

Mexican Consulate celebrates new office in Natomas

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Mexico's ambassador to the United States, Arturo Sarukhan, presided over the official grand opening of new consular offices in Sacramento.

Tuesday's ceremony and reception for approximately 700 invited guests celebrated the first time in its 69-year presence in Sacramento that the Mexican government has owned its own building.

The consular offices moved to the 33,000-square-foot space at 2093 Arena Blvd. in North Natomas in January. For more than a decade, the Mexican Consulate operated from a 9,000-square-foot office at 1010 Eighth St. in downtown Sacramento.

"The grand opening of this building marks an exciting future for the consulate as an office primarily oriented to provide documentation and protection services to the Mexican nationals who reside in its 24-county jurisdiction," Consul General Carlos González Gutiérrez said during the ceremony. "But it also announces a promising future in terms of the role that this consulate can play as a local partner for dozens of community members and organizations that we hope will feel at home in these facilities, or as a forum or cultural expression for the arts and the humanities in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area."

Tuesday's event included an exhibit, "Mexicans and the Shaping of the Sacramento Valley: Diversity, Work & Hope," illustrating the presence of the Mexican community in Sacramento since 1942. It featured photographs from The Bee's historical archives at the Center for Sacramento History.

Consular officials noted that no other nation has consular representation in the Sacramento Valley. With a 28-member staff, the Sacramento office represents the interests of Mexican nationals in the central and eastern portions of Northern California, from Stanislaus County to the Oregon border.

Officials said the consulate serves an average of 250 to 300 people a day.