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CHICAGO

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Why this immigrant rights march is brought to you by



By Oscar Avila  
Tribune staff reporter

Marchers had to duck into fast-food restaurants for water when they first took to Chicago's streets in support of illegal immigrants five months ago. At the next two marches, family-owned grocery stores offered free bottled water from trucks emblazoned with their names. This time, as demonstrators march from Chinatown to House Speaker Dennis Hastert's (R-Ill.) Batavia office this weekend, they will have Miller Brewing Co., as a sponsor. The brewer has paid more than \$30,000 for a planning conven-

Iranian defiance—and dread

IRAN SNUBS UN NUCLEAR DEADLINE



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad remains strident despite UN threats: "The Iranian nation is united."



MILLER: Brewer seeks inroads with Hispanics

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ists to confront whispers that they are commercializing their movement when they accept much-needed donations.

"We would love to have 20 corporate logos. It doesn't mean we are selling the movement out," said Jorge Mujica, a member of the March 10 Committee. "The principles and demands remain the same. They are helping out this movement and we are happy with that."

Labor unions remain the movement's backbone with four major unions bringing at least 600 marchers on buses from throughout Chicago. Religious groups have been key too. Some marchers will bed down in churches and a mosque.

But businesses have become vital to this weekend's Immigrant Workers Justice Walk, which will cover 45 miles to Hastert's district office. Hundreds of marchers plan to cover the entire span from Friday through Monday, and organizers need food and water for them.

Sometimes political and commercial messages are mingled. At a July march, Chicago-based food producer V&V Supremo printed signs with its lo-



Jose Artemio Areola and Ana Guajardo, move food and water into a community center as they prepare for the march.

go that urged "Moratorium Now, Legalization Yes." Jimenez Market, an area chain, had its sign on display as workers passed out more than 5,000 bottles of water and other supplies worth nearly \$17,000. Co-owner Jose Perez acknowledged it is good publicity but stressed that "we are supporting our people. Without them, our business would go downhill."

This weekend, the Los Comanches restaurant plans to donate 500 tortas, Mexican sandwiches filled with steak, ham and other toppings. The Laredo Bakery is donating bread while other restaurants are donating water, fruit and other supplies, organizers said.

Those businesses are natural allies—"part of the same broth-

erhood," as one marketer put it. But the presence of Miller at a welcoming reception the day before the Aug. 12-13 planning convention raised eyebrows.

The convention brought together labor unions, anti-war groups, immigrant service organizations and even socialist political candidates.

Hours before hashing NAFTA and U.S. foreign policy participants at the Aug. 11 reception mingled with the Miller Girls, the company's public relations ambassadors, amid a display of Miller logos.

That Miller was involved in the first place is one measure of the growing power of immigrants. After the boycott announcement, the company approached march organizers to try to find common ground, and

agreed to back the march organizers' efforts. Miller is also bankrolling informational ads in Voces Migrantes, or Migrant Voices, a community newspaper in Chicago, and has promised scholarships for area Latinos.

Mathew Romero, the company's local market development manager, said Miller felt it was important to speak out against Sensenbrenner's legislation, though his campaign was one of many the company supported.

Romero noted that company founder Frederick Miller was a German immigrant and many current executives are foreign nationals. Miller is now part of London-based SABMiller.

Romero said he wasn't worried that some opponents of illegal immigration would be upset at the company's support of "the free movement of people, labor, goods and services."

"As long as you are stacking facts against facts, they are free to make their own decisions. We will stand by our positions," he said.

George San Jose, president of the San Jose Group, a Chicago-based marketing company specializing in the Hispanic market, said he understands why companies chase Hispanic purchasing power, which tops \$700 billion annually in the U.S. Brewers, he said, have been especially aggressive.

But San Jose would advise clients that there are better ways. "A company sponsoring one of the two sides of the immigration debate is no different than a company sponsoring groups for or against abortion [rights]. It's

"We would love to have 20 corporate logos. It doesn't mean we are selling the movement out."

—Jorge Mujica, march spokesman

one of those heated political debates that companies should stay clear of," he said.

At the request of march organizers, media executive Robert Armband sent e-mails to thousands of business contacts, asking if they would consider helping the March 10 Committee.

"It certainly is an opportunity to reach the masses, but it might not be the right vehicle to come out as a sponsor," said Armband, publisher and chief executive of La Raza, a Chicago newspaper.

March organizers say they have not made any full-fledged sales pitches to major corporations and are having internal discussions about whether they should make a real push. That can be a tough decision, according to march organizer Gabe Gonzalez.

Gonzalez said he represents those in the movement—maybe half the total, he thinks—who don't even consider themselves capitalists. Many have been involved with labor campaigns targeting specific companies.

March organizers shot down a suggestion that they approach Coca-Cola, for example, because of what they perceive as the

Hilton, union agree on pact

If tentative deal is ratified, other hotels are likely to follow, just as the city starts key fall convention season

By Barbara Rose  
Tribune staff reporter

The likelihood of a hotel strike diminished Thursday, just days before the kickoff of Chicago's busy autumn convention season, when Hilton Hotels Corp. announced a tentative agreement with its workers union.

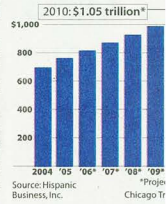
Labor and business leaders were elated at the pace-setting agreement, which likely will avert a repeat of the drama four years ago, when then-Gov. George Ryan stepped in to work out a deal with the hotel union, saying Chicago couldn't afford the loss of business.

Power in numbers

The Miller Brewing Co. sponsorship of a Chicago-area immigration rally is an example of large businesses noticing the growth in Latino purchasing power. Estimates show that Hispanics could represent 11 percent of total U.S. buying power by 2011.

U.S. LATINO BUYING POWER

Scale in billions of dollars



company's labor abuses in developing world, a cause lóbre among liberal activists

Although immigrant activists see legalization as a first step, Gonzalez and other corporations might back the idea as a way to protect bottom line. Whatever the negotiations, Gonzalez said he would cooperate with almost any company willing to back the cause. "That's the nature of public policy. You form coalitions based on mutual self-interest," Gonzalez said. "So will we work with portions? We will work with anyone who will work with