ANOTHER DECADE OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE COMMON GOOD

2019 Annual Report

A report to the Legislature as requested by Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, Subd. 8
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Welcome Letter from the 2019 Chair

Dear Community Members,

During my time as Chair of the Board of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council), I have seen community members rise to do great work on behalf of the vibrant, diverse Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities in our state. We are encouraged to see Asian Pacific Minnesotans increasingly engaged in state-level public policy making.

In 2019, the Council worked across the partisan aisle and built coalitions to achieve its statutory duties. We advocated for empathetic, impactful policies to address the unique realities of Asian Pacific Minnesotan families; facilitated relationships between community leaders and government; and engaged with our diverse communities as a strategic means to better gauge how state-level decisions are impacting them.

In fulfilling our statutory duties to the Minnesota Legislature and our community, I believe our staff, Board, and advocates have responded to a multitude of challenges and opportunities. From partnering with statewide and community-based organizations in order to secure funding for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, to ensuring our communities participate in the 2020 Census, I am proud of the creativity, effort, and steadfastness with which the Council faces each new challenge that arises.

It is also with a heavy heart that I share with you that this is my last year as Chair of the Council Board. That said, I am confident in the commitment, vision, and leadership of my successor, Dave Hoang, as well as the dedication and expertise of the staff of the Council.

With that, I am pleased and proud to present you with this impressive record of our work at the Council in 2019.

Warmly,

David Maeda
The breadth and depth of the Council’s work is guided by our legislative agenda. Updated each biennium, this agenda is informed directly by our community via a legislative priorities survey, as well as year-round, intensive, and intentional community-building efforts.

Based on the findings of our most recent Legislative Priorities Survey, the Council has identified five high-priority issues on which to focus our legislative agenda this biennium: higher education, education data disaggregation, access to healthcare, equity and social justice, and immigration rights. Equally important, the Council’s work in our communities informs our ongoing positions on the following key issues: programs and services that are respectful of and responsive to the linguistically and culturally diverse communities of Minnesota, including Asian Pacific communities; continued collection of more nuanced data, such as data being collected by the Department of Education pursuant to the All Kids Count Act, to better inform policy making on issues of importance to Asian Pacific Minnesotans; and increased understanding of the causes and prevention of violence against Minnesota’s Asian Pacific women and children.

The following are the key legislative achievements of the Council in 2019.

**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program Bill – H.F. 479/S.F. 608**

At least 1 in 5 women of Asian or Pacific Islander (API) descent experience violence in their lifetime, and in some API ethnic groups, the number is as high as 4 out of 5 women. Culture is a critical factor in the decisions made by individuals experiencing violence. Fear of retaliation, marginalization, or other internal community pressures frame individuals’ choices and constrain their options.

We are proud to share the passage and signing into law of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program bill in the 2019 session. This success comes after two years of legislative discussions, with the support of a coalition of more than 200 statewide member organizations, and in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS). The program, housed within MDH, appropriates grants to qualifying nonprofit organizations across the state to fund initiatives that incorporate community-driven and culturally relevant practices for historically underserved communities to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault.

The Council will continue to work closely with MDH and other partners to ensure the legislative intent remains intact during the design and implementation phases of this program.

**Spoken Language Health Care Interpreting Registry Bill – H.F. 1400/S.F. 875**

Over 30% of Asian Pacific Minnesotans have limited proficiency in English. Populations that rely on interpreters within our community—particularly for healthcare purposes—are some of our most vulnerable constituents. To ensure all Minnesotans have access to safe and equitable health care, S.F. 875 requests a minimum standard for medical interpreters in basic medical terminology, standards of practice, and interpreter ethics.

We believe S.F. 875 is an important step in ensuring all Minnesotans receive the same quality of care. This legislation provides a transparent training and support mechanism, which is critical to addressing the health care
interpreting needs of Limited English Proficient Minnesotans.

An amended version of S.F. 875 was passed in the Senate Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee and referred to the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee. The legislation did not move in the House. During the interim, the Council continued to activate and mobilize stakeholders in preparation for reintroduction of this legislative proposal in the 2020 legislative session.

**Southeast Asian Equity Grants Program**

The Council is pleased to report that the 2019 Legislature fully restored the Southeast Asian Equity Grants Program, one of six competitive state equity grants administered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), to its 2016 level of funding. The program enables grantees to address economic disparities in the Southeast Asian community through workforce recruitment, development, job creation, organizational capacity-building, and outreach.

The model minority myth obscures the experiences of Minnesota’s refugee-experienced communities, many of whom came to the United States after decades of violence and political persecution in their native countries. In recognition of this reality, the Southeast Asian Equity Grants Program is an essential component of the state’s effort to address economic challenges faced by these populations that are currently overlooked in other programs within DEED.

At the Council, we believe the Southeast Asian Equity Grants Program is a more targeted, and therefore more likely to succeed strategy given what we know about the barriers Southeast Asian Minnesotans are experiencing as they strive to achieve economic stability.

**Data Disaggregation – H.F. 1639/S.F. 709**

For the second year, legislators introduced amendments to repeal the All Kids Count law, which requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to collect and report ethnicity and race data pertaining to student performance. In direct response to these repeal efforts, led by some members of our Chinese Minnesotan community, the Council worked with a diverse coalition to help policy makers understand why data disaggregation benefits all Minnesotans.

Asian Pacific Minnesotans are arguably the most linguistically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse cultural community in the state. However, this diversity is overshadowed by the model minority myth, which obscures the reality of the struggles many in our community face. The Council supports measures to counter the myth of the homogenous model minority through a more accurate understanding of our diverse communities. For this reason, the Council maintains its stance that the All Kids Count law is a move in the right direction and should be left in place.

**Increase Teachers of Color Act – H.F. 824/S.F. 1012**

In the last decade, the percentage of Minnesota’s K-12 students of color has increased from 24% to 34%. Despite this, the percent of teachers of color has remained only 4%, and only 1.6% are of API heritage. To address the severe shortage of teachers of color, the Legislature successfully passed several sections of the Increase Teachers of Color Act with some new funding, including $750,000 per fiscal year for grants for student teachers of color and $750,000 per fiscal year for teacher mentorship and retention grants.

Additionally, the Council is pleased to report that the legislation received bipartisan support and was the top joint priority in education for Minnesota’s three ethnic councils.

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**Image:**

A photo of a sign saying, “The Council works toward economic, social, legal, and political equality for Minnesotans of Asian-Pacific Islander heritage.”
Research Achievements

Asian Pacific Islander Complete Count Committee
In September of 2019, the Council announced the formation of the Asian and Pacific Islander Complete Count Committee (API CCC). This committee aims to identify a statewide coalition of geographically and ethnically diverse API community leaders in order to raise awareness of the importance of the 2020 Census in Minnesota. The API CCC will facilitate the design and implementation of culturally responsive strategies to reach our API communities in Minnesota and ensure their participation in the 2020 Census.

Asians are the fastest-growing minority population in Minnesota and across the nation. In order to ensure an accurate and complete understanding of the reality of Minnesota's API population, an exhaustive count of all individuals in the 2020 Census is crucial. Establishing a statewide coalition of community leaders will serve to further the involvement, recognition, and relevance of Minnesota's API residents regarding statewide policies and future population counts.

Emerging Communities Report
The Council has undertaken groundbreaking work to compile a first-of-its-kind Emerging Communities Report (ECR), focusing on five emerging API communities in Minnesota. These communities are the Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese Lhotshampa, Guyanese Indians, and Chuukese peoples. This is an ongoing study encompassing the resettlement history, an assessment of current population in Minnesota, and an analysis of trending issues among each of these unique communities.

As these emerging communities grow, it is critical that policy makers, school districts, and community organizations have a basic understanding of each group’s unique attributes and needs. By conducting primary qualitative data collection, we hope to shed light on the unique experiences of these communities, and in doing so, provide critical information on relatively small communities that are vulnerable to being overlooked and underserved by policy makers.

The ECR will be completed in 2020.

Asian Pacific Islander Day at the Capitol
Asian Pacific Islander (API) Day at the Capitol is an annual Council event designed to help community members learn about the state policy making process. On March 19, 2019, the Council facilitated 16 legislative visits attended by 100 community members. More than a dozen members of the Legislature participated in the visits, including Representatives Her, Lesch, Mariani, and Noor, and Senators Gazelka, Hawj, Limmer, and Pratt.

This year, Governor Tim Walz attended API Day at the Capitol, marking the first time Minnesota’s governor has attended since 2013. The Governor’s attendance at this important event was deeply meaningful regarding the Council’s work—it served to remind our communities that the Capitol is truly the People’s House, because it is here that state government undertakes the work of the people. When public officials have more personal and frequent interactions with community members, it is more likely the community’s needs will be understood, considered, and reflected in state-level decisions.

Land of 10,000 APIs
In May of 2019, the Council honored Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) by celebrating the “Land of 10,000 API,” a visual series of engaging snapshots emblematic of the thriving API communities that make up our diverse state. The social media campaign provided glimpses into some of the vibrant stories and lives within our communities. With this project, the Council honored a cohort of community members for...
their contributions to our state and nation.

Posts from the month-long celebration can be found on Facebook and Twitter by searching for the hashtags #APAHM2019 and #Landof10000API.

Legislative Session Recap

In 2019, the Council took a new approach to informing Asian Pacific Minnesotans of key legislative decisions: it summarized the 2019 legislative session in five short, animated, and informational videos. Because the realm of public policy is confusing to many outsiders, the Council strives to find creative and enticing ways to communicate important policy decisions to its communities after each session. The videos summarized legislation in the following areas:

Health & Human Services:
- Established the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program to fund community-driven and culturally relevant prevention programs;
- Established the Skin Lightening Products Public Awareness and Education Grant Program to fund awareness of the dangers of mercury exposure to pregnant women; and
- Increased funding for school-linked mental health grants to support student mental health counseling.

E-12 Education:
- Passed a 2% increase in basic education funding to address educational achievement gaps;
- Renewed base funding of more than $8 million with a net increase of approximately $133,000 over the biennium for E-12 and Higher Ed programs intended to address the shortage of teachers of color as well as licensure shortage areas;
- Established the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program to increase racial equity, promote healthy child development, and reduce health disparities.

Higher Education:
- Appropriated $400,000 to fund a qualified student debt loan counseling organization;
- Invested $2.9 million in teacher grants and teacher loan forgiveness programs to help reduce barriers faced by upcoming teachers of color; and
- Imposed a 3% cap on tuition increases at Minnesota state colleges and universities and the University of Minnesota.

Jobs & Economic Development:
- Cut Minnesota’s second-tier income tax rate by 0.25%;
- Dedicated $2 million to the Southeast Asian Economic Disparities Relief Competitive Grant Program; and
Total Population of Asian Pacific Minnesotans: 325,207

I. POPULATION, BY COMMUNITY.

- Hmong: 79,643
- Asian Indian: 50,109
- Chinese: 38,238
- Japanese: 10,057
- Cambodian: 10,068
- Burmese (incl. Karen, Karenni): 13,765
- Vietnamese: 32,622
- Korean: 24,356
- Filipino: 20,559
- Laotian: 12,939
- Other Asian Pacific Groups: 32,951

II. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ADULTS OVER AGE 25.

- Bachelor’s degree or higher: 44%
- Less than high school diploma: 16%
- High school graduate or equivalent: 20%
- Some college or associate’s degree: 21%
- Less than high school diploma: 16%

III. HOUSEHOLD INCOME, IN 2018 DOLLARS.

- $10,000-$14,999: 4%
- $150,000-$199,999: 9%
- $10,000-$14,999: 4%
- $15,000-$24,999: 6%
- $100,000-$149,999: 18%
- $25,000-$34,999: 8%
- $75,000-$99,999: 14%
- $50,000-$74,999: 17%
- $25,000-$34,999: 8%

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

- Implemented a new law that makes wage theft a felony and punishes employers who retaliate against employees who report wage theft.

Judiciary & Public Safety:
- Passed Minnesota’s first hands-free cellphone law;
- Repealed the state’s marital rape exception statute; and
- Considered a bill to extend the timeline to petition conviction decisions for individuals faced with threats of deportation, barriers to naturalization, or travel limitations.

The five videos, each one to two minutes long, are available on the Council’s website.

Census 2020: Community Mobilization

To determine how the Council should assist with the state’s effort to ensure Asian Pacific Minnesotans participate fully in the 2020 Census, we sought the advice of key community leaders throughout the metro area and in greater Minnesota. These consultations occurred over the phone and in one-on-one meetings, during which the Council debriefed community leaders about modes of community mobilization during the 2010 Census—what worked, what did not work, what could be done to improve participation, and how the Council can help.

Participation in the 2020 Census is one of the many ways Asian Pacific Minnesotans can continue to model civic engagement for future generations. In full recognition of the fact that many, if not most, of our communities are relatively new to American democracy, the Council works to help community members understand what “democracy in action” means—via the decennial Census. As the political power of some of our ethnic communities have outpaced others’, the need for our varied and diverse ethnic groups to be engaged, informed, and collaborative is clear.

Community Events

At the Council, we strive to be present for our communities year-round. By being present, the Council demonstrates to its many communities that they matter. Being an active part of our many ethnic communities allows us to continually learn about their unique needs and emerging issues while building and maintaining relationships. This relationship building is key to our success.

In 2019, the Council actively participated in dozens of community events, including: Tibetan, Cambodian, Hmong, and Karen new year celebrations; Asian Women United of Minnesota “From the Heart” Gala; IndiaFest; Loy Kratong, the Thai festival of lights; VIIVCAUS-Aurora workshop on sexual assault; “Because Tomorrow Matters” youth suicide awareness event; the United Cambodian Association of Minnesota (UCAM) gala; and many others.

Some notable events the Council participated in this year include:

- Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT) Policy Forum, hosted by the three ethnic councils and a coalition of other organizations. More than 80 educators and community leaders gathered.
to discuss the following: (1) the progress we have made with respect to increasing teachers of color in Minnesota; and (2) the amended 2019 Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA) which the coalition (including our Council) plans to bring to the Legislature in 2020.

- An extensive interview with the California-based national organization Hmong Women Today on public policy and gender-based violence, and leadership that affects change at the policy level as well as challenges and signs of progress for newer American communities.

- Loy Kratong, hosted by the Thai Cultural Council of Minnesota and Wat Thai of Minnesota. Also known as the festival of lights, this event brought together leaders from the various Southeast Asian Minnesotan communities, Deputy Consul-General Khun Siripon of the Royal Thai Consulate General, and Commissioner John Harrington of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to celebrate the contributions these Southeast Asian communities have made to the state of Minnesota.

- “Bridges to China,” hosted by the Diversity Council of Rochester. This event focused on the need for ongoing cooperation and collaboration between cities like Rochester, home of the Mayo Clinic, and China, and the implications and applications of technology on health and wellness.
“As a co-chair of the API Complete Count Committee and a member of the Hmong Outreach Network, I am excited to engage our API communities in civic life through Census engagement in 2020. Through outreach to different API organizations, relationship-building, and community engagement, representative participation in the 2020 Census today will see our diverse communities reflected in state policies tomorrow.”

BAI VUE, CO-CHAIR OF THE API COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE AND A MEMBER OF THE HMONG OUTREACH NETWORK

Dear Community Members,

With every step forward, with each new year, we find ourselves in new legislative territory facing the priorities of our ever-evolving communities and state. Propelled by our conviction that we are much more likely to succeed in our individual and collective pursuits when government and the people work together, we welcome the future with hope and enduring enthusiasm.

In our role as the chief advocate for Asian Pacific Minnesotans within state government, our Council looks forward to 2020—both the challenges and opportunities unique to Minnesotans. Two of our top priorities include mobilizing our community to be fully counted in the 2020 Census and encouraging participation in the November general election. Legislatively, our Council sees opportunities this year to close the diversity gap in teaching, ensure that Asian Pacific Minnesotans have access to quality medical interpreters, and assist the Governor and the Legislature with their shared priorities for the state. Additionally, 2020 marks the 45th anniversary of the Southeast Asian American diaspora; our Council will make this an area of focus as well.

With appropriate support from the Legislature and the Governor, we believe our Council has and will continue to strategically contribute to our state government’s capacity to enact good policies and practice good politics. This is an ambitious and worthy goal for our state. Successfully meeting these goals with you will generate more opportunities for prosperity, economic growth, and social achievement, for all Minnesotans across many generations and walks of life. You have my personal thanks for all that you have done to support these efforts and make your voices heard. As the executive director, my personal goal in the year ahead is to continue expanding my time with all our communities so that we build a fuller understanding of who makes up our Asian Pacific Minnesotan community.

Among forthcoming transitions in 2020, one of our Council’s most dedicated and effective legislative supporters, State Senator Carolyn Laine, will step down from our Council and the Minnesota Legislature at the end of the year. We will miss her leadership, her advocacy, and most importantly, her friendship.

Throughout 2019, we enjoyed many successes fulfilling our statutory duties. In 2020, we look forward to continuing these vital roles in Minnesota—to working with our communities in Minnesota wherever they may be emotionally, geographically, and linguistically. In doing so, we hope our work helps to dismantle any barriers that stand in the way of your full participation.

Sincerely,

Sia Her

“As a co-chair of the API Complete Count Committee and a member of the Hmong Outreach Network, I am excited to engage our API communities in civic life through Census engagement in 2020. Through outreach to different API organizations, relationship-building, and community engagement, representative participation in the 2020 Census today will see our diverse communities reflected in state policies tomorrow.”

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Sincerely,

Sia Her
Minn. Stat. § 15.0145, Subd. 8

Subd. 2. Membership.
(a) Each council has 15 voting members. Eleven members of each council are public members appointed by the governor. Four members of each council are legislators.
(b) The governor shall appoint 11 members of each council as follows:

(c) The Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans must include one member from each of the five ancestries with the state’s highest percentages of Asian-Pacific populations, as determined by the state demographer. The other six members must be broadly representative of the rest of the Asian-Pacific population, with no more than one council member from any one ancestry. The council must include at least five women. For purposes of this clause, ancestry refers to heritage that is commonly accepted in Minnesota as a unique population.
(d) Four legislators are voting members of each council. The speaker of the house and the house minority leader shall each appoint one member to each council. The Subcommittee on Committees of the senate Committee on Rules and Administration shall appoint one member of the majority caucus and one member of the minority caucus to each council.

Subd. 7. Duties of council members.
A council member shall:
(1) attend and participate in scheduled meetings and be
Sia Her, Executive Director
Sia has been executive director of the Council since 2013. Before joining the Council, Sia served as campaign manager for the successful Saint Paul Public Schools’ “Strong Schools, Strong Communities” levy referendum. She has a master’s degree in public policy from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs and a bachelor’s degree in political science from Macalester College. Sia manages all operations and projects, and develops and implements strategic and well-informed plans to ensure that the Council delivers on its statutory duties. Contact: sia.her@state.mn.us

Anjuli Mishra Cameron, Research Director
Anjuli joined the Council in 2016. Prior to her work at the Council, Anjuli conducted public health research at the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago, and worked with community-based organizations in Minnesota on advancing health equity. She has a master’s degree in biomedical sciences from Rosalind Franklin University and a bachelor’s degree in neuroscience from Carleton College. Anjuli conducts original research, assists the executive director with advancing the Council’s major initiatives, and produces research reports to inform the Council’s key constituencies about the state of Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities. Contact: anjuli.cameron@state.mn.us

Virakcheath Hing, Office Manager/Executive Assistant
Virakcheath (Virak) joined the Council in September 2019. Prior to his work at the Council, Virak served as a public servant at the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and most recently, at the Department of Public Safety for more than two decades. He has a degree from the Center for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement. Virak manages the office of the Council, administers and monitors the Council budget, assists with supervision of the Council’s staff, and performs and coordinates numerous administrative functions as the assistant to the executive director. Contact: virakcheath.hing@state.mn.us

Andrew Morris, Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Andrew (Andy) Morris joined the Council in December 2019. A native of Minneapolis, Andy has lived and worked in Minneapolis; Washington, DC; and Tokyo, Japan across the non-profit, higher education, government, and private sectors in international exchange, government affairs, and policy analysis roles prior to joining the Council. He has a master’s degree in Asian Studies from Georgetown University’s Graduate School of Foreign Service and a bachelor’s degree in Asian Studies from Saint John’s University. Andrew educates, informs, and engages Asian Pacific Minnesotans on issues of importance to these communities; assists in developing the Council’s policy positions and legislative initiatives; and maintains close connection between the Council and its stakeholders. Contact: andrew.morris@mn.state.us

Daniel Yang, Research Assistant
Daniel joined the Council in December of 2019 after completing a year of work and studies as a Fulbright scholar in Thailand. During his undergraduate years, Daniel co-founded the JUSTICE mentoring program, which serves students from underrepresented and under-resourced communities. Daniel has also worked with multiple organizations through the Minneapolis Urban Scholars program, including Minnesota Management and Budget and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. He has a bachelor’s degree in political science from Saint John’s University. Daniel assists with research projects and community outreach; drafts social media content, graphic content, and the Council’s community newsletter; and assists with support tasks as necessary. Contact: daniel.y.yang@state.mn.us
Letter from the 2020 Chair

Dear Community Members,

As the incoming Chair of the Council, I am honored and excited to engage and advocate on your behalf, and the behalf of the many diverse communities our Council represents.

We are living in a time when our leaders recognize that a more representative government is in the interest of the common good.

We are living in a time of unprecedented progress; but also, unprecedented challenges facing America’s democratic institutions.

We are living with the echoes of our many histories—seeing the reverberations of the decisions of our friends, family, and loved ones, and seeing how those ripples have played out over time.

In 2020, Minnesota’s Southeast Asian communities, specifically the Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, and Hmong will observe the 45th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. The end of one series of events serves as the beginning for another; in this case, the beginning of the stories of our Southeast Asian Minnesotan communities.

Minnesota is home to some of the largest urban concentrations of newer Americans in the country. While many of our more established Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities are reveling in the opportunities available in America, our refugee-experienced and emerging communities are still facing complex challenges that require government to act in a way that recognizes fast-changing demographics and their respective realities. It is our statutory charge to serve all these Americans, bring their voices to the level of leadership, and break down the barriers that stand in the way of their success.

People thrive when they have a sense of community. It is my hope that the Council’s work will continue to foster and strengthen this feeling of statewide community in the coming year.

Respectfully yours,

Dave (Dai) Hoang

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FY19 EXPENDITURES

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“By meeting with API community leaders to build a plan by the community, for the community, we are helping to galvanize sustained engagement in the 2020 Census. As co-chair of both the API and Filipino American Complete Count Committees, I will see to this coalition-building to ensure under-counted and under-represented communities understand the importance of the 2020 Census.”

ALLEN MALICSI, CO-CHAIR OF BOTH THE API AND FILIPINO AMERICAN COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEES
“The API Complete Count Committee is tasked with dismantling any barriers that stand in the way of full participation in the 2020 Census by Minnesota’s API community. The importance of our task is impossible to overstate—this is democracy in action. This is civic engagement. This is the American dream.”

MONTHA CHUM, CO-CHAIR OF THE API COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RELEASE MN8