



HITN, the First National Spanish-Language Public Television Network in the U.S., Launched Nationwide Television Show - Destination Casa Blanca 2008: The Latino Voice in the Presidential Election

WASHINGTON, April 15 /PRNewswire-HISPANIC PR WIRE/ -- HITN, the first national Spanish-language public television network in the United States, aired the inaugural broadcast of Destination Casa Blanca 2008: The Washington Perspective Roundtable, on Thursday evening, April 10 at 9pm. The show is hosted by award-winning journalist Marlene Fernández, who welcomed as her first guests Art A. Estopinan, Chief of Staff for Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18); Mr. William Ramos, Office Director for the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) in DC; Jane Murguía, President & CEO of the National Council of La Raza; and Democratic Congresswoman Hilda Solis (CA-32). One of the topics of discussion in the inaugural show was the Immigration Backlog. "In July 2007, the Bush Administration raised the naturalization fee application by 66 percent. This fee increase was meant to improve efficiency at USCIS," said Solis. Solis continued by saying, "Unfortunately, the USCIS is months behind schedule despite these fee increases. The realization of the American dream -- including the right to vote -- is being unnecessarily delayed for many. These delays are inexcusable and reprehensible. America's immigration system should be efficient and effective, especially for those abiding by the law and eager to participate in civic society."

Destination Casa Blanca 2008 was created to focus on Latinos' needs and concerns unaddressed by the campaigns and not-yet-covered by the mainstream media. HITN will utilize the strong relationships it has with local community-based organizations throughout the country to bring grassroots issues to a national level. Viewers will see leading public policy experts participating in dialogue and debate on matters specific to the Latino community, such as immigration, the economy, health care, and education, as well as social and cultural affairs. "We have a unique opportunity to build a bridge between the candidates' campaigns and Hispanic communities through the usage of effective multiple media platforms in an unprecedented way," says José Luis Rodríguez, CEO of HITN.

The English-language program marks the first time in history that a nation-wide television series dedicated solely to issues affecting the Hispanic community will air in over 30 million U.S. households. Breaking away from its traditional Spanish-language programming, the series is designed to facilitate communication between Latinos and the campaign's staff, many of whom are non-Hispanic. This will give the candidates an opportunity to learn what Latinos think, in the language they understand.

The show will consist of three original broadcasts: Destination Casa Blanca 2008 "One-

on-One," hosted by Marlene Fernández, will eventually air on Wednesdays at 9pm and again at 12am; Destination Casa Blanca 2008: "Newsmakers Roundtable," hosted by Fernández airs on Thursdays at 9pm and again at 12am; Destination Casa Blanca 2008: "Washington Perspective Roundtable," hosted by Ray Suarez, airs on Fridays at 9pm and again at 12am. HITN is available on Dish Network; DirectTV; Time Warner Cable (NY, NJ, TX); Comcast (IL, CO); Charter (CA, NV, WA, GA); AT&T U-verse and Verizon FiOs nationwide.

Additionally, clips of the programs will be available on HITN's website, <http://www.HITN.TV>, further stimulating viewer participation and connecting Hispanics to its guests via texting and social networking media, such as MySpace, Facebook and YouTube. This unprecedented interactive component gives viewers yet another platform to view and interact with those shaping the presidential race. Utilizing expanded and multiple outreach platforms, Destination Casa Blanca 2008 will help create well-informed citizens and increase the participation by Latinos in the quest for the presidency. Never before has there been a political program that brings Latino interests and concerns about presidential politics to the forefront.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, this year eligible Latino voters will loom as a potential swing vote. Elected officials welcome the show as an opportunity to interact with the community in an effective and proactive manner. "It is very important to educate the Hispanic community to participate in the electoral process so that their voice is heard, Destination Casa Blanca is an important venue through which our community can learn about the civic responsibilities of citizens and the importance of exercising the privileged right to vote," said Republican Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL - 21).

Hispanics are the fastest growing Ethnic minority comprising 15% of the US Population. In 2007 and 2008, Hispanic voting surged during the primaries which resulted in a significant narrowing of the gap between the two Democratic candidates. "The 46 million Latinos across the country are poised to have a historic impact on the 2008 Presidential election, and their strength has already been seen in record turnouts for the primaries and caucuses. It is being said that Hispanics could be the deciding factor this year, but the only way to make that happen is to get out and vote! By standing together, we will make our voices heard," adds Democratic Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez (NY-12).

With Hispanic voters now looked upon as key arbiters in the nation's political future, Destination Casa Blanca 2008 is the program that lets the nation know what they are thinking and the questions they have about the future.

About HITN

The Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network, Inc. (HITN) was established in 1983 as a non-profit organization.

HITN's mission is dedicated to the advancement of Hispanics by providing engaging educational entertainment that invites individuals and families to live fuller, richer lives and enables them to serve as an

Back

ever-growing engine of intellectual power and progress. HITN-TV was created in 1987, becoming America's first Public Television Network for Latinos. Today, HITN-TV can be found on cable, satellite, video on demand and online, reaching over 31 million households.

HITN provides a unique source of educational, cultural, news and public affairs programs to the homes of Hispanics in the United States and Puerto Rico. For more information log onto <http://www.hitn.org>

HITN: CELEBRATING 25 YEARS AS AMERICA'S FIRST PUBLIC TELEVISION NETWORK FOR LATINOS