



SOPA 2014

STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF GUIMARAS
OCTOBER 29, 2014

Masanag nga palaabuton sa inyo tanan!

Thank you for your valuable and inspiring presence today.

It is a good one year, two months and 29 days since July 1, 2013, when we started our campaign for a renewed hope.

It is evident that our young province is full of opportunities and much is needed to progress. In the one year that you have given your faith to our administration, Guimaras is graciously bracing up an improved quality of life.

Last September, 2013, Guimaras was declared 'Rabies-Free Province,' having no positive case of rabies both on canine and human. The continuing Canine Rabies Prevention and Control Program of our Provincial Veterinary Services Office with the unceasing campaign support from our Provincial Health Office sustained this

recognition.

We have passed the requirements for the Seal of Good Local Governance with high ratings on Good Financial Housekeeping, Disaster Preparedness, Social Protection, Business-Friendliness and Competitiveness, and Peace and Order. This distinction marks that our Provincial Government has enhanced its existing performance and expanded the benchmark beyond good financial practices.

Our Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council received a consecutive 2nd Best PDRPMC in Gawad KALASAG Search for Excellence in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and Humanitarian Assistance for both national and provincial categories in 2013 and 2014.

These coveted recognitions did not just happen overnight. Neither did it happen by mere chance. It is the product of our purpose-



SAMUEL T. GUMARIN, MD, MPH
Governor

driven efforts to make Guimaras as the agri-tourism capital of the region with empowered, self-reliant and healthy families enjoying a progressive economy anchored on the principles of sustainable development.

I am privileged to share with you some of the humble undertakings that we have established for 2013 and allow me also, to impart our plans for 2014 and beyond.

ON AGRICULTURE...



Agriculture, fishery and tourism are the major drivers of Guimaras' economy. And funnelled to one of our four developmental goals that is to improve competitiveness and sustainability of our economy, our agriculture services massively work to enhance our agriculture areas particularly on Sustainable

Organic Vegetable Production.

The 105 seaweed growers that we have assisted expanded their seaweeds production area to 16 hectares contributing to 1,518 metric tons production in 2013. Our Guimaras Mango Industry produced 10,138 metric tons of mangoes with 10% increase compared to the 2012 production. In this production, our proud 700 mango growers adopted the Good Agricultural Practice and were monitored to maintain the quality of our cream of the crop. Our Organic Sweet Potato Production is as well inclining with 60 growers trained with the protocol packaging for export market, giving them an estimated income of P 9,000.00 per hectare, P 4,000.00 more than expected.

With our priority for farming livelihood, 17 of our Farmer's Association members were granted farm machineries. Ten collapsible dryers were given to our four municipalities (Jordan, San Lorenzo, Sibunag and Nueva Valencia), 84 public schools benefitted from our Agri-Pinoy Program, and three Rural-Based Organizations – the Rural Improvement Club for Women, 4-H Club for the youths and our Indigenous people were given support.

To continuously improve our economy in agriculture and fishery, we have allotted P 700,000.00 this year for the development of Agri-Fishery Demo Farms in support for our Agri-tourism circuit. We also established Biological Control Laboratory for Control of Major Pest of Rice, Corn and Vegetables.

We commit to carry on providing equity counterpart to Farm Machineries and Equipment, and to the construction of Small-Scale Irrigation Projects on Rainfed Rice Areas for our farmers.

Currently, we are working on a special program called the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP), in partnership with the World Bank and the Department of Agriculture (DA). PRDP is designed to establish an exclusive and market-oriented agri-fishery sector through strategic investments in priority commodity value chains, with one of its objective to increase by 20% the number of farmers and fishers with improved access to DA services.

With our intensified cooperation through our Provincial Office for Agricultural Services, our island will lead the agricultural market.

ON TOURISM...

Farm or agri-tourism destination is being set by Guimaras as its definitive tourism image in Western Visayas. With this directive, we have identified and developed six tourism circuits – the Educational and Research Destinations, Eco-Agri Adventure Destinations, Religious, Historical and Heritage Destinations, Sightseeing Destinations, Island Hopping Destinations and Experiential Community-Based Rural Tourism Destinations. 19 agri-tourism sites, destinations and festivals promoted, and 183 tourism front liners and stakeholders were trained. Six tourism-related events facilitated and four Tourism-Related Industry Groups (TRIGs) were organized under the umbrella organization of the Provincial Tourism Council. All of these have boosted our tourism sector and brought us a welcoming increase



of 4.11% visitors' arrival and 15 % occupancy rate in 2013.

Our island is blessed with natural resources that generously give our communities livelihood and at the same time liven up our culture. To promote a responsible engagement of tourism to these assets, we have strengthened our

Community-Based Tourism Development and Enhancement Project (CBTDEP). Together with our Provincial and Municipal Tourism Offices, seven festivals were enhanced and two Community-Based Rural Tourism projects – that of Hoskyn's Tultul and San Roque's Eco-tour, and eight Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have passed the Canadian Government for funding through LGSP-LED Metro-Iloilo Guimaras Innovation Challenge Fund to enhance their existing products and services

A Comprehensive Tourism Ordinance, Categorization, Classification and Accreditation of Tourism Products and Destinations is currently reviewed for the crafting of our Provincial Comprehensive Tourism Code that will standardize our policies

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