

## Officials of APRACA's Member-Institutions in India Visit FICOBank



High-ranking officials of member-institutions of the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) in India visited FICOBank on May 9, 2013. APRACA, which is based in Bangkok, Thailand, is an association dealing with rural and agricultural finance in the Asia-Pacific Region that facilitates cooperation and exchange of information and expertise among its member-institutions. The members of the Association are composed mainly of central, agricultural, development and commercial banks, as well as apex organizations and federations of financial institutions, rural development institutions and non-government institutions, in the Asia-Pacific rim.

Through the Center for Training and Research in Agricultural Banking (CENTRAB), the official training and research arm of APRACA, an International Study Visit Program on Rural and Cooperative Banking for five senior- and middle-level officers from APRACA's member-institutions in India was organized on May 6-11, 2013. The study visit was designed to provide the participants with the opportunity to learn from the

## FICOBank Bags More Awards from BANGKOOP

Continuing its corporate tradition of achieving significant progress and creating valuable impact to the community, as it marks a year-after-year remarkable growth, high-quality performance, outstanding contributions to countryside development and adherence to the strictest banking standards, FICOBank has been recognized once again.

On its 25th Annual General Assembly last July 29, 2013, which was held at the Supreme Hotel Convention Plaza in Baguio City, the Cooperative Banks Federation of the Philippines (BANGKOOP) presented to FICOBank the Award of Excellence for its outstanding financial performance in 2012. In addition, four more Awards of Distinction have also been given to the Bank for besting other cooperative banks in the Philippines in terms of resources, deposits, net worth and net income. The Vice Chairman of the Board, Mr. Wilfredo DC.

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## FICOBank Inaugurates Its San Fernando Branch

Following FICOBank's success in setting its market footprint in Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, the Bank hit another huge market, as San Fernando (Pampanga) Branch carried out its inaugural banking activities on June 17, 2013. This was brought about by the transfer of Mangaldan (Pangasinan) Branch to the said City.

After a thorough study of the social and economic conditions of the City of San Fernando, Pampanga, the Board of Directors, through the strong recommendation of the Senior Management, decided to relocate FICOBank's Mangaldan Branch in it to take advantage of its great market potential.

The grand opening of FICOBank's San Fernando Branch started with a blessing-and-dedication rites officiated by Rev. Aristotle R. Delos Santos of the Kamuning Bible Christian Fellowship. This was immediately followed by the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Hon. Oscar S. Rodriguez, Congressman-elect of the Third District of Pampanga. Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, President/CEO of FICOBank, in the





## Officials of APRACA's... from page 1

government regulators and practitioners regarding the growth, development and promotion of rural and cooperative banking in the Philippines, and discover the best practices and approaches which they may adopt or replicate in their country. As planned, and as coordinated with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, GM Bank will represent the rural banking industry while FICOBank will represent the cooperative banking industry.

For its part, FICOBank, at its branch in Cabanatuan City, made the briefing on May 9, 2013 for the eight-person representatives of APRACA CENTRAB. The delegates from the member-institutions of APRACA in India were: Mr. B.P. Singh, Regional Manager of the Central Bank of India; Mr. S.C. Singh, Deputy General Manager of the Central Bank of India; Mr. S.K. Rai, also a Deputy General Manager of the Central Bank of India; Mr. Pandurang Balasaheb Kodag, Branch Head of the Bank of Baroda (India); and Mr. Thampy Kurian, Additional General Manager of the Federal Bank (India). They were accompanied by Ms. Lecira Juarez, Managing Director, Ms. Gigi Cuevas, Program Officer, and Ms. Grace Ferrer, Finance and Administrative Officer, of the APRACA CENTRAB Secretariat in the Philippines.

The President & CEO of FICOBank, Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, rendered a masterful presentation of FICOBank's profile, programs, projects, products, services, outreach methodologies and accomplishments, as well as the best practices and approaches in the promotion, development and strengthening of the cooperative banking in the Philippines. The virtuoso performance of President/CEO Ocampo in portraying FICOBank and the cooperative banking industry—in a periscope—was also witnessed by the Board of Directors and some senior officers at the corporate office and key officers at the area office in Central Luzon.

This one-day study mission of APRACA CENTRAB at FICOBank culminated in a visit of, and interaction with, the Bank's clients in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

— RR Palac

## FICOBank Inaugurates... from page 1

presence of the Board of Directors, officers and staff of the Bank, key officials of the City of San Fernando, other visitors and would-be clients, flavored the inaugural address by revealing himself as a *cabalen* (*kababayan*) of the



*Capampangans*, which made the Bank closer to the heart of the residents of the City. President Ocampo highlighted the socio-economic profile of the City by mentioning the presence of 245 financial institutions, which is a manifestation of the City's development and economic growth. In his message, the President was also very pleased to announce that San Fernando Branch will be manned by well-trained and customer-service-driven personnel, headed by Mr. Reynaldo U. Valdez, Jr. Meanwhile, the Bank's profile and recent developments were shared by Ms. Carlyn M. Vitoria, Human Resource and Administration Department Head, to the guests and visitors.

As a *Capampangan*, Congressman-elect Rodriguez surprised the Bank's stakeholders by saying that the *Ilocanos* are very close to his heart. In his inspirational message, he assured the audience that the City of San Fernando, as the center of commerce in the province of Pampanga, is a safe and strategic place to put up a business undertaking. He added that the private sector, which includes businesses and financial institutions, plays an important and parallel role in the governance and development of the City. Subsequently, Hon. Edwin D. Santiago, Mayor-elect of the City of San Fernando, expressed his gratitude to FICOBank for choosing their City as one of its branch locations. He further assured the spectators that they will do their best to make the City of San Fernando a better place in doing business.

The Chairman of the Board, Atty. Estalker A. Argonza, conveyed his sincerest appreciation for the warm welcome from the residents of the City of San Fernando. He said that he has high hopes in opening a branch in the said City because of its fast-growing population and ever-booming economy. He is optimistic that the opening of a branch in the City will make the presence of FICOBank strongly felt in the province of Pampanga. He added that the Bank's wide array of financial products and services will definitely cater to the financial needs of the people in the metropolis.

The opening of San Fernando Branch will definitely and significantly benefit the Bank and the City of San Fernando. Both parties are



looking forward to the success of their newly established partnership for development.

FICOBank San Fernando is conveniently located at PLSC Bldg., A. Consunji St., Sto. Rosario, San Fernando City, Pampanga. The branch personnel can be contacted through telephone no. (045) 435-1174.

— Michelle A. Cadiz

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Antonio, and the Security Officer, Mr. Jimmy C. Padernilla, received the said awards on behalf of the Bank.

Both national and local dignitaries—Mr. Nestor A. Espenilla, Jr. (Deputy Director of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas), Ms. Gilda E. Pico (President & CEO of the Land Bank of the Philippines), Ms. Jovita M. Corpuz (Executive Director of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council), Dr. Orlando J. Sacay (Recognized Father of the Cooperative Banking Industry), Hon. Nestor B. Fongwan (Provincial Governor of Benguet), Hon. Edna C. Tabanda (Municipal Mayor of La Trinidad, Benguet) and Hon. Mauricio G. Domogan (Mayor of Baguio City)—also graced the said occasion.

Drawing more inspiration from these remarkable feats, FICOBank aims to soar even higher toward banking excellence.

— Fae Marie Louise M. Esteban

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## FICOBank Embarks on a Risk-Based Lending Training Program

In compliance with the BSP's imposed policy on the adoption and maintenance of an internal credit risk rating system, FICOBank took initiative and effort to come up with its own Risk-Based Lending framework. This lending approach, which is to be fully carried out by the Bank in July 2013, will be used as a tool for systematically assessing, measuring, controlling and managing credit risk in applicable sectors and borrowers, specifically the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). To ensure the effective implementation and supervision of the same, the Bank has created its Risk-Based Lending Management Office (RBLMO), headed by Mr. Ronald C. Busto.

In order to foster the culture of risk-based lending at the Bank, Mr. Busto and his team started the conduct of the Risk-Based Lending Training Program on June 8, 2013. The RBL Training Program, which is facilitated by RBL trainers, who have also undergone extensive training about this new lending methodology, is specifically designed for the Bank branch/extension office managers, assistant branch/extension office managers, loan officers, loan bookkeepers, credit officers, credit assistants, account officers and audit assistants. As the trainees, together with the trainers, are divided into three groups, the three series of RBL training activities are held in three venues—Cauayan City (Isabela), Alicia (Isabela) and Cabanatuan City (Nueva Ecija). The RBL Training Program is made up of three modules, namely: (1) Introduction to SME Lending and Overview of Financial Statements; (2) Financial Statement Validation, Reconstruction and Analysis, Borrower Risk Rating (BRR) Principles and Preparation, and Facility Risk Rating (FRR) Principles and Preparation; and (3) Credit Risk Management Concepts, Credit Risk Mitigation, Risk-Based Lending Process Flow, Loan Structuring and RBL Database.

The pool of trainers for the Bank's RBL Training Program, with Mr. Busto as its Lead Trainer, is composed of: Mr. Dionicio A. Marquez, Jr., Credit Department Head; Ms. Marjorie J. Cabilas, Todo Finance Unit Head; Mr. Edmar D. de Luna, Regular Loans Unit Head; Ms. Lara Angelie P. Manzano, EA to the SVP for Administration and Support Services; Ms. Abigail A. Ramones, Compliance Assistant; Ms. Angeli Psyhe B. De Leon, Audit Assistant; Mr. Mark Romel A. Sunga, Credit Assistant; Mr. Judith G. Gamido, Credit Assistant; Mr. Ferdimar A. Peralta, Credit Assistant; Ms. Winnie Veth P. Clemente, Credit Assistant; and Ms. Leslie A. Martinez, also a Credit Assistant.

At present, the Bank's Risk-Based Lending Training Program continues to provide the participants with knowledge necessary to increase their appreciation on the benefits of risk-based lending, as a means of providing credit access to a greater number of SMEs that will improve their productivity and realize their growth goals.

— Juan Jacinto T. Ambrocio

## FICOBank Joins BSP in Its Financial Learning Campaign for OFWs and Their Beneficiaries in Ilagan City

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), in collaboration, and in cooperation, with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) and selected institutions, conducted a financial learning campaign for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their beneficiaries at Marj's Hotel in Ilagan City on June 19, 2013.

Dubbed "*Paghahanda sa Kinabukasan*," the activity aims to promote the importance of financial planning by discussing with the OFWs the productive uses of their remittances through saving, investment in financial instruments and entrepreneurship. This campaign is a major component of the Economic and Financial Learning Program (EFLP), a program of the BSP that promotes greater awareness and understanding of economic and financial issues to help the public make well-informed decisions and choices.

Among the invited institutions were the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Social Security System (SSS), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and the First Isabela Cooperative Bank (FICOBank). The participants, on the other hand, were composed of over 200 OFWs and their beneficiaries from the different municipalities/cities in Isabela and its adjacent provinces.

The campaign started with a message from Mr. Ricardo M. Cogay, Deputy Director and Head of BSP-Tuguegarao Branch. In his speech, he emphasized the role of Financial Learning Campaign, as an advocacy of BSP, to help educate OFWs and their beneficiaries on the importance of using remittances to build up savings and in directing investments in financial products and business ventures. This was followed by a series of lectures about the importance of microfinance and retirement preparedness from the speakers of BSP.

Each invited institution, through its representative, was given the chance to discuss its products and services that cater to OFWs and their beneficiaries. The Bank's products and services were ably discussed by Ms. Michelle A. Cadiz, a technical staff of the Business Development Department. During the forum, the participants were allowed to ask questions and raise their concerns regarding the products and services that were discussed to them by the speakers.

Moreover, during the campaign, OWWA signified its interest to ask for the participation of the Bank in its entrepreneurial campaigns. This signifies good opportunity for the Bank to further expand its market reach and bolster its presence in its geographic areas of operation.

Through this worthy endeavor, the BSP, with the active cooperation of both the public and private sectors, hopes to help the OFWs and their beneficiaries achieve financial independence and security, bring them into the fold of the formal financial system, and enable them to participate more meaningfully in the country's economic development.

— Kevin Marc M. Sinagub



## FICOBank Gets BSP's Approval to Increase Its Capital Stock

The Central Applications and Licensing Group (CALG) of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) had approved on March 5, 2013 the application for the amendment on the Articles of Cooperation of the First Isabela Cooperative Bank (FICOBank), particularly the increase on the Bank's Authorized Capital Stock from Php50 million to Php160 million and the reclassification of 2,350 unissued Preferred Shares "A" and 6,450 unissued Preferred Shares "B" to Preferred Shares "C".

With the aim to raise and improve its current capital structure, the cooperative-stockholders of FICOBank had approved, during their regular meeting held on September 10, 2010 at Isabela Hotel and Resort, Minante I, Cauayan City, Isabela, the proposed amendments to the Articles of Cooperation, with at least three-fourths of all members, with voting rights present and constituting a quorum, concurring.

The said proposal was formally submitted for approval on June 25, 2012 to the CALG of the BSP, particularly addressed to its Deputy Director and Head, Atty. Manuel C. Segueria.

The overall impact of the aforesaid application on the Bank's capital structure shall be of two things: first, to increase the Authorized Capital Stockholdings of the Bank from Php50 million to Php160 million or equivalent to an increase from 50,000 shares to 160,000 shares for both common and preferred shares, thereby increasing the Authorized Common Stockholdings from Php30 million to Php80 million and the Authorized Preferred Stockholdings from Php20 million to Php80 million; and second, to reclassify the 2,350 unissued Preferred Shares "A" and 6,450 unissued Preferred Shares "B" into Preferred Shares "C", thereby increasing the Authorized Preferred Shares "C" from 3,700 to 72,500 shares while effecting a reduction on the Authorized Preferred Shares "A" from 3,100 to 750 shares and to the Authorized Preferred Shares "B" from 13,200 to 6,750 shares.

After almost a year of negotiation, the BSP had approved on March 5, 2013 the aforesaid application. A corresponding letter bearing the approval and a certificate of authority to register the said amendments on the Bank's Articles of Cooperation to the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) was sent by the BSP and received by the Bank on March 13, 2013.

In compliance with the BSP's instruction, an application for registration was submitted to the CDA on March 15, 2013. On May 2, 2013, the CDA has approved the aforesaid application and effectuate the registration accordingly. A corresponding certificate of registration was sent by the CDA and was received by the Bank on May 14, 2013.

Authorized Capital Stock is the maximum number of shares a certain entity is allowed to issue for its capitalization. The amount thereof is stated at the entity's Articles of Cooperation of which, in accordance with Article 99 of Republic Act 9520, also known as the Cooperative Code of the Philippines, only a vote of at least three-fourths of all the members with voting rights present and constituting a quorum can effect an amendment.

The said approval allows the Bank to generate more funds to finance its current operation as well as its expansion plans.

— Lara Angelie P. Manzano

## FICOBank's New Set of Board of Directors Attends Orientation/Reorientation Program

Given the policy- and decision-making functions and the general oversight role over the Bank, it is of paramount importance for the members of the Board to: be familiarized with the basic concepts and common terms used in banking business; know why banks are being regulated; relate banking business concepts vis-à-vis the Bank's operations; and know more about the Bank's governance and management perspectives. Thus, an Orientation/Reorientation Program, which aims to enable the new set of Board of Directors to make sound business decisions for the Bank, was conducted on June 13, 2013 at the Corporate Office.

During the orientation, the members of the Board got familiar with: the key financial management evaluation factors of a bank (liquidity, stability, profitability and growth potential); the different critical management concerns of a bank (liquidity management, money position, bank reserves, asset management, liability management, capital adequacy and profitability); the major balance-sheet characteristics of a bank in relation to the present asset, liability and capital structures of FICOBank; and the risk management and marketing concepts of a bank. Further, the directors got a general idea on: corporate governance and its various laws/regulations; the elements of sound corporate governance; the qualifications and disqualifications of a member of the Board; the general and specific duties of the Board; and the different Board and Management committees of the Bank. Furthermore, the compliance oversight function of the Board was given emphasis to ensure the effective implementation of the Bank's Compliance Program, both to prevent and to address operational weaknesses and violations of rules and regulations. President/CEO Herminio G. Ocampo, SVP Hubert E. Molina and CCO Oscar M. Maninantan served as the resource persons of the said orientation/reorientation.

Definitely, all of the lessons learned will serve as guide of the members of the Board in performing their respective duties and responsibilities. Also, the same will be the Board's basis in determining and analyzing the current status of the Bank's business operations and the accomplishment of its plans and programs, which will subsequently direct them in making, as much as possible, best decisions for FICOBank and in the fulfillment of its corporate objectives and goals.

Upon completing this orientation/reorientation program and gaining more knowledge in banking, it is the primary responsibility of the Board to carry out its policy- and decision-making functions, with utmost diligence and for the best interest of the Bank and its stakeholders. Thus, the Board's general oversight role is geared toward good corporate governance and the achievement of FICOBank's public purpose.

— Fae M. Esteban



## Tripling the 2013 Summer Outing Fun and Adventure



It is not surprising that this year's summer outing—pardon the pun—is still the hottest affair of the season. With all the pictures being displayed and the cheery conversations being heard here and there, there's no wonder, FICOBankers really had a kick of fun and adventure.

If in the previous years all FICOBankers were brought together to meet, mingle and make memories, a sudden turn of event made the recently conducted outing stirring news. For the first time on its "summertime gallery," the Bank's Management decided to carry out this team-building activity with three groups—the Northeast Luzon Area, the Central and Northwest Luzon Area, and the Corporate Office.

This is apparent since the FICOBank family is getting bigger, and it is also becoming extremely difficult to select a perfect venue that would not only accommodate all FICOBankers but will also satisfy their diversified tastes and preferences in beating the summer heat. Hence, the three groups were given the freedom to choose as to where, when and how will they make the most out of this summer getaway. Inasmuch as all deserve a break from the hustle and bustle of work, it was really a must to select the best beach resort to relax and have fun at. And with this, there's no doubt that each group had its perfect choice as to where it could let loose of its outrageousness.

The group of Northeast Luzon (NEL) Area, headed by Area Manager Zorina S. Aradanas, chose to enjoy the summer at the Terra Rika Beach and Dive Resort at Saud White Beach Cove in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte last May 18-19, 2013. Different teams were made—North, East, West and South—for the series of parlor games that have been prepared, like balloon race, fill the bottle with water, ski race and egg throwing and catching. Everybody got high on these games. The East Team (operating units of Head Office, Jones, Alicia and Echague) was proclaimed as the overall champion. It was followed by the West Team (operating units of Roxas, Ilagan, Aurora and San Mateo), South Team (operating units of Maddela, Santiago, Solano, Bambang and Diffun) and North Team (operating units of Aparri, Solana, Tuguegarao and Tumauni) for the second, third and fourth places, respectively. In addition, singing contests and beauty pageants were also conducted to dash more fun. For the singing contests, Ms. Laarni Silverio (Female Category) and Mr. Joel Mamuric (Male Category) won while Ms. Kristine Star Querubin and Mr. Marlon Jacinto clinched the titles of Ms. NEL Summer Outing (*Kagandahan* Pageant) and Ms. GAY Summer Outing (*Kabonggahan* Pageant), respectively, for the beauty contests.

On the other hand, on June 1-2, 2013, the Central and Northwest Luzon Area group, led by its Area Administrative Officer, Mr. Samson T.

## Getting Ready for Viral Marketing

One of the coolest things about the Web is that when an idea takes off, it can propel a brand or a company to seemingly instant fame and fortune for free. "Free" is the most powerful word in a marketer's vocabulary. Most viral marketing campaigns give away valuable products or services to draw attention. By the word-of-mouth, one person sends it to another, then that person sends it to yet another, and on and on. But nothing is guaranteed to go viral, and for that matter, it has to be viral-able.

As FICOBank intends to go viral, its Business Development Department (BDD) Head, Dr. Robert R. Palac, and E-Marketing Assistant, Ms. Katrina Ann A. Bolo, attended the Seminar on Viral Marketing last April 29, 2013, which was conducted by Dr. Donald Patrick L. Lim, E-Marketing Strategist of Mansmith and Fielders, Inc., at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Makati City. The said seminar is imperative to the Bank, as many organizations nowadays set out to go viral. They are enjoying great benefits with lower costs and higher response rates from their target market. Actually, it is now becoming a trend in boosting marketing campaigns. So, how does one make a material viral?

First, it has to be authentic. Authenticity is important—it should be very human. There's only one PSY. There's only one Christopher Lao. There's only one cat that can play a keyboard like he owns it. The point is, don't try to be someone else. It has to come out with purpose. Is it to promote a brand, launch a new product or just for plain fun? Let the audience feel something. Let them feel happiness, sadness or heck. Make the message known. Tell a story, and leave them with something to remember it.

The OFW Project of Coca-Cola is the most successful viral video released locally—barely 72 hours after it was launched. The said video reached one million views and became a Twitter trend worldwide. At its peak, it became the world's most shared video getting over 700,000 shares by "netizens" from different parts of the globe. It produced massive cultural and emotional impact because of the heavy emotional tear-jerking video execution. It was a campaign that resonated powerfully with Filipinos and touched the hearts of millions more around the world, notwithstanding geography, race or nationality.

Further, land the material on websites, blogs and social networking sites, where friends and most of the contacts are found, since people are willing to share the material for free. It could be simple but creative and easy to share. Track and analyze the results if the marketing campaign is successful.

A viral marketing campaign must ensure that the process of creating a viral marketing plan is followed. That is to determine the campaign goal, wherein the objectives will determine what business goal the company wants to accomplish. Followed by creating the virus, for it is the reason of it all. Identify the carriers where the virus starts the infection, and contaminate it to spread. Lastly, to know if the virus infected the targets, a success metrics should be used to determine its effectiveness.

— Kat A. Bolo



## General Assembly Recognizes 2012 a Momentous Year for FICOBank



FICOBank successfully convened its General Assembly (GA) on May 25, 2013 at the Tindalo Hall, Isabela Hotel and Resort, Minante I, Cauayan City. The GA Meeting, with the theme "FICOBank in 2012: A Growth Benchmark for the Future," was participated by 101 coop-stockholders, which represents 98.06 percent of the total membership of the Bank. Also present during the said event were the Board of Directors, the Senior Management, department heads and branch/extension office managers.

The GA Meeting formally started at around 10:00 a.m. with a doxology and singing of the national anthem by the Isabela Dance Sport and Cultural Team. This was immediately followed by an opening prayer and message from Rev. Manuel M. Gonzales, Jr., Senior Pastor of the Living Streams Fellowship in Quezon City. In his message, Rev. Gonzales shared some inspirational thoughts that could help the Bank to continue its growth and success. He gave emphasis on making God as the center of the Bank's business. He pointed out, "Having a spiritual relationship with God, the Bank could learn more ways to grow its business, in partnership with the community and people around it."

Mr. Florentino T. Somera, Jr., Chairman of the Board, recalled, in his opening remarks, that 33 years ago, the very first FICOBank General Assembly Meeting was held. He said that he is very grateful to be a part of the history of FICOBank, as he was one of those Agricultural Cooperative Development Officers (ACDOs) who helped establish the Bank. According to him, FICOBank will have its place in the history of the country as a successful cooperative bank established by farmers for the purpose of bringing about the economic ascendancy of the many people in the countryside. He encouraged all FICOBankers, as well as the member-cooperatives of the Bank, to continue to work together to achieve the Bank's growth target in the future.

Serving as the keynote speaker, Atty. Niel A. Santillan, Executive Director of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), congratulated the member-cooperatives and employees for the success of FICOBank. He expressed his strong belief that the Management will continue to seek the best for the Bank. But he also said that doing the best is attuned to the fear of change. Nevertheless, he added that change is just a part of life that everybody has to undergo. He ended his message with good news by saying that the CDA, in coordination with the Cooperative Banks Federation of the Philippines (BANGKOOP), will issue an order of deferment of the

## Mid-Term Review of FICOBank's Five-Year Development Plan



In assessing the progress of its 2011-2015 Development Plan, dubbed as "Firmly FOCUSED," the Bank conducted a Mid-Term Review on July 26-27, 2013 at the Baguio Burnham Suites in Baguio City, with the theme "Staying in Business amid Difficult and Stringent Banking Environment." This was attended by the Bank's Board of Directors, senior officers, heads of the different departments and offices, area managers and some branch/extension office managers.

Started at 8:00 a.m., the review and planning session opened with a prayer, imploring the Almighty for wisdom and guidance, which was led by BM Donna Jane F. Empania. The Chairman of the Board, Atty. Estalcker A. Argonza, welcomed everyone and set the tone of the activity. This was followed by the presentation of Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, the President & CEO of FICOBank. He gave a background that FICOBank, as a business organization, is not shielded, immune or could avoid being affected by developments that are or will be happening in its environment. Coming up with alternative strategic solution(s) is/are necessary in order for the Bank to fit in with its changing market and regulatory backdrop. He further spoke of the trends in the banking industry, particularly in rural/coop banking, as well as the issues and concerns besetting the Bank. He ended his presentation with the Bank's probable, but doable, response to address the same.

Afterward, SVP Emilio U. Rico, Jr. presented the "what have been" vis-à-vis "what would be" of the said five-year plan. He discussed, in details, the accomplishments of the Bank for the first half of its five-year-term plan. SVP Hubert E. Molina subsequently talked about the shortcomings in accomplishments and the barriers being encountered by the Bank in pursuing its five-year plan. Majority of the shortcomings and barriers are dependent on the Bank's conversion into a thrift bank, which, although already approved by the Monetary Board, the Bank cannot pursue the implementation process due to legal concerns.

Meanwhile, the consultants of the Bank, Prof. Vicente R. Valdellon, Jr. and Mr. Jowell L. Tan of the VRV Management and Property Consultancy, Inc., facilitated the question-and-answer portion of the said mid-term review. Several concerns on the previous presentations were raised by the participants, but were also properly addressed afterward. And to come up with some enhancing and facilitating moves/strategies for the on-track and off-track paths of its corporate journey, or partly or entirely revise its direction in light of the various changes in market conditions and trends, as well as in regulatory rules and requirements, a workshop was facilitated by the consultants.

The consensus of the participants that transpired during the workshop was to make adjustment in growth indicators and continue the corporate approach, but will keep the status of the Bank, as a cooperative bank, until 2015. What will matter most in the very near future is being **different** from others rather than being **better** than others. After all, FICOBank is "a bank that makes a difference."

— MA Cadiz & FM Esteban



## FICOBank Sponsors Bombo Medico 2013



As part of its corporate social responsibility, FICOBank sponsored the Medical and Dental Mission organized by Bombo Radyo Philippines last July 14, 2013 at the Our Lady of Pillar College, Cauayan City, Isabela. The activity—Bombo Medico 2013—simultaneously took place in 24 key cities across the country.

According to Bombo Medico 2013 nationwide statistics, there were 44,861 Filipinos who benefited from this activity. It was attended by 5,000 medical practitioners, such as, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and other volunteers. Five million medicines were given to the beneficiaries.

In Cauayan City, a total of 1,423 patients were given free medical and dental services, in various fields, such as dental (192 patients), optical (219 patients), internal medicine (364 patients), pediatric (207 patients), ENT (114 patients), OB-gynecology (29 patients), pulmonary (150 patients) and cardiology (148 patients). There were 45 doctors and health practitioners from private and public hospitals and 71 volunteer nurses and other support staff present during the event, which was participated by various organizations/institutions, such as: 5th ID Medical and Dental Team, Philippine Dental Association (Isabela and Quirino Chapters), Philippine Academy of Ophthalmologist (Cagayan Valley Chapter), Optometrist Association of the Philippines (Isabela Chapter), De Vera Medical Center, Ester R. Garcia Medical Center, Gov. F.N. DY Memorial Hospital, Cauayan District Hospital, Isabela Medical Society and Our Lady of the Pillar College of Nursing.

With this sponsorship, FICOBank was given the privilege to promote its financial products and services through a 15-second ads (three spots per day) for seven days, 15-minute guesting/interview in *Good Morning Philippines*, four-time pre-plugging per day for seven days, display of a streamer inside the venue, and post-credit mention during the *Zona Libre* and *Bombo Hanay Bigtime*.

Also, during the said event, Ms. Michelle A. Cadiz, Mr. Kevin Marc M. Sinagub, Ms. Riel Kamille V. Nera and Ms. Tanya Mae D. Silao, BDD and HRAD staff, distributed flyers with the desire to attract prospective clients.

Prior to this social-welfare commitment, last June 30, 2013, Ms. Michelle and Mr. Kevin Marc were invited as guests for *Good Morning Philippines*, hosted by Bombo Gil. They were given the opportunity to discuss briefly the Bank's history, its products and services and business plans on air.

— Riel Kamille V. Nera

## FICOBank Espouses Risk-Based Audit Approach

As risks hinder the achievement of Bank's objectives, internal controls are necessary to manage such risks, hence, the internal auditing function. Internal auditing provides opinions—based on verifiable facts and viewed without bias—to the Management about whether these internal controls are managing the risks to acceptable levels.

Just last May 23, 2013, Mr. Oscar M. Maninantan, Bank's Chief Compliance Officer, Mr. Albert V. Agnes, Internal Audit Department Head, and Mr. Wincy Jay R. Parada, Audit Assistant, attended the seminar on Risk-Based Audit Approach for Banks in Intramuros, Manila. This was conducted by the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines (RBAP), through the Rural Bankers Research and Development Foundation, Inc. (RBRDFI), to strengthen the rural/coop banking industry.

Mr. Norberto "Nolan" Nabong, Banker, AML Compliance Officer and Trainor/Consultant, served as the resource person of the said seminar. He discussed what risk-based audit approach is, how to assess the risks, how to respond to these risks and how to report such identified risks. Also, risk-based audit approach was explained, as it looks into business process from a risk and control angle, with the following objectives: (i) to identify, quantify and analyze the risks that affect the bank's objectives and strategies; and (ii) to communicate timely the results thereof to users.

Furthermore, risk-based audit approach was elaborated that its purpose is to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, at the financial statement and assertion levels, by understanding the bank's operations and its environment, including its internal control, thereby providing a basis for designing and implementing responses to the assessed risk of material misstatement. After the business and fraud risks have been identified and assessed, consideration can be given to the existence of significant risks. Significant risk is where the assessed risk of material misstatement is so high that, in the auditor's judgment, it will require special audit consideration on high-risk activities, large non-routine transactions, matters requiring judgment or management intervention and potential for fraud. An evaluation of the results will take place after the planned audit has been performed. This would include a review of the audit documentation and discussions with the engagement team, and any changes to the audit plans as a result of the procedures performed.

Through this risk-based audit approach, FICOBank can assure its various stakeholders that the risks inherent in its banking operations are being properly managed.

— Quenee B. Tomas





## The Imperatives of Directors' Orientation and Training Programs in Corporate Governance

The recent principles (BIS, 2010) and rules (BSP, 2012) on corporate governance emphasize the overriding importance of orientation and training programs for directors of all banking institutions. These capability-building programs aim to help the members of the Board of Directors acquire, maintain and deepen their knowledge and skills in banking.

Our self-regulation on corporate governance encourages the development of a structured orientation program for all our new directors and the adoption of an appropriate training program for all the directors of our Board. And to fulfill our basic function and specific responsibilities, as prescribed by our By-Laws and imposed by law, our Bank ensures that all its directors have access to programs of customized initial and ongoing education on relevant banking aspects.

As our new directors are likely to require some important information and training when they are first elected by the General Assembly, our Board, through its Education and Training Committee, schedules an induction program not just to welcome them to our Board and comply with the rules but to prepare them for their new roles. Board induction is essential in ensuring that our new directors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and understand the corporate objectives and operations of our Bank. With such orientation, our new directors can easily grasp the principles and practices of corporate governance, the purposes and goals of our organization, and the systems and processes of our banking operations, which will in turn help them boost their confidence in policy/decision making and general oversight.

When becoming a member of any committee of the Board, our new director is also required to participate in an orientation session, so as to get acquainted with his/her applicable responsibilities, as well as the prescribed practices of such committee. This orientation system is intended to enable our starter to become active and useful member of the committee, rather than being cast into action without understanding how to perform his/her specific role.

Over time, our role, as directors, is becoming more difficult because we need to deal with a wider variety of intricate issues concerning the complexity of the banking business, the high dynamism and volatility of the markets, and the rigorous oversight function of the Board, as a prerequisite for the sound and prudent management of our Bank. Likewise, from time to time and during our regular and special meetings, we are receiving presentations about our Bank and its operations, as well its plans and programs, products and services, financial and non-financial performances, audit findings and exceptions, legal and compliance issues, and risk management and business continuity matters. These periodic presentations encompass corporate governance matters, fiduciary obligations and responsibilities of the directors, and legal and regulatory development, which are deemed relevant to the Board. With these, our Board and its various committees need to undertake specialized training courses, as appropriate, to avoid the prevalence of information asymmetry.

With our orientation, training and development programs for directors, we are armed with a fundamental tool that we could use in improving the effectiveness of our Bank's corporate governance. As such, we can expect that our new and incumbent directors are adequately informed, skilled and competent to offer a significant contribution to the overall task of creating value for the Bank. More importantly, with their depth and flair in corporate governance, we can surely count on them—acting individually and collectively in the best interest of the Bank—as they take upon themselves the ultimate responsibility and accountability to the Bank's stakeholders and regulators.

*Atty. Estalder A. Argonza*





## Fostering a Culture of Good Corporate Governance through Public Governance

The old conventional wisdom held that corporate governance in banking industry is distinct from local governance in public sector. This thinking is rooted in the fact that banks—like FICOBANK—are created mainly for the purpose of buying and selling of money. On the other hand, the basic mission of the local government, such as the local government of the City of San Fernando (Pampanga), is the socio-economic welfare of its constituents. I believe that in both cases, the management of our Bank *per se*, and the local government of the City of San Fernando, have an obligation to their respective constituencies—the clients of our Bank and the citizens of the said City.

The City of San Fernando—our newest market location—has successfully made good governance as one of its economic cornerstones. The City has continually advocated competence, transparency and accountability in public service through the stewardship of its local government unit. The breakthrough performance results of its Performance Governance System (PGS), the local adaptation of the Harvard-pioneered Balanced Scorecard management system, has made the City as one of the world's best-managed organizations after being elevated to the Palladium Balanced Scorecard Hall of Fame for Executing Strategy in 2010. Through this governance system, all constituents are able to monitor the progress and evaluate the impact of all projects and programs implemented by the City. The results of the implementation of PGS include: (i) significant increase in the City's income; (ii) near 100-percent client satisfaction rating; (iii) faster processing time of business permit applications; (iv) enhanced public-private partnership, leading to an improved socio-economic condition; and (v) dramatic growth of the City's middle class. This has also served as the platform where problems of graft and corruption in the City, including the adverse impact of political patronage, are uprooted. In addition, the City's establishment of the Multi-Sectoral Governance Council, composed of representatives from various sectors (e.g., private business, academe, transport, agriculture, health, religion, civil society, women and youth) has also led to positive results in the economic development of the City.

On the other hand, our Bank, for a lengthy span of years, is continuously growing and succeeding in providing the financial needs of its clients because of its relentless practice of good corporate governance. We created our Corporate Governance Program to make the leaders of our Bank compliant with the core principles and best practices of sound and effective corporate governance in banking. Our program in corporate governance is composed of competency development, policy formulation, strategic direction, oversight strengthening, transparency enhancement and risk management. Aside from this, we have already designed the Performance Scorecard for the Board of Directors to determine periodically how the Board performs its functions/mandates, based on the following criteria: (i) Board Governance; (ii) Commitment to Board Governance; (iii) Transparency; and (iv) Auditing. The implementation of the same has also been started.

Moreover, as a result of our Bank's good corporate governance, just last July 29, 2013, the Cooperative Banks Federation of the Philippines (BANGKOOP) presented to our Bank the Award of Excellence for its outstanding financial performance in 2012. In addition, four more Awards of Distinction have also been given to our Bank for besting other cooperative banks in the Philippines in terms of resources, deposits, net worth and net income.

In view of the foregoing premise, we can certainly say that the corporate governance of our Bank and the local government of the City of San Fernando are both aiming for just one goal—the improvement of the quality of life of their constituencies. Through sound and effective governance, our Bank and the City of San Fernando similarly reached the pinnacle of success.

Driven by our distinct mission “to bring about the economic ascendancy of the many people in the countryside,” and powered by our sound corporate governance, FICOBANK is indeed destined to be the epitome of banking excellence now and in the future.

*Herminio G. Ocampo*



## Legal Matters

Atty. Hubert E. Molina



Toward the end of the 15th Congress, a lot of important legislations were approved by the Congress and which were subsequently signed by Pnoy, making them laws.

The said laws are about to be, if not already being, implemented. Knowing them is extremely necessary to avoid being punished for something you do not know. Besides, ignorance of the law would not be an excuse for not complying them. One of the said laws is the "Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act of 2013."

Under Republic Act No. 10586, drivers who were found to be driving under the influence of liquor or prohibited drugs and/or other similar substances will be penalized. The penalties provided by the said law are very stiff, as follows:

(a) If found to be driving under the influence of liquor or prohibited drugs or similar substance and it did not result in physical injuries or homicide, the penalty of three (3) months imprisonment, and a fine ranging from Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00) to Eighty Thousand Pesos (Php80,000.00) shall be imposed;

(b) If it resulted in physical injuries, the penalty provided for serious physical injuries in the Revised Penal Code (*one month and 1 day to 12 years*) or the penalty provided in the next preceding subparagraph, whichever is higher, and a fine ranging from One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000.00) to Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php200,000.00) shall be imposed;

(c) If it resulted in homicide, the penalty provided for homicide in the Revised Penal Code (*12 years and 1 day to 20 years*) and a fine ranging from

## Drunk Driving is Over!

Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php300,000.00) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php500,000.00) shall be imposed; and

(d) The nonprofessional driver's license of any person found to have violated this Act shall also be confiscated and suspended for a period of twelve (12) months for the first conviction and perpetually revoked for the second conviction. The professional driver's license of any person found to have violated this Act shall also be confiscated and perpetually revoked for the first conviction. The perpetual revocation of a driver's license shall disqualify the person from being granted any kind of driver's license thereafter.

As can be seen above, mere driving while intoxicated with liquor or drugs is a criminal act for which the driver may be held criminally (imprisonment and fine), civilly (damages) and administratively (suspension or revocation of driver's license) liable. What is worse is that the "the owner and/or operator of the vehicle driven by the offender shall be directly and principally held liable together with the offender for the fine and the award against the offender for civil damages unless he or she is able to convincingly prove that he or she has exercised extraordinary diligence in the selection and supervision of his or her drivers in general and the offending driver in particular." This applies principally to the owners and/or operators of public utility vehicles and commercial vehicles, such as delivery vans, cargo trucks, container trucks, school and company buses, hotel transports, cars or vans for rent, taxi cabs, and the like.

As provided in the law, "a law enforcement officer who has probable cause to believe that a person is driving under the influence of alcohol, dangerous drugs and/or other similar substances by apparent indications and manifestations, including overspeeding, weaving, lane straddling, sudden stops, swerving, poor coordination or the evident smell of alcohol in a person's breath or signs of use of dangerous drugs and other similar substances, shall conduct field sobriety tests. If the driver fails in the sobriety tests, it shall be the duty of the law enforcement officer to implement the

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## From My Notes & Files

Emilio U. Rico, Jr.



## Operation and Banking Services Group's Mid-Year Assessment and Planning

"If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail."

The above adage captures and explains perfectly the

importance of having a plan, not just in our personal lives, but most especially in a business organization. Many people have great ideas, but fail to put it into a clear plan of action, and think that they can simply just do anything and expect money to keep flowing. Similar to learning how to play an instrument (like the drums), everyone wants to play the drums like a rockstar, but nobody wants to learn the basics. They immediately start banging the drums with the stick without first learning how to properly execute it. In cases like these, people are already setting up themselves for a failure.

If an organization fails to anticipate or prepare for fundamental changes, like economic fluctuations, regulatory requirements and competitive pressures, among others, it may lose valuable lead time to combat them. Planning then helps mitigate unforeseen and unexpected structural shocks. Without a plan that helps mentor and guide the people, the company will make unnecessary detours, making it costlier for the company.

Succeeding without a plan may be possible, but this may be attributed

more to luck rather than on business acuity. However, one may ask himself/herself: "Could I have grown and become even bigger (i.e., more profit) if I were better organized?" I bet, the answer will be yes. Questioning the value of strategic planning is normal because planning can be intense and costly, but if the attitude that planning isn't necessary becomes part of your corporate culture, it can prove deadly.

Assuming that we already have plans and programs for the year, we are almost halfway through July, indicating that we are left with less than six months to hit our annual target. Naturally, we are prompted to ask the question: "Have we attained our goals for the first semester?" Unfortunately, only few people actually do this. They wait until the start of the fourth quarter to assess their condition. And when they found out that they are way behind the target, they start executing haphazardly created initiatives directed to generate sales, which may be considered impractical. However, it doesn't have to be this way. By assessing where the organization stands during the first half of the year against its annual target, the company can immediately create a tactical plan to address the identified constraints.

For our part, we, at the Operation and Banking Services Group (OBSG), did our fair share. We have just concluded the first phase of our mid-year operational assessment. The second and final phase, which is the

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Proud to be a  
FICOBanker

Carlyn M. Vilorio



(Written last 15 May 2013 at 5:14 A.M.)

## Daughters of Their Fathers: The Case of Grace Poe and Nancy Binay

The Philippines' 2013 midterm election is now almost completed. Two senatorial candidates, although not yet proclaimed, are occupying the number 1 and number 5 ranking based on the partial and official COMELEC results, as of today. They are Grace Poe, daughter of "The King" Fernando Poe, Jr. of the Philippine cinema and Nancy Binay, daughter of hugely popular Vice President Jejomar Binay.

Like most Filipinos, I don't really know them well, except that they are the daughters of their very famous fathers. And I believe it is because of this crucial "credential" that they were widely voted and favored by the Philippine

voting populace.

This made me think of my own birth right in the spiritual realm. 1 John 3:1 says, "See what great love the FATHER has lavished on us, that we should be called children of GOD!" Also, Zephaniah 3:14 proclaims that I am a "Daughter of Zion." Wow! I am the child of the King of kings and Lord of lords! Therefore, because of this relationship as daughter of the Most High and Almighty GOD, I am hugely favored, well provided for, and deeply beloved!

Like Grace Poe and Nancy Binay in this 2013 senatorial election, I am the daughter of my FATHER in heaven and I can be victorious in this life!

1 Corinthians 15:57 - "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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## Drunk Driving...

mandatory determination of the driver's blood alcohol concentration level through the use of a breath analyzer or similar measuring instrument. If the law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe that a person is driving under the influence of dangerous drugs and/or other similar substances, it shall be the duty of the law enforcement officer to bring the driver to the nearest police station to be subjected to a drug screening test and, if necessary, a drug confirmatory test, as mandated under Republic Act No. 9165."

It will be mandatory to subject the driver of a motor vehicle involved in a vehicular accident resulting in the loss of human life or physical injuries to chemical tests, including a drug screening test and, if necessary, a drug confirmatory test, as mandated under Republic Act No. 9165. This will be done in order to determine the presence and/or concentration of alcohol, dangerous drugs and/or similar substances in the bloodstream or body.

A driver of a motor vehicle who refuses to undergo the mandatory field sobriety and drug tests shall be penalized by the confiscation and automatic revocation of his or her driver's license, in addition to other penalties provided herein and/or other pertinent laws.

Considering the harsh penalties and the very intent of this law of

ensuring road safety through the observance of responsible and ethical driving standards, a driver's education and information drive is mandated. "Every applicant for a motor vehicle driver's license shall complete a course of instruction that provides information on safe driving including, but not limited to, the effects of the consumption of alcoholic beverages on the ability of a person to operate a motor vehicle, the hazards of driving under the influence of alcohol, dangerous drugs and/or other similar substances, and the penalties attached for violation thereof. For professional drivers, every applicant for a driver's license or those applying for renewal thereof shall undergo the driver's education herein stated. The driver's license written examination shall include questions concerning the effects of alcohol and drug intoxication on the ability of a person to operate a motor vehicle and the legal and pecuniary consequences resulting from violation of the provisions of this Act."

For the safety of all, *whether drivers, passengers, bystanders, or otherwise*, don't drink if you intend to drive. If you want to drink, bring a driver who doesn't drink. Or better, bring your wife to guard you!

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## Operation and Banking...

consolidation of our output in the first phase, will be conducted soon (as of this writing). From the very start, we have clearly defined our objectives, the process that we have to undertake and the importance of this exercise to us.

The following were the processes that we have undergone:

1. Revisiting Our Beginning-of-the-Year Plans and Programs. This stage is undertaken to review our original plans and programs for the year. It is more of determining if what we have planned were done and do they deliver the results we have expected.
2. Assessment of Performance for the First Semester. This stage answers the question: "Where are we now?" It states our current position against our targets, financials and non-financials. Is it ahead, behind or on track?
3. Challenges and Constraints Encountered. Given the performance assessment, one may need to identify the challenges and constraints that were met, especially when the performance is way behind the target. It explains the reasons/causes why the target has not been met. This process may also include what have been done right to bring the performance on track.
4. Revised Plans and Programs. Taking into consideration the recent

performance, identified challenges and constraints, one needs to recalibrate, adjust or create amendments to the plans accordingly, without losing sight of the overall goal.

Thus, it always pays to think ahead. There is no better substitute to a good preparation. Nevertheless, other factors come into play in determining the success of our tactical plans. One is the proper implementation of the plans. No matter how good a plan is, if the implementation is improper (i.e., wrong timing, not implemented completely or not implemented at all), then it becomes ineffective. Having the right human capital (i.e., people possessing the right skills, attitude and mindset) is also a critical factor for the plan to be successful. And, of course, conscientious monitoring is a must.

Meanwhile, the plan is not ironclad. Modifications may be made when deemed necessary, depending on the current conditions of the market and business climate.

However, as it was previously mentioned, the effectiveness of our plans depend on the way we execute them—keeping ourselves committed to what we have planned to do, giving our best shot, driven by our targets, and possessing the spirit and willingness to succeed.

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Proud to be...

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(Written last 29 June 2013 at 4:00 P.M.)

## Open Letter to Ma'am Sol

Yesterday, 28 June 2013, FICOBank organized a retirement program for its Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Ms. Soledad S. Cabantac, for her 34 fruitful years in service. After the program, Pastor Joey Magundayao commented that Ma'am Sol is so blessed because she has experienced how it is to be honored and felt so much loved while still around, unlike others who were honored only after passing on this life. Last night also, at around 10:00 P.M., she called thanking me for the program. I told her not to thank me, as we are just instruments of GOD to give her that celebration and that it was also made possible through the humble and hardworking people of HRAD and BDD (Miss Kat who did the video production, program, photo collage, etc.). During that late-night conversation, I confessed to her that I don't have any material gift to give her, as she received a lot already. Humble as she is, she said that my prayers for her are more than enough. So, I did pray and declare all GOD's best for her days that are still ahead. Today (29 June) GOD gave me wisdom to give her another gift using a gift HE also gave me—writing letters. So Ma'am Sol, this is my open letter for you...



Dearest Ma'am Sol,

By Monday, the 1st of July, you'll not be reporting anymore to FICOBank. The office will not be the same again. I dread that feeling of being orphaned of a mother in our FICOBank family. No one can ever take your place as our Mama Sol.

But like you, in your previous FICOnnect article

entitled "Moving On," I also want to move on and make you proud and happy by giving the best service to FICOBank that you have served for almost four decades. Perhaps, one thing to lighten the load on the road ahead is to look back at those times together and cherish all the memories. I may not be able to contain it all here, but I will mention a few that made indelible marks in my heart. I hope reminding them to you will bless you and cheer you up whenever you feel down and lonely.

Ma'am Sol, I thank GOD for all the times we have traveled together. Your kindness and caring character is remarkable. Like in the office, you take care of our meals and have always foot the bill, even if we have meal allowance. Aside from that, you make sure that we have enough food and water in the car so we can eat anytime while traveling. You also make sure that we have enough time to shop, until we drop, while in the malls. I can't also forget the time you requested to ride in the MRT for the first time. I know you got tired going through all the stairs, but you said you enjoyed and that brought joy in my heart too. Thank you also for bringing your daughter so I can bring mine during travels. Wow, the girls (now both in college) have become seasoned travelers, got exposed to places and people,

and have transformed all these years from being "our chikiting gubat" to "dalagang bukid." And of course, on our times while lodging, I would always remember the teleserye I was able to follow for one straight week because I was "forced" to watch with you. This is something, for someone like me who doesn't subscribe to a cable connection for years. Well, I was able to relate well with my friends during those Maria Clara days. Thanks to you!

Ma'am Sol, I am also deeply grateful to GOD for connecting me to you (see, I got something better than cable). Because of you, I have learned that humility is not a sign of weakness, but strength under control. You are my hero on this virtue. Despite your position as the second-highest-ranking officer in Management, you never railroaded your own agenda, neither did you bulldozed nor bullied anyone. You remained lowly in your spirit to anyone and at any situation. I know you have cried silently behind closed doors, but have always put on a brave face in front of us. You did this so that we can be confident in ourselves for whatever challenges we were facing. Your humility and resiliency in every circumstance became our source of strength through those hard and trying times for the Bank.

Please know that you are also my hero in honoring my superiors. I have seen how you respected and submitted to authorities at the Bank. Indeed, you took the wise Proverb below to heart when relating to your bosses.

**Proverbs 27:28 – "The one who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever takes care of his master will be honored."**

Thank you for this very positive influence, Ma'am Sol!

Lastly, I praise GOD for being the author and perfecter of your faith (Hebrews 12:2), Ma'am Sol. I know that when GOD brought you to FICOBank, HE did so for you to bring the message of the cross and Christianity in our workplace. Your testimony and the virtues you have lived-by magnified the LORD in your life. I know that there were times some people are quick to point out weaknesses and be critical of others. But that is the difference of reputation and character. Reputation is what people think of you. Character is what GOD knows about you. I believe our FATHER is pleased with the life you have lived while a FICOBanker, for if not, you will not receive all the accolades that you have received during your birthday party last May 26 and your retirement party yesterday. Your life as a FICOBanker can be summed up in this fantastic Bible verse...

**Proverbs 15:33 – "Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor."**

And for your retirement Ma'am Sol, I give you HIS wonderful promise...

**1 Corinthians 2:9 – "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."**

Wow Ma'am Sol, your best days are still ahead!

You're most willing and obedient FICOBank child (only according to me).

– Carlyn



## General Assembly Elects Six Directors



During the business meeting of the General Assembly, the official delegates of the cooperative-stockholders elected six directors from among the nine candidates. Immediately after the casting of votes, four candidates were declared as

elected regular members of the Board. They are: Mr. Wilfredo DC. Antonio, representing San Manuel Credit Cooperative; Atty. Estalcker A. Argonza, representing Isabela State University Credit Cooperative; Mr. Eufemio M. Basuel, representing San Pablo Multi-Purpose Cooperative; and Ms. Pasencia B. Battung, representing Damorris Multi-Purpose Cooperative. On the other hand, the newly elected independent directors are Mr. Florentino T. Somera, Jr. of Olongapo Multi-Purpose Cooperative and Mr. Erwin B. Tabucol of Village Farmers Cooperative.

Subsequently, the election of new officers of the Board took place. Atty. Estalcker A. Argonza was elected as Chairman of the Board while Mr. Wilfredo DC. Antonio and Ms. Pasencia B. Battung were elected as Vice Chairman and Treasurer, respectively. Meanwhile, Mr. Marcelo G. Cargo was chosen as the Chairman of the Election Committee. Mr. Dante H. Guerrero was appointed as the Corporate Secretary.

— MA Cadiz

## FICOBank's Licensed Real Estate Broker and Appraisers

Many FICOBankers have already made extra tints on their names by gaining "plus points" on their respective curriculum vitae. These include the titles of a Certified Public Accountant, Engineer, etc. But unknown to some, FICOBank has also Licensed Real Estate Broker and Appraisers, and they are:

Name	Position
1. Mr. Dionicio A. Marquez, Jr.	Credit Department Head
2. Mr. Jay A. Bacting	Credit Officer
3. Mr. Vicente M. Magaoy	Credit Officer
4. Mr. Anthony P. Resurreccion	Credit Officer
5. Mr. Lucky A. Ramos	Area Credit Supervisor
6. Mr. Joel G. Cadorna	Assistant Branch Manager

Mr. Dionicio A. Marquez, Jr. took the licensure exam for real estate appraiser last November 24, 2007 at the University of Makati in Makati City. He passed the said exam and became a member of the Institute of Philippine Real Estate Appraiser (IPREA). Moreover, he also became a Licensed Real Estate Broker after he took the exam on March 18, 2012 at the Pines City National High School in Baguio City. Through this, he became a member of the Philippine Association of Real Estate Boards, Inc. – Real Estate Brokers of Santiago City (PAREB-RBSC).

Mr. Jay Bacting, Mr. Vicente Magaoy, Mr. Anthony Resurreccion, Mr. Lucky Ramos and Mr. Joel Cadorna also took the real estate appraiser licensure examination on July 8, 2012 at the Pines City National High School in Baguio City. Out of the 1,117 aspirants who took the said exam, they were among the 587 who passed. The said FICOBankers are members of the Accredited and Integrated Professional Organization of Real Estate Service Practitioners (AIPO). All commercial banks and assessor's offices only qualify a licensed appraiser to appraise property.

In recognition to their hard-earned titles, as they manifest their selfless devotion of time consistency in upholding the legacy of service with integrity, it truly proves that learning never stops. Thus, FICOBank is so proud to have them!

— Fae M. Esteban

## Tripling the 2013...

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Daguio, experienced the nature scenery of the Punta Riviera Resort in Bolinao, Pangasinan and did island-hopping at the Hundred Islands. Prior to this, the group went and had fun to tour around at the Lingayen Gulf and Pangasinan Capitol. They also had their set of games, such as crazy relay, volleyball, *saluhan ng itlog*, *punsin mo ako*, *putukan ng lobo* and beer drinking, which made them set aside for the meantime the pressure of meeting their targets. A "ka-loka like" contest was also undertaken, wherein Assistant Branch Manager Jessie A. Chua of Paniqui Branch, who portrayed himself as *Ka Tonying* (Anthony Taberna) of the *Umagang Kay Ganda*, was proclaimed as the winner.

On similar date, after a "one-to-sawa" picture-taking at the St. William Cathedral, Aurora Park and Sinking Bell Tower in Laoag City, at the wonderful Kapurpurawan Rock Formation in Burgos, Ilocos Norte and at the giant Bangui Windmills in Ilocos Norte, the Corporate Office group plunged into the Hannah's Beach Resort and Convention Center in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte. The team was able to experience the soothing swimming pools, particularly the infinity pool, and the rhythmic pounding of the sea waves that definitely lured both the officers and staff of the different departments/offices of the Bank. Each one unleashed his/her childish fantasies in this Disney-like-themed resort. A never-ending picture-taking was also done with the different giant statues and the world's biggest *banga* pool. It was also relaxing to stay at the Ocean View where one can glimpse the beauty of the resort, as a whole, with its clear ocean, white sand, green mountains, cool breeze of the air and the like. The group really took advantage of the place—swimming, drinking, eating, chatting, bonding, etc.—'til the very last minute. *Sulitin ang libre!*, so to speak.

Though the FICOBankers had these three separate summer getaways, it seemed that they were not divided at all, but were together in tripling the fun and adventure during their 2013 summer outing. A genuine FICOBank spirit, indeed!

— Kristal Bea P. Samson

## General Assembly Recognizes...

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implementation of Article 144 of Republic Act No. 9520 and Memorandum Circular No. 2012-06 on the Cancellation of the Certificate of Registration of Cooperatives.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, President & CEO, said that the 33rd General Assembly Meeting of FICOBank is one of its kind because of the presence of Rev. Gonzales and Atty. Santillan—both experienced speakers. He also conveyed his heartfelt thanks to Atty. Santillan for addressing the problem that is currently faced by cooperative banks. Aside from this, he also said that this event is a memorable one because the Bank is also celebrating the birthday of one of its first employees—Ms. Soledad S. Cabantac, Executive Vice President and COO—who is also about to retire this year. Finally, President Ocampo expressed his sincere thanks to the stockholders, directors and employees for making 2012 a momentous year for FICOBank.

With the exceptional performance of the Bank, the General Assembly, in its plenary session, confirmed that 2012 is indeed a historic one, as it will go into the archives of FICOBank as the most profitable year in its history.

— Michelle A. Cadiz



## FICOBank Sees Its Banking Opportunity in San Fernando City, Pampanga

Given a great promise of banking opportunity to serve a number of different market segments, FICOBank transferred its Mangaldan (Pangasinan) Branch to San Fernando City, Pampanga.

With its vision of becoming the "Gateway to North Philippines," one has to pass through the City of San Fernando to be able to go to any provinces from all directions, be it north in Tarlac and Pangasinan, west in Bataan and Zambales, east in Nueva Ecija and south in Bulacan. It lies about 67 kilometers away or approximately one-hour travel from Manila, 50 kilometers east of Subic Bay and 16 kilometers south of Clark Air Base in Angeles City.

The city's strategic location within the Manila-Clark-Subic Economic Triangle makes it a growing agro-industrial-commercial metropolis. Like the other towns in the region, it also serves as one of the agricultural processing centers of Central Luzon, hence, considered as a major rice-producing and an important sugar-producing area. Meanwhile, the lantern-making industry, which provides livelihood to more small and medium enterprises (SMEs), has made the City of San Fernando famous for its unique giant-lanterns, which are constantly attracting tourists every year. It is the city's One Town One Product (OTOP) and the model OTOP for the province of Pampanga. As a result, the City of San Fernando has been dubbed as the "Christmas Capital of the Philippines." Furthermore, it has been also the choice industrial location of commercial establishments like San Miguel Corporation, Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines, Inc., Universal Robina Corporation, etc. and some local food-processing companies that are now nationally gaining popularity, like Pampanga's Best and Tita's Special. Moreover, tycoons Henry Sy and John Gokongwei, Jr. saw the economic potentials of the City of San Fernando when they both decided to pour huge investments for SM City and Robinsons Starmills, respectively.

Aside from being the provincial capital, it is also the Regional Government Center of Central Luzon, which has been a major influence in the economic development of the city. It is also considered as one of the most competitive cities in the country, as it joins the big cities in the south outside of Metro Manila, such as, Cebu City, Davao City, Iloilo City and Cagayan De Oro City. San Fernando City is not only economically competitive; it also harbors a responsive local government unit.

Being the chamber of commerce of Pampanga and the regional growth center of Central Luzon, it definitely holds a wide pool of opportunities for growing businesses, like FICOBank, making the city a wise location for its expansion initiatives.

After it held its preliminary operation last June 17, 2013, with the aforementioned remarkable socio-economic profile that the City of San Fernando has, FICOBank can certainly maximize the potential of its lending services through its commercial, microfinance and other loan products, as well as its deposit-taking and fund-wiring services. Hence, the transfer of the branch, from Mangaldan to San Fernando City, will lead the Bank to another gate of triumph.

— Kevin Marc M. Sinagub

## FICOBank Lingayen Moves to a Better Place



After about three-and-a-half years of productive banking operation, resulting to an ever-increasing number of customers, FICOBank Lingayen moved to a better place to provide its growing market base with more spacious and much pleasant office in doing deposit-taking, loan-making and money-wiring transactions.

Lingayen Branch transferred to its new site at Matriarch Enterprise Bldg., Avenida Rizal East, Poblacion, Lingayen, Pangasinan. Its new building is inspired with a nice outdoor façade and cozy interior design, giving an ambience that is relaxing and accommodating, added with the privilege of a spacious parking area for its valuable clients. This is to offer to the local populace a more convenient and satisfying banking experience.

FICOBank Lingayen carried out its new office's blessing-and-dedication rites on June 18, 2013. It was officiated by Fr. Francis C. Posadas of the Catholic Church of Lingayen, Pangasinan, and was followed by the traditional ribbon-cutting and pouring of rice and coins in every corner of the building, an act to attract good fortune. Atty. Estalder A. Argonza, the Bank's Chairman of the Board, delivered his inaugural address in the presence of the Board of Directors, officers and staff of the Bank, officials from the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Lingayen, guests from other banks, and a number of existing and prospective clients from the town.

In his inaugural address, Chairman Argonza gave emphasis on the corporate tagline—"Banking with a heart"—that FICOBank continues to put into action. Furthermore, he also narrated FICOBank's humble beginnings in Isabela and how it eventually expanded and opened its branch in Lingayen, Pangasinan to serve the financial needs of its townsfolk.

In her inspirational message, Hon. Josefina V. Castañeda, Municipal Mayor of Lingayen, expressed her gratitude to FICOBank for investing in their municipality. She also apprised the Bank about more potential market segments to serve with, as Lingayen grows its commerce and trade with the arrival of new investors in the town. As to his response, Mr. Wilfredo DC. Antonio, Vice Chairman of the Board, showed his sincerest appreciation for the support of the LGU of Lingayen as well as the strong patronage of its people to FICOBank.

Ms. Evangeline C. Sison, Branch Manager of FICOBank Lingayen, proudly introduced her staff to the audience and expressed her profound gratitude for the support of the officers of the Bank, officials of the host LGU and distinguished guests for making the said event a successful one.

The new office of Lingayen Branch will surely give the Bank a more appealing public image; thus, attracting and keeping more clients that will eventually lead to a greater market share.

— Kevin Marc M. Sinagub



## Together, Everyone Achieves More

By Syra M. Miguel

The Northeast Luzon Area believes that the concept of teamwork is extremely important to the success of any team. Teamwork and unselfishness are the backbone of a great team. Without such, a team cannot practically compete. You can have a group of superstars, but if they do not work well as one unit, chances are, they are not going to be as successful as you would think.

In a successful business, promotion—through a joint effort of a group—plays an important role. In the area, we have our own marketing/promotion activity, the “Marketing Brigade and Leafleting,” which involves all the branches and extension offices. It is carried out to meet our targets by making our customers aware of the Bank’s deposit and loan products, and enticing them to avail of such products over those ones that are offered by our competitors. This is also our way of retaining existing clients, acquiring new clients and re-acquiring former clients. Though we have already been practicing this for two years, and have penetrated this year the service areas of Bambang and Solana in Nueva Vizcaya, and Jones and Echague in Isabela, we shall continue to execute it in all areas covered by the Northeast Luzon branches and extension offices.

We are pursuing this activity for reasons of unity and camaraderie, and these are being transpired within the group. It’s important that we get everyone on the bus and moving in the right direction, with a shared vision, focus and purpose. We, as a team, come together, and we are affirmative that we will succeed together. Unity among us happens because we are all committed to, and engaged in, the process of building a united and winning team. It requires focus, time and energy from each of us. We are pleased that our team members care more about the vision, purpose and performance of the area over their own personal agenda.

Joining this marketing activity during Saturdays is indeed a big sacrifice for everyone—being under the heat of the sun, traversing on the roads of nowhere and talking to different people. Despite the extra hours that we have to give just to meet our targets, we are still able to keep our spirits up for the overall accomplishment and success of the team.

Teamwork is something that must be considered a high priority, and must be given constant attention. All players must need to realize how significant it is for them to work smoothly together. If they want to be successful, they must be committed to the team, and must be willing to act unselfishly and wholeheartedly. Whenever challenges occur, the team must see to it that it has the available resources, and the sense of responsibility and right perspective, to deal with such challenges.

Though we work as a team, each of us has his/her individual contribution that is worthy of recognition and appreciation. Our team believes on what Henry Ford had stated: “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

Just remember TEAM—Together, Everyone Achieves More!

## On FICOBank’s Radar: Tumauni Extension Office



F I C O B a n k  
Tumauni team  
picked up the pace  
to be on  
FICOBank’s radar.  
The team has  
markedly enhanced  
its performance in  
the first six months  
of 2013, reflecting

positive developments in its key result areas—net income, loan volume, loan portfolio and ADB-based deposits.

Based on the Bank’s bankwide report as of June 30, 2013, Tumauni Extension Office made it to the top in terms of net income, which amounted to Php3.47 million. This is Php2.09 million, or 151 percent, higher than the Php1.38-million record in same period last year. Furthermore, the team was able to double its half-year net income target of Php1.71 million and post an 87-percent accomplishment for its Php4-million whole-year budget.

Through the team’s unwavering efforts in promoting the Bank’s loan products, increases in loan volume and loan portfolio were posted. From a loan volume of Php63.42 million in June 2012, an increase of Php40.02 million, or 63 percent, was recorded a year after, resulting to a Php103.44-million mark. In like manner, the Php18.47-million loan portfolio posted in same period last year grew by Php20.53 million, or 111 percent, which resulted to a Php39-million level. With reference to the targeted loan volume of Php84.38 million and loan portfolio of Php33.46 million for 2013’s first semester, 123-percent and 117-percent budget-versus-actual accomplishments were posted, respectively.

With the good banking image that the team has shown in its area of operation, a remarkable figure in ADB-based deposits was also registered. As of June 2013, the extension office recorded a Php9.46-million ADB-based deposits. This is Php7.67 million, or 428 percent, higher than the Php1.79-million record a year ago. A 178-percent accomplishment was also posted, in reference to the Php5.31-million half-year budget.

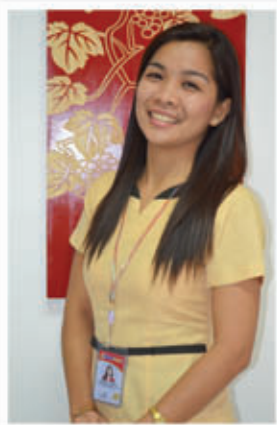
With FICOBank Tumauni’s goal-driven workforce, led by Mr. Emmanuel A. Bartolome, the above-figures—although these were boosted by the accounts that were transferred from Cagan Branch—are just the starts of greater feats because the Tumauni EO team believes that there are more to achieve.

— Kat A. Bolo



## Continuing the Journey of a Banker

By Shyrrill T. Bilog



I remembered my maiden piece in *FICOnnect* entitled, "Start of a New Journey." It was my first time to make an article featuring myself. I never thought that I would be given a second opportunity to make a testimonial write-up again.

My career life at FICOBank started on January 11, 2011, as Planning Assistant at the Business Development Department (BDD), headed by Dr. Robert R. Palac. He is the one who discovered my talent in writing, which is unknown to me, until he directed me to draft articles for the CY 2010 Annual Report. The success of the said assignment led me to do more write-ups.

It was in May 2011 when I, with Dr. Palac's consent, was given a chance to work

as Credit Analyst at the Credit Department (CD), headed by Mr. Dionicio A. Marquez, Jr. To improve on my training, I was required to learn the Credit Management Process (CMP) and discuss the same to a panel of credit officers. The other requirement is the complete attendance to the Thursday session, *hehehe!* With CD, I've experienced to report to the CRECOM meeting, do a credit approval memorandum (CAM) and recommend loan folders to the top management.

During my BOD presentation for regularization, I remembered when Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, the President/CEO of FICOBank, whom I used to call as "the change man," asked me what I would like to be after five years. I jokingly answered that I would like to become one of the directors. It was the first time I saw President Ocampo to laugh out loud (LOL). Actually, I only did that to ease my nervousness, and it actually worked, *hehe!* Life after regularization in CD became more challenging and stiffer. Like in CAM preparation, there are several factors that are needed to be considered first. And of course, arguments between the CD and the operating units are expected, but it's only an indication that a proposed loan application is being scrutinized and analyzed in details.

'Twas on July 18, 2011—the day I never realized will change my career not only as a FICOBanker but also as a person—when I received a memorandum from the Human Resource and Administration Department (HRAD) directing me to report as the Executive Assistant to the SVP for Operation & Banking Services. At first, I have hesitations because I am not familiar with the job being assigned to me. I got worried that it might be the end of my career, if I would not be able to meet the expectations of SVP Emilio U. Rico, Jr. The very first words that I would never forget SVP Rico told me were: "Take the new position or leave." This challenged me and made me decide to accept the new position rather than to be jobless at that point. With SVP Rico, my knowledge in banking operations has expanded through exposure, not only in the income-generating activity of the Bank but also in its deposit-taking operation. My stay with him enhanced my communication skill to discuss in front of the bosses. I also learned the crafting of sensible and systematic presentation of plans, proposals, reports and the like, the quadrant principle, the what-went-right and what-went-wrong analyses, and the preparation and dissemination of memoranda, which were far beyond the work I used to do. I thank SVP Rico for all the lessons I learned from him.

A month after, I was assigned as the Executive Assistant to the Area Manager of Regions I & III, under the headship of Mr. Ronald C. Busto. I experienced constant long trips that had taken its toll on my body. The isolation for stretches of days from my family had drained me emotionally because it was my first time to be away from my comfort zone. But thanks to AM Busto because, with him, I found not only a mentor but also a father. "A

## Serving God by Serving Others

By Edmar D. de Luna



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11

It was such a big surprise and a confirmation when I have read my favorite Bible verse in the bulletin board of FICOBank three years ago, when I was still an applicant. At that time, I was already hired by two other banks in Cauayan City, Isabela, but kept on asking the Lord where I could contribute my knowledge and skills.

By the way, I was born on February 7, 1989 in Cauayan City, Isabela. I am the eldest child, among the four children, who was raised with full of hopes and dreams by my parents, Mr. Mario G. de Luna and

Mrs. Edna P. de Luna. Beset by lots of trials that I have gone through with my less-fortunate family, an urge to finish my studies ignited me. I can still remember that during my younger age, I used to sell snacks and soft drinks along the streets during town and patronal *fiestas* and even during All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. As a student, I have been used to it since it provided my schooling allowance. During weekends, I helped my *Tita* Neneng in selling frozen foods in the market. Having experienced all of these circumstances, I was inspired by a lofty goal to lift the life of my family in the not-so-distant future.

I finished elementary at the Cauayan North Elementary School with an academic honor. Subsequently, I studied at the Cauayan National High School and graduated as the class salutatorian in 2005. When I was about to enter college, at first, I was upset to take the Academic Scholarship Exam at Our Lady of the Pillar College-Cauayan Campus because my family could not afford to send me to a prestigious school where I could study Civil Engineering. However, I was still lucky to pass the two sets of screening and examination, which were taken by hundreds of examiners in the province. This qualified me to be one of the top 30 dean's listers at OLPCC, which eventually led me to take Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. This rare privilege entitled me to enjoy all school fees for free. Every day, after my class, I spent the night studying and assisting my *Tita* at the Pasalubong Center just to have an allowance. College had never been easy to me, but with the help of my parents and my very supportive and loving *Tita* Neneng, I strove hard to maintain consistently my academic scholarship. After four years of perseverance, I successfully attained my degree, with an Excellence in Accountancy Award. After graduation, I enrolled at an accountancy review center in Metro Manila. However, I was not able to take the board exam for Certified Public Accountants due to an error in my birth certificate.

With my long desire to help my family and being the eldest child, I accepted my calling to work here at FICOBank as Loan Officer, starting December 2009. I was the youngest Loan Officer at that time. I could still recall that, at first, I didn't even know how to drive a motorcycle, so it was a great struggle on my part. Eventually, I was able to learn driving a motorcycle. Since then, my journey at the Bank continues. I was assigned at the Diffun Branch and then at the Head Office. After three years of working as Loan Officer, the Senior Management recognized my potential, and I was promoted as Unit Head for Regular Loans at the age of 23. As I have said, I owe everything to God and to my family. I would never forget my mentors—Mr. Dionicio A. Marquez, Jr., Ms. Rolangeline G. Nueve, BM Xerxes T. Dela Cruz, BM Ma. Pilar Milagros C. Atienza and the late BM Johnson B. Pascual—who have honed me to become the person I am now.

Currently, I am humbly serving the Bank with a lot of passion and



## EVP/COO SOLEDAD S. CABANTAC: A Rare Breed of a Bank Executive



First off, luminaries in the cooperative banking circle have a very high regard for Ms. Soledad S. Cabantac, the former General Manager and Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer of FICOBANK. This may be due to her range and depth as a banker and as a person—the panache she carried on and off the Bank—or, possibly, the quite sense of confidence that is absent in lesser breeds. It could also be her extreme passion, sharpened proficiency and lengthy experience that had set her apart from being “just another” executive in the cooperative banking industry. But one thing is certain, it is attributable to her history-making accomplishments—the result of her

titanic efforts that greatly contributed to what is FICOBANK today. As time itself would attest, the dream that she shared with the public and the officers and staff of the Bank became a reality. Polished by time and enriched by experience, her breed as a bank executive for 34 years is indeed a rarity.

### Background

Sinaoangan Sur is a small village in San Agustin, Isabela, an interior town bordering Quirino Province. It was here, on May 26, 1953, where she was born. She is the seventh child, the youngest and the only “rose among the thorns.” Her parents raised and nurtured her to become a strong-willed and principled person. As a born leader, which was evidently shown earlier on, she led her school’s student body in high school, as Vice President during the first two years and, ultimately, the President in her junior and senior years. Despite her ambition of becoming a doctor of animals, she followed her father’s wish to take up accountancy so that she could work in a bank. As a result of a fervent prayer, which was coupled by an extra-hard work, such aspiration was eventually granted by the Lord.

Ms. Soledad S. Cabantac—usually called “Ma’am Sol” by the FICOBANKERS—has spent her entire professional life with banking institutions. After obtaining a degree in Commerce, major in accounting, at the University of Baguio in 1975, she joined the Rural Bank of Alicia (Isabela) in March 1976 as Accounting Clerk and Bookkeeper. After more than three years, she decided to resign from her job with the said rural bank and joined the then soon-to-be-opened First Isabela Cooperative Rural Bank, Inc. While working with the coop bank, she took up a master’s degree in Business Management at the University of La Salette to further hone her proficiency in management.

### With FICOBANK in Its Early Years

It was in June 1979 when she officially joined the Bank. “I consider myself very lucky for having been part of the last six months in the preparation for the organization of the Bank before the Central Bank of the Philippines issued its authority to operate,” she declared. The said authority, numbered B-1000, was given on December 21, 1979. “We started the operation of our Bank on January 2, 1980. It was, at that point, when I served as the Bank’s first Cashier,” she added. Ma’am Sol served in that capacity for more than six years.

In 1986, Mr. Eduardo F. Castro, the erstwhile MTAP professional manager of the Bank, resigned and went to Saudi Arabia as an overseas worker. Ma’am Sol filled the void. “I took over the helm of management and tried my best to lead the staff since we could not afford to hire a professional manager at that time. Through our faith and trust in God, which was complemented by our

teamwork, dedication, loyalty and confidence in the leadership of our holdover Chairman, Mr. Pacifico B. Miranda, Sr., we were able to stir up the patronage and support of the banking public,” she said. With her appointment, as Manager, a significant increase in capital and membership of the Bank was attained. “Although the Bank was beset with myriad of challenges and difficulties, we have a complete trust on the Lord, as what is said in Proverbs 3:5-6: *‘Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths,’*” she added.

### With FICOBANK in Its Growth Years

The following year, Ma’am Sol started to rummage around for a “suitable reinforcement” in professionally running the Bank. “I started to ‘sell’ the idea to Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo, then Manager of MASNAMARCO,” she recalled. Mr. Ocampo is a marketing wizard who led the biggest marketing coop during that time. “Initially, he seemed uninterested. It took three years for him to reconsider the proposal. Luckily, as it was, he became a member of the board in 1990. He generously shared his expertise in marketing and management,” she added. After a year, he assumed the chairmanship of the Bank and steadfastly steered it to become what it is today.

In 1995, the Bank started to branch out. With just a workforce of 12 at that time, the first branch was opened in Roxas, Isabela. The following year, Ma’am Sol became the General Manager of FICOBANK, in anticipation of further expansion in its operations. True enough, four more branches were opened in the succeeding year, with only one accountant to handle the records of transactions in the head office. “As our Bank has already the capability to hire the services of CPAs, we recruited Mr. Emilio U. Rico, Jr. to professionalize our banking, accounting and internal control systems,” she recalled. She remained as GM until the end of 2002. At the start of 2003, structural changes in the Bank were made with the entry of Mr. Herminio G. Ocampo as the first-ever President and Chief Executive Officer. Ma’am Sol became the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, a position she held up to June 28, 2013.

### Points of View

Ma’am Sol was dotingly referred to as the “mother” of the FICOBANK family. “I wanted to be known then as a boss who gives motherly care to all our employees,” she revealed. Indeed, she wanted what is best for everyone under her. She gave encouragement to all. To the present FICOBANKERS, she advised, “Observe honesty in all your dealings. Perform your tasks sincerely with unquestionable integrity. Entrust your life to God, so you can build a symbiotic relationship with our Bank, and you will live and grow happily with the company, as you travel life’s journey.”

### Remarkable Accomplishments

She is most proud that FICOBANK was a consistent awardee of LBP’s Gawad PITAK for 12 consecutive years, becoming a Hall of Famer, and ultimately the first Ginintuang Gawad PITAK winner for the coop rural bank category in the whole country. Likewise, she is pleased with the other accolades that the Bank has reaped through the years. “I am also honored that FICOBANK was the first producer of the much-coveted Microentrepreneur of the Year in 2002, in the person of Ms. Josephine Alima, given by the Citigroup, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines,” she related. For the record, five more microentrepreneurs of FICOBANK were recipients of the MOTY Awards in different categories in the national and island-group levels in the succeeding years.

### Dream and Legacy

Ma’am Sol once dreamed of the impossible: “FICOBANK will become a renowned billionaire, multi-awarded and full-service bank with a wider



## Grateful to Management for Giving the Right People

By Ronald C. Busto

I am thankful to the top management for finding and giving me the right people to fill up the right jobs—the RBL trainors—and then leave them to get on with it. I know this is one rule that requires a certain intuitive touch, but I'm sure you know whom they are I'm talking about. They seem to surround themselves with capable and competent people, and then they just seem to sit back and watch them go for goal. It is a special talent that has to be developed. I guess their skills are both in seeking the right people (staff) and letting go—leaving them to get on with it. We have to have lots of trust to do that—trust in their ability and trust in myself, as their guide and leader as well.

Mixed of happiness and sadness filled my emotion when the top management decided to give me the position of an RBL Management Officer. Sad, for I will be leaving the group whom I've learned lessons from and gained experience with. Happy, for I will be facing challenges and meeting people who, after all, can study and teach as well. I have a very clear idea of who I am looking for to fill the job, just like what you are looking for. For instance, I might need a good senior account officer—that is what I'm looking for. But who? A team player? One who is good in all-around task? Someone who is able to make decisions on the run? Someone who can plan ahead? Someone who can understand the program? Someone who can speak well on spreadsheets? Or someone who can work with an over excitable? I'm sure you get the idea, if you have a clear picture of the staff that I need. But finding the right people is not that hard. Thanks to the top management for giving the right people who have good vision, logic and, most of all, are hard-working.

I once made the mistake of being totally in control, as the head. But I know when my team members (trainors) need to take wings and soar, as they should. Getting our team soars would take courage, determination and an overwhelming passion.

I have teammates who are better than me. As such, I have to trust them, get the best out of them, train them to take over, rely on them not to stab one's back when it's time to take over, and be confident in ourselves that no one will be jealous when someone will take off. Indeed, it takes me moral fiber to carry these out. At this point, I am pretty relaxed and secure in my position.

I am always encouraging my team members to bring out their guts and best efforts. I want them to perform well and attain the greatest feat. They are all bright and sharp. I want them to fill the shoes of others, if such opportunity arises.

In a nutshell, once we built a good team, everybody will become accustomed to have you as their leader/head and manager. Eventually, they will feel comfortable with that and won't attempt to overtake you. Team members will only do otherwise when they feel resentful or distrusted. So, let's bring them all (employees), train them and make them better.

**"YOU HAVE TO BE GOOD AT FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO FILL THE RIGHT JOBS—AND THEN LEAVE THEM TO GET ON WITH IT."**

**"ONCE YOU'VE BUILT A GOOD TEAM, IT GETS IN THE HABIT OF HAVING YOU AS THE MANAGER AND A LEADER."**

## Fifteen Years of Fulfilling Work at FICOBank

By Marjorie J. Cabigas



The first time I heard of FICOBank was over Bombo Radyo airing a job vacancy. After a week, I entered FICOBank's door as one of its fortunate five new employees. On my first day, I was welcomed by the happy faces of Ma'am Susan, EOM Tes, *Kuya* Bong and, of course, EVP Sol who then make up the Head Office staff. That day was on January 21, 1998 at the CAVADECO Building.

My first work assignment was as Cashier of Jones Branch, but prior to deployment, I had to

undergo training at the Alicia Branch. There I learned the ABCs of accounting. Thanks to my trainors—BM Bing, the accountant then, and BM Beth, the cashier then—who taught me a lot of banking details that I treasure up to now. After two months, that was it—Jones Branch assignment. It was unforgettable. The challenge to me was to cross the overflow bridge in Dalibubon during flood months. But seriously, I learned there everything to know about branch banking. EOM Kit, the accountant then, was especially instrumental to this.

After two years at Jones Branch, a reorganization of FICOBank brought me to the Corporate Office where I had the priceless privilege to work in the office of FICOBank executives—President Hermie, Atty. Hubert and Ma'am Ylla (Corporate Secretary then). In one ordinary day, the President himself handed me the book *How to Become CEO*. To my fascination, I almost memorized most of the brief passages in that book of Jeffrey J. Fox. Although I can never be a CEO of FICOBank, I take pride as a junior officer who can lead, inspire and share to the persons in my circle of influence. I dream that my staff at the Todo Finance Unit will lead their own teams very soon.

Back in college, my classmate in UP Manila asked me about job priorities and why I did not participate in the campus job fair just before graduation. My simple answer was, "*Gusto kong maguwork sa Isabela*." Wish granted! I'm now with one of the best banks in the province.

This year is now my 15th year of fulfilling work at FICOBank. I look back with gratitude to FICOBank for molding my person as a banker and providing my financial needs adequately. I'm sure that Lyneth and Jerome are proud to tell their high school friends that their *mama* works at FICOBank. Boyet is thankful that he has a better half who contributes to the family budget. And Willy has peace of mind even in his old age for seeing a daughter satisfied at work. These are all because of FICOBank.



## Macoy Joins the Todo Finance Unit



Macoy is the newest member of the Todo Finance family. He performed well in the past three years, as an Account Officer (AO), so now he's joining the group of Melvin, Jude, Ferdz, Art, Virgo, Jerome, Ric and Maki.

Macoy, if you don't know him yet, is Mr. Ferdinand A. Estioko—nicknamed after the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos. He was hired as AO for Cagayan and Tuguegarao Extension Offices on

on March 1, 2010. Year after year, he proved to be a constant performer among the ranks of FICOBANK AOs. In 2011, he ranked fourth in the bankwide performance evaluation of AOs. He was ninth in 2012 and first in the first semester of 2013. Although some performance indicators in the five-pronged key result areas (portfolio size, outreach, portfolio quality, loan releases and compliance) changed from year to year, he adapted to the changes and sustained his performance.

Macoy is 30 years old, an *Ybanag* from Tuguegarao, Isabela. He and Bernadette are blessed with two children—Angelica May and John Phillip. His new assignment at FICOBANK San Fernando surely requires the adjustment and understanding of his family.

As Credit Officer, Macoy will now be facing more mature responsibilities. Looking at his background, he has the ability and guts as well. His college education at the Isabela State University (ISU) Cagayan prepared him for serious roles in life. After college, his work as member of Area Coordinating Group at PR Bank further made him mature. But foremost, the FICOBANK culture imbibed in him makes him really ready for this promotion!

Congratulations Macoy!

— Marjorie J. Cabigas

June 28, 2013

Ma'am Sol, Our Boss,

Shakespeare was right when he said: "Parting is such a sweet sorrow." As we extend our best wishes on your retirement, we feel the throbbing of not being with you anymore as our EVP/COO effective July 1, this year.

As your time to retire has finally arrived, we would like to thank you for what has been in the past years of working with you, as our chief and coach. We have learned a lot in banking and in life from you. Working with you was, beyond doubt, a pleasure. We will always treasure our working relationship. We are also grateful for the many great things you did at FICOBANK that we, the now and the next FICOBANKers, are privileged to share with and benefit from.

As yesteryears you dealt with pressure, learn now to relax for your days shall be free from stress. Whatever aspirations you now hold in your heart, we, at FICONnect Editorial/Production Team, wish you the best retirement. Enjoy all the things you're yet to experience on your retirement.

We will surely miss you.

FICONnect Editor & Staff

## FICOBANK Family: Getting Bigger and Better

FICOBANK's growing and expanding banking operations call for bigger and better workforce. Given this backdrop, it would be a great challenge to recruit and hire employees who could contribute to the attainment of the business goals of the organization.

But after a stringent evaluation and selection process, for the period covering March to July of this year, HRAD is proud to present 35 new members of the FICOBANK family, and they are:

Name	Position
1. Pauline Dela Cruz	Jewelry Appraiser
2. Joel Mamuric	Loan Officer
3. Michelle Manuel	Loan Bookkeeper
4. Kevin Marc Sinagub	Marketing Communication Assistant
5. Maria Krsna Charlotte Quimado	Loan Bookkeeper
6. Rose Avedano	Teller
7. Raymond Cairel	Account Officer
8. Bernadette Carlos	Jewelry Appraiser
9. Christine Star Querubin	Teller
10. Jhomer Castillo	Loan Officer
11. Tanya Mae Silao	HRAD Assistant
12. Aiko Valenton	Loan Bookkeeper
13. Elizabeth Cauilan	Loan Bookkeeper
14. Joan Pascual	Loan Bookkeeper
15. Leo Miranda	Accounting Assistant
16. Carlo Carillo	Account Officer
17. Karen Carag	Jewelry Appraiser
18. Consuelo Macaraeg	Jewelry Appraiser
19. Javie Duran	Teller
20. Daisyree Agustin	Teller
21. Rube Precious Aguilar	Account Officer
22. Kenneth Bayaua	Teller
23. Joel Ariola	Account Officer
24. Lerica Dhubey Laungyan	Credit Assistant
25. Jennelyn Babarin	Jewelry Appraiser
26. Juan Jacinto Ambrocio	RBI Management Assistant
27. Sunshine Fenix	Loan Bookkeeper
28. Winnie Ramil	Accounting Assistant
29. Justine de la Rosa	HRAD Assistant
30. Kathleen Gonzales	Credit Assistant
31. Emerson Comillas	Loan Bookkeeper
32. Riel Kamille Nera	Market Intelligence Assistant
33. Cherry Pie Feria	IAD Assistant
34. Richie Ann Acoba, CPA	IAD Assistant
35. Bernie Parangan	Loan Officer

Congratulations!

— Tanya Mae D. Silao



## Bigger Reward Beyond Success

The Success Story of Francis Leonard C. Rualiso



From his sideline as a dressed-chicken dealer in the neighborhood, Mr. Francis Leonard C. Rualiso now manages his own business, which is already operating for almost 10 years. Through his firm belief that a bigger reward is waiting ahead, as long as one perseveres for his/her dream, he is now a successful micro-entrepreneur. For him, this success is more fulfilling because he can also help other people even in a small way and be a role model in the community.

### Personal Background

Mr. Francis Leonard "Bong" C. Rualiso is a 33-year-old micro-entrepreneur in Ilagan City, Isabela. His mother is a retired school teacher while his father is a retired employee of an insurance company. He is the fourth child among the brood of six. During their younger years, all of their basic needs were being provided to them. But because of his father's early retirement (when all of his elder sisters had already finished their courses in Manila and he was only about to enter college at that time), he had to stay and pursue his studies at the Isabela State University (ISU) in Ilagan, Isabela. His father's retirement pay was invested to a family-owned insurance agency, which eventually ended into bankruptcy. Given this financial constraint, he applied for a municipal scholarship. At that time, he experienced to be one of the laborers in the construction of ISU's gate. But after five years of patience and perseverance, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. He subsequently took the board examination and successfully became a licensed Electrical Engineer afterward.

Later on, he worked at the Cagayan Valley Development Cooperative, Inc. (CAVADECO), which is engaged in the production of dressed chicken and feeds, until he became the Supervisor in the dressing plant and feed mill sections. Through this, he was able to help his brothers finished their schooling. To gain more knowledge about his job, he enrolled and earned some units in Business Administration at the St. Ferdinand College in Ilagan, Isabela.

He decided afterward to have his own family. Even presently working at CAVADECO then, he had some sidelines, like hauling of feeds (he used his father-in-law's truck to transport feeds from CAVADECO feed mill plant to Cagayan Poultry Farm), contracting of electrical services and selling dressed chicken in the neighborhood. Still, working at CAVADECO and earning extra income from sidelines can no longer fully sustain his family's needs. This made him decide to venture into business.

### Business Milieu

With the experiences, knowledge and skills he gained from his previous job at CAVADECO, and his experience in selling dressed chicken, he initiated his own business. He started with a capital of Php3,000.00, which he used to buy 30 to 50 heads of live and dressed chicken. He delivered them to his customers through public conveyances, like tricycle and jeepney. Due to his

good relationship with customers and the hard work he manifested, in 2004, he was able to buy a multicab, which he used then to deliver his chicken products.

In 2006, his business went almost bankrupt, as his accounts receivable from his customers became difficult to collect. Believing, however, that his business can still succeed, he borrowed from his sister-in-law to continue his operation. All went well afterward. Learning from his previous experience, he became more cautious in extending credit to his customers.

In 2008, he built his own de-feathering machine for his mini chicken-dressing facility at their residence, where all his dressed chicken products come from.

Having the "attitudes" that a successful entrepreneur must possess, Mr. Rualiso was able to acquire an Isuzu elf and a motorcycle in 2009, as well a stall in the new Ilagan Public Market in 2010. Inspired by the visible promises of his micro-enterprise, and with his ardent desire for it to grow and prosper more, he felt the need to augment his working capital.

In 2011, FICOBank opened its door to him, and this definitely brought a new horizon and more favorable changes in his business operation. With an initial loan amount of Php50,000.00, he was able to increase his chicken inventory that subsequently made him to cater more customers. Equipped with lofty purpose and good repaying habit, he handily repaid his first and succeeding loans at the Bank. And for every loan take out from the Bank, he makes it sure that the same is properly used for business purposes, so as to expand and sustain his business operation.

At present, Mr. Rualiso sells live and dressed chicken in different areas, particularly in the public markets of Roxas and Ilagan City, both in Isabela. In his stall at the public market, aside from dressed chicken, chicken head and feet are also available as well as internal parts, like kidney, intestines and lungs. As to his suppliers, aside from San Miguel Foods, Inc. in Rizal, Santiago City, Mr. Rualiso also sourced his live chicken inventory from backyard poultry raisers from Alicia, Gamu and Ilagan (Isabela). As of now, he is buying 500 to 800 heads and is disposing half of such to his customers at the public markets while the rest are being dressed, using his own mini chicken-dressing facility.

### Business Plans

Mr. Rualiso is presently working out in putting up his own poultry farm. He had already bought a land in Ilagan City where he can put up the same. Additional equipment/vehicles are also on his list for his business expansion so that he can acquire more clients from the adjacent towns. He also wants to have his own mini feed mill in the future, servicing feed stalls/outlets in public markets. Furthermore, he and his wife also plan to have a roving canteen/rolling store that sells meals or *merienda*, with chicken as the main ingredient.

### Success Factors

Mr. Rualiso believes that product quality, reasonable price, after-sale service and customer satisfaction are the key factors to sustain his business. For him, a good entrepreneur is a person who builds good relationship with his workers, suppliers, customers and the community where he belongs. These are the major things that he values most to compete well and sustain his business in the market/industry he is with.

According to him, a person who perseveres more will also attain more than what he/she dreamed of. He only dreamed then to have an own business and be a good family-provider. But now, other than fulfilling his dreams, he also enjoys the other fruits of his perseverance—savings, house renovation and two lots.

He also showed that one's entrepreneurial skills could be nurtured, as long as there is determination.





From Ahem's Collections

## Let's Make Life Light

### Baker

Wife: Hon...Paki-fix naman ilaw natin sa labas.

Husband: Hellooo... Electrician ba ako?

Wife: Eh di pakigawa na lang hagdan natin.

Husband: Hellooo... Karpintero ba ako?

Umalis si Husband. Pagbalik gawa na lahat ng sira sa bahay.

Tinanong n'ya si Wife kung sinong gumawa ng trabaho.

Wife: Kasi kanina, a man saw me crying. Sabi ko daming sira dito sa bahay, so he offered to help in exchange of either sex or i-bake ko siya ng cake.

Husband: So, pinag-bake mo siya ng cake?

Wife: Helloooo... Baker ba ako?

### Liver and Cheese

A Filipino, a Chinese man and a Japanese guy are in a bar having a drink. When a gorgeous woman comes up to them and says, "Whoever can use the words 'liver' and 'cheese' in a creative sentence can have me for tonight."

So, the Chinese man says, "I love liver and cheese." She says, "That's not good enough."

The Japanese guy says, "I hate liver and cheese." She says, "That's not creative."

Finally, the Filipino says, "Liver alone, cheese mine!"

### Drunk Driving

It seems a gentleman had too much alcohol at a party, was heading home, and was pulled over by a state trooper. Upon being tested, the fellow couldn't walk a straight line any more than he could drive one, so the trooper wrote out a ticket and had just given it to the driver before an accident in the opposite lane took his attention to more important matters. The inebriated driver, figuring that the trooper wasn't coming back to him, drove home and went to bed. He was awakened in the morning by a knock at the door, created by two more state troopers. "Are you Mr. Johnson?" they asked. He admitted that he was. "Were you pulled over at Main Street last night for driving under the influence?" Again, the man admitted that was he. "And what did you do then?" the troopers asked. The man replied that he drove his car home and went to bed. "Where is your car now?" the troopers inquired. The man answered that it was in the garage. "May we see the car?" asked the troopers. The man answered, "Sure," and opened the garage. Inside the garage was the state trooper's car.

### Drunk Husband

A wife was in bed with her lover when she heard her husband's key in the door. "Stay where you are," she said. "He's so drunk he won't even notice you're in bed with me." Sure enough, the husband lurched into bed none the wiser, but a few minutes later, through a drunken haze, he saw six feet sticking out at the end of the bed. He turned to his wife: "Hey, there are six feet in this bed. There should only be four. What's going on?" "Nonsense," said the wife. "You're so drunk you miscounted. Get out of bed and try again. You can see better from over there." The husband climbed out of bed and counted. "One, two, three, four. You're right, you know."

### Heavenly Marital Help

Betty and Tim die in a car accident on the eve of their wedding. In Heaven, they ask St. Peter if they can still be married.

"Well, let me find out if this is possible. Stay here and I will be right back."

Six months pass and St. Peter returns. "Yes, we can do this for you."

The couple asks, "Well, as we have spent so much time together waiting for your answer, we need to know that if things don't work out, is there a possibility that we can be divorced?"

To which St. Peter answers, "It took me six months to find a priest up here, how long do you think it will take me to find a lawyer?"

### God Helps Me Pee

An old man and his daughter go to the doctor for his monthly checkup. During examination, the doctor asks how his nightly incontinence is.

"It's fine," says the old man. "I just get up and go to the bathroom, and God turns on the light for me."

The doctor finishes up the examination, and then calls in the daughter to tell her about the God-light thing.

"Oh, my God!" says the daughter. "He's been using the fridge again!"



Sources: [www.jokes4us.com](http://www.jokes4us.com); [smileypliny.blogspot.com](http://smileypliny.blogspot.com); [www.jokes.com](http://www.jokes.com)



## Continuing the Journey... *from page 16*

banker is a gambler who never loses." It's a principle I'll never forget AM Busto taught me. Through him, I acquired a deeper know-how in banking operations. Together, we undertook tactical and operational planning, and carried out strict monitoring of the implementation of area-wide plans and programs. I stayed at the Area Office for a year, doing executive presentations, consolidation of reports, review and recommendation of folders, especially Todo Ani Loan folders, and monitoring of personnel assigned at the Area Office since, during that time, the Todo Finance Unit and the Administration Office in Regions I & III Area were not yet established.

Encouraged by AM Busto, I decided to accept the Assistant Branch Manager (ABM) position, and started my formal training last August 6, 2012. I felt like I was a student, being transferred to different schools, as I do different functions, e.g., tellering, jewelry appraisal, loan bookkeeping and cashiering, in different branches. I become flexible, as I mingled with different classmates and instructors. Finally, I started my hands-on training last January 28, 2013, with BM Darwin B. Mendoza as my trainor. He taught me how to handle clients and staff properly. I've experienced to go out for a client call every Tuesday, together with the loan officer and jewelry appraiser, and participate in group leafletting every Friday and in group marketing for two Saturdays of each month, all of which form part of the Cabanatuan Branch's Plans and Programs for CY 2013.

Five months later, I was eventually assigned to the newly opened branch of FICOBANK in the beautiful City of San Fernando, Pampanga. It is a privilege to be here inasmuch as it is the hometown of President Ocampo. It is not only an add-on but an advantage to my training since I am under the guidance of BM Reynaldo U. Valdez, Jr., a seasoned ABM, who is now the Manager of the said branch. It is another big challenge to meet the financial targets given to us by the Management. But with our dedication to work, and through God's guidance, we will do our best not only to meet the branch's targets but to beat the Management's expectations as well.

It is a great honor being a part of the FICOBANK family. I take pride in having dealt and associated with a family of professional, responsible, talented and dedicated people. It was a privilege having served trustworthy clientele. What I am today, what I have and what I will be in my journey in the future, I owe a large part of it to FICOBANK and to my mentors—Dr. Palac, Sir Dong, SVP Rico and BM Darwin. To Sir Ronald, my sincerest thanks to you for taking care of me and believing in my capabilities. The knowledge, the experience and the fond memories will forever be in my mind and heart's gallery.

## Serving God...

*from page 16*

enthusiasm. Aside from my current position, I am also one of the core trainers for the Bank's Risk-Based Lending Training Program. Outside the Bank, I am actively serving our church, as the Youth Pastor of the Jesus Kingdom Builders Christian Ministry. As I am always saying, if I am not at work, I am fulfilling my innermost heart's desire—to be used by God in proclaiming the good news.

## EVP/COO...

*from page 17*

geographical area of operation in the future." That dream, which was seemingly impossible three decades ago, became a reality today. She pointed out, "In times of uncertainty, leaving anything to chance cannot be afforded. We have to do the impossible by 'thinking outside the box' and 'getting things done' beyond the usual, with the help of the Lord who directs our paths."

In essence, and for 34 years at FICOBANK, this defined EVP Cabantac—a rare breed of a bank executive.

— RR Palac & JM Juan

## Bigger Reward...

*from page 20*

### Social Responsibility

Mr. Rualiso is a model citizen of the community with high moral standards and exhibiting socially responsible behavior. His workforce is indeed a great contribution to the development of the local economy in the area, aside from the other development support/contribution that he has provided in terms of poverty reduction, savings generation and tax contribution.

Aside from being a good provider of his own family, Mr. Rualiso also extends his help to his brother and brother-in-law by providing them a source of livelihood. He is a responsible employer. He treats his workers well, like part of the family, and pays them fair wages, which are given on time. He also provides free food and lodging to some of his workers staying in his residence. They said that their job with Mr. Rualiso really helps them and their families.

Mr. Rualiso also made a social impact on the lives of his customers with insufficient capital, as he sells his chicken to them on consignment basis. His customers are benefiting from a preferred term in paying their accounts. With this good customer-and-supplier relationship, it is not impossible for Mr. Rualiso to succeed in this type of business.

Most importantly, he is making himself more involved in the community, as well as in the church, by giving donations for several projects and activities.

Indeed, Mr. Francis Leonard Rualiso's story proves that the success of an entrepreneur can also be measured by what he/she can do to help others.

— FLM Esteban



Get **rewards**  
as you earn



through FICOBank  
**Jewelry LOAN**

## Participating Product - Jewelry Loan

**Promo Period - September 2013 to February 2014**

### Promo Mechanics

1. The FICOBank POGI Points promo is open to all new and existing Jewelry Loan clients of FICOBank in Regions I-II-III, excluding its borrowing employees.
2. No registration shall be required to participate in the FICOBank POGI Points promo.
3. A FICOBank POGI Points Card shall be issued to each participating client by the servicing branch/extension office.
4. One (1) point shall be given for every Php5,000.00 Jewelry Loan availment/renewal.
5. A fraction of one (1) point shall be given to the excess of the Php5,000.00 monthly Jewelry Loan availment/renewal.
6. Five (5) points shall be given to an existing Jewelry Loan client of the Bank who refers/brings in a new Jewelry Loan borrower, with loan availment of at least Php5,000.00. If the new Jewelry Loan borrower is not referred by an existing client of the Bank, he/she is entitled to the said five (5) points.
7. Calculation and accrual of FICOBank POGI Points will be automatically generated out of the Jewelry Loan transactions at the end of the month.
8. The ICT Department of the Bank shall ensure the control of the computer-generated FICOBank POGI Points of the participating clients.
9. A Jewelry Loan client can verify his/her accumulated POGI Points—from one/several branch(es) and/or extension office(s)—during banking hours at the servicing branch/extension office.
10. FICOBank POGI Points are non-transferable to other person/client.
11. A reward, in the form of interest discount or gift item(s), will be given to a Jewelry Loan client at his/her option, based on the corresponding number of his/her POGI Points that have been accumulated.
12. In determining the corresponding interest discounts for points in excess of the ones specified in the promo rewards matrix, one (1) point is equivalent to Php5.00.
13. A Jewelry Loan client may redeem/avail of the reward, using the POGI Points accumulated from the servicing branch/extension office.
14. A Jewelry Loan client is required to present his/her FICOBank POGI Points Card and fill up the Claim Certificate in claiming for the reward under the FICOBank POGI Points.

15. Reward(s) for FICOBank POGI Points can be claimed at the servicing branch/extension office upon the client's submission of his/her Claim Certificate. In case of unavailability of gift item(s), a period of ten (10) days from the date of submission of the Claim Certificate shall be allotted to make such gift item(s) available.
16. The reward for the FICOBank POGI Points must be claimed personally by the Jewelry Loan client (representatives are not allowed) at the servicing branch/extension office during banking hours.
17. The corresponding points of a redeemed reward shall be deducted from the total points accumulated.
18. Rewards for the FICOBank POGI Points shall in the form of interest discount on loan, gift item(s) or a combination of both, depending on the preference of the Jewelry Loan client.
19. All rewards for the FICOBank POGI Points are non-transferable, non-exchangeable and non-convertible into cash.
20. All unredeemed FICOBank POGI Points will be automatically forfeited three (3) months after the promo period.
21. The 20-percent tax of all rewards (interest discounts and gift items) exceeding Php10,000.00 shall be borne by the Bank.
22. The decisions of the Bank's Management pertaining to FICOBank POGI Points promo, with prior concurrence of DTI, will be deemed final, in case of dispute.
23. The Bank shall utilize the radio, print and electronic media to advertise this FICOBank POGI Points promo.
24. Details of the promo mechanics shall be posted at the lobby of the branch/extension office.

### Promo Rewards

Points	Rewards	
	Interest Discounts	Gift Items
1	Php 5.00	Not Applicable
2	10.00	Not Applicable
3	15.00	Not Applicable
4	20.00	Not Applicable
5	25.00	Not Applicable
10	50.00	Mug
20	100.00	Tumbler (plastic)
40	200.00	T-Shirt/Umbrella
60	300.00	Bag/Polo Shirt
80	400.00	Towel/Tumbler (stainless)
100	500.00	Jacket

"Per DTI-Isabela Permit No. 13-52, Series of 2013"



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