secretariats from RDC-1 sectoral committees, sub-

committees, and support committees were capacitated on secretariat services on January 30, 2020. The participants were oriented on the RDC-1 structure, functions, ground rules, and manual of styles, concept of Completed Staff Work (CSW) and on the institutionalization of the procedures to monitor the implementation and review of RDC-1 resolutions. Asst. Regional Director Donald James D. Gawe, RDC-1 Secretary, also provided an overview of the Foundation Values of the Workshop.

During the same day, the PSRs had a train-

ing on basic policy process. ARD Gawe provided an overview of policy analysis and basic policy process which are essential in the function of PSRs as policy makers. The training was attended by Mr. Vincent Adorna (Economic Sector), Ms. Divina Quemi (Economic Sector), Engr. Larry Cabatic (Governance Sector), Engr. Leonora Quarte (Labor Sector), Mr. Expedito Pilar (Basic Sector) and Ms. Vini Nola Ortega (La Union).

On January 31, 2020, a team-building was conducted for the participants which aimed to enhance organizational relationship and encour-

age team work among committee secretariats and PSRs. The team-building was facilitated by the Human Resource Development Division (HRDD) of the Department of Education (DepEd) Region 1.

Communication, collaboration, coordination, strategic planning and leadership were among the lessons learned during the team-building. The activity ended with a commitment setting, where the participants wrote their expressions of commitment which include dedication to deliver quality secretariat services to RDC and support to RDC activities for the region's development.

*/NEDA RO 1/ Zenaida L. Garcillan*



Regional Development Council 1 (RDC-1) Private Sector Representatives (PSRs) and committee secretariats participate in the RDC-1 training and team building on January 30-31, 2020 at OveMar Resort in Sta. Catalina, Ilocos Sur.



## NEDA RO1 HURDLES THE ISO 9001:2015 2ND SURVEILLANCE AUDIT

Upholding its commitment to continuous improvement for excellence, the National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office 1 (NEDA RO1) underwent the conduct of its ISO 9001:2015 Second Surveillance Audit on January 27, 2020. Mr. Kim Winston Pajares, the Lead Auditor, and Dr. Ryan Liba of SOCOTEC Certification UK (Formerly AJA Registrars) conducted the one-day onsite audit. The auditors recommended, on-the-spot, for certification maintenance of NEDA RO1's Quality Management System (QMS) under the ISO 9001:2015

standard subject to satisfactory closure of corrective actions.

The purpose of the surveillance audit is to check whether the organization is still adhering to the standard requirements of the ISO certification. In order to validate this, the SOCOTEC ensured that the audit scope will include the three Core Processes namely: Development Planning; Investment Programming and Budgeting; and Project Monitoring as well as the Support Processes for Human Resource, Procurement, Supply, Financial Resource Management and Docu-

ment Control. Likewise, the Internal Quality Audit and the Management Review, both of which the Leadership & Performance Evaluation and Support Resources are categorized were also subjected to the audit.

During the Audit Debriefing, Mr. Pajares presented commendable findings which include in-place system of monitoring the functional objectives, proper handling of documented information as well as recognizing the key role of NEDA RO1 in regional development. There was no major non-conformity

raised and because of this, the office received the much-awaited recommendation for certification maintenance. In his closing message, the Regional Director of the NEDA RO1, Nestor G. Rillon expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the NEDA RO1 staff for persevering to sustain the organization's adherence to the standard. He assured that Top Management will remain steadfast in providing the needed support and commitment to enhance the NEDA RO1's services to its stakeholders while fostering a culture of excellence in the workplace.

*/NEDA RO 1/ Aubrey Quezada-Abuan*



*Mr. Kim Winston Pajares of SOCOTEC audits the Top Management represented by RD Nestor G. Rillon and ARD Donald James D. Gawe.*

## MASTER PLAN FOR VIGAN CITY PLANNING TEAM CONDUCTS LEARNING VISIT IN SOUTH KOREA

The Planning Team for the Formulation of Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Development Master Plan for Vigan City embarked on a visit to historically and developmentally significant places in South Korea from December 14-18, 2019 to further validate the recommendations of the consultants. The trip was also an initial effort to forge partnership between Vigan City and the City of Gyeongju which is a founding member of the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC). It is likewise part of the capacity-building activities to equip implementers of the Master Plan on culture and heritage planning, and sustainable infrastructure design and implementation.

The highlights of the learning visit include guided tours around the Cities of Gyeongju and Seoul and surrounding localities, project site visits and meeting with some local officials and personalities.

The visit to Gyeongju City was the primary focus of study tour because like Vigan City, it is also inscribed in the World Heritage List, hence, an ideal locality to learn about the best practices on culture and heritage preservation. Gyeongju City is also one of the seven regional secretariats of the OWHC.

**Turning back the time in Gyeongju.** The team visited several preserved and conserved archaeological sites and cultural properties as they provide a window to Korea Peninsula's rich cultural history. These include ancient imperial tombs, temples, rock carvings, religious artifacts, and imperial treasures and properties, housed in restored and developed sites. The team also visited a village where traditional houses called "hanok" still stand. Some of the houses were put

into other uses (adaptive reuse) but their traditional design were preserved. These sites have been drawing both local and foreign tourists making the city one of the fast rising tourist destinations worldwide. Consequently, tourism is becoming one of the fast growing and important components of the city's economy.

Moreover, areas of cooperation in the field of culture and heritage were discussed during the courtesy visit to the Gyeongju City officials. This enabled laying the groundwork for sisterhood between Gyeongju and Vigan City. The Deputy Mayor of Gyeongju welcomed and expressed excitement over the prospects of establishing sisterhood between the two cities. NEDA RO1 ARD Donald Gawie, on the other hand, said he looks forward to the conduct of the 2020 Convention of World Heritage Cities in the Asia and Pacific in Vigan City of where Gyeongju will participate. He expressed hope that the two cities will be able to formally forge their sisterhood city agreements when the Gyeongju City delegates visit Vigan City for the Convention in 2020. The OWHC – Asia and the Pacific (AP) discussed the massive interventions of the Korean government to promote culture and heritage preservation and development including the issues and challenges they face in undertaking the related activities during a visit to their office located in Gyeongju. OWHC-AP and

the Planning Team expressed hopes for more cooperative efforts to promote culture and heritage over the coming years.

**A peek into the future.** With the assistance of Mr. Sehun Park, one of the Directors of the Kyong-Ho Engineering Architects Co. Ltd, the Team visited the following sites/projects related to sustainable infrastructure: the Waste Water Treatment and Embankment and Flood Control in Guri, Gyeonggi-do and the Hydro-power Plant in Gangcheon. The team also paid a visit to the Department of Land and Housing Promotion Center in Dongtan City where the Dongtan New Town Development 1 &2 Master Plan and scale model were showcased.

The visit to the said projects provided the learning team a glimpse on how South Korea balances urbanization, economic development and environmental preservation in terms of urban planning, land use and transport management.

Furthermore, the visit provided an appreciation on the importance of pursuing socioeconomic development while preserving culture and heritage, and promoting environmental protection. This development paradigm could serve well the City of Vigan in its quest to become a world class heritage city.

Participants of the learning visit included NEDA Regional Office 1 and NEDA – Infrastructure Staff; PRIMEX and the Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur and the Vigan City.

*/NEDA RO1/Rey B. Ferreria*



**Gyeongju City meets Vigan City.** Representatives of the Gyeongju City Government headed by the Deputy Mayor Young Lee (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) received and exchanged pleasantries with the Planning Team for Vigan Master Plan headed by NRO1 ARD Donald James D. Gawie during the latter's courtesy visit at the City Hall of Gyeongju, South Korea. Also in the photo are (L-R) Ms. Angie Kim (OWHC), Mr. Lee, Gyeongju Heritage Department Staff, Ms. Racquel Atawe (NRO1), Ms. Mariz Dafnae Mendoza (NRO1), Mr. Bernie Magtala (NCO-IS), Mr. Edgar Basilio (NCO-IS), Arch. Oscar Molina (PRIMEX), ARD Gawie, LGU-Vigan and PG-Ilocos Sur Staff (partly hidden).

## NLPSC CHARTS ITS NEW MEDIUM-TERM DIRECTION

Dr. Elizabeth M. Gacusana, President of the Northern Luzon Philippines State College (NLPSC), together with some Board of Trustees, RD Nestor G. Rillon of NEDA, RD Armando Ganal of DOST, OIC RD Rogelio Galera Jr of CHED, together with other state college officials led the conduct of the Strategic Planning Workshop for the school on January 17-19, 2020 at the Ban-aw Resort in Candon, Ilocos Sur.

The Strategic Planning Workshop was conducted in response to the need of the institution to formulate a successor plan for NLPSC's current strategic plan 2016-2020, and to ensure responsiveness of the institution to national and local priorities and cope with the socio-economic, demographic, technological, and political changes. Dr. Gacusana, the first President of NLPSC, and who was recently reappointed to the same post, expressed her optimism that NEDA would be of great help in

crafting the institution's Strat Plan.

The output of the workshop includes the assessment of the implementation of NLPSC's Strategic Plan 2016-2020, draft NLPSC's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and its Results Matrices and the draft Investment Program 2021-2025.

Guests from the Department of Labor & Employment (DOLE), Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur (PGIS), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Department of Science & Technology (DOST) graced the first day of the activity to apprise the participants of some of their agency's updates. Ms. Rosemarie M. Sebastian of DOLE presented the Jobsfit 2022, which provided information on the latest labor market study. The PPDO of PGIS, Ms. Aida Tolio, also presented the Provincial Thrusts and Priorities. OIC-RD Galera of CHED discussed the Development Updates in Higher

Education, which the attendees believed were valuable inputs to the accomplishment of their tasks. On the other hand, Dir. Ganal of DOST presented the Harmonized Regional Research & Development Agenda (HRRDA) 2017-2022 where the participants expressed their interest in conducting research which can be sponsored by research funding institutions.

The lead trainer, ARD Gawe, and personnel from NEDA RO 1 facilitated the conduct of the workshop. The workshop focused on the following: (a) Assessing NLPSC's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT); (b) Gender Responsive Planning; (c) Revisiting the Vision, Mission, Goals/Thrusts & Core Values; (d) Developing the Results Chain/Matrix; (e) Investment Program Process & Matrix; (f) Preparing Sample Project Profiles/Logframes; (g) Preparing the Monitoring & Evalua-

tion Plan; (h) Report Templates & Communication Plan; (i) Preparing the Land Use and Campus Masterplans; and (j) Assessing the GAD-responsiveness of the Draft Strategic Plan and Investment Program.

Participants included the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Administration & Finance, Deans and Directors, and representatives from the faculty, non-teaching personnel, students and community.

Following the timeline presented by RD Rillon, NLPSC's management is expected to submit their consolidated output to NEDA facilitators for them to provide their initial comments. The facilitators will continue to provide technical assistance to the institution until they will be able to finalize their Strategic Plan for 2021-2025. The final draft of the Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees by 1<sup>st</sup> week of March 2020.

**/NEDA RO1/ Yehlen I. Yangat**



*Participants brainstorm with the assistance of NEDA-I personnel. They were grouped according to the functions of NLPSC – Instruction, Research, Extension and Production.*



## CHED RO1 CONDUCTS THE 2019 REGIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The fourth industrial revolution is the current and developing environment in which disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) are changing the way we live and work. Fast changes in innovation and technologies in the way we work, learn, and live, is a crucial force for economic competitiveness and social development. Higher education research in the fourth industrial age must put innovation high on its agenda.

In line with the Commission's mandate to promote, direct and support higher education institutions (HEIs) in performing their research and instruction functions, with the objective of enabling our colleges and universities to produce research innovations that will advance learning and accelerate

regional and national development, CHED Regional Office I conducted the **2019 Regional Research Conference** with the Theme: *"Research Innovation in Higher Education in the Milieu of 4th Industrial Revolution"* on December 13, 2019 at Marand Resort and Spa, Bauang, La Union. The event was attended by Vice Presidents for Research and Extension, Directors for Research, Deans of the Graduate Schools and faculty researchers of HEIs in the region.

The activity was funded by the Office of Planning Research and Knowledge Management (OPRKM) and initiated by CHED RO1. The conference aimed to enable the participants to define a research University and prepare their institutions towards becoming

one; be guided on the research priorities in higher education; to know the challenges confronting higher education institutions in research in the milieu of the 4<sup>th</sup> IR; and be informed how research innovations of HEIs can boost economic growth and contribute to national development.

The keynote speech was delivered by CHED Commissioner Aldrin A. Darilag with the theme Research Innovation in Higher Education in the Milieu of 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. He highlighted CHED Memorandum Order No. 52, Series of 2016 or also known as the Pathways to Equity, Relevance and Advancement in Research, Innovation, and Extension in Philippine Higher Education was passed to put premium on the relevance, utility and social impact of knowledge generated thru research.

The roster of speakers included Dir. Nelson G. Cainghogan, Director IV, CHED-OPRKM who presented a lecture on Becoming a Research University and the National Higher Education Research Agenda in the 4<sup>th</sup> IR. He iterated that researchers must build their capacity while doing research and to deepen the focus on their field of specialization.

Dr. Rogelio T. Galera Jr, OIC-Office of the Director IV, CHED RO1 presented the Challenges in Research in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Research 4.0) reminding the HEIs of their role to prepare students for the digital future by stimulating interdisciplinary research and institutionally fostering a curious mindset towards other disciplines. Dr. Armando Q. Ganal, Director IV, DOST RO1 Research showcased the different Innovations Contributory to National Development.

**/CHED RO I**





## ILOKANO RICE FARMERS RECEIVE 5K FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Department of Agriculture (DA), in partnership with the Landbank of the Philippines (LBP) and Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte (PGIN), grants an unconditional cash assistance of P5,000 for rice farmers in the province affected by the Rice Tariffication Law.

For its launching ceremony at the Centennial Arena, there are 2,000 initial beneficiaries of the assistance program.

These farmers come from Laoag City, Badoc, Solsona, and Bacarra.

According to DA, there are more than 19,000 farmer beneficiaries who will be

benefitting the P95 million Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA) in Ilocos Norte.

Moreover, these qualified farmers till between one and a half to two hectares.

“Sa tulong pinansiyal na ito, mabibiyayaan ang mga magsasakang maliit ang kanilang sinasaka,” DA-1 Regional Director Lucrecio Alviar Jr. said.

Alviar emphasized that this is not a loan assistance, but an unconditional cash assistance for the rice farmers.

“Wala po kayong babayaran sa gobyerno. This is a grant,” the regional

director stressed.

According to LBP First Vice President Belma Turla, cash cards will be used by the farmers in withdrawing their money.

“Mabibigyan ng cash card na may naglalamang P5,000. Mayroong dalawang Landbank mobile para mas madali at mabilis ang pagbibigay ng tulong pinansiyal,” Turla addressed.

Two LBP mobiles are stationed at the Centennial Arena to assist the beneficiaries in keying their PIN and withdrawing cash. Rice farmers can also withdraw from other LBP Automated Teller Machine (ATM) in the

province for their convenience.

The agriculture department regards this as the government’s way of recognizing the contribution of farmers in the country.

“Masaya ako sa binigay na dagdag ayuda para sa aming pagsasaka. Makakatulong ito nang malaki lalo na para samang pamilya,” Robert Jose, a farmer beneficiary from Laoag City, said.

DA is also set to distribute cash assistance to the remaining 17,000 rice farmer beneficiaries.

**PIA-Ilocos Norte/JCR/MJTAB/**

## MGB LAUNCHES #MINERESPONSIBILITY

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau Central Office led the launching of the nationwide campaign titled #MineResponsibility to ensure responsible mining in the country at the Elements at Eton Centris in Quezon City. This IEC campaign aims on giving information on responsible mining as a shared responsibility. Moreover, it shall heighten awareness on the role of the MGB, its directives, and the importance of its

existence in the government in achieving responsible mining in the country. It enjoins everyone to take part in ensuring that mining in our country remains technically feasible, environmentally compliant, socially acceptable, and financially viable. Further, this information drive encourages responsibility among its stakeholders, mining firms, and other government agencies.

**/DENR-MGB RO 1**



## DOT REGION 1 HAILED AS “BEST IN TOURISM DATA BUILDING”

The DOT RO1 was hailed “Best in Tourism Data Building” Award for 2 consecutive years for being the sole region in the country that practices the most effective measures in statistical data gathering and report generation thus coming up with reliable reports on tourist arrivals in Region I.

The award was given during the 5th Annual Tourism Development Workshop held in Tacloban City on December 9-13, 2019.

This activity is being held annually by the DOT Main

Office-Office of Tourism Development Planning Research and Information Management-Statistics, Economic Analysis and Information Management Division (OTDPRIM-SEAIMD) to give recognition to the Regional Offices doing best practices on region-wide local tourism planning, policy conformity, and statistics adequacy in partnership with tourism stakeholders.

**/DOT RO I**



DOT Region I Staff, Ms. Loryna Fonacier, Senior Tourism Operations Officer and Mr. Edilberto Littaua, Jr. received the award for DOT Region I from Mr. Ramil Basuel in behalf of Asec. Roberto Alabado of the DOT Office of Tourism Development Planning.

## DOT MOVES FOR ACCESS ROADS RISE IN REGION 1

The Department of Tourism in Region I moves for the rise of more projects like access roads to boost the tourism potentials of the provinces in the region.

Newly-installed Tourism Regional Director for the Ilocos Joseph Francisco ‘Jeff’ Ortega, said he has started making the rounds in tourism areas in Pangasinan and held talks with local chief executives on how to boost infrastructure to improve economic livelihood with tourism.

He is hopeful that in partnership with the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the government will be able to make tourism development areas accessible to more tourists by developing more

and more access roads.

“Kailangan muna may mga daan ang mga tao papunta sa tourism development areas. Pag walang maayos na daan, walang saysay ang paglalagay ng infrastructure sa mga TIEZA properties,” Ortega told the press during his visit to Lingayen town.

Ortega said there is no need for competition among areas and provinces when it comes to tourism as tourism is apo-

litical and DOT wants to make sure everybody has areas developed for tourism.

He said tourism gives alternative livelihood opportunities for people. Although the sand and beach are primary tourist attractions, people can also venture into farm tourism.

“We also encourage farm tourism which is an alternative livelihood para kumita ng mas malaki and at the

same time hindi maghihintay sa season (ang mga farmers). Malaki ang nasasakripisyo kapag may El Nino and La Nina. Ang turismo, all year round,” he said.

In his visit to Pangasinan, the 29-year old tourism director said he was awed by what he saw.

“The Patar white beach in Bolinao town is considered the ‘Boracay of the North’ and as for the Hundred Islands in Alaminos City, I was really impressed - sobrang linis, manicured and safety is of utmost importance,” he exclaimed.

Meanwhile, Ortega said tourist arrivals in the country have increased to 14 percent and tourism contributed 12.4 percent to the gross domestic product of the Philippines last year.

**/PIA/JCR/VHS**



**TOURISM.** Newly-installed Tourism Regional Director for the Ilocos Joseph Francisco ‘Jeff’ Ortega, said he has started making the rounds in tourism areas in Pangasinan and held talks with local chief executives on how to boost infrastructure to improve economic livelihood with tourism. (PIA)



## PANGASINAN 2<sup>ND</sup> DEO COMPLETES NEW RABON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDING

The Department of Public Works and Highways Pangasinan 2<sup>nd</sup> District Engineering Office (DPWH-PANG2DEO) has completed the construction of the new two-storey, four-classroom Rabon Elementary School building in Barangay Rabon, San Fabian, Pangasinan.

Each classroom measures nine by seven meters and can accommodate 144 students or 36 students per classroom.

DPWH PANG2DEO District Engineer Edita L. Manuel said, "The new building aims to provide a



place to educate the children of Barangay Rabon and nearby barangays."

The new facility is equipped with two sets (three pcs/set) or six

units of rain water-collector tanks that is intended to save water and electric consumption of the school.

The building was complet-

ed on December 9, 2019 with a total project cost of Php 10,285,010.91.

**/DPWH RO 1/Espanza C. Tinaza**

## DPWHR1 INAUGURATES CENTENNIAL BONGO BRIDGE ALONG ILOCOS NORTE-ABRA ROAD

The Department of Public Works and Highways Region I (DPWH R1), headed by Regional Director Ronnel M. Tan, inaugurated the two-lane, 245.9-meter long Centennial Bongo Bridge, replacing the old Bongo Bridge beside it, along Ilocos Norte-Abra Road located in Brgy. Poblacion, Nueva Era, Ilocos Norte on December 15, 2019. The bridge which connects the provinces of Ilocos Norte and Abra is expected to improve the social and cultural exchanges between the two provinces.

Started on August 15, 2015 consisting of the

construction of 7 spans 35-meter Pre-Stress Concrete Girder, installation of road safety devices (warning and regulatory signage, reflective thermoplastic pavement markings, metal beam guardrails), construction of grouted riprap, gabion, and stone masonry slope protection for the approaches and riverbanks, and the construction of Gabion Spur Dikes on the upstream and downstream of bridge abutment B. River rechanelization or river excavation, the under Phase I was completed on May 10, 2018.

Engr. Angelito A. Dian, Project Engineer of Bongo Bridge project said, "The Phase II of the project was started on June 25, 2019, which consisted of the construction of PCC pavement 280mm thick for carriageway, construction of Slope Protection Structure, installation of Metal Guardrail, and the installation of its Solar lighting."

DPWHR1 RD Ronnel M. Tan added, "The newly constructed Bongo Bridge will attract business opportunities and

*tourists to visit the locality and discover the environmental natural spots and landscape in the area, and will result to faster delivery of products to economic and business centers and faster mobility of manpower and services due to reduced time of travel."*

Phase I and Phase II of the project were funded with project costs of Php 179,287,509.83 and Php 15,208,790.79 respectively.

**/DPWH RO 1/Espanza C. Tinaza**

## BFAR-1 ORGANIZES FISHERMEN'S COOPS TO ADVANCE FISHERY BUSINESSES

The BFAR-1 Cooperative Organizers (CO) have organized fishermen cooperatives in the coastal municipalities in the four provinces of Region I to help them become key players in the agribusiness industry.

The five trained COs are Derickson Chrisandrei Mandar (Alternate Regional Coop Organizer); Chris Cantor (Pangasinan); Rodel Villena (La Union); Gilbert Pulido (Ilocos Sur) and Nena Batulan (Ilocos Norte).

They have attended and participated in the four modules of cooperative training programs in 2018 & 2019 for first and second batch, respectively.

The COs conducted actual field validation from July to September 2019 to identify active fisherfolk associations which will eventually attend and participate in regional fisheries training programs.

Phase 1 of the training, entitled Basic Cooperative Organizing was conducted on September 30 to October 02, 2019 at BFAR-RFaTDeC Paoay, Ilocos Norte.

Thirty officers and members of various fisherfolk associations participated in the training - Pasuquin Fisherfolk Association (Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte); Victoria Fishermen Association Inc. (Currimao, Ilocos Norte); Pilar Blue Marlin Fishermen Association (Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur); Magnificent Fisherfolk and Payao Association (San Fernando City, La Union); and Bugallon Great Farmers-Producers (Bugallon, Pangasinan).

Then they attended the Phase 2 training, entitled Entrepreneurial Skills Development, was also conducted on October 23-25, 2019 at

BFAR-RMaTDeC, Alaminos City in Pangasinan.

These training programs aim to enhance their knowledge & understanding on fisheries enterprise and to develop their management skills on business operation as cooperative.

Wilfredo Fajardo, BFAR national consultant/cooperative focal and Edwin Callado, private consultant & business expert served as the Learning Service Providers for phases 1 & 2 trainings.

Several meetings were also conducted for the FAs on November 2019 to assist them on preparing various statutory requirements (e.g. articles of coop; capital build-up sharing mechanism) for the formation of micro-scale fisheries cooperatives.

BFAR-1 is set to closely collaborate with CDA and other partner agencies for the preliminary registration seminar and other

pre-requisite for CDA accreditation.

Organizing of fisherfolk cooperatives for a production and marketing system in fisheries will address one of the marching orders of Agriculture Secretary William Dar for the inclusive agri-industrialization for 2020 and beyond.

The fisherfolk cooperatives and other rural-based organizations could be key players in big-brother-small brother partnerships, and agribusiness industry value chain and export development initiatives.

Recall that the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) signed a memorandum of agreement on January 11, 2017 to promote, encourage and enhance cooperatives of farmer's and fisherfolk and rural women to venture into micro-scale fisherfolk marketing cooperatives in order to reverse the "sell and buy" scheme that impoverish fisherfolk.

To intensify cooperative organizing, USEC for Fisheries and BFAR National Director Eduardo Gongona issued a memorandum in 2018 directing all Regional Fisheries Offices to designate Regional and Alternate Cooperative Focal to be trained as Cooperative Organizers/Trainer's.

*/BFAR-RF01/Derickson  
Chrisandrei S. Mandar*





## SECRETARY DAR PUSHES ENHANCEMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Agriculture Secretary William Dar has pushed for the enhancement of the country's tobacco industry by farm mechanization and implementation of modernized tobacco farming technology.

"The members of the Board and Management of the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) are working together for the enhancement of the local tobacco industry by formulating the Tobacco Industry Enhancement Program (TIEP) while we are looking at the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund as a model. With this, we can help our tobacco farmers to increase their income through mechanization program, farmer to market road construction, and provision of value-adding and market scheme, training infrastructures and credit facilities that offer 2% interest rate," Dar said.

During his recent short visit to the town of Tagudin to lead the awarding ceremony for the winners of the 2019 National Tobacco Administration's Tobacco Growers of the Year (TGY), Dar said that he is fast-tracking the immediate completion of the TIEP that aims for a modernized and industrialized tobacco industry in the next five years.

Secretary Dar, who is the chairman of the NTA Governing Board, said the tobacco agency wishes to

use the P40 billion for five years, or P8 billion annually, from the Tobacco Fund for farm mechanization, seed distribution, credit facilities, and skills development to make tobacco growers in Northern Luzon more productive.

Through this initiative, Dar is very optimistic that this will surely enhance the tobacco industry and will achieve his new thinking in agriculture program: "Masaganang Ani at Malaking Kita."

Dar is eyeing for the modernization of tobacco farming considering that it is still a steady and lucrative source of income by the tobacco farmers in

the Ilocos provinces after the rice season.

Before he administered the awarding ceremony of the national winners of the TGY contest, Dar had joined Tagudin town Mayor Roque Verzosa to the inauguration of the Tobacco Farmers' Training Building.

The newly-constructed NTA Tobacco Farmers Training Building was firstly used for the awarding ceremony for the six national winners of the TGY contest representing each category of tobacco type or sub-type category. Each winner had received a P50,000 cash prize and plaque of recognition. The national winners were Roberto A. Reciles of

Malasiqui, Pangasinan (native chewing or batek tobacco category); Albert M. Cataggatan of Tumauni, Isabela (burley improved flavor); Eligio V. Vega of San Juan, Ilocos Sur (Virginia improved flavor); Elmer R. Abat of San Juan, La Union; Lito S. Esteban of San Manuel, Tarlac (burley neutral); and Rico B. Bangibang of Native Cigar Filler (native cigar filler).

The winners were adjudged for their honesty, integrity, innovativeness, and diligence in the adoption of good agriculture practices for tobacco, keeping farm records and getting a reasonable cost to produce a kilo of the cured leaf.

**PIA 1/JCR/FGL**



*In this file photo, Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar tests a combine harvester farm machinery before he turns-over to the farmers' organization in Badoc, Ilocos Norte during the recent awarding rites in Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) Auditorium, Batac City, Ilocos Norte. (Photo by: FGL,PIA 1)*

## RDRRMC1 APPROVES HYDROMET RESPONSE PLAN

OCD Regional Director Melchito M. Castro, also the Chairperson of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council 1 (RDRRMC1), together with the members of the Council approved unanimously Resolution No. 02, series of 2019, "Approving and Adopting the Regional Disaster Response Plan for Hydro-meteorological Hazards Version 1" during the RDRRMC1 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Full Council Meeting on November 29, 2019 at Hotel Ariana, Bauang, La Union.

Series of workshops, meetings and simulation exercises were conducted by the Technical Working Group (TWG) to develop the plan. It aims to provide appropriate actions and prompt response to achieve the goal of saving

lives, protection of properties and zero casualties in times of disaster. The plan highlights the use of the Philippine Disaster Response Cluster System and Incident Command System which are essential in the management of response.

Currently, the Philippine Government recognizes eleven (11) Disaster Response Clusters, and their respective lead agencies. The RDRRMC1 adapts the clusters and developed the Public Works and Engineering (PWE) cluster led by DPWH. Based on the workshops, the PWE cluster was seen necessary to focus on the debris clearing and restoration of lifelines of the region. Further, the PIHAC

cluster was not included because it is only applicable in the national level.

The RDRRMC1 Vice-Chairperson of Response, DSWD Field Office 1 Director Marcelo Nicomedes J. Castillo emphasized the importance of having the plan in order to have appropriate and coordinated actions of each member agency during operations.

"It is never easy for any Agency to achieve its goals during disasters, but with our cooperative and invaluable partners on the ground, their initiatives to do their own functions without being told, help us walk through the impediments we encountered", Castillo said.

*/OCD RO I*



## RDRRMC1 HITS TARGET FOR 2019

The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council 1 (RDRRMC1) Member-agencies presented their Annual Accomplishment Reports through the four Vice-Chair Lead Agencies for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response and Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery on the 4<sup>th</sup> Full

Council Meeting on November 29, 2019 at Hotel Ariana, Bauang, La Union.

OCD Regional Director and RDRRMC1 Chairperson Melchito M. Castro thanked the Council Member-agencies for the successful conduct and implementation of the programs, projects and activities on the four DRRM The-

matic Areas for 2019. As prescribed under the Regional DRRM Plan, the outcomes and outputs of each area were met.

Further, the council approved three resolutions for 2019: a) Approval and adoption of the Regional Disaster Response Plan for Hydro-meteorological

Hazards Version 1, b) Approval and adoption of the Implementing Plan of RDRRMC1 as the primary assisting region in the North Sector of Metro Manila and Central Luzon for the 7.2 Magnitude Earthquake, and c) Adoption of Templates for the preparation of Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan and Monitoring Reports in the Region.

*/OCD RO I*



## CONDUCT OF TRAINING AND CASCADING OF THE COMMUNITY AND SERVICE-ORIENTED POLICING (CSOP) SYSTEM FOR CRIME PREVENTION

The CSOP is an organizational strategy that allows the local chief executives, local police, and the community to work closely for the delivery of basic services, prevent the occurrence of crimes and other related matters, and thereby secure and improve the quality of life in achieving the Ambisyon Natin 2040 – Matatag, Maginhawa, at Panatag na Buhay.

To create a more in-depth awareness on CSOP System as an approach to crime prevention that stresses strong

relationship between the local chief executives, the local police, and the community, the National Police Commission Regional Office 1 conducted the Training and Cascading of the CSOP System on December 10, 2019 at the Centennial Arena, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

Four Hundred Fifty-Six (456) Punong Barangays in the province and 23 Chiefs of Police of Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office attended the training and cascading.

Comr. Felizardo M. Ser-

apio, Jr., a Ret. Police Major General and now Commissioner of the National Police Commission, acted as the Resource Speaker for the activity. He said that a strong family tie is considered as a crime prevention because if the foundation of the family is strong and love is present to each member of the family, the child will grow the right manner and right conduct, thus, he/she will not become a problem of the community.

He underscored that a solution to the communi-

ty-problems, it requires the coordination, cooperation, collaboration, consultation, and commitment of the local chief executives, the local police and communities working together to explore ways to address and solve issues and concerns.

Comr. Serapio assured that the NAPOLCOM, the overseer of the Philippine National Police, stands committed to provide assistance in relation to crime prevention.

**/NAPOLCOM RO 1/  
Gia Mariz F. Rivera**



## PGIN LAUNCHES ENVIRONMENT FLAGSHIP PROGRAM 'NARIMAT'

Leading the launch of “Narimat nga Aglawlaw” on October 3, 2019 at Brgy. Casili, Laoag City, Governor Matthew Marcos Manotoc urged the whole Ilokano community to start doing their part in taking care of our environment.

“Narimat nga Aglawlaw,” a province-wide environmental awareness campaign, is an initiative of Gov. Marcos Manotoc reiterating the importance of Solid Waste Management and segregation.

In his speech, Gov. Marcos Manotoc described the serious problem of non-biodegradable materials on the planet:

“The world faces a plastic crisis now. These plastics are not only damaging our environment but also damaging us, humans. *Hindi sapat ang mga band-aid solutions sa pangangalaga sa ating kalikasan; kailangan natin ay long-term solutions.*”

In addition, Gov. Marcos Manotoc emphasized on the immediate action needed in order to protect it:



“In the province, all barangays have started complying to the call so I am hoping that this will be the start of the effort. *Panahon na para patunayan natin na kaya nating alagaan hindi lang ang ating kapaligiran kung ‘di pati na rin ang ating*

*probinsiya.* A cleaner province is a healthier province. Indeed, the time is now.”

Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Mrs. Estrella Sacro also expressed her optimism about the program of the Provincial Government, saying, “It’s about time time to instill discipline in ourselves, in our people, and in our communities we serve. Through our simple ways of throwing out garbage properly and by practicing waste segregation, coupled by our steadfast coordination and action, this project will definitely become successful. Patricia Dacanay, founder of the Movement Against Plastic Pollution, further

extended her support to the project of the Provincial Government, as well as to encourage local officials:

“We would like to thank Governor Matthew Marcos Manotoc for this initiative. We urge all government officials and employees, including the Sangguniang Kabataan, to help in the implementation of our environmental laws. We also encourage the public to comply with our ordinances. Let’s keep our province clean and green.”

The program was attended by local executives and officials, environmental officers, *barangay* representatives, and other environment stakeholders, who joined in the signing of the Ilocos Norte Environment Covenant.

Brgy. Captain Joegie Jimenez from Brgy. Poblacion, Burgos, Ilocos Norte; and Brgy. Captain Jogie Calapao from Brgy. Barani, Batac City, Ilocos Norte.

The former presented the “Basura Exchange School Tiangge” while the latter shared about the “Basura Mo, Palit ni Kap” Program which support the initiatives of Gov. Marcos Manotoc.

During his time as Board Member, Gov. Marcos Manotoc authored Provincial Ordinance No. 058-2019, The Provincial Anti-Littering Ordinance; and Provincial Ordinance No. 2019-05-074, otherwise known as the Provincial Anti-Plastic Ordinance to boost the environmental awareness campaign in the province.

*/PGIN/Stewart C. Ocampo*



**Gov. Manotoc on province-wide solid waste management drive: “The time is now”**



## LA UNION INFRA PROJECTS REPORTED

The status of the high-impact infrastructure projects in La Union was reported by Provincial Engineer Ressie A. Estrella during the Provincial Government of La Union (PGLU) Cabinet Meeting held on December 02, 2019 at the Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol, City of San Fernando, La Union.

Included in the Convergence Programs being implemented in La Union by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) are the Roads

Leveraging Linkages for Industry and Trade or "ROLL IT Program" and the Tourism Road Infrastructure Projects or "TRIP Program" by DOT-DPWH, wherein most of them are previously proposed by Gov. Francisco Emmanuel "Pacoy" R. Ortega III to the Regional Directors of the said agencies.

As per records gathered from the DPWH Region 1 Office, there are Php287.5M worth of infrastructure projects enrolled under the ROLL IT Program and Php147M worth of infrastructure

projects enrolled under the TRIP Program, both implemented in the province for 2019. For the ROLL IT Program, there are 10 projects being implemented and 50% of them are already completed. Meanwhile, there are four projects for the TRIP Program wherein only one of them is completed and the remaining are still on-going.

The ROLL IT Program aims to further the growth of investments and other economic activities in the country through more road projects leading to manufac-

turing and economic zones while the TRIP Program aims to promote rural and value chain development toward increasing agricultural and rural enterprise productivity and community-based tourism.

As for the status of the Bauang-San Fernando-San Juan Bypass Road, it is already under phase 2 construction which is still on-going along Bauang and San Juan section. Both sections will meet half-way in the City of San Fernando section which is not yet implemented.

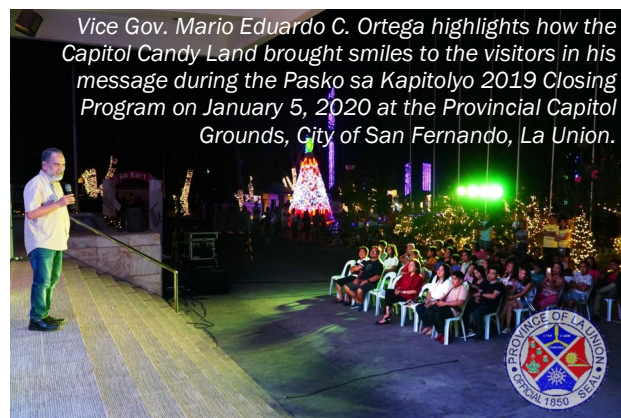
*/PGLU/Emille Martinez*

## TURNOUT INCREASES IN LU'S PASKO SA KAPITOLYO 2019

A gushing 134.5% increase in visitors in Pasko sa Kapitolyo 2019 was recorded after 37 days of opening the Provincial Capitol's Candy Land to the public in celebration of the Christmas Season from November 29, 2019 to January 5, 2020.

From a total of 148,485 visitor arrival in 2018, there were 348,192 visitors who came to see the Pasko sa Kapitolyo 2019. To evaluate and get feedback from the visitors, the Office of the Provincial Governor – Media and Public Information Unit conducted a survey in the duration of the event with 2,002 respondents.

The survey showed that majority of the visitors are in the age bracket of 16-20 years old. 185 of the respondents were tourists coming mainly from adjacent provinces of Ilocos Sur



(62), Pangasinan (43), and Benguet (22).

This year's highlights were the Tunnel of Lights, Pagoda, Candy Land Carousel, Christmas Bazaar, and Paintings as recorded favorite sites by the respondents. The intensified promotion of the event is evident in the survey results showing that the respondents learned about the

event through Social Media 46%, Family and Friends 33%, and Posters and Tarpaulins 11%.

97% of the respondents said that the Pasko sa Kapitolyo 2020 met their overall expectations with the set-up and physical arrangement, activities and services. 99% said that they will recommend the event to oth-

ers. Suggestions on decors, themes, activities and services for the improvement of the event were also noted from the survey results.

The annual Pasko sa Kapitolyo, as institutionalized by Sangguniang Panlalawigan Ordinance No. 173-2019, aims to bring the Christmas spirit to the public through various attractions and shows.

*"It's good kasi libre, uray awan kwarta agenjoy ka. Feel na feel ko ang Christmas, magandang bonding with friends and family,"* ("It's good because it's free, you get to enjoy even if you don't have money. I can really feel the spirit of Christmas, it's great to bond here with friends and family,") said one of the visitors.

*/PGLU/Camille R. Bumatay,*

## BUSINESS ONE STOP SHOP (BOSS) RE-LAUNCHED IN BATAK CITY

This January 2020, the City Government of Batak has re-launched the Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-Ilocos Norte and other government agencies like the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Social Security System (SSS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and Pag-IBIG. This is in compliance to Republic Act 11032 otherwise known as "Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018" to speed up the processing of business permits within the city.

Under the EODB law, government agencies are required to complete simple transactions within three days; complex transactions within seven days; and highly technical transactions within 20 days. They are also mandated to

trim the number of signatories required to release a license, clearance, permit and authorization.

The re-launched Business One Stop Shop (BOSS) is part of the City's initiative to streamline the processing of business permits and licenses and will run for the entire year.

Representatives of national government agencies involved in business licensing are also present every January of every year at the City Hall Lobby adjacent to the BPLO.

Under the re-launched BOSS, a client with complete documentary requirements can now finish the process in one day with two easy steps 1- Secure, 2- Pay & Receive. The establishment of a Backroom Operations in

the Business Permits and Licenses Office reinforced by the electronic Government Application System (eGAPS) of the City Government has contributed a lot in the shortened processing time. Departments involved in the business permitting such as the Zoning section utilizing the Zoning Compliance Management System, the Sanitary Permit, Clearances and Certification System of the City Health Office while the Business Permits and Licensing Section is operating the Business Permit and License System and the Treasury Office is applying the Point of Payment System. Present too in the Backroom Operations are the Office of the Building Official and Bureau of Fire Protection.

The present eGAPS in the Backroom Operations, lessen the burden of clients in going from one office to another,

hence there is the so called "just sit back and relax", because once their application is received, the documents will go through the process and the clients will wait until their Business Permit is ready for release.

For the convenience and satisfaction of our clients, we also have the queuing system, an overflowing of free coffee and drinking water, and the recognition of Top 50 prompt and Top 5 highest Tax payers and Business applicants by giving them Plaque of Appreciation, Umbrella and a sack of Rice (25kg).

True to its commitment to hasten the burden of the transacting public, Mayor Albert D. Chua remains steadfast in improving frontline services of the city government specifically to continuously improve the processes for permits and licenses to make it easier for entrepreneurs to do business in the city.

*/LGU-Batak City*

## NEW MEDICAL CENTER TO RISE IN CANDON CITY

Residents and patients from the provinces of Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte and Abra will soon have more accessible healthcare facilities with the ongoing construction of the satellite hospital of the Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center (ITRMC) in Candon City.

In a statement, Secretary Mark Villar of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said he is confident that the new 18,439-square meter satellite hospital will provide convenience to patients who are far from the main

ITRMC located in San Fernando City, La Union.

"Aside from providing medical services, we hope that this center can also promote relevant research projects and trainings for continuous medical staff development in Ilocos region," said Secretary Villar in the statement.

In his report to Secretary Villar, Director Ronnel Tan of DPWH in the Ilocos said that construction is in full swing for the two storey main building which will house the 100-

bed emergency room and the outpatient department, with a total cost of P61.61-million and P86.44-million, respectively.

"We are also fast-tracking the completion of the two storey Radiology Building in the amount of P28.96-million that is set for completion by April 2020," reported Director Tan.

Upon completion, the ITRMC satellite hospital compound will also have its own rehabilitation building, dialysis building, administrative and records building, dietary



building, and maintenance building.

The satellite ITRMC is implemented by DPWH-Ilocos Sur Second District Engineering Office and is funded under the 2018 General Appropriations Act.

***PIA/JCR/AMB with reports from DPWH)***



## USAPANG REAL ESTATE

In October 2015, **Usapang Real Estate** was conceived out of an advocacy to aid the public to be educated on everything that concerns lands, taxes and the laws governing real estate. And to reach a more diverse audience, the organizers, A joint project of **Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association, Inc. (CREBA) La Union Chapter and Real Estate Brokers Association of the Philippines, Inc., (REBAP) La Union Chapter** headed by **Mr. Reynaldo Q. Nisce** and **Ms. Cheryl R. Mercado** decided to use the radio for a massive campaign.

And it was chaired by **Ms. Susan M. Prieto**.

This was a once-a-month program which lasted for a year, after which, it was decided for them to go to the grassroots in the hope of touching base with those who need help the most. And thus, **Usapang Real Estate sa Barangay** was born. Twenty-six barangays in the City of San Fernando, La Union, were covered but the program was held in abeyance to pave the way for a radio come-back program to discuss the most urgent and timely topic "**Estate Tax Amnesty**" by **Bureau of**

**Internal Revenue (BIR-RD03), Regional Director Officer Ms. Charmaine C. De La Torre** as our guest speaker on September 18, 2019.

**Usapang Real Estate** radio program will be re-launched over **Aksyon Radyo 783 Khz La Union**. The **CREBA La Union Chapter** and **REBAP La Union Chapter** continue its **Usapang Real Estate** advocacy; an information, education and communication campaign; educating the public as far as real estate is concerned. After the re-launching of **Usapang Real Estate sa Aksyon**

**Radyo** and requested by some listeners we decided to have 2 consecutive months for the topic **Estate Tax Amnesty** by the **BIR-RD0-3** for more detailed explanation considering that there are only two years to avail of it. An additional topic was the "**New Zonal valuation**". Another topic was "**Free-Patent Title**" was discussed by the **Provincial Environment and Natural Resources (PENRO)** officers. The two (2) Chapters will continue its advocacy to promote awareness and education to the public.

*/CREBA/Susan M. Prieto*



## DAGUPAN SCHOOL CONDUCTS INFO DRIVE ON NCOV

The Dagupan City National High School (DCNHS), the biggest secondary school in this city, has rolled out its information campaign to students and teachers on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (nCoV).

Two separate symposiums on nCoV were conducted on February 10, 2020 at the school gymnasium for Grades 7 to 8 and Grades 9 to 10 for the combined 5,000-strong students of junior high school.

Principal Medarlo de Leon said the activity is one of the Department of Education's (DepEd) preventive measures to

make students and teachers aware of the facts about nCoV.

"We cannot deny that nCoV has affected so many people in other countries. *Marami ring kumakalat na fake news* that is why it's proper that students and teachers learn about nCoV from reliable resource speakers who are experts in their field," De Leon told the Philippine Information Agency (PIA).

De Leon added that aside from the symposium and info campaign materials, students are also encouraged to practice the 3 S' - sanitation, safety, and security.

Dr. Rowena Virrey of the infection control unit of the Region I Medical Center, who served as the resource speaker, said it is the hospital's advocacy to reach out to as many people as possible especially to the students.

"The symposium is more on the awareness and how to practice infection prevention at their level. Not necessarily teaching them the medical terms but more of what the disease is, how they can be protected and how they should react," Dr. Virrey said.

Remo Siapno, school disaster risk management focal person, said they

have posted information materials about nCoV and taught proper handwashing to the students.

The Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) of the DCNHs has also helped in the information dissemination campaign on nCoV and has distributed hand soaps which were placed in the wash areas and comfort rooms.

PTA Federation President Liway Yparraguirre said the group is also helping in the info campaign in all schools in the city.

**PIA-Pangasinan/JCR/  
JND/VHS**



The Dagupan City National High School, the biggest secondary school in this city, has rolled out its information campaign to students and teachers on the novel Corona virus (nCoV) through symposiums and awareness drives. (VHS)