

# AN NAGAN NGONIAN

THE CITY GOVERNMENT NEWSLETTER  
75TH YEAR CITY OF NAGA

PHILIPPINE  
CREATIVE  
CITIES AND  
MUNICIPALITIES  
COMPETITIVENESS  
INDEX



# 3-PEAT

**OVER-ALL  
MOST  
COMPETITIVE  
CITY  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**2021 • 2022 • 2023**



**“Nurturing  
Nagueños’ Lives,  
Lighting Up  
Tomorrow’s  
Strives”**





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## COVER STORY

**A Testament to Naga's Vision:** The city government's resolute commitment to overcoming diverse challenges, all in pursuit of a radiant future for every Nagueño family, resonates vividly in the imagery gracing this magazine's cover. From the recent accolades garnered to the ambitious development of the Naga City Industrial Park, and the honor of being recognized as the Overall Most Competitive Component City for 2023, these photos encapsulate the city's determined trajectory. Under the adept leadership and guidance of Mayor Nelson Legacion, Naga proudly secures the coveted title for the third consecutive year, marking an unbroken streak of excellence from 2021 to 2023.



**CHAMPIONS OF LEGISLATION:** Honoring a distinguished legislative body, dedicated to setting the bar for excellence in crafting laws and serving as an unwavering ally in promoting good governance and progress. Their commitment and prowess inspire us all. Photo shows (left to right): Atty. Arnaldo Escobar Jr., DILG Region 5 director; City Councilor Jessie Albeus, Vice Mayor Cecilia de Asis; City Councilor Jose Perez, Sangguniang Panlungsod Secretary Gil dela Torre; City Councilor Joselito del Rosario; Atty. Hazel Deocareza, DILG Naga; Ma. Mercedes Deleña, DILG Naga, and Rico Gaurino, DILG Region 5's Chief Administrative Officer.

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## 69 CELEBRATING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE NAGA CITY SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD



## THE NAGA CITY 75TH DIAMOND JUBILEE CHARTER ANNIVERSARY LOGO



Central to the logo is the *Narra tree*, a symbolic representation deeply rooted in the city's tradition, honoring both the city's nomenclature and embodying the strength and resilience synonymous with Naga's identity.

The design incorporates *leaves* mirroring the city's map, signifying the 27 barangays of Naga. Their vibrant *green color* signifies life and vitality, portraying the city's health and robustness. Beneath the foliage lies the *trunk*, divided into two segments. One segment signifies the citizens of Naga—hardworking, courageous, and actively engaged. The other

segment symbolizes the city government—emphasizing traits of openness, transparency, effectiveness, and reliability, collectively upholding the city's vision and fostering the renowned good governance of Naga.

Encompassing the tree are the years *1948 and 2023*, encapsulating the 75-year span since Naga's establishment as a city on *June 18, 1948*, through the signing into law of Republic Act No. 305 by President Elpidio Quirino.

The *birds* soaring above the tree epitomize peace and freedom, emblematic of the city's aspiration to provide a joyful life for its residents.

Encircling the logo, the *diamond frame* embodies 75 years of strength, progress, love, and commitment, echoing the enduring significance of the city's journey and growth over time.

Logo Design:  
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Logo Description:  
Nympha Amor  
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## Naga Na, Uswag Pa!

WE ARE GLAD TO PRESENT TO YOU THE 75TH CHARTER ANNIVERSARY (DIAMOND ISSUE) MAGAZINE!

**I**t has now been 75 years since Naga City had been granted the privilege of becoming a Chartered City on the 15th of December of 1948. The many petitions presented then, in the background of a newly-rebuild city after being liberated from the Japanese invasion only three years earlier in 1945, tells of the strong resilience and high sense of self-determination of the Nagueños.

Fast forward to 75 years later, that same tenacity and autonomy to chart a course for ourselves, is what we aspire to live up to at present, as we build on the story of the charter of Naga.

Under our administration, we seek to continue the narrative with our bold ventures in creating opportunities for sustainable economic development. Since day one, we made it clear in the agenda of our administration that without losing sight of social services, attracting domestic and foreign investors to develop the local economy and generate jobs is the way forward for Naga. These, together with tourism promotion, and therefore providing the necessary infrastructure will be the major focus of our administration's agenda. We highly believe that infrastructure development is the backbone of the economy that is essential in bringing in new opportunities for more businesses and investments to come and thereby create new jobs and livelihoods, to the benefit of many.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the successive calamities almost sidetracked us from pursuing our goals, but we remain steadfast in our vision for Naga. We worked on our long-term objectives while attending to concerns at hand. And we succeeded. We are able to open new development areas and gladly welcomed big players in the business industry, like the Filinvest, the Santerra, the S & R, Landers, and more who are still expressing their interest. Other necessary infrastructure developments are also being undertaken, and many others are still about to be taken up.

Thus, in the background of many socio-economic challenges, we are able to emerge as the Top 1 Overall Most Competitive Component City in the entire country in the Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and maintain the same stature for three years in a row, from 2021, then 2022, and this year 2023!

All these innovations that we have introduced under the brand of good governance for which Naga has long been known for, we owe to the culture of strong people participation that we exemplify. And we hope to keep it that way.



We are still a long way off from our collective dream. We dream of a Healthy City of Naga. We dream of zero out-of-schools. We dream of zero unemployment. We dream of families clothed with dignity and communities armed with resilience. We dream of thriving urban districts teeming with opportunities. We dream of state-of-the-art modern facilities and excellent public utilities. We dream of large and tranquil open spaces for leisure and various recreational activities, where we can enjoy time with friends and family, right at the very heart of Bicol. These and more, comprise our shared long-term vision of An Maogmang Lugar.

In this light, as we have proven in the past, we will continue to make good use of the privilege entrusted us in being granted our own charter. We will all remain stakeholders in promoting the welfare of our constituency.

For now, we celebrate Naga.

Dios Mabalos.

  
**NELSON S. LEGACION**  
City Mayor

My congratulations to the City of Naga  
on her 75th Charter Anniversary.

**75** years is a significant event in any lifetime. As a city, we have experienced blessings and tragedies, witnessed triumphs and defeats, welcomed windfalls and endured calamities. But we take the good with the bad because the good gives us confidence, and the bad pushes us to be better. These have all contributed in shaping the Naga City that we now know and love.

As we celebrate our Diamond Jubilee, let us remember and recognize the excellence and virtues of the great men and women who came before us; and let their brilliance reflect back to us as we emulate and live up to their bequest and legacy. Let us also continue to cultivate resilience as we move forward towards the next 75 years. Like the Narra, may Naga be steadfast and stalwart as we face threats and challenges; yet humble and noble as we savor victory and good fortune.


The 14th Sangguniang Panlungsod will always be supportive of our Mayor, the Hon. Nelson S. Legacion. We will always work earnestly for your priority projects for the betterment of our people. We share your vision of elevating Naga by uplifting the lives of all Nagueños and their families. We proudly stand shoulder to shoulder with you as you take Naga City to even greater heights. We got your back, Mayor.

As great as Naga is on her 75th year, there is still so much more to do; and I am confident that we are capable of doing what needs to be done. When Naga celebrates her 100th year in 2048, I hope that Nagueños then will be kind and generous as they look back on what we have done during our stay in the city. It is always our honor to serve our fellow Nagueños.

For now, we celebrate Naga.

Dios Mabalos.



  
**CECILIA B. VELUZ-DE ASIS**  
Vice Mayor of Naga City

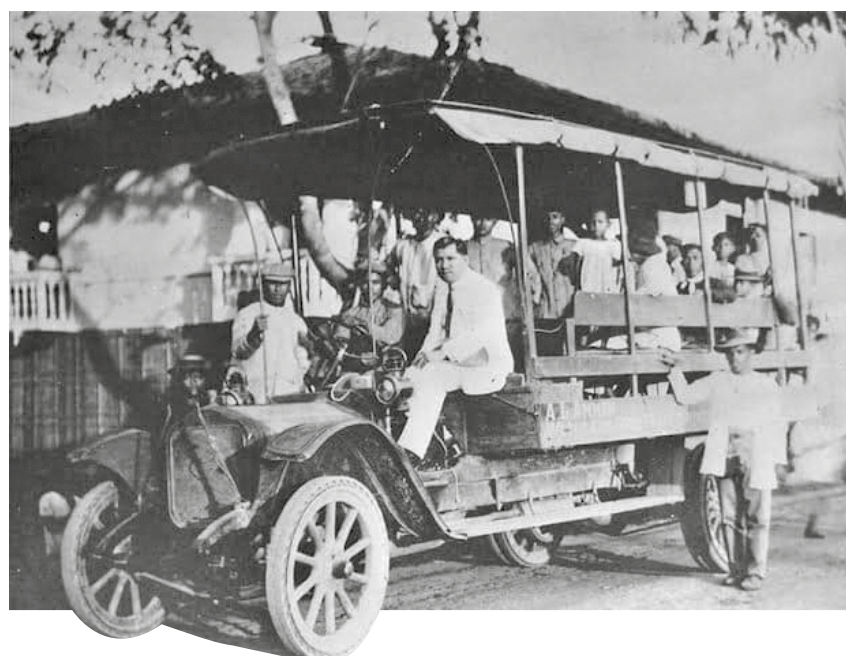


Naga City's Panoramic Development:

# FROM A GLORIOUS PAST TO A TOWERING FUTURE

By Danilo Madrid Gerona, PhD.

**F**OR MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED YEARS, the City of Naga was known throughout the Spanish empire by its mellifluous and colonialist title as *La Ciudad de Nueva Caceres*. Although unknown to most residents, this city takes pride for being one of the first four Spanish royal cities not only in the Philippines but in the entire Southeast Asia, together with Cebu, Manila and Vigan. This becomes the basis for the residents to proudly claim antiquity of their roots and the immensely important role it played both in the national and imperial histories. In celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> city charter anniversary, this paper provides a panoramic view of this city's dramatic travail in history, tracing its birth from an indigenous riverine settlement to its rise as a bustling Spanish city, which served as solid cultural foundations for its exponential transformation as one of the highly urbanized and progressive metropolitan centers in the Philippines in the present.



GENERAL LUNA ST. NAGA CITY 1958

**THE MOVIE HOUSE BUSINESS** IN THE CITY HAD BEGUN TO TAKE A BIG TURN WHEN THE LEBANESE COUPLE, VICTOR BICHARA AND EMILY PANAYOTTI OPENED MOVIE HOUSES IN THE 1920S. THE BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS ALONG THE GEN. LUNA ST.



## ► FROM THE INDIO VILLAGE OF NAGA TO THE SPANISH CITY OF NUEVA CACERES

Located almost at the center of the densely populated riverine district known to the native population as Bicol, the village of Naga, was described by various early Spanish records as the most affluent and powerful settlement. Surviving oral traditions and earliest available colonial written accounts traced the origin of its peculiar name to a duck, or a mythical serpent, but the most popular attributed it to the narra tree. Such pristine and idyllic world of ancient Naga came to a suddenly end with the arrival of the first band of Spanish *conquistadores*.

In the early part of 1576, an impressive Spanish force led by the intrepid captain, Pedro de Chavez, accompanied by a horde of native allies, entered the Bicol riverine district and found the opulent village of Naga. Despite a spirited resistance made by the natives, the settlements were swiftly subdued by the superior Iberian force. Spanish control of the territory was consolidated on May 27, 1579 when Capt. Juan Arce de Sardonil promptly founded on the other side of the bank of the Bikol river opposite the ancient village of Naga, a Spanish settlement where all encomenderos of that province congregated and made their

residence. On the 16th of September 1579, by the decree of Governor-General Francisco de Sande, this Spanish settlement assumed the name Nueva Caceres, in honor of the birthplace of the incumbent Governor-general, the city of Caceres in Spain. The Governor-General likewise appointed what became the city's first set of officials composed of six regidores, an escribano publico, and a secretary of the cabildo. To formalize the creation of the city, the Spanish residents of this city petitioned the king for a royal confirmation. Although nothing was known of the king's response, it could be assumed that a royal franchise was conferred on this nascent Iberian community as the settlement flourished in time.

While the Iberian community in Nueva Caceres extended their war of conquest to the nearby villages, the task of consolidating Spanish hegemony was carried out by the missionary enterprise of the few Franciscan missionaries based in the convent of San Francisco de Naga beginning in 1578. It was also these pioneering missionaries who laid the foundation for the city's typical urban landscape.

One of the earliest social features of the emerging colonial city was its multi-cultural population. Aside from the

original indigenous residents and the small Iberian community, the cultural landscape of the colonial city was enriched by a small number of migrants called Sangley, the Chinese, whose presence could be traced back centuries prior to the coming of Spain. The Chinese' earliest documented presence in the city was recorded in Bishop Antonio de San Gregorio's report in 1650 which mentioned some 10 or 12 houses of Chinese merchants in the city.

Despite the occasional violent clashes which marred their relationship with the Spanish authorities in the 17th century, Chinese population continued to thrive in the city. By the 1730's their number assumed a small community

called the Sangley Parian which 18th century parish records referred to as pariancillo, located along the present Padian street. It might therefore be possible that the name of the street, Padian, was a corruption of parian rather than a term associated with the seminary which also rose in the same place probably in the latter part of the 18th century.

This abaca industry and the handicraft industry, which utilized indigenous materials, became the main source of livelihood of the natives which produced, aside from cordage, also items for personal and household decorations such as bags, rugs of various colors, and native handicrafts

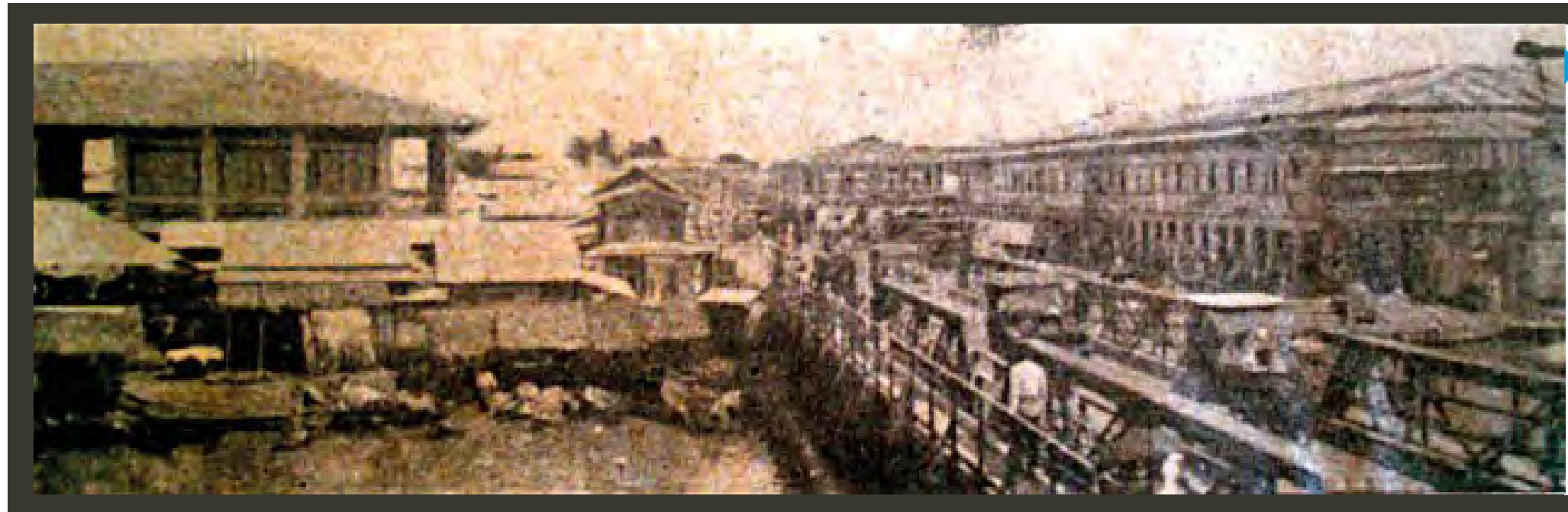
made of indigenous palms. Among the products were nito hats, chestboxes, wallets and other items which these natives sell in Naga. At any rate, most of these items confined their market in the city. According to the report of Bishop Domingo Collantes in 1792, the city had regular market days every Wednesday and Saturday.

The traditional market systems such as the saod and the tiangge survived in the second half of the 19th century. The nocturnal market trading particularly during Wednesdays and Saturdays continued to draw large crowd. Adolfo Puya Ruiz, a Spanish journalist who visited the city in 1887, observed that the people who flocked

to the market were there either to buy their basic necessities or to court the young vendors. Puya Ruiz was amused by the sight of these young vendors in the city market who, "seated on the floor and by the light of the juepe are selling, tobacco, buyo, native liquor, sinamais, etc."

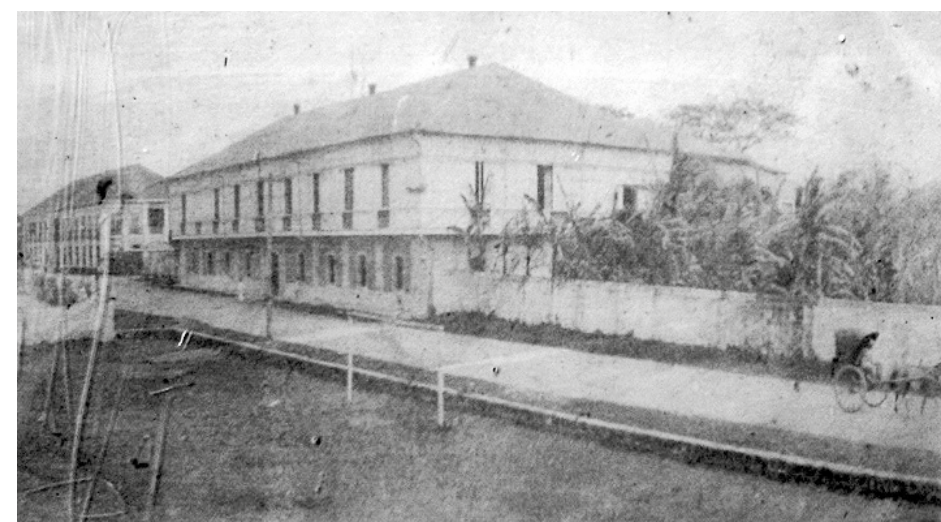
Alongside the proliferation of these portable stalls, was the emergence of variety stores or *almacenes*. At about 1880's among the more popular big stores in the city was the Spanish store popularly referred to as Sres. Munoz Hermanos y Sobrinos. This was famous throughout the province for its wide array of luxury and imported goods sold at prices at par with those in Manila. But by 1890's bigger stores sprouted in what would become the business district of this Spanish city. This business section extended from Tabuco to Via Gainza where numerous stores were lined up. The most important street in this commercial district was the Calle Real (now the General Luna Street) where the more prominent stores were located such as the wine cellar of Senores Castillo y Lomas. Antonio Pelayo's store also sold local and imported liquors. So was the Spaniard Jose Esturi.

As sophisticated lifestyle took roots among the residents of the city and the neighboring municipalities, businessmen were quick to perk up local demands for classy lifestyle



**THE TABUCO BRIDGE IN THE WARTIME NAGA.** Standing on the right-side was an imposing building where the Supermarket now stands.

**THE SEMINARY OF NUEVA CACERES** in the early years of the American era. Founded in the 1780s, the seminary became the only center of higher learning in southern Luzon for the most part of the Spanish era.



**THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMPLEX OF THE CITY** where the cathedral patio and the episcopal palace were located. An incipient concrete road network already existed in the early 20th century where a local transport known as quilts passed by.



**THE FRONTAL VIEW** of the imposing episcopal palace which underwent a renovation in the later part of the 19th century.



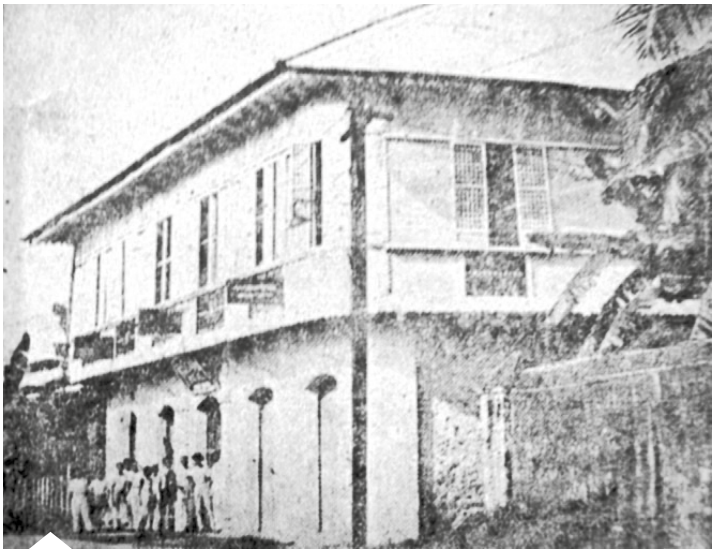
items. Wide array of luxury items such as perfumes and jewelries were displayed for sale in the stores of Sres Antonio Gaudo and Ca. (Compañía), and from the bazar of Mariano Abella which aside from the above-mentioned item also sold porcelain wares. Drugstores also became a major business enterprise and one of the earliest and most well-known was owned by Tomas Prieto, a young but brilliant pharmacist about the early years of 1890's. By 1896 other drugstores were opened. The vibrant economic life of the city also attracted professional physicians. Among its earliest Bikolano medical doctors was Severo Patrocinio who registered his medical practice in the city about 1893. Another physician in the city was Felix Munoz de Bustillo, apparently a Spaniard or of Spanish descent. Aside from physicians the city also drew some other minor medical practitioners such as dentists, vaccinators and even sanitary inspectors. Among the more popular dentists was Francisco Eguia, originally from Manila but took advantage of the booming industry and settled in the city.

One of the hallmarks of development of the second half of the nineteenth century was the continuing expansion of road networks extending beyond the immediate boundaries of the city. In 1887 inland travel to nearby towns of Milaor, Camaligan, Canaman, Magarao, Calabanga and Pili was possible through these roads. Alfred Marche, a French traveller to the region in 1887, noted that the roads which linked the city to other towns were solid and fairly well-maintained.

The booming industry also boosted the intellectual life of the city. At about 1893 the city already boasted of a bookstore and a printing press called Imprenta de la Sagrada Familia owned by Mariano Perfecto located in what was then a bustling commercial area called Via Gainza (now Peñafrancia Avenue in a site where the Phil-Am Life now stands). Almost at the same time the first newspaper in Kabikolan the *El Eco del Sur* began circulating every Sunday first came out in the 25th of June 1893 but eventually folded up about 1894.



**COINCIDING WITH THE YEAR OF THE BIRTH OF NAGA AS A CHARTERED CITY**, this parade was joined by the contingent of the Ateneo de Naga which was passing by the street where the present Crown Hotel stands.



**LOCATED WHERE THE PRESENT PHIL-AM LIFE BUILDING STANDS**, this imposing building used to house the first printing press and bookstore in Naga in the late 19th century.



**PLAZA RIZAL**  
NAGA, CAMAR SUR

PLAZA RIZA, NAGA CITY 1934



**A PORTION OF PLAZA RIZAL** is shown in this early 1960s photo. At the background was the Fire Station at the corner of Elias Angeles and Panganiban Street where the South Star Drug is now located.

**FIRST MUNICIPAL COUNCIL** Photo shows the members of the first municipal council of Naga, who began to serve from year 1940 up to 1947 (Wikipedia: the Second World War lasted from 1939-1945). The council, which was headed then by the municipal mayor, used to conduct its regular session at the residence of Dr. Cornelio Abesa, a municipal councilor, in Barlin Street where the Santa Milagrosa Hospital, a privately-owned hospital, was adjacently located. The municipal officials were: Mayor Rosario Imperial Sr., Vice Mayor Blas David, and Municipal Councilors Gregorio Salceda, Atty. Exiquel Grageda, Manuel dela Rosa, Dr. Cornelio Abesa, Dr. Jesus Hidalgo, Mrs. Maria de Naz, Emiliano Fausto, and Domingo Escalante, and Mr. Felipe Imperial, council secretary. (Photo courtesy of the Imperial Family of Naga City)







### > THE FIFTEEN MARTYRS AND THE CRADLE OF BIKOLANO NATIONALISM

During the closing years of the Spanish regime in the Philippines, the city of Caceres became the showcase of nationalist activism. What constituted as the core of nationalist propaganda in the region was the local intelligentsia who obtained their preliminary education from the famed Seminario-conciliar de Nueva Caceres. When the ideas of the reform movement reached the city, a more enthusiastic support came from the elite. This collective but inchoate patriotic sentiment was further consolidated with the birth of the masonic movement in the city. Logia Bicol no. 64, as the first masonic lodge in Bikol was named, owed its birth from a peninsular Spaniard residing in the city in the 1890's named Don Juan Utor y Fernandez. Utor was fondly referred to by his masonic brethren as El Padre Nuestro

**A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE TANGCONG VACA GUERRILLA** after the successful battle for the Liberation of Naga in April 13, 1945.

on account of his being the Father of Masonry in the region. Owing to his influence, Utor succeeded in penetrating various sectors of the society and carry out his masonic proselytization. The masonic movement initiated by Utor prospered and drew membership from various sectors of the society not only from among the wealthy and educated indio-mestizos but even from among the Spaniards themselves.

On 22 August 1896, three days after the katipunan was discovered in Manila, Gov. Gen. Ramon Blanco telegraphed all provincial governors informing them that an "entire secret organization with a masonic character was discovered" and ordered all civil governors to be more vigilant of all persons suspected of embracing ideas against religion and the state. In response, the civil governor of Ambos Camarines, Don Ricardo Lacosta, issued an arrest order of numerous prominent persons in the province, many of them were based in Nueva Caceres. By the last week of December of 1896, the group of Tomas Prieto and those he implicated in his testimony were convicted with the crime of rebellion and received varying sentences. Eleven, however, were sentenced to die by musketry. They were: Manuel Abella, millionaire and notary public; Domingo Abella, surveyor and son of Manuel Abella; Tomas Prieto, acting mayor of Nueva Caceres and a brilliant pharmacist; Fr. Gabriel Prieto, brother of Tomas and parish priest of Malinao; Fr. Severino Diaz, parish priest of the Cathedral; Fr. Inocencio Herrera, choirmaster; Mariano Melgarejo, former mayor of Nueva Caceres and draughtsman of the public works; Camilo Jacob, photographer; Florencio Lerma, teacher of music and owner of carriage shop; Cornelio Mercado, clerk of the Department of Finance (hacienda publica). The execution was carried out on 4 January 1897 at the Bagumbayan Field, now Luneta. These men, including Leon Hernandez, Ramon Abella and

Mariano Arana came to be called as the Quince Martires of Bikol.

But on the midnight of the 18th of September 1898, feast of the Virgin of Peñafrancia, the city was awakened from its slumber with angry shouts and outbursts of gunfire. The unexpected revolution had erupted in Nueva Caceres. Although the Spaniards were right in their belief that the Tagalog revolution would not gain substantial followings in the region, they were, however, wrong in thinking that a similar outburst of violence against them would not occur in the city. It was too late for the Spanish authorities to realize that the revolt would not be orchestrated by the masons nor by the katipunaneros but by their own trusted indio civil guards. The revolt was planned and carried out under the leadership of Corporals Elias Angeles and Felix Plazo.

The successful bloody revolt in Nueva Caceres which brought the proud Spanish government to its tragic end in the province likewise signaled the end of Spanish rule in the whole region and a provisional government independent of the Aguinaldo government was organized. But the atmosphere of freedom was short lived as the strain on the relationship between the Americans and the Filipino troops worsened and finally ruptured into a seething warfare, the Filipino-American War. When the Americans entered Nueva Caceres on the 22nd of February 1900, it was virtually a deserted place and Nueva Caceres fell on the Americans without any fight. Few days later, the inhabitants of the various municipalities particularly Nueva Caceres began to return to their respective residences, marking the beginning of American colonial control of the city and the province in general.





A STREET IN NAGA IN 1900 as captured by the lenses of an American soldier.

## ➤ AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALIST PROSPERITY

One of the greatest and most novel aspects introduced by the American colonial government to the city was free popular education. The arrival of the **U.S.S. Thomas** which transported substantial number of teachers, the Thomasites, paved the way for the opening on 15 July 1903 of a grammar and a high school under the supervision of Frank L. Crone. But Catholic schools continued to enjoy esteemed reputation and the Colegio de Sta Isabel remained the only Catholic school for women. One of the most popular among these Catholic schools was the Camarines Sur Catholic Academy founded in June of 1928 by Fr. Luis Dimarumba and Bishop Francisco Reyes which was replaced by the Ateneo de Naga in 1940. Private schools such as the Southern Luzon College also opened.

New entertainment facilities were also opened such the cinema. The first non-talking movie was introduced in Naga in the 1920's which came to be called **Cine Union** which quickly encountered difficulties and folded up shortly. Another movie house was opened in the same spot called **Cine Cita** by the Almeda family but also suffered the same fate as the previous one. The movie house business in the city had begun to take a big turn when the Lebanese couple, Victor Bichara and Emily Panayotti opened movie houses in the 1920s.

Although horse drawn vehicles such as the calesas still dominated the streets of Naga in the early decades of the American regime, automobiles, began invading the streets and became an index of high socio-economic status in 1930's. Among the first and more popular owners of these cars were the families of Dy-Lliaco, Lopez, Arroyo, Abella, Diaz, and the Meliton. A more efficient public transport system came with the ALATCO buses.

With the presence of cars came gasoline stations and repair shops. One of the earliest gasoline stations set up in the 30's was owned by a Chinese named Yu Kiw located near the Tabuco Bridge. This gasoline station also offered other array of car parts and accessories. The Naga Auto Repair Shop owned by C. Aragon was among the more popular repair shops in Naga.

The increasing volume of trade likewise affected the influx of non-residents of the municipality of Naga and thus the need for lodging. By the 1930's Naga provided visitors with convenient accommodation during their stay in this bustling municipality when Jacinto Ursua opened in February 1933 the Libmanan Hotel in the Balintawak street. Subsequently more hotels were opened such as the Bicol Hotel Grocery with a restaurant and a bakery. The most sophisticated hotel was the Ritz, located in the area where the Crown Hotel now stands. The growth in the number of students in Naga from towns far and near opened opportunity for dormitory business such as that of Macandog and what came to be known as the Provincial Girls Dormitories.

Growing side by side with the rise in hotel and dormitory business was the food industry. Restaurants and food processing proliferated since the early decades of the American period. The famous **Cu Tu Co**, a Chinese store selling chocolates, sweets, native soap and other grocery items. The **Sanitary Bakery and Grocery** was well-known for its wide array of food products such as ham, bread, biscuits, grocery items, fresh fruits, etc. **Naga Rendezvous** owned by the Chinese Yen Nuat offered Chinese and American cuisine. Bicol Cafe, owned by the Anciano's was among the biggest restaurants in Naga shortly before the second world war.



A VICTORY PARADE HELD TO CELEBRATE THE RETAKING OF NAGA from the Japanese on May 1, 1942. The event was captured by a photographer as the contingent was passing by the street now occupied by the Plaza Rizal on one side and the PNB building on the other.

## ➤ FROM WARTIME TO POST-WAR REBIRTH OF THE CITY

The outbreak of the Pacific War and the subsequent arrival of the Japanese in Naga, abruptly threw the town in chaos and a lingering four years of darkness. Indeed, life under occupied Naga was difficult since the war virtually destroyed the major means of production serving as the life blood not only of the capital but of the province as a whole. Although a semblance of normalcy was subsequently restored few months after, occasional outbreak of hostilities continued to sow fear and uncertainty. Between January and April of 1942, Naga was relatively quiet but not in nearby municipalities where restive civilians and members of the disbanded regular and reserve units began organizing underground resistance movements. In an impressive display of unity and bravery, a composite guerilla force headed by Faustino Flor assisted by Juan Q. Miranda and Teofilo Padua made a coordinated attack on Naga on 1 May 1942. This victory however, was short-lived for few days later, an impressive contingent of the Japanese cavalry supported by tanks and planes arrived in Naga.

The ordeal of the residents of Naga continued for the next three years. By 1944, reports indicating that the tide of war was changing favorably for the allies infused tremendous hopes for the despairing residents. About the first months of 1945, residents heard of more aggressive guerilla combat

operations on Japanese patrols and even on their fortified garrisons in the neighboring towns. The anticipated liberation of Naga finally arrived when an impressive composite guerilla forces led by Maj. Juan Q. Miranda entered the capital and engaged the Japanese in a historic three-day battle, from April 9 until 12, forcing the Japanese to finally withdrew and sought refuge in the mountains of Isarog. When the Americans arrived, Naga was already cleared of enemies.

Like the mythical phoenix rising from the ashes, Naga was among the few provincial capitals in the Philippines where recovery from the devastating effects of the Pacific War was remarkably quick. By the first months of 1946, Naga was steadily restoring its pre-war urban vibrance. Naga's post-war rehabilitation was greatly facilitated by, among others, the immediate restoration of electric power. Except for a brief period of interruption, particularly at the height of the battle for liberation, the distribution of power supply in Naga by Meralco was generally efficient. By the first months of 1946, this electric company had resumed normal operations. Likewise, water supply from the NAWASA, except for its routine but voluntary nocturnal shutdowns, was regular.



Commerce and trade also resumed with remarkable haste. At the start of 1946, Naga registered at least eight classy refreshment parlors and restaurants, some were already operating prior to the outbreak of the war. The more popular were the **New China Restaurant**, the **Sugar Bowl Refreshments**, the **New State Cafe and Restaurant**, the **Washington Restaurant**, the **El Gaucho Restaurant**, the **Allied Restaurant**, the **New Kitchen**, and **The Lucky Hotel and Restaurant**. Hardware and lumber business also prospered as residents were engaged in the repair of damaged buildings, an auspicious condition which enterprising Chinese and mestizos seized to gamble on their capital. Famous among them were the **Central Supply**, the **Southern Luzon Lumber and Hardware Corporation**, the **Cledera Lumber**, the **Leechan Hardware** and the pre-war **Mariano Dy-Liacco and Sons, Inc.**

Transportation and communication facilities began operating by 1946. On 2 November of that year, the **Far Eastern Transport Inc. (FEATI)** made an inaugural flight of passenger plane PI-C39 christened "City of Naga." Inland travel to and from Naga was already regular and inter-provincial transportation needs were served by the famous **ALATCO** buses described as "safe, regular, courteous and economical."



▶ **AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR 1947-48**, Ateneo de Naga did not only resume operation but opened courses in the college level.

The clamor for the resumption of educational services in the post-war Naga received a response from a young teacher named Melchor Villanueva who opened a private school named **Naga College** in the summer of 1947. A year after, Naga witnessed the birth of another school, the **Nueva Caceres Colleges**, founded by the Commonwealth and war-time Finance Secretary Jaime Hernandez. Other private schools both collegiate and technical/vocational were opened such as the **Bicol Institute**, the **Southern Luzon College**, the **Garcia Business Institute**, the **Elegant Fashion Academy**, the **Camarines Sur Fashion Academy**, and the **Vicki's Academy**. More schools were added to the list of academic institutions in Naga even barely a year after. The **Naga Parochial School** was opened to provide a Catholic education to the young pupils. At the beginning of the school year 1947-48, the two Catholic schools, the **Ateneo de Naga** and **Colegio de Santa Isabel**, did not only resume operation but both opened courses in the college level.

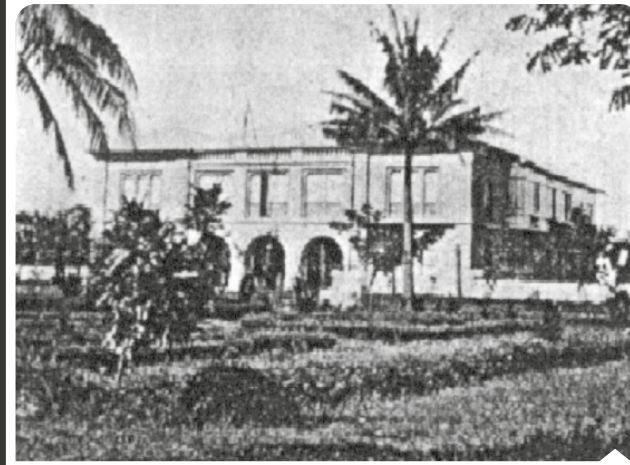
To brighten the gloomy spirits of the post-war residents, two pre-war movie houses, Alex and **Bichara Theaters**, resumed operations in the early months of 1946, almost simultaneously with another movie house, the **Cine Cita** of the Almeda family. This process of rehabilitation, nevertheless, culminated in the legislative creation of the municipality of Naga into a city in 1948. Preliminary steps for the creation of Naga into a city was initiated in the early months of 1948 by the local



▶ **PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RAILWAY STATION** The PNR Naga Station was opened as one of the train stations along the Legazpi Division line of the Manila Railroad Company. By 1938, the Legazpi Division was merged into the Main Line South.



▶ **THE FAÇADE OF THE COLEGIO DE STA. ISABEL.** Like the Ateneo de Naga, this school had resumed operations and opened courses in the college level in 1947. The last half of the century for the school was marked by enormous strides toward development as evidenced in the various infrastructural buildings which filled up the landscape of the Sta. Isabel campus. USI FB



▶ **THE PROVINCIAL CAPITOL IN 1910.**



▶ **THE OLD FAÇADE OF THE NAGA METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL,** the oldest standing cathedral in Luzon which was established in 1595. It is also known as the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John Evangelist.



▶ **AN EARLY POST-WAR PARADE** passed by at the Elias Angeles Street where the Plaza 15 Martires is located. On the left side could be seen an old Spanish building where the Jollibee fast food restaurant is located.

municipal council headed by Mayor Faustino Reyes. The guerilla-turned-politician, Cong. Juan Q. Miranda, apparently played a pivotal role in the planning and in the subsequent realization of this historic charter. In his effort to provide wider dissemination and a more enlightened public appreciation of the proposal, an influential lawyer of Naga, Patricio Amanse, wrote an article in the Bicol Star arguing heavily on the fiscal benefits of the proposed charter. He pointed out that if Naga were to become a city, "its revenue would be increased by more than twice without increasing the present rate of taxes being paid by its citizens, especially the merchants and the businessmen."

On 18 June 1948, in the presence of prominent Bikolano national officials such as Sen. Vicente Madrigal, Sec. Mariano Garchitorena, Rep. Juan Q. Miranda, Rep. Toribio Perez, Rep. Tomas Clemente, and the lawyer Antonio Ojeda, the House Bill No. 1255, sponsored by Rep. Juan Q. Miranda, was signed by Pres. Elpidio Quirino into a law. This historic law came to be known as R.A. No. 305 which formally declared Naga a charter city. One of the major provisions of this charter dealt with the creation of the city council composed of eight key officials, namely: the mayor, the treasurer, the engineer, and the five councilors. The latter were to be elected by the voting population of the city every three years. The city council was to meet every week but could be convened for special sessions provided these would not exceed 30 times per year.

After 444 years since the creation of la ciudad de Nueva Caceres on September 16, 1579 as one of the first four Spanish cities, and 75th years after it became a charter city on June 18, 1948, Naga has accomplished remarkable milestones in terms of urban development and commercial prosperity. Such achievement is conspicuously reflected on the towering infra-structural transformation punctuating not only the vibrant tropical skylines of the heartland of the city but also the once remote and inaccessible forested slopes of the majestic Mount Isarog. It can be said therefore that, as Naga residents under Mayor Nelson Legacion takes a nostalgic glance back into its idyllic days of old, one can whisper that indeed, it has truly gone a long way!



▶ ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Danilo Madrid Gerona obtained his AB Philosophy from the Ateneo de Manila University, his MA Philosophy from the same University, and PhD in Philippine Studies Major in History from the University of the Philippines. As a historian, he has undertaken extensive research in various archives in Europe such as in Spain, Portugal and Italy spanning more than a decade. He has written numerous books and articles on Bikol and national histories, the most famous of which was the book, Ferdinand Magellan Armada de Maluco and the European Discovery of the Philippines, earning for him the recognition as the only Filipino and one of the few experts on the Magellan expedition in the world. He is presently the Director of the Center for Partido Studies in Partido State University in Goa, Camarines Sur.





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## MUST-VISIT TOURIST SPOTS IN NAGA CITY

By James Z. Carpio

The City of Naga is on the southern peninsula of the Luzon island. The biggest island in the Philippines. Establishment of the town was ordered by the Spanish Governor-General Francisco de Sande in 1575. It is interesting to note that he was from Caceres, Spain. So, the town was named Ciudad de Nueva Caceres.

Naga was one of the Spanish royal cities in the Colonial Empire. It shares that title with Manila, Cebu, and, Iloilo.



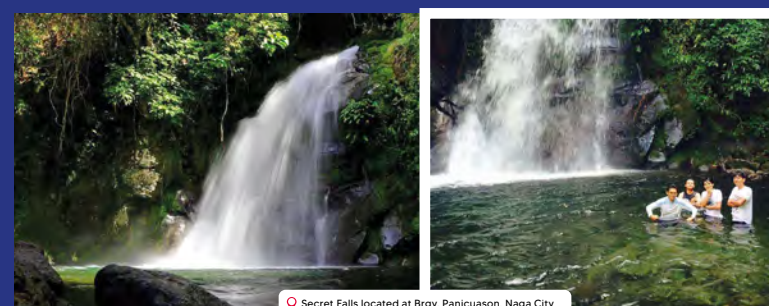
City employees in front of the Naga City Hall Main Building



Fluvial Procession during the 2023 Peñafrancia Festival



Dried Fish section located at the 2nd floor of the Naga City Peoples Mall.



40TH YEAR CELEBRATION of BIGGS last June 2, 2023.

### > THE HEART OF THE CITY

The City of Naga is the Heart of Bicol. When in Naga you will hear locals say **centro** myriad times. From commuters hailing a ride, or people asking, "where are you going?" **Center.** is the answer. It is a Spanish word, and, to say it in English, it would be, "center." In translation it is the City Center. Naga's Downtown— the most happening place —is the heart of the city.

In this beatnik age and modernism, the buildings at the City Center are mostly repurposed. The glory days of movie theaters had seen their golden heydays. For instance, the Emily Theatre is now an arcade. The Advent Theatre became a department store, although again it is under renovation. Poon and Jason Theatre is now the Unitop department store. Probably the only one still showing films would be the Bichara Theatre but it is now called the Bichara Mall. One of the buildings that is still what it used to be and had just undergone renovations is the Philippine National Bank structure.



THE RENOVATED BIGGS, located at Elias Angeles, Brgy. Sta. Cruz, Naga City, near the Plaza Quince Martires along Naga Centro.

Change is wonderful. **Cliché** as it sounds there is always room for improvement. Nonetheless, different strokes for different folks. Some embrace change with open arms, however, put simply, other people are less adventurous. While other people love comfort food. These are what we call our all-time-favorites. And, these become the best-sellers of the food or culinary industry.

The following restaurants have made their mark in the Bicolano Restaurant Industry for numerous years. They are iconic Bicol brands. We begin with Moderna, Naga Garden Restaurant, Bigg's, Geewan, and, New China. A few of them have grown and have branches that are strategically located in other parts of the region.



NAGA GARDEN RESTAURANT OPEN SINCE 1968.



NEW CHINA RESTAURANT, one of the oldest restaurants in Naga City, was founded in 1943 by Wong Yee.

### ▼ Recommendations:

AS YEARS PASSED BY NEW PLAYERS HAVE SPROUTED ACROSS THE CITY. These are Bob Marlin, Red Platter, 1st Colonial Grill, Green Earth Cafe, Casa Soriano Family Heirloom Cuisine, Chef Doy's, Grissini Ristorante, Bistro Roberto, Naga Oriental Wok, Jimmy & Tang's, Oyster Villa, Caffe Primo, Anselmo's, Jack's Blue Plate, Kapenaga, Mama Sarah's Lettuce Garden, Coffee Near Me, Antigua, & M Plaza. And more are coming in the not so distant future. When it comes to authentic Bicolano dishes, we have the Kinalas, Pinangat, Binutong, Bicol Express, Pili delicacies such as Mazapan, Kinunot, Kandinga, and many more. Most are coconut-milk-based dishes.



PLAZA QUINCE MARTIRES



## > A PLETHORA OF PARKS

Plaza Quezon is named after President Manuel L. Quezon who saved 1,200 Jews from Nazi Germany. The plaza is where parades, concerts, morning exercises, shows, and, campaigns are conducted.

Plaza Rizal was built to honor the National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. He was a writer and an ophthalmologist. The plaza is a place for relaxation, and leisure, and street foods, and coffee, and, other refreshments. Is is a must-see in the Christmas Season when it is abundantly decorated with ornaments.

Plaza Quince Martires was built to honor the 15 martyrs who died for the country. They are Camilo Jacob, Severino Diaz, Florencio Lerma, Domingo Abella, Mariano Arana, Mariano Melgarejo, Macario Valentin, Mariano Ordenanza, Cornelio Mercado, Tomas Prieto, Ramon Abella, Gabriel Prieto, Manuel Abella, Leon Hernandez, and, Inocencio Herrera. They were accused by Spaniards as conspirators during the Philippine Revolution in 1896 - 1898.

Plaza de Nueva Caceres is where the Oragon monument can be found. It commemorated the 62nd establishment anniversary of the city in 2010. With honoring the city's former name it is a fitting tribute to history and its lessons.

Vincentian Heritage Park is a religious park with the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary on a high pedestal. A lush garden with a few saints also grace the park like Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Elizabeth Seton, and, Saint Catherine.

Plaza Jorge Barlin is named after the first Bicolano and Filipino bishop in the Roman Catholic Church.



PLAZA DE NUEVA CACERES



PORTA MARIAE, located at one of the borders of the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral.

## > BARLIN STREET: A STREET DOWN MEMORY LANE

In this area, a lot of ancestral houses can be appreciated if you are a history buff. It is also teeming with restaurants. You may compare it to a smaller-scale-version of *Champs-Élysées*.

Senator Raul Roco's ancestral house is located along the street. It had been their family house since time immemorial. And it is made of wood unlike the typical *bahay na bato*. You would see much of the second floor.

At the end of Barlin Street is the *Porta Mariae*. The religious monument was built to commemorate the 300 years of devotion to *Ina*. The arch is 36-foot tall. It is a mini-me version of *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris. On top of the arch is a 10-foot image of *Ina* made of brass.

### Recommendation:

YOU MAY LIKE TO DINE IN AT BIGGS BARLIN. There is a part of the floor made of glass where you can see a bit of history. There is something that looks like a tunnel. For others they say it looks like a bomb shelter or a foundation, or even a grave. They refer to the mind-boggling ruins as Bigg's Barlin's Secrets.



WREATH-LAYING, Ceremony in commemoration with Jose Rizal held last December 30, 2022 at Plaza Rizal.

The Almeda ancestral house was built in 1938 by Dominador and Josefa Almeda. Students are allowed to view the historic house upon permission. It has a see-through gate made of iron, thus, you may catch a glimpse of the enchanting *façade*.

Ludivico Arejola ancestral house was built in 1927. Melchor Villanueva rented the house as the first site of his project, the Naga College Foundation. The house is now owned by Ermelo Almeda.

During the school season, Naga is teeming with students from all levels. There are plenty of learning institutions that provide quality education.

Ateneo de Naga University is a Jesuit university. It is the largest Catholic university in the Bicol Region. People appreciate its four pillars. A classic contemporary *façade*.

Universidad de Santa Isabel was inaugurated on April 12, 1869. It is a private Catholic university owned and run by the Daughters of Charity. The first normal school for women in the Philippines and Southeast Asia that had been declared as a national historical landmark by the NHCP.

University of Nueva Caceres was established in 1948 and became a University on December 15, 1954. Heading for a different direction when it changed owners and management, it is ready for a bright future.

Camarines Sur National High School is the oldest national high in Camarines Sur and one of the biggest public secondary schools in Bicolandia. The Thomasites or early American teachers began this endeavor.

The Holy Rosary Minor Seminary was founded on March 7, 1797 by Reverend Domingo Collantes, Bishop of Nueva Caceres. The mesmerizing exterior has multiple arches. And the rust-colored-bricks are a sight to treasure.

## > REMNANTS OF THE PAST

The Nueva Caceres Heritage Movement, Inc. helped the preservation of an arch which is a remnant of the Don Mariano Abella idyllic mansion. The mansion witnessed relevant moments during the American period when Don Abella was provincial governor. The arch is recognized by the local government and serves as a living evidence of a grand bygone era.

Known as the *Administracion de Coreo* (circa 1846) the old post office is a remnant of Spanish architecture. It is considered as a cultural heritage in the city. As of this writing the walls and its foundations are still standing, however, it is endangered of being demolished.

The San Francisco bell tower is the only remaining debris from the church that was heavily bombed during the Second World War. The Franciscan Friars built the church which is considered to be the oldest. There is a debate because as written the Cathedral may be the oldest but when it was relocated to another spot it lost its title.

### Recommendation:

PENINSVLA CO-WORKING SPACE/CAFE is an ancestral house turned into a public-friendly accessible business establishment. Cultural immersion at its best. A trail blazer in the city, it serves as a good example of how old buildings should be repurposed.





LCC NAGA - CBD II



YASHANO MALL NAGA



SM CITY NAGA



LCC FELIX PLAZO

## > SHOPPING AND STROLLING IN THE MALLS

Maybe you were invited to a dinner party by someone and you forgot to pack the appropriate attire. Do not worry. The city got you covered. Pun intended. Here are a list of malls in the city:

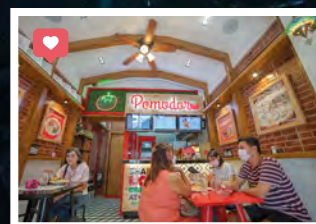
SM, Nagaland E-Mall, LCC Central Mall, Gaisano Mall, Vista Mall, Robinsons Place Naga, Yashano Mall, ALDP Mall, Angena Trading Win Win Mall, 2Puregold supermarkets, & Naga City People's Mall.



## > NAGA'S NIGHTLIFE

Magsaysay district is Naga's own version of Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles. Cafés, bars, restaurants, events, and, concerts happen here. Hotels, inns, fast-food restaurant chains also dot the area. Korean, Chinese, Vegetarian, Filipino, Italian, Bicolano, American, and, Mediterranean Cuisines are served in restaurants along the Avenue.

Avenue Square is a lifestyle center that became a prime mover in the night life here. A newly constructed leisure hub is the Magsaysay Town Center. It has Marks Ribs & Steaks, and, Masisseo Korean Restaurant. New restaurants are also mushrooming everywhere like Pomodoro Pizza Naga along Magsaysay Avenue.



**MAGSAYSAY DISTRICT IS NAGA'S** own version of Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles. Cafés, bars, restaurants, events, and, concerts happen here. Hotels, inns, fast-food restaurant chains also dot the area. Korean, Chinese, Vegetarian, Filipino, Italian, Bicolano, American, and, Mediterranean Cuisines are served in restaurants along the Avenue.

Approximately, there are 60 hotels and inns within the city center, two 4-star hotels and ten 3-star hotels. A number of them have cafés, restaurants, bars, and, convention areas that provide entertainment and vibrancy to help paint the town red so to speak.



**ZIP BIKING** as one of the favorite recreational activities in Panicuason Hot Spring.

The **PANICUASON HOT SPRING** located at the city's uptown district.

## > NATURE ADVENTURES

As you go farther away from the city downtown, locals call the outskirts as Uptown Naga. And, it is where most of nature's splendors are found. Literally, when you trek the slopes of Mount Isarog you go upwards.

Panicuason Hot Springs is one of the hottest tourist destinations in Uptown Naga. Tourists say it is a therapeutic way of minimizing stress and fatigue. Trees and other greenery surround the stream and the springs.

Malabsay Falls can be discovered at the foot of Mount Isarog. Getting there is a fifteen-minute-trek which is an easy feat. Another waterfalls is the Nabontolan Falls which is regarded as a rare secluded gem.

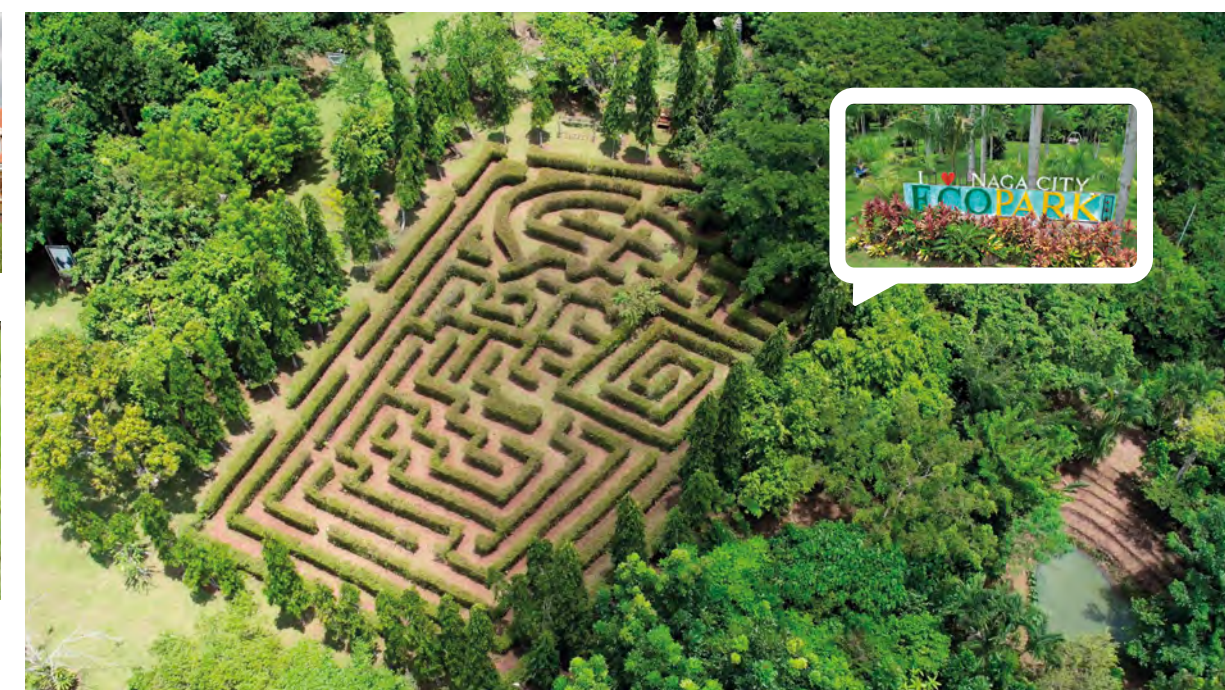
Haciendas de Naga is a country club and golf course. They offer a wave pool, zip line ride, wall climbing, and, obstacle courses.

Naga Ecological Park covers 3 hectares of land. It has playgrounds and magnificent gardens. It has a maze typical of British gardens.

Mount Isarog National Park is fast becoming to be a sports-oriented nature exploration. Isarog's peak is about 6,600 feet. Even foreigners love to hike this mountain. Permits should be applied from the local government for safety reasons.



**HACIENDAS DE NAGA**, county club and golf course.







## ➤ CULTURAL HERITAGE CHURCHES AND MUSEUMS

Naga is well known as the “Queen City of Bicol” because of the historical significance of the city in Bicolandia. Most of the Spanish Churches have been restored and preserved. These churches are a source of pride among the locals due to their amazing distinct architecture and inherent magnificence.

Naga Metropolitan Cathedral is of Spanish Romanesque Revival style. Construction of the present Cathedral started in 1808. This is a favorite among tourists. The interior of the church is beautifully painted with intricate designs.

Our Lady of Peñafrancia Shrine was constructed in 1742 and completed in 1750. The old home of Our Lady prior to its transfer at Basilica. Spearheaded by Bishop Ysidore Arevalo, it has a lovely ceiling painted with events in Jesus’ life.

Minor Basilica of the Our Lady of Peñafrancia is the new home of Our Lady of Peñafrancia since 1985. Monumental space to accommodate the growing number of devotees was its main objective.

The San Francisco Church was constructed in 1578. The architecture of the church is European and the clean lines are noticeable. One tower is pyramidal in shape, and it evokes a contemporary vibe while keeping an old-world-charm.

The city has its own Indian Sikh Temple that can only be viewed from the outside. However, the temple’s towers can be seen. While a Temple of Taoism is thriving in the midst of other churches of different Christian denominations.



**THE PEÑAFRANCIA MUSEUM** displays the crowns, the Aureolas, and the Mantos of Ina. Written devotions are curated and may be perused by museum-goers.

The Peñafrancia Museum displays the crowns, the **Aureolas**, and the **Mantos** of Ina. Written devotions are curated and may be perused by museum-goers.

The UNC Museum is being rebuilt by the Ayala/Yuchengco group. The schedule of its reopening is in July of this year, 2023. It will house significant artifacts.

The V Gallery x Museum proclaims itself as an Art Gallery Museum that showcase Artworks made by Local Artists and the History of Naga College Foundation. Free admission as of this writing.

The Museo del Seminario Conciliar de Nueva Caceres is located inside the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary. Minimal fee is charged upon entry. It has old paintings and Catholic church pieces.

The Jesse Robredo Museum is dedicated to the former mayor of the city. He was also the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government from 2010 until his death in 2012 due to a plane crash.



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### > PILGRIM CITY

A bastion of the Roman Catholic Church, the city is a crowd drawer during its Seasons, particularly, Lent and Christmas. Moreover, all roads lead to Naga for the Peñafrancia Fiesta in September and the Peñafrancia de Mayo. The Marian pilgrimage is considered to be one of the largest in Asia.

For the Holy Week you may consider Naga as a place to observe the traditional Visita Iglesia or Visita Altares. Naga has enough churches for one to complete the tradition. These churches are the Basilica of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, Carmelite monastery, Holy Cross Parish, Mary Of Co-redemptrix Church, Mater Salutis Parish, Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Parish, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Our Lady of Peñafrancia Shrine, Saint Jude Thadeus Parish, San Francisco Church. San Lorenzo de Manila Parish.



#### ▼ Recommendation:



THE KAMUNDAGAN FESTIVAL is a celebration of the Nativity of the Infant Jesus. This is especially joyful for children. Christmas trees are lighted at the parks of the city.



### > A NUGGET OF WISDOM IN A NUTSHELL

The best reason why anyone should like to visit The City of Naga is still, of course, the Peñafrancia Festival. The city celebrates the feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, the patroness of Bicolandia.

Beginning on the second Friday of September each year, the 10-day **fiesta** is heralded by a procession called **Traslacion** when the centuries-old image of the Blessed Virgin Mary is transported from the Peñafrancia Basilica to the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral.

While the nine-day-novena-prayers are being conducted at the cathedral, simultaneous celebrations with civil and military parades, region-wide pageants, concerts, trade shows and, other fun-filled activities are happening all over the city.

On the third Saturday of September, the image of **Ina** is returned, aboard her **andas** and pulled by the **voyadores**, to the basilica via the iconic Naga River. Then, Sunday marks the feast day of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Pontifical High Masses are celebrated in the basilica, attended by hundreds of thousands of faithful devotees and pilgrims.



#### ▼ Recommendation:



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO EXPERIENCE the same event but in a smaller-scale you may opt to attend the Peñafrancia de Mayo where women are the ones who board the **pagoda**. All the traditions are still observed but with a much lesser number of people. This is ideal for older people, women, and, children. In the fullness of time, Naga was ultimately given a much deserved title as "The Pilgrim City of Naga." The most essential title among other titles.



#### > ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Z. Carpio writes for Bicol Mail as an Opinion Columnist. He also collaborates with Ascension Press, U.S.A. as a writer. He graduated with distinction from Aptech Computer Education with a Diploma in Information Systems Management. He has a second degree in B.A. Philosophy from the University of the Philippines, Diliman where he was a University/College Scholar. And, has a Travel Vlog on YouTube.





**NAGA IN 1935** from National Archives Catalog, National Archives and Records Administration, U.S.A. Taken by a US Air Force personnel on a military helicopter, this old photo shows a part of Naga's premier area 4 years before the World War II began in 1939. Kim Poñado, a CEPIO staff member, did try a drone shot around the area in a modern-day setting.





# TWO BECOME ONE

## THE SYMBIOTIC NATURE OF NAGA'S EXECUTIVE OFFICE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

By Jaq Hernandez



**THE BALATAS DEVELOPMENT CENTER** feature seven high-rise housing projects, with construction set to commence in 2024. These facilities are poised to transform the BMDA into a thriving hub for commerce and development. Beyond these seven structures, an additional five housing projects, part of the same initiative, are planned for various barangays in the city, including Sitio Iwid in Barangay Balatas, as well as the villages of Lerma, Sta. Cruz, San Felipe, and Carolina. Mayor Nelson Legacion's commitment to affordable housing for informal settlers and low-income earners is evident through the Pambansang Pabahay program of the city government and President Marcos.



**THE ENTIRE LOT AREA FOR THE LEGACY RESIDENCES PROJECT** is about **12,068 SQUARE METERS** which will be divided into seven buildings. Each building will be **12 STORIES** high and will house **550 UNITS**, with a total of **6,000 UNITS** across all seven buildings. Aside from the initial building site here in the Balatas Development Center, The Legacy Residences will also be established in other barangays in Naga, namely in Barangays Sta. Cruz, San Felipe, Lerma, and Carolina.



### SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

Under the Constitution, the Executive and Legislative are two of the three equal branches of government; with the third being the Judiciary. The Executive branch, with the Mayor as chief executive and administrative officer, is in charge of implementing the policies set by the council, and seeing to it that local laws are carried out. On the other hand, the Legislative branch, presided by the Vice Mayor and composed of the elected councilors, is mandated to formulate and approve ordinances and resolutions, and to generate and maximize the use of resources and revenues for the development plans, program objectives, and priorities of the city. The two function very differently: one enacts and the other enforces.



**THE NAGA CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL**, a collaborative effort between the city council and the executive branch led by Mayor Legacion, stands proud in the Balatas Development Center. Anticipated to commence operations in November 2023, this healthcare facility symbolizes dedication to community well-being.

The Executive and Legislative both have powers to be each other's internal control. Checks and balances are meant to prevent the centralization of power, reduce mistakes, and correct improper behavior. It also clearly defines the duties and responsibilities of the equal branches, share decisions and accountability between them, and even force each other's cooperation for the completion of important projects. But when the Executive and Legislative work as a team, cooperation is not forced, but rather willingly given.





**THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE NAGA CITY POLICE OFFICE HEADQUARTERS TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF THE BALATAS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.** This facility, an integral part of the Center for Safety and Resiliency (CeSaR), will house not only the police headquarters but also serve as the future home for the Bureau of Fire Protection, Public Safety Office, and City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office. The event was honored by the presence of distinguished guests including PBGen. Westrimundo Obinque, Police Regional Office 5, Police Col. Nelson Pacalso, NCPO director, Mayor Legacion, Vice Mayor de Asis, and dedicated city councilors such as Jose Perez, Joselito Del Rosario, Salvador del Castillo, Jessie Albeus, Antonio Beltran, and Ramon Melvin Buenafe. Captured in the moment is Atty. PJ Barrosa, head of the Persons with Disability Affairs Office.



**GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE CENTER FOR SAFETY AND RESILIENCY**



However, long before the MOA signing and the ground breaking, the Office of the Mayor and the 14th Sangguniang Panlungsod have already been communicating back and forth and working together hand-in-hand on the needed resolutions for this monumental infrastructure project. Resolution No. 2023-131 authorized Mayor Nelson S. Legacion to enter into a tripartite agreement or contract with the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, represented by Secretary Jose Rizalino L. Acuzar, and Home Development Mutual Fund represented by its Chief Executive Officer, Marilene C. Acosta, for the implementation of Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino (4PH) Program in the City of Naga.

Three other resolutions were approved and adopted by the 14th Sangguniang Panlungsod that made the tripartite agreement possible. These included Resolution No. 2023-083 for Home Development Mutual Fund for affordable housing loans to Pag-Ibig Fund members under the end-user home financial program, Resolution No. 2023-088 for the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development for the implementation of the "Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino: Zero ISF Program for 2028, and Resolution No. 2023-119 for the Home Development Mutual Fund for the implementation of the Housing Loan Program.



**THE NEXT YEAR,** McDonald's will be constructed at the Almeda New Development Area. Following this, the expansive Naga Global Business Park, spanning 9.5 hectares, will emerge in the same location. This mixed-use development encompasses a grand market mall, a Business Process Outsourcing firm, health facilities, commercial establishments, townhouses, and offices. Upon completion, the park is projected to create job opportunities for 1,000 to 1,500 workers. This April 29, 2022 photo shows Mayor Legacion (center) and the members of the city council along with the Yao Family of Lautan Luas Inc. that owns the Park.

## > A NATURAL SYMBIOSIS

Clearly, the Executive and Legislative are two different and distinct offices; but in Naga City, now more than ever, the two have been in a harmonious relationship and have worked collaboratively in the service of Nagueños. This symbiotic nature of Naga City's Executive and Legislative branches has ensured that policies and projects are crafted and designed with the people in mind, and their fulfillment opportune and delivery comprehensive.

Such symbiosis was on display on March 16, 2023 when Mayor Nelson S. Legacion, Vice Mayor Cecilia B. Veluz-De Asis, city councilors of the 14th Sangguniang Panlungsod, and other city officials, welcomed President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and his party at the ground breaking and launching of The Naga Legacy Residences at the Balatas Development Center. It was in February 28, 2023 when the Naga City Government and the Department of Housing Settlements and Urban Development of the National Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding to build medium rise condominium units in Naga City as part of the socialized housing efforts of the local government and the Pambansang Pabahay para sa Pilipino Housing Project of the BBM administration.

## > CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

Even after the launch of The Legacy Residences project, the 14th Sangguniang Panlungsod continues to show support to the Mayor's vision by passing more resolutions to help the project come to fruition. Resolution No. 2023-245 authorizes the Mayor to negotiate and enter into a contract of sale for the acquisition of 2,123 square meter property and Resolution No. 2023-246 for 1,210 square meter lot, both located at Barangay Balatas, which will be used as part of the Project Development Plan of the Legacy Residences.

This cooperation between the Office of the Mayor and the Sangguniang Panlungsod is not unique to the Legacy Residences project. These two offices have always been in-sync when it comes to projects that will elevate and uplift the lives of Nagueños. Resolution Nos. 2022-687 and 2022-688 green light the construction of satellite markets in Barangay Carolina and Barangay Sta. Cruz respectively allowing residents of the area to have easy and convenient access to food and other necessities. Resolutions Nos. 2022-685 and 2022-686 approved the construction of multi-purpose evacuation centers for Barangay Concepcion Pequeña and Barangay Carolina respectively making government response in times of calamities and emergencies quick and adequate.

Flooding during rainy seasons can be mitigated with projects like the construction of box culverts which the Sanggunian supports with Resolution Nos. 2022-682 for Barangay Pacol and 2022-683 for Barangay Concepcion Pequeña. Traffic can be abated and alleviated with the help of Resolution Nos. 2022-660 permitting the widening of the Balatas-Cararayan Road and 2022-661 doing the same for Queborac Drive in Barangay Bagumbayan Sur. Resolution Nos. 2022-678, 2022-679, 2022-680, and 2022-681 allows for the installation of Cat's Eye road stud devices in various roads and highways in Naga City enhancing road safety for Nagueños and other motorists passing through the city.



**AFTER A SPAN OF 8 MONTHS,** the inauguration and blessing of San Isidro National High School's second classroom building took place on November 6, 2023. The city government officially handed over the two-story, six-classroom structure to the Department of Education. Mayor Legacion, Vice Mayor de Asis, and members of Sangguniang Panlungsod, alongside DepEd Naga Schools Division Supt. Susan Collano, PhD., School Principal Ramon Geronimo Jr., and students and school personnel, graced the event with their presence.

## > WINNING COLLABORATION

Even after the launch of The Legacy Residences project. These are but a handful of instances when the Sanggunian manifested its support of the Office of the Mayor and its priority plans for the city. This support is also evident in the Sanggunian's shared pursuit of socio-economic development, especially in the fields of education, healthcare, enterprise, and infrastructure; and of the overall realization of a collective dream of a better and dignified life for all Nagueños and their families.

With the rise of social media influencers, "collab" has become a buzzword, even a cliché. And at times, even carries with it a negative connotation. But in the local government of Naga, collaboration is not an empty cliché; it is not something negative. It is, in fact, why Naga is so successful; it is what makes Naga City the best. Roadblocks are cleared and problems are solved because of collaboration. It helps us learn from each other and eventually brings us closer. It also opens up new channels of communication and cooperation. And with more of us buying in, it boosts morale and inspires loyalty. Collaboration makes us more efficient and effective; it makes us winners. But the rewards do not stay in the confines of the offices in city hall, or rest on the shoulders of our elected officials; the rewards cascade down to our communities, to our families, to our children, thus to Naga City's future.

In the sum of all things, Nagueños are the real winners here.



**PHILIPPINE COUNCILORS LEAGUE,** City Councilor Joselito S.A. Del Rosario (3rd from right), PCL Naga president, together with PCL Naga members (from left to right) City Councilors Ghriel Rosales, Ramon Melvin Buenafe, Vidal Castillo (rightmost), Buddy Del Castillo (2nd from right), and SK President and Ex-Officio City Councilor Kylie Tripulca (3rd from left) with visiting PCL National President Handy Vertext T. Lao (front row, center). PCL-Naga is celebrating PCL week and have lined up various projects such as Feeding Programs, Distribution of Back-to-School Kits, and even Tree Planting and Greening Activities, among others.



# AN ENABLING LEADERSHIP

By Armie B. Gunay



**MAYOR SON LEGACION** giving his message during the Blessing and Turnover Ceremony of 2 Storey - 6 Classroom Building in San Isidro National High School last November 6, 2023.

**N**AGA CITY MAYOR **NELSON LEGACION** exemplifies an enabling kind of leadership to the Nagueños. Being one who also came from among the less privileged yet managed to make it successfully in his profession as both a lawyer and now a public servant, Mayor Legacion largely understands the importance of being presented with the necessary opportunities for empowerment and development, in order to achieve despite the limiting circumstances.

It is in this same perspective that he set to steer the direction of Naga when he first assumed post as City Mayor in 2019. He then came to find a city that is not in good shape as it was before. Naga was being confronted with varied concerns from all sides— presence of out-of-school children and youths, traffic and road issues, flooding, lack of job opportunities, and to top it all, a downswing in the Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI) rankings.

For Legacion, this should not be the case for a city that is being recognized as a premier one in the region. In his first days in office, he set it early on as an indispensable LGU priority, that economic development by means of attracting domestic and foreign investors in order to develop the local economy and generate

jobs without losing sight on social services, is the way forward for the Naga. These, together with tourism promotion and providing the necessary infrastructure shall be the major focus of his administration's agenda.

Guided by this direction, the Legacion administration embarked on the opening of new schools and the establishment of new government and business centers in the city. These aim to make education and health services more accessible for the Nagueños, as well as provide more business, job, and employment opportunities, so as to capacitate the citizenry in realizing their fullest potential and aspirations, and become productive members of the society contributing to the development of the community. These, together with other infrastructure developments, have since then been helping introduce positive changes and improvements in both the city's landscape and the lifescape of the Nagueños.

## > EDUCATION AS KEY FOR TRANSFORMATION

Legacion holds the sector of education close to his heart. The many turning points in his own life story have their hinges rested upon his attainments in schooling. This passion for education had been evident early on in his many crafted legislations benefitting the education sector during his stint as a City Councilor.

When he begun with the conduct of community meetings in the different barangays and sitios of Naga in his incumbency as City Mayor, the growing concern on the presence of many out-of-school children and youths particularly in the far-off villages that he came to know in many of his visits, weighed him a heavy burden. Accordingly, the problem stems primarily from lack of financial means of the families to afford of transportation and other costs of sending them to school.

**GUESTS, EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS,** and the city officials in a group photo officially closing the recently blessed and turned over classroom building at the San Isidro National High School.



For Legacion, true to his very own life experience, education is the key that allows one to access many other opportunities and possibilities for further development in many aspects, and thus being deprived of the privilege will be disadvantageous for both the individual and the entire community especially in the long run.

With this in sight, he led the city government in establishing new schools in those needing communities. **In a span of four (4) years, the city government had already established five (5) new barangay-based schools— one elementary school in Sitio Yabu, Barangay Carolina, and four (4) new national high schools in the barangays of San Isidro, Balatas, Sta. Cruz, and the recent one in Mabolo.**

The schools are currently accommodating **a total of more than 1,500 enrollees** and are helping reduce the cases of out-of-school children and youth in Naga, with families in said areas now being presented with an option for schooling that would entail them lesser to no transportation costs at all.

In addition, with the new schools now offering a more accessible education services for students in the vicinity, the facilities assisted in the decongestion of several big schools in the city that have been struggling with problems on student overpopulation, and thus even helped in fostering quality education with the decreased teacher-to-student ratio.

Further helping improve the quality of education being given to students, the Legacion administration embarked also on the construction of additional school buildings for the existing schools in the city. At present, the local government was able to **construct and turn-over more than 170 classrooms** that are

\*Salamat po Mayor Nelson Legacion sa padagos na suportar asin pagmakulog sa kapakanan asin futuro nyamong mga estudyante kan San Isidro National high school.  
\*Naga Na, Uswag pa!

Thank you Mayor Nelson Legacion for your continuous support to us, students of San Isidro National High School, and compassion for our well-being and future.

Naga Na, Uswag pa!

now helping provide conducive spaces for learning and assist in the provision of quality education.

Aside from these benefits to accessibility and quality of learning, the new schools also opened employment opportunities to teaching and even non-teaching staff, to provide the necessary education services. To date, **more than 60 new teachers** were now being provided with the job opportunity.

More than these, the administration is seeing even more rewarding opportunities that would soon follow with the establishment of new school sites. These would include the opening of local businesses, improved means of transportation services, and other economic activities that will further help revitalize the local economy in those communities.





BALATAS NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

## > MIXED-USE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR LIVABILITY

Sustaining the city's stature as the regional center of trade and commerce in Bicol, the Legacion administration boldly engaged with the opening of new government and business centers in the different locations in the city. The local government has already bared the initial plans for the **four (4) identified new development areas in the barangays of Balatas, Sta. Cruz, and Almeda and Mabolo-Tabuco areas.**

These new growth areas employ mixed-use urban development design that functionally integrates the combination of multiple uses such as commercial, residential, institutional, or recreational into one space. The project has been steadily taking shape with the strong support being extended by the private sector and the national government agencies through funding and land donation efforts.

The **Balatas Development Center** will be initially composed of the following: (1) a new, bigger (200-bed capacity), and modern Naga City General Hospital that is now being readied for turn-over this last quarter of the year; (2) the newly- established Balatas National High School; (3) the Center for Safety and Resiliency (CESAR) that will enhance the city's emergency and disaster response capabilities with its inter-linked and inter-agency communication facility equipped with 'intelligent' features, and is set to commence construction this November 2023; (4) PNP Headquarters that has already started construction last April, 2023; (5) BFP Headquarters; (6) the newly-opened

Multi-Purpose Event and Evacuation Center; and (7) the Naga City Urban Agriculture Training Center and Demo Farm which has already been accommodating varied livelihood trainings.

The area will feature a 20-meter-wide road project with four-lane carriageway, green line with fruit-bearing and flowering trees, bike lanes, and walkways, coupled with a food and leisure park, which is now undergoing construction.

The area will also be the site of seven (7) medium or high-rise condominiums (*The Legacy Residences*) that will be constructed thru the **Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino** (4PH) program under the auspices of the Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development (DHSUD).

Alongside with this, the **Sta. Cruz New Development Area** now houses the (1) Naga City Health Office II; (2) Naga City Event Center I, and (3) the newly-established Sta. Cruz National High School. Other facilities that will be established thereat include a Satellite Market and a medium rise housing, among others.

At the **Almeda New Development Area** now stands the (1) new City College of Naga and (2) the RT-PCR Molecular Laboratory, which will soon be followed with the construction of TESDA office and training and innovation centers, Police Station II, and the Naga City Event Center III.



AN AERIAL SHOT OF THE BALATAS Access Road from the Naga City Science High School.

On the other hand, the **Bicol Riverfront Development Area** will feature a (1) river boulevard; (2) People's Park and Recreation Center (PPRC) with cafes and a concert ground, and other interactive and recreational facilities; and (3) a bypass road and bridge that is now undergoing construction, which will further serve as an alternate route to ease traffic congestion particularly along the Maharlika-Diversion Road especially now that the area has been starting to welcome the rise of more business developments.

The new growth centers, together with other ongoing city infrastructure projects which include road networks and public transportation, ICT and others, are being seen to ensure mobility, accessibility, and business-friendliness. This will further build industry confidence in the city, eventually leading to investment generation, the thriving of more economic activities, and the creation of more job and employment opportunities particularly for the Nagueños.

## > URBAN FORESTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Growing up in a farming community back in his hometown in Buhi, Camarines Sur, Legacion brought with him his love for planting and caring for the environment, in the exercise of his leadership as the mayor of Naga. Barely three (3) months into office, on September 2019, Legacion launched the **Forests-in-Our-Midst (FOM) program** by virtue of Executive Order No. 2019-046.

Unlike with other traditional tree planting programs that were being done in rural, forested areas, FOM focuses on the afforestation of the city's built-up areas— the planting of mini-forests in 'opportunity areas' within residential and commercial complexes in Naga's urban districts. With this strategy, the Legacion administration aims to have the impact of trees in mitigating the negative effects of climate change such as flooding and urban heat, to be readily felt by the communities in the commonly-affected areas, particularly those in the urban districts.

Overall, through the program, the city seeks to improve carbon sequestration and oxygen generation of trees, lower average air temperature in the vicinity of FOM sites, enhance water quality and quantity of aquifers, pump up generation of groundwater, better soil retention and absorption, prevent erosion and flooding along waterways, increase biodiversity, and help in food security.

The program highly complements the city's rapidly-growing urban landscape with the increase in volume of the infrastructure projects being constructed in land. With the urban heat island effect commonly resulting from the conversion of permeable soils into concrete pavements with the fast-paced urbanization, FOM balances the need for economic development alongside environmental sustainability.

For a fact, the launching of the first FOM site in 2019 was done at the then recently-closed 60-year-old city dumpsite. The facility was situated across the newly-established Balatas New Development Area and in near proximity to the city's Magsaysay Lifestyle District. Back then, the city's 'smokey mountain' negatively pictured the barangay and almost had the name 'Balatas' synonymous with the dirt and stench. However, at present, the 3-hectare mound, hill-like piece of property is now growing trees and ornamental gardens— providing a green, elevated landscape set at the backdrop of the growing Balatas New Development Area.

Four years forward into 2023, **FOM sites in the city had grown into more than 80** and include areas categorized mainly into five (5)— **(1) open spaces, (2) school sites, (3) road sides, (4) private properties, and (5) easement areas.** Among these include the Re-greening Project of the city's Panganiban Drive, and the green line trailing the newly-opened Balatas-Naga City Science High School Road.

Enriched with the employment of scientific methods and techniques to ensure denser forest growth, the program has been helping increase the vegetation cover of Naga and allow for greater biodiversity to thrive in the sites.



STA CRUZ NEW DEVELOPMENT AREA ACCESS ROAD FROM QUEBORAC DRIVE TO STA CRUZ PORO



> **BOOMING INVESTMENTS AND RISING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

With a promising environment for the thriving of business and tourism in a manner that respects the city's natural ecosystem, Naga has since been earning the trust and confidence of different foreign and local investments and developers, in coming and expanding their businesses in Naga.

Last November 2022, **Filinvest Land, Inc.** already held the groundbreaking ceremony for the land development of Futura Monte in the city— Naga's first master-planned condo community which features mid-rise condominiums with recreational amenities that will soon rise along the city's Roxas Avenue in Diversion Road.

Another township development—the largest in Bicol—the **Santerra Vista Estates** that will soon transform the city's landscape in the part of Barangay Del Rosario with its residential communities, leisure and wellness hubs, play park, business park, commercial and retail districts, was also launched in the city by Vistaland last February 2023.

In addition, only recently in July 2023, Naga welcomed the first branch of **S&R Membership Shopping** center in the Bicol Region, which is also situated along Roxas Avenue in the city's Diversion Road. Another membership shopping that expressed their interest in coming to Naga City is the **Landers Superstore** which will also be located along Roxas Avenue.

Further complementing the rise of developments taking place in that part of the city, the **Lau Tan Luas Inc.** likewise held already last April 2022, the groundbreaking ceremony for the establishment of the **Naga Global Business Park** to be located adjacent the city's newly-established Almeda New Development Area. The 9-hectare commercial complex will include a Grand Market Mall, Business Process Outsourcing Location, Townhouse Development, Health and Leisure Hub and Commercial Center.



With these investments and more, Naga City Mayor Nelson Legacion is glad to share how these developments have been and will even be generating hundreds to thousands of jobs for the Nagueños, while stimulating as well the advent of varied economic activities in the nearby areas, and therefore contributing further to the overall improvement of the city's local economy. Nevertheless, the Legacion administration commits to continue seeking the coming of more investments, for even more and better economic opportunities particularly for the Nagueños.

> **UNPARALLED FEATS**

The trailblazing efforts earned recognition with Naga City being hailed as the **Overall Most Competitive Component City in the entire Philippines for three consecutive years (2021, 2022, and 2023)** in Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) CMCI rankings— an interval of five (5) years from when Naga was last conferred with the coveted title and an unmatched 3-year feat. The award ranks local government units under five (5) categories namely Infrastructure, Economic Dynamism, Government Efficiency, and Resiliency, and with the recently added Innovation pillar.

Putting Naga back on track in the CMCI rankings as it was six (6) years ago, and even surpassing the then 2-year feat record, had not been an easy feat for the Legacion administration. Legacion's first term as City Mayor was plagued by series of adverse events that overwhelmed the local government and distressed the city economy— the outbreak of African Swine Fever, the occurrence of three successive strong typhoons, and the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was barely six months into office when his vision for Naga was put to the test.

Yet, what has set the city apart is how his administration remained firm in delivering its expressed commitment to Nagueños even in the midst of those eventualities. The circumstances that followed did not sidetrack the city administration in pursuing a better Naga. Rather, those happenings all the more bared before the local administration the dire need and the urgency to work on needed infrastructures to avert the same happenings in the future. Thus, the City attended to the pandemic concerns at hand, while working alongside the tasks for the long-term targets.

True enough, just as when the economy started to reopen again, Naga was poised to have a responsive environment for recovery which secured the city's sustainability, post-pandemic.

The Legacion administration's next steps and aspirations remain anchored on Naga's reconfigured long-term vision of being a Happy Place, translated in Bikol as "An Maogmang Lugar", which specifically aspires for a healthy city that is peaceful, vibrant and productive, safe and smart, green and resilient—driven by excellence and solidarity, enabled by technology, powered by a strong and diversified urban and agricultural economy, and cultured by religious and cultural diversity.



With all the developments that have been taking place, the Legacion Administration further celebrated last September 2023, the declaration of the 25-hectare **Naga City Industrial Park (NCIP)** located in upland Naga as an **Industrial Special Economic Zone (ecozone)** by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 299—the first in the Bicol Region as well. Having an industrial ecozone positions Naga as a location for light manufacturing industries for export. The NCIP features 21 industrial lots for sale or lease, commercial strip that can accommodate up to 16 establishments, and other amenities. Looking into similar localities in the country with the same industrial ecozone such as Cebu, Bataan and CALABARZON, Naga is seeing the generation of more or less 10,000 direct jobs of the NCIP for the Nagueños and neighboring towns, not to mention the growth of other support industries that the NCIP will be spurring around the area, such as housing, transport, recreation and more, that will further generate more jobs.



**24** | **NAGA CITY INDUSTRIAL PARK**  
THE FIRST INDUSTRIAL ECOZONE IN BICOL  
GRAND LAUNCHING ACTIVITY  
VENUE: NAGA CITY INDUSTRIAL PARK GROUNDS  
SEPT. 2023



THE NAGA CITY GOVERNMENT NEWSLETTER



The city's officials and representatives pose for a group photo during the CMCI Awarding last September 28, 2023 at Manila Hotel. Photo shows (left to right): ITPO Officer PJ Legaspi, City Administrator Elmer Baldemoro, City Mayor Hon. Nelson Legacion, City Councilor Hon. Jose B. Perez, PDAO Head and Secretary to the Mayor PJ Barrosa, CEPPIO Head Allen Reondanga.



# A NAGA OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE

By Jaq Hernandez



A WORKSHOP, through the Committee on People Empowerment chaired by Hon. Gayle Abonal Gomez, on the process workflow of the implementation of the i-Engage Ordinance sponsored by Hon. Oying Rosales last March 2023.

## > THE GIFT OF EMPOWERMENT

A few days before Christmas, on December 20, 1995, Mayor Jesse M. Robredo and the 5th Sangguniang Panlungsod under presiding officer Vice Mayor Lourdes V. Asence, MD, gifted the people of Naga with Ordinance No. 95-092, also known as THE EMPOWERMENT ORDINANCE OF NAGA CITY. The ordinance initiated a system for a partnership in local governance between the city government and the people of Naga.

This empowerment ordinance initially contained three underlying principles of governance presupposing that:

- The will of the people shall always reign supreme. It shall be the prime responsibility of any government to ensure that such will is at all times manifested and enforced;
- The will of the people can best be determined if they organize themselves to address their sectoral or common concerns;
- Governance is best effected if its responsibilities are shared by the people. A system of partnership between the governor and the governed shall guarantee that sovereignty effectively resides in the people.



The ordinance allowed the government to enter into a partnership with duly accredited Naga City based people's organizations and non-government organizations in the conception, implementation, and evaluation of all government activities and functions. All accredited NGOs and POs may organize themselves into a People's Council and have their representative recognized by the Sanggunian, and through whom their rights, privileges, and responsibilities may be exercised.

## > 28 YEARS LATER

On January 24, 2023, just a few days after welcoming the New Year, it was the turn of Mayor Nelson S. Legacion and the 14th Sanggunian Panlungsod under the stewardship of Vice Mayor Cecilia B. Veluz-De Asis, to gift the people of Naga with Ordinance No. 2023-004, also known as the "i-ENGAGE ORDINANCE." This ordinance, sponsored by Councilor Ghriel G. Rosales, intends to promote participation of individual citizens in Naga City's legislative process.

The i-Engage Ordinance of 2023 takes the Empowerment Ordinance of 1995 a few strides forward by allowing individual citizens, who may not be members of accredited organizations and not members of the recognized People's Council, to still participate in the legislative process of the Sangguniang Panlungsod by providing avenues for them to convey comments, objections, recommendations, or suggestions for consideration by the members of the Sanggunian on proposed measures filed in the plenary or in the committee level.

This time, the underlying principles posited that:

- Open governance ensures inclusive participation in all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making through the establishment of consultation mechanisms;
- Nation building requires open communication and free exchange of information between the government and its constituents. This fosters patriotism and nationalism which encourage them to participate in local governance;
- Consistent consultation with stakeholders guarantees transparency in the enactment of local legislation.

## > THE GIFT OF PARTICIPATION

To ensure that feedback from citizens are received and considered, the Sanggunian Panlungsod will now adopt an enhanced legislative process where all measures filed for first reading and referred to committees shall be posted within three days after the regular session and shall not be scheduled for hearing unless posting was complied with and earnest

efforts to seek feedback from concerned sectors have been made. A valid justification shall be included in the committee report if there was non-compliance of publication and consultation; and a simple majority vote allows the Sanggunian to return the proposed matter to the committee for compliance. Approved ordinances and resolutions shall be posted for easy search and access and should be available for downloading in a Portable Document Format (PDF.) Lastly, all committee meetings and public hearings shall be live streamed in the city government or Sangguniang Panlungsod's social media platforms.

## > EIGHT SCORES (OR 160 YEARS) LATER

In his Gettysburg address in 1864, Abraham Lincoln honored the soldiers that sacrificed their lives in the American Civil War with his words, "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

160 years later, this idea of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people still resonates resoundingly. For democracies to function at its optimum level, we should respect and hear ALL people; not just those who voted for and agree with us. Additionally, in order for the people to properly and truly exercise their rights, the people should be fully and truthfully informed.

The city government of Naga knew and believed this in 1995; and do so still in 2023. People participation engenders accountability and transparency which are essential requirements in good governance; and in turn, good governance fosters economic growth, political stability, social development, and overall security.

After all, a democracy is a living system of government that prospers and progresses by being open and responsive, and by allowing itself to be reinvented and transformed.



OFFICIAL SIGNING for the approval of the i-Engage Ordinance last January 30, 2023.





# CITY’S SECTORAL PLAN MOVES CLOSER TO FINAL APPROVAL

By Jason B. Neola



**T**HE CITY’S NINE-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP), which encompasses the years 2022 to 2030, moved close to final approval by the Sangguniang Panlungsod after positive review of the DILG-led Regional Inter-Agency CDP Review Committee last May 2.

Ruthel Gigantoca, chief of the Local Government Capability Development Division (LGCDD) of DILG Bicol, said the assessment of Naga’s CDP looked at the three parameters – form, process and content – to ensure that the city’s primary sectoral plan adhered to the prescribed CDP formulation guidelines and processes as developed and adopted by the department.



Form looks at the plan’s compliance with prescribed forms and output documents for the different analytical processes in CDP formulation, as well as documents that led to integration of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Process looks at the extent of institutional partnerships, consultations, and linkages during plan formulation – from information sharing to consensus building – to ensure that it is consultative, participatory, and inclusive.

Content, on the other hand, looks at the plan’s substance and logic – including consistency, cohesiveness, responsiveness, and comprehensiveness; and confirms use of technical and scientific data to integrate CCA and DRR.

Wilfredo Prilles Jr, head of the city’s government’s planning and development department, provided the highlights of the nine-year plan, which banners a new reformulation of Naga’s “Maogmang Lugar” long-term vision anchored this time on being a “healthy city.”



The plan will require around P30.9 billion to implement until 2030, with local funds funding 66% of the financial requirements, with the national government and international agencies expected to put up 16%; public-private partnerships (PPP) covering 15%; and borrowings around 3%.

As suggested during the planning workshops, monitoring and evaluation of the plan will be carried out by the inter-agency Naga City Statistics Committee, using the pioneering Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of the city’s SDG indicators as a monitoring tool.



Initial assessment by the regional CDP review committee showed that Naga’s CDP has already partially complied with the three criteria, with consolidated comments from member agencies to be consolidated by DILG Bicol for transmission to the city planning department. Right after the meeting, the CPDO already submitted the missing forms and documentation, and is only waiting for the consolidated comments.

Once fully addressed, the CDP is expected to be fully adopted by the Sangguniang Panlungsod, which conditionally approved the plan subject to review by the DILG-led committee.







I salute the city government, lalo na kay Mayor Son, sa mabilis na response para mapa konkreto itong mahabang portion ng daan from Diversion road to the Naga Hope Christian School. Masayang hassle sa mga motorista lalo na sa mga naglalakad lalo na kung maulan. Salamat po, mayor sa pagiging responsive sa mga pangangailangan at kahilingan ng mga tao.



KAJJANDRA ARLEGUI  
SALES STAFF, BARBECUE KING  
BROY, TRIANGULO



Malaking bagay po ang road concreting dito sa aming community dahil magbubukas ito ng bagong madadaan pagkatapos na saraduhan na "yung kalsadang dating ginagamit namin sa likod papunta sa labas ng Copradia. Kahit tinambakan muna ng madrigal at least may madadaanan na kami. Malaking talong ang road concreting na ipapagawa ni Mayor Legacion dito, sapagang buong 8,477 square meters na aming community. Dahil sa ipapagawang kalsada, di magtatagal magiging marami na rin ang bahay dito kasi lahat na nakikita nating vacant lots ay meron nang nagmamay-ari. Initially, mga more than 20 families



MRS. RUBY C. NARZOLES, HOUSEWIFE  
ZONE 5, SITIO COPRADA, BROY, SAN FELIPE



Dakulang marhay an pakinabang sa pagpa-improve kan tulong classrooms digdi sa Mac Mariano Elementary School, arag na sa panahon na sobra an init, mababawasan an overcrowding kan mga aki. Uokoparan an tulong classrooms kan mga aki na yaon sa kinder, sa special education (SPED), asin kan mga estudyantes na pigpagamit an library ngonian bilang classroom. Igwa pa kaming plano na maging project site man an samuyang eskwelahan kan Forest in Our Midst program sa kamawotan na pagulphohan an mga tinanom sa laog kan eskwelahan.



RAQUEL PAPA  
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
MAC MARIANO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Dakulaan an pasalamat mi ki Mayor Son kan aprobaran nya tolos an kahagadan kan Calauag Elementary School na magkaigwa nin detached comfort rooms para sa mga lalaki, sa mga babae, asin sa members kan LGBTQ+. Laen kan ginhawang itatoo kami sa mga paraadal asin sa magiging mga bisita nyamo arag na kun may okasyon an eskwelahan, magkakaigwa pa kami nin dakulang oportunidad tongonaning malibol nyamo an WINS program kan DepEd, an WASH program na nakasentro sa paglikay sa mga kaakian laban sa hygiene-related diseases. Salamat tabi mayor.

NANCY T. SIBAYAN  
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
CALAUAG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Omaw mi an plano kan gobyerno lokal na pakarhayon an drainage system digdi sa samuyang kalye, lalo na duman sa enotan na parte kan Chico na nagwawarak na sa tinampo an tubig o wastewater hale sa mga harang arag na kun mauran. Stagnant na o dae na pati nawawara an maating tubig sa drainage na puwedeng magdalot nin helang arag kan dengue. Salamat ki Mayor Son huli kan proyektong iyan na may kaibahan pang an road concreting.

NESTOR BORRAL | BUSINESSMAN  
ZONE 3, CHICO ST., BROY, TRIANGULO



Sa tahaw po kan pagiging sibol kan syudad sa pagpahaman nin hospital, eskwelahan, drainage, tinampo asin iba pang mga pasilidad, naisipan po man kan gobyerno lokal na maglaag nin Bicol River Esplanade/Boulevard, sarong magayon na pasyaran nin mga gurang asin kaakian. Pigheheling ko, magiging sarong lugar na matao nin bwelo para sa bonding kan pamilya. Igwa nin river-walk, treeline asin greenscape. Salamat po.

ARRIANNE FRANCISCO DAZAL  
BARANGAY MABOLO, NAGA CITY



PROJECT PERSPECTIVE



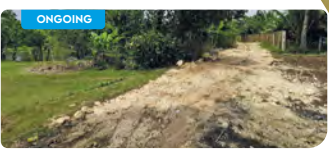
Dawa popoonan pa sana an pagpahaman kan school building na igwang duwang eskalon asin apat na kwarto, ngonian po sana, pigpapasalaman mi na si Mayor Legacion huli kan saiyang marikas na aksyon. Ogma po kami ta sa primerong pagkakataon magkakaigwa an Pacol Elementary School nin halangkaw na school building. Kasimbagan po ini sa kulang na classroom para sa samang kaakian.

ROWENA B. SABATER, PTA OFFICER  
ZONE 5, BROY, PACOL



Dakula an pasasalamat mi ki Mayor Nelson huli kan labi kaimportanteng road opening project digdi sa samuyang lugar. Sa panahon na matapos na, maseserbian kan tinampog ini an mga sadit na lunadan asin darakulang truck na naghahakot nin mga produktong agrikultural siring kan mais asin tuba. Magiging pasil na asin marikas an pagdara nin mga gulay sa merkado.

JOSEFINA MENDOZA,  
LANDOWNER/PLANTER  
ZONE 4, SITIO CAROMATIG, BROY, CAROLINA



Thank you po, Mayor Nelson Legacion ta magkakaigwa na po nin dagdag na classrooms an samuya pong eskwelahan nin 2 storeys 8 classrooms, if ever po na matapos na an construction kan pangatlong school buildings digdi sa Sta. Cruz National High School magkakaigwa na po kami nin additional venues para sa pag-adal. Kan Grade 8 po ako kulang pa pong maray an classrooms may time po kaidta na pigpagamit mi po an event center para sa samuyang learning activities.



MICKAELLA RODRIGUEZ  
GRADE 9-BANABA  
STA. CRUZ NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
BROY, STA. CRUZ

PROJECT PERSPECTIVE



MARIA THERESA RUIZO  
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
CAROLINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dae nin pagduda na si Mayor Son pirming yaon para sa pagkanood kan satuyang kaakian. An papatindogan na multipurpose building digdi sa Carolina Elementary School maserbing laboratory kan mga eskwela sa Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan (EPP). Pagkatapos na agihan nin mga bagyo, dae mi na napapakinabangan an samuyang multipurpose hall. An plano kan alkalde na magpatindag liwat nin kaparehong pasilidad dakulang tabang para makamtan kan mga aki nyato an quality education. Sa panahon na mahaman na, an pasilidad gagamiton kan mga aki na yaon sa Grade 4, 5, asin 6. Dawa an mga yaon sa primary grades pigpagagamit man an lugar na ini para sa saindang learning activities.

OLD MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING



PROJECT PERSPECTIVE



TESTIMONIES





## DESPITE P150-M BUDGET DEFICIT NAGA TO PUSH THROUGH WITH 2023 INFRA PROJECTS

By Jason B. Neola

**T**HE CITY GOVERNMENT OF NAGA needs to strengthen its fund generation campaign and networking to cope with the negative impact brought about by the LGU's decreased share in the National Tax Allocation (NTA).

This was given emphasis by Mayor Nelson Legacion who revealed that his administration keeps a list of big-ticket projects that are due for implementation this year. "The city government has to augment also the funds for the infrastructure projects whose constructions began last year and have to be completed within the year," he said.

The slash in the NTA share which was felt by the LGUs across the country happened due to the drop in tax collection by the national government from different industries in 2020 and 2021 during which the operations of businesses were greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said that the adverse effect caused by the cut in the NTA will be felt until 2024 considering that the allocations to be received by the LGUs for that year will depend on the revenues collected by the national government in 2021 or three years before the applicable year. "If the applicable year

is 2023, an LGU will receive its allocation based on the revenues collected by the national government in 2020," the mayor said.

The global economy was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 when movement restrictions and major disruptions to the global supply chain drastically reduced economic output at all levels. Naga was not spared, with many local businesses forced to close or suspend operations, leading to significantly lower taxes collected by the national government, a portion of which forms a large part of LGUs' budgets three years down the line.

Another factor that made the allocation of the cities to shrink was the conversion of two municipalities into cities, which, based on the law, must have been allocated with individual shares in the NTA, thereby making the funds distributed to all the cities throughout the country even smaller.

The mayor said the situation has made Naga City to suffer a deficit in its 2023 budget of around P150 million. Naga approved a P1.5 billion budget for 2023, which is lower than the one approved in 2022.



**LIFELINE PROJECTS** The Center for Safety and Resiliency (*top photo*) and the Naga City Convention Center (*below*) are the leading big-ticket projects of the administration of Mayor Nelson Legacion which are expected to help boost the economy of the City of Naga.

In the city government's Satong Aramon program hosted by Allen Reondanga, head of the City Events, Protocol, and Public Information Office (CEPIO), Legacion bared that the city was able to acquire at least P1.5 billion as a firm funding commitment intended for the construction of roads and other lifeline projects including the Naga City Convention Center in Barangay Carolina and the Center for Safety and Resiliency (CeSaR) at the Balatas Development Center.

He said the funds and the projects on which they will be spent were included already in the 2023 General Appropriations Act.

Aside from the P1.5-B, Legacion also disclosed that the city government is confident in can acquire additional funding assistance for the projects by way of un-programmed

appropriations based on the assurances made by an official of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Un-programmed appropriations are those which provide standby authority to incur additional agency obligations for priority programs or projects when revenue collection exceed targets, and when additional grants or foreign funds are generated.

The mayor said that the construction of the convention center, which will be completed in two- or three-years' time, needs at least P600-M funding requirement while the CeSaR has to be funded with more or less P400-M to be accomplished including its technology requirements to make it resilient against potential calamities.

He announced that due to fund sourcing initiatives that his office has undertaken, the city government was able to generate an initial amount of P145 million for CeSaR. Bidding processes are now being prepared by the DPWH. For the convention center, the LGU has generated P100 million as initial fund.

Since July 2022, Legacion has begun networking with the offices of senators, congressmen, various national government agencies and government officials to be able to generate more funds for the city's projects.

"I am glad to inform my fellow Nagueños that with such initiative the city government was able to acquire firm funding commitment of P1.5 billion from different sources which is now included in the national government's 2023 general appropriations act passed by the House of Representatives and the Philippine Senate and approved by President Marcos Jr." the City Mayor said.





# CITY AGRICULTURE OFFICE: CULTIVATING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE FOR NAGUEÑO FARMERS

By Jason B. Neola

**T**HE CITY AGRICULTURE OFFICE (CAgO) has launched an agricultural development program dedicated to uplifting the lives of local farmers. With an unwavering focus on breathing new life into the city's agricultural sector, CAgO has embarked on a series of impactful initiatives promising to reshape the landscape of farming.

At the core of CAgO's is the improvement of the income of farmers by empowering them with knowledge, resources and markets. These are pursued thru farmers field schools, farm machinery and post-harvest services, interest-free input loans, food processing and packaging services, and participation in agri-fairs.

To date, six farmers field schools (FFS) have been conducted by CAgO in partnership with national agencies and the private sector benefiting 168 farmers. Twenty-five are indigenous people (IP) from Bgy. Panicason and an equal number are urban poor residents from Bgy. Triangulo who were trained on high-value crop production. These were conducted in Panicason for the IPs in partnership with the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Rotary Club of Naga Caceres, and in Bgy. Triangulo in partnership with SM Foundation, DA and Ruby Shelter Realty Development Corporation which lent one of its lots.

On the other hand, 37 farmers completed their three-month long training on hybrid rice production and mechanized farming in Sitio Tiripon, Bgy. Pacol while 26 participants from Bgys. Cararayan, Carolina and San Felipe completed Inbred Rice Production Technology, both in partnership with the Agricultural Training Institute, DA RFO V, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. In corn, two FFS were conducted in Bgys. Carolina and Panicason with a total of 50 graduates, likewise in partnership with DA RFO V and ATI.

The learnings gained were immediately put to use as their training coincided with the planting, growth and harvest of their own crops.



**NOTHING LIFTS THE SPIRIT OF THESE FARMERS BETTER THAN BEING AMIDST HEALTHY EGGPLANTS, TOMATOES AND BEANS.** IP participants midway thru their 16-week training on high value crop production conducted by Agricultural Technician Alvin Alvaro in Bgry. Panicason.



**PARTICIPANTS OF THE FARMERS** Field School for hybrid rice applying their new knowledge of using only a single palay seedling instead of 3 or more per hill during transplanting. Agricultural Technician Francis Abasola said single planting and wide spacing is the key to robust palay plants.

Most recently, CAgO and the UPLB-National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology collaborated in the conduct of a two-day seminar to promote the use of microbial inputs with the second day devoted to field application in two trial farms in the city. The goal is two-fold: reduce synthetic inputs to reduce cost of production, and produce healthier food for consumers. No less than 100 farmers, barangay agricultural technicians, and teachers involved in Gulayan sa Paaralan, attended the training.

To help farmers earn more from their produce, CAgO tapped the Philippine Center for Post Harvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) for new post-harvest facilities at the city's Nursery Site in Bgy. Carolina. A rice mill was added increasing capacity by 2.5 tons per load, while a 6-tonner dryer was recently installed and another 12-tonner dryer is on the way. A cargo truck was likewise acquired to assist farmers bring their produce to these facilities. These are on top of existing corn dryers with a combined capacity of over 20 tons per load. Henceforth, rice and corn farmers can always dry their harvest and mill them even during rainy days assuring them of a better price for their produce.



**UP BIOTECH** deputy Director Mannix Pedro discusses how plants absorb nutrients and encouraged farmers to gradually minimize the use of harmful fertilizers and pesticides and instead migrate to naturally occurring inputs to produce safer and healthier vegetables, grains and fruits.



**ECONOMICS PROFESSOR AND RADIO DJ ERNEST ASENCIO**, one of CAgO's agricultural technicians, presenting the city's feasibility study at a PhilMech training session. Its approval paved the way for the grant of additional post-harvest facilities for the rice farmers of the city, along with the lobby efforts of Biosystems Engineer Menandro Calingacion.



**MS. DAISYDONA RAMOS** shows the techniques on processing tomato into tasty but healthy candies at the Food Processing Center. The center also churns out powdered turmeric, powdered malunggay, dried mushroom, noodles and other marketable food products.



**INITIAL HARVESTS** were best seller given the good quality of the mushrooms. Some were pickled at the Food Processing Center for longer shelf life and better prices.



**FRESH HARVEST** from the city's upland barangays excites shoppers who flock to get their share of healthy produce of local farmers at the Jubilee Farmers Market held at Kinastilyuhan Street in downtown Naga City.



**FARMERS LOADING NEWLY HARVESTED PALAY** into the city's 6-tonner dryer capable of bringing down moisture content to 14% or less in half day of operation. Another dryer with twice the capacity is expected to be also operational next year.

## LIVELIHOOD FOR SMALL FISHERFOLKS

**FORTY-TWO SMALL FISHERFOLKS** of Brgy. Mabolo underwent training on backyard hito production conducted in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources which also provided the fingerlings.



**MAYOR NELSON S LEGACION** and Councillor Melvin Buenafe who chairs the Committee on Agriculture in the Sangguniang Panlungsod lead the dispersal of 5,000 tilapia fingerlings in the Bicol River under CAgO's Fishery Program being implemented in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.



**RELEASING 500 HITO FINGERLINGS** in the backyard fishpond of Archie San Jose in Pagdaicon Poro, Mabolo. This pioneering project of the city government and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources seeks to provide alternative livelihood to fisherfolks affected by the dwindling fish stock in the Bicol River.



**ACTUAL APPLICATION OF BIOSTIMULANT** to the tomato and eggplant seedlings of farmer Myrna Dolor in Brgy. Pacol.



**LEARNING BY DOING**, most of CAgO's training activities involve actual hands-on practice. Balatas residents learning how to prepare the medium for their mushroom sponge.



**PART OF THE PARTICIPANTS** coming from Balconville, Balatas Workers Association, and Sitio Iwid, with their PNP partners, mastering the proper preparation of fruiting bags for mushroom production. Teaching them is Daisydona Ramos, one of CAgO's technologists on mushroom production and lead trainer on food processing.

For those who are into vegetables and other high-value crops, a Food Processing Center set up under the Angat Buhay Project of then Vice President Leni Robredo and the Department of Trade and Industry is providing training and on-site services to transform excess harvest into long shelf-life more marketable food products.

Likewise, urban households are encouraged to engage in mushroom production starting with residents of Bgys Balatas. Members of Balconville, Balatas Workers Association and residents of Sitio Iwid, with support from a team of the Philippine National Police, underwent training on mushroom production. Now, they

are already producing mushroom which they either sell fresh or processed.

Periodically, local farmers are assisted in marketing their produce thru agricultural fairs either conducted by the city government or the private sector including the malls in the city. Earlier, CAgO and the Independent Component City Agriculture and Fishery Council, in partnership with the Market Enterprise Promotion Office, also ventured into wholesale and retail marketing of farm produce thru a stall at the third floor of the public market. However, it became apparent that the model won't work given the limited time farmers have to attend to their produce at the stall and their need for immediate cash. Other options are now being explored. The Jubilee Farmers Market however was a success with daily deliveries of fresh produce by 30 individual farmers and farmers groups being snapped by health-conscious consumers.

To free farmers from the clutch of compradas, the city's SARIG Loan facility lends inputs payable upon harvest without interest. Repayment rates have averages 85% notwithstanding the recurrent bad weather erratic farmgate prices. The facility lends fertilizers, pesticides and other farm inputs in kind based on the assessment of CAgO's agricultural technicians. Cushioning them from calamities is the free insurance coverage from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation.

Food security of consumers and income security of farmers are the primordial thrusts of the city government under Mayor Nelson S. Legacion. CAgO's initiatives and interventions, pursued in partnership with national agencies and the private sector, are all tailored towards these goals. Barring calamities, disasters and economic disruptions, the city government foresees better lives ahead for Naga City's farmers.



# MADANAY AN PAG-TALUBO KAN NAGUEÑO

By Jonathan Noble and Gian Charles Basco

**S**A POON KAN TAON 2020, pigestablisar kan Naga an manlaen-laen na Economic Stimulus Programs para matabangan an mga empleyado sagkod mga negosyante sa Naga kun sain pigtawan ta nin pinansyal na asistensya an satong mga kahimanwa na nadanyaran nin pagkabuhay. Ngonian, sa likod kan COVID-19, padagos na pig-ooprecir kan Naga para mas matabangan an satong mga Nagueño na mawot magtugdas kan saindang negosyo o matawan nin oportunidad na magtrabaho.



**JOHN BENEDICT PAYCANA**  
22 YEARS OLD TUPAD BENEFICIARY



**Dakulaon pong tabang** si nakua mi ta syempre mayo po ako kadtong trabaho, tapos nag abot si TUPAD dakulang pasasalamat ko ta nakasali ako, ta kan nagabot si TUPAD, si pan araaldaw mi, si mga pangaraaldaw kan aki ko, ta mayo kami trabaho, mayo ako trabaho, tapos natustusan ko si mga pangangaipuhan mi sa laog kan harong lalo namay duwa kaming aki.



A STORE OWNED BY KATHERINE M. PANGANIBAN through the Business Stimulus Program. Located along Magsaysay Extension, Barangay Liboton, Naga City.

## BUSINESS STIMULUS PROGRAM

Saro an Business Stimulus Program sa tolong Economic Stimulus Initiatives na mawot matabangan an sektor kan mga negosyantes sa syudad sa paagi kan pag-oprecir nin mga interest-free loans para sa mga saradit na negosyo para makabuhay an saindang negosyo sa tahaw kan pandemya. Sa pagluya kan kaso nin COVID-19, pigbosol ta an programang ini para mas matabangan pa an mga Nagueño na mawot na magpuon kan saindang negosyo. Kan nagpuon an Business Stimulus Program kan 2020 antes sa taon 2021, igwang 157 na Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) sagkod 510 na empleyado an na natawan nin P9.8M na benepisyo. Sa taon 2022 hasta ngonian na 2023, igwang 23 MSEs sagkod 81 na empleyado an natawan nin P1.6M.

## TABANG TUGANG FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

Pig-ooprecir kan Tabang Tugang na matabangan an mga empleyado o displaced workers na nadanyaran man kan pandemya. Tatawan nin P5,000 interest-free loan para magamit kan benepisyaryo para masuportahan an saindang pamilya, orog man magamit ini para magpoon nin sadit o home-based na negosyo. Sa ngonian igwa nang 78 na benepisyaryo an natawan nin P396,000 na ayuda poon pa kan pandemya.

## COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Katuyuhan kan Community Employment Program an matawan nin short-term, 10-day employment para sa mga mayong trabaho asin nawaran nin trabaho sa paagi kan pagsasagibo nin maintenance asin repair sa mga pampublikong lugar asin pasilidad sa mga barangay. Ini an naging obheto kan CEC sa panahon kan pandemya. Ngonian, naglawig naman din an obheto kaini. Sa irarom kan Metro Naga PESO, katakod naman an pagtao nin asistensya

sa mga ahensya asin man sa mga aplikante na naghahanap nin trabaho sa paagi kan mga bulletin na pigluluwas kan Metro Naga PESO. Katakod man kan programang ini an paglansar kan Department of Labor and Employment kan TUPAD Program na saro man sa mga programa na pigooprecir kan Metro Naga PESO. An TUPAD o Tulong Panganapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/ Displaced Workers sarong community-based employment program kun saen nagtatao an gobyerno nin emergency employment para sa mga kahimanwa ta na nadanyaran o nawaran nin trabaho sa panahon kan pandemya.

## PARA SA PADAGOS NA PAG-TALUBO KAN NAGUEÑO

Sa likod kan mga angat na namate kan mga Nagueño sa mga nakaaging taon, dae man pinabayaan kan lokal na gobyerno an saindang mga pangangaipo. Sa pagsara kan mga oportunidad, tinawan ta nin mga bagong dalan para sa pag-aseño an satong mga kahimanwa asin man mapadagos ini sa mga masunod pa na taon.



**AN NEGOSYO NI KATHERINE M. PANGANIBAN**, saro sa mga benepisyaryo kan Business Stimulus Program. Salamat sa pigtaong inisyal na Php 50,000.00 na loan kan programa, napondohan an saiyang school supplies business. Nagkua man din siya nin dugang na Php 75,000.00 loan para madagdagan an saiyang kapital madagdagan an serbisyo kan saiyang negosyo.





## NAGA'S STARTUP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE: FOSTERING A THRIVING INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM FOR THE FUTURE

By Paul John C. Legaspi



**NAGA ROUNDABOUT OR "ROTONDA"**, connecting the roads of Panganiban Drive, Magsaysay Ave., Del Rosario, and Diversion Road.

**L**OCATED IN THE HEART OF BICOL REGION, Naga City has proven itself to be one of the fastest-growing economies in the Philippines. To continue this momentum towards progress and a sustainable future, Mayor Legacion advances efforts in innovation and the digital startup industry. Naga envisions itself as an innovative city with a flourishing ecosystem for startups.

The city's commitment to drive innovation can be traced back to as early as 2007, with the establishment of the Naga City Creative Media Center. The city's brainchild technology incubation facility produced several outstanding and pioneering firms, such as Nueva, a mobile app development firm that has introduced Hungrily, Community Mart and Tindahang Tapat; Extesoft-- a security software firm serving the French market; and MediaFarm, Inc.-- an animation and e-learning company doing work for Philippine and international firms.



**LGU NAGA** continues to expand collaboration among the academic institutions to strengthen the startup ecosystem. These partnerships led to the implementation of the city's Idea2Startup program in ADNU, BISCAST, NCF, and UNC reaching more young innovators and startup founders.

Today, in collaboration with existing startups and enablers, more efforts are being poured in building the startup industry in the city. This is anchored on the Naga City Startup Ecosystem Strategic Plan, a multi-sectoral and multi-component development initiative that focuses on:

- **Talent Development;**
- **Community Awareness;**
- **Digital Presence;**
- **Strengthening Organizations of Startups and Enablers;**
- **Incubation, which includes facilities and programs;**
- **Funding; and**
- **Incentives**

This initiative was developed in collaboration with the Department of Trade & Industry, Department of Information & Communications Technology, Department of Science & Technology, QBO Innovation Hub, local academic institutions, and the private sectors, and the local startup community.

This industry development began by institutionalizing Naga's startup development program through Ordinances 2020-016 known as "The Naga City Digital Innovation Hub Ordinance" and 2021-057 known as "The Naga City Digital Innovation and Startup Ordinance." These ordinances aim to provide startups and enablers the needed marketing support, funding, facilities, equipment, mentorship, incubation, and network. As one of the pioneer cities that institutionalized a digital innovation and startup development program, the foundation has already been laid to allow startups and startup enablers to thrive in Naga City.

In 2019, the Naga City Digital Innovation Hub was established to provide a place not only for incubating innovation but also as a venue for creating a strong startup community—a place where innovators can explore possibilities of cooperation and synergy.

In 2020, **Blast Off!** the very first LGU-run digital startup pitching challenge for launch and growth-stage startups, was organized. Since then, **Blast Off!** has become a rolling program where startups can pitch and get funding through the Digital Innovation Fund; facilities & equipment through DIH; and partnerships, linking & matching opportunities with other government agencies and local businesses.

The Naga City Digital Innovation Fund (DIF) is the first-ever government funding facility for tech startups managed by a local government unit. Startups, through pitching sessions, can avail of financial support in the form of grants, loans or investments.

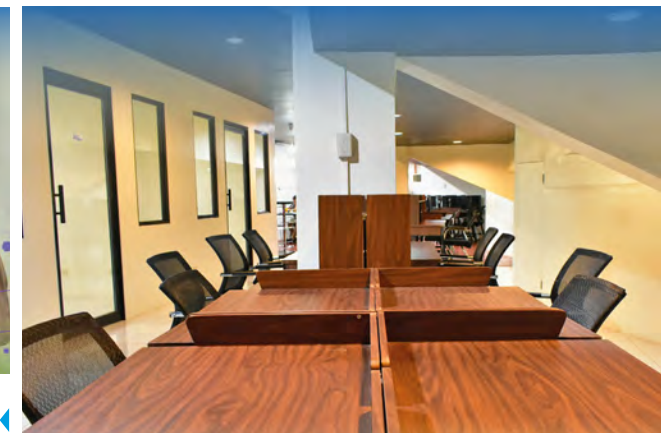
To continually strengthen the talent pool that will pursue innovation, partnerships are being built with Naga's six academic institutions: Ateneo de Naga University (ADNU), University of Nueva Caceres, Naga College Foundation, Bicol State College of Applied Science & Technology, Camarines Sur National High School, and Naga City Science High School, through the Department



**IN 2007**, LGU Naga established the Naga City Creative Media Center, an innovation facility for startups in the creatives, digital, and animation industry.



**THE DIGITAL INNOVATION HUB**, located at the mezzanine of JMR Coliseum, is an innovation space and facility open to all startup founders, freelance workers, faculty and student innovators.





## IDEA2STARTUP MOA SIGNING



**AS PART OF THE CITY'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN NAGA**, wider and stronger partnerships are being built for collaboration among various colleges and universities in the Maamgang Lugar.

Last March 17, 2023, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the City Government of Naga and the Naga College Foundation in the said institution. This program seeks to promote the development of idea-stage startups by providing funding support to develop their prototypes.

Present in the MOA signing event are Mayor Nelson S. Legacion, NCF President Dr. Mario C. Villanueva, City Administrator Elmer S. Baldemoro, NCIB Executive Director Mr. Reuel Oliver, Investment Promotions Officer Mr. Paul John C. Legaspi, CBM Dean Mr. Renato B. Belaro, CCS Dean Ms. Anna Loretta C. Romulo, and Technology Resource Center Director Mr. Proceso P. Capagas.



**NAGA STARTUPS GOES NATIONAL** | Naga City Government, through the Naga City Investment Board (NCIB) collaborates with the University of Nueva Caceres (UNC) to implement the Idea2Startup program as part of the city's Digital Innovation and Startup Development Program.

The Memorandum of Agreement was formally signed on July 6, 2023, at the Naga City Hall. The signing was led by Hon. Mayor Nelson S. Legacion and UNC President Dr. Fay Lea Patricia M. Lauraya. They were also joined by: Mr. Elmer S. Baldemoro, City Administrator; Mr. Reuel M. Oliver, NCIB Executive Director; Mr. Paul John C. Legaspi, NCIB Investment Promotion Officer; Dr. Nora Elizabeth F. Maniquiz, UNC Vice President for Research, Extension, and Linkages; Mr. Jason Keith Bonhaga, AEM, EMORCM, MBA, Director/CEELI-TBI; and Mr. Nico A. Ogarte, MBA, DIC-Director/Research Center.

The Idea2Startup program seeks to promote the development of idea-stage startups by providing funding support to develop their prototypes. Through this, UNC students and faculty can access support to turn their prototypes into viable technology startups, even after students' senior year/graduation from UNC.



**NUECA TECHNOLOGIES**, one of Naga's pioneering startups, celebrated its major milestone as it moved to its new location at Roxas Avenue, signaling its growing operations and team.



## 2023 NATIONAL INNOVATION DAY

**THE NAGA CITY STARTUP ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF LGU NAGA** is one of the 13 proposals who received the Innovation Grant. Fund last year from the National Innovation Council among 440+ proposals nationwide. The Naga City Exhibit was also made possible through the support of HAKANaga.

## IDEA2STARTUPBOOTCAMP



**EMPOWERING STUDENTS' IDEAS TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL STARTUPS** | As a cornerstone of the Idea2Startup Program led by the City Government of Naga through the Investment & Tourism Promotions Office, the recent Startup Bootcamp took place from September 21 to 28, 2023. This immersive experience spanned two days at each of the four esteemed partner academic institutions in Metro Naga: Naga College Foundation, Inc., Ateneo de Naga University, Bicol State College of Applied Sciences and Technology, and University of Nueva Caceres. Jointly conducted with ACADEMY Campus Tour, powered by Q80 Philippines, the bootcamp immersed students and faculty in vital startup concepts and processes.



**NAGA STARTUPS GOES NATIONAL** | As part of the city's Startup Ecosystem Development Program funded by the National Innovation Council, the City Government of Naga gathered its emerging startup community in the annual conference and regional showcase at the Philippine Startup Week (PSW) 2022 last November 15, 2022, in Metro Manila.

In partnership with BEECALLTBI, a Bicol-based technology incubator, and HAKA Naga, the city's startup community group, Naga City brought 30 delegates to immerse in the annual startup conference. The delegation consists of Bicol-based startups and startup enablers from the private sector and the academe. Our startup community had an opportunity to rub elbows with other startup giants and communities across the country.



## PHSW 2022 IMMERSION

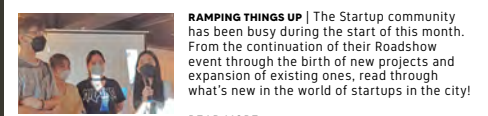


## NAGA CITY STARTUP COMMUNITY

**MEET THE NAGA CITY STARTUP COMMUNITY** and its newly-elected Ronald Rodriguez of BSS Corp as its president. It, the creation of tentatively named Naga City Startup Community was established last September 1 to further strengthen the startup ecosystem of the city. Groups and communities such as these can help bolster and support other growing startups and provide an entry point to others thinking of building their own startup concepts in the future.



## STEP UP LAUNCH



**RAMPING THINGS UP** | The Startup community has been busy during the start of this month. From the continuation of their Roadshow event through the birth of new projects and expansion of existing ones, read through what's new in the world of startups in the city!

READ MORE:  
<https://www2.naga.gov.ph/nagas-startup-development-ramps-up/>



## IDEA2STARTUP PITCHING SESSION - ADNU



## IDEA2STARTUP

**IDEA2STARTUP** is a program for students and faculty designed to turn their senior or capstone projects into startup ventures. Idea2Startup is a collaboration of the city government and the academe to support innovation and push for technopreneurship. Through this program, the city funded and supported 17 projects and has already expanded to 4 academic institutions.



## STARTUP ROADSHOW - ADNU

**ENCOURAGING OUR FUTURE STARTUP FOUNDERS** | Kan June 29, 2022, pigllobo kan Naga City Investments Board (NCIB) an Naga City Startup Roadshow sa Ateneo de Naga University (AdNU) na may obhetong ipalakop an mga startups asin startup development programs, urog na an Idea2Startup program sa satuyang mga estudyante.

Pigatenderan an Startup Roadshow kan mga CBA, Computer Studies, asin Engineering students kang unibersidad, asin pinangenotan ini ninda PJ Legaspi kan LGU Naga, Jude Buelva asin Jun Ocol kan BEECALL TBI, Magno Conag III kan Nueca Technologies Inc., Raymond Rosco kan Servisit, asin Joshua Avellana kan Higayon. Obheto kan NCIB asin kan Digital Innovation Hub an pagpadagos kan Startup Roadshow, bako lang sa AdNU, kundi sa iba pang unibersidad igdi sa syudad.

of Education Division in Naga, to help them create their Technopreneurship Programs. In 2021, the Idea2Startup Program was launched at ADNU. This program provides funding support so that students working on their college senior or capstone projects can develop prototypes with the potential to become startup products. This program will also be implemented among the other partner academic institutions.

In 2022, Naga's innovation initiative was funded by the National Innovation Council through the 2022 National Innovation Grants, together with 12 other government institutions. The P7.5M grant helped the city in advancing the following programs to support the growth of the innovation ecosystem, as defined in the Startup Ecosystem Strategic Plan:

- **Technopreneurship and Startup Mentors' Bootcamp Session** (with Mentoring), participated by 11 educational institutions and 45 educators in Camarines Sur, 6 of which are undergoing consultations for the development of their schools' technopreneurship programs/ curriculum.
- **School-Based Startup Bootcamp** which generated 26 startup teams from 7 colleges and universities, 3 of which will be funded through the city's Idea2Startup Program.



**THE FIRST IOT LABORATORY IN SOUTHERN LUZON OPENS IN NAGA CITY.** The City Government of Naga takes a leap towards fostering startup growth with the inauguration of the Naga City IoT Laboratory—a cutting-edge facility supporting IoT projects and product development funded by the National Innovation Council/ National Economic Development Authority. This is in partnership with Ateneo de Naga University, ThingsPH, Inc., and Packetworx Inc., which the ribbon-cutting ceremony took place yesterday, July 18, 2023. With a shared commitment to fueling IoT technology, various government agencies and the local startup community united in forging a Memorandum of Agreement.

The laboratory is situated at 4/F Dolan Building, Ateneo de Naga University, open to startups, students, and faculty from all over the region, ushering in a new era of innovation.



- **Philippine Startup Week 2022 Immersion** participated by 15 startups and startup enablers which brought networking opportunities for our local founders.
- **Bicol Digital Congress**, the first large-scale 3-day startup event in the region which included an exhibit showcasing 19 existing Bicol startups, a conference which gathered 17+ local and national speakers, networking events, and pitching presentations of 16 startup projects, participated by more than 250 attendees.
- **Establishment of an IoT and 3-D Printing Laboratory** which will provide a working facility in place to allow startups to explore and develop IoT (Internet of Things) and 3-D printing projects.

The city's commitment to startup ecosystem development has put Naga in StartupBlink's global list of the 2022 Top 1,000 Startup Cities, ranking 4th out of the 5 Philippine cities that made it to the list and gaining the 20th spot for Southeast Asia. Naga was also recently hailed as the Most Competitive component city in Innovation, one of the pillars in this year's Cities and Municipalities Competitiveness Index (CMCI). Among these, Naga City's startup ecosystem maturity level has emerged from *nascent* to *foundational* in 2022.

These are testaments to the administration's hardwork in promoting technology and cultivating a culture of innovation—in government, in the private sector, and among our individual citizens.



**RELIVE THAT EXHILARATING EXPERIENCE TO THE FIRST EVER DIGITAL CONGRESS IN THE BICOL REGION.** Share and tag your friends, let's keep the momentum high for Naga City, the most vibrant startup ecosystem in the Philippines this year!





■ Drone Pilot | Ramil C. Herrera Jr.

# 90%

**COMPLETED NA AN PHASE 2 KAN NEW NAGA CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL SA BALATAS DEVELOPMENT CENTER O AN P100-M LAND DEVELOPMENT** asin construction kan multi-purpose and maintenance building kaini mantang ikinurit man na yaon na sa 75% completion an phase 1 kan hospital na igwa nin kantidad P350-M. Marikas na isusunod tolos an phase 2 kan pasilidad.

Sa bulan nin Oktubre 2023 tapos na an Phase 1 kan New Naga City Hospital na igwang 100-bed capacity. Piglinaw ni Alkalde Legacion na mapoon an operasyon kan bagong pasilidad sa mga huring bulan kan presenteng taon o sa laog kan primerong tolong bulan kan taon 2024.

Hihingowahon kan alkalde na makumpletuhan na nin mga medical apparatuses asin hospital equipment an pasilidad bago magsara an 2023.

Magiging enot na personahes kan Phase I kan New Naga City Hospital, na 100-bed capacity, an mga doctors, nurses, midwives, asin iba pang empleyado na dating nagseserbi sa lumang city hospital sa Barangay Peñafrancia. An lumang hospital padagos na maoperar bilang primary healthcare facility siring kan Our Lady of Lourdes Infirmary, City Health Office 2, asin Super Health Center sa Barangay Concepcion Pequeña na igwang kantidad sobra sa P12-M na nakatalaan nang poonan sa masunod na bulan.



INTERIOR OF NAGA CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL



**MATRAYUMPONG IBINOSOL KAN GOBYERNO-LOKAL AN GROUND BREAKING** para sa Super Health Center sa Barangay Concepcion Pequeña kan Hunyo 3, ngonian na taon. Igwa nin kantidad P12-M, an pasilidad, na itutugdok sa barangay na may pinakadakol na bilang nin mga nag eestar sa Naga, igwa nin birthing facility laen pa kan serbisyo sa mga nangangaipuhan nin lab test. An ground breaking papangenutan ninda Sen. Bong Go, an naggibo nin paagi tanganing matawan nin pundo an proyekto, asin Alkalde Legacion kaibahan an mga myembros kan Sangguniang Panlungsod sa panengenot ni Vice Mayor Cecilia de Asis.





## PAVING THE ROADS AHEAD: THE NAGA'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

By Jason B. Neola

**T**HE CITY GOVERNMENT OF NAGA done a good job in its endeavor to include in the 2023-2028 Bicol Regional Tourism Development Plan at least 18 tourism-related projects that will further boost the city's socio-economic growth. The projects are contained in the infrastructure development portfolio of Naga Mayor Nelson Legacion, which he certified as "very relevant and crucial to the tourism development of the city" as the center of trade, investment, and tourism in the Bicol Region.

On joint and collective motion, the city councilors has adopted Resolution No. 2023-265 which fully endorses Legacion's proposed infra projects to the Bicol Regional Tourism Committee (BRTC), the Department of Tourism in Bicol, and the National Economic Development Authority. The resolution is one of the requirements to consider the projects for evaluation. The first group of the projects were presented by Legacion in a meeting with the BRTC in March 2023 while the second one were presented by City Councilor Jose B. Perez during the May 17, 2023 special meeting of the BRTC.

The projects presented last May 17, 2023:

1. Rehabilitation and upgrading of the Naga Airport – **P10.62-B**
2. Restoration and rehabilitation of the PNR Shuttle Commuter Rail System
  - a. Sipocot-Naga-Legazpi – **P60-B**
  - b. Rest of South Luzon Project – **P115B**
3. Improvement of the 57.60 km Del Gallego to Sipocot Road along the Andaya Highway –**P1.2B**
4. Construction of Port/Pier (**Pasacao, Camarines Sur to San Pascual, Masbate** – **P300M**
5. Ferry Service to Mercedes and Calaguas, both of Camarines Norte, and Siruma of Camarines Sur via Bicol River and San Miguel Bay – **P600M**

6. Construction of Caramoan-Catanduanes Connection Bridge and Highway (**10km Friendship Bridge**) – **P30B**
7. Improvement/rehabilitation of JMR Coliseum – **P200M**, and;
8. Construction of modern skating plaza – **P10M**

Perez reported in his privilege speech on May 23 Sangguniang Panlungsod regular session that the abovementioned additional projects have unanimously been approved during the May 17, 2023 BRTC meeting.

As regards with the projects already presented earlier by the city mayor that are already incorporated in the Bicol Regional Tourism Development Plan for 2023-2028:

1. Road along Naga-Camaligan Fishing Port – **P38.4M**
1. Integrated Naga River Revitalization Project – **P300M**
2. Cultural and Heritage Preservation Projects – **P200M**
3. Sports Tourism Projects – **P200M**
4. People's Park and Recreation Center – **P800M**
5. Bicol River Esplanade – **P464.5M**
6. Mt. Isarog Natural Park Development – **P400M**
7. Panicuason to Malabsay Access Road Component – **P20M**
8. Establishment of Bicol Regional Museum – **P55**
9. Malabsay Falls Ecotourism Park Development – **P26.3M**

With high hopes of seeing the additional projects included in the 2023-2028 tourism development plan of the Bicol Region, Mayor Legacion along with the members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod extended his appreciation and gratitude to the BRTC, the Department of Tourism in Bicol, and the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) for their positive response and consideration.

## NAGA LAYS OUT 2023 PLAN ON NEW ROADS AND PARKS

By Jason B. Neola

**M**AGINE a multimodal tree-lined road alongside the Bicol River where one can go biking or jogging safely early in the morning or just before sunset. Think also of a large open park with families and groups of friends leisurely spending their time and children socializing in playgrounds surrounded by bike and jogging lanes not too far from a well-maintained open-air concert ground and football field.

This scene will no longer be a figment of one's imagination if the plans of the city government push through two years from now. Already, a new bypass road and access road are under construction, opening up the areas for proposed location of the Bicol River Esplanade and People's Park and Recreation Center in Barangay Tabuco. The new thoroughfares are expected to help relieve traffic congestion along Roxas Avenue, especially with the scheduled opening of two large membership shopping complexes in the area later this year. Legacion has identified the tourism projects as a top priority given that Naga lacks adequate open spaces for recreation and leisure.

The city mayor said the project will be undertaken in 2024 and it is hoped that the city government can secure financial support from senators, congressmen, and government agencies. Legacion added that he has been meeting personally with potential sponsors of priority infrastructure projects to save the city government from spending its meager resources. A bridge connecting the Sagop Creek and the Bicol River Esplanade/Boulevard (Barangay Tabuco side) will also be constructed this year.

The city mayor also said that the Naga City Police Office Station 5, which is based at the Bicol Central Station, will set up a permanent headquarters in a 1,000 sq. meter lot inside the proposed People's Park and Recreation Center to look after the area's peace and order.

In another part of Naga, plans are underway to improve the access road from Magsaysay Avenue leading to the Balatas New Development Area. Last year, the city government finished constructing a crucial road link from the Naga City Science High School to the Balatas-Cararayan road, relieving traffic congestion at the Magsaysay-Dayangdang-Balatas junction. Mayor Legacion said that this road will be further developed into a four-lane road with P49.5 million provided by the office of Senator Ramon Revilla Jr.

To be funded with P20-M sourced as grant by Mayor Nelson Legacion from the office of Sen. Sonny Angara is the road widening project that will start from the corner of Magsaysay Avenue to the Naga City Science High School in Barangay Balatas where the aforementioned road begins.



**MAYOR LEGACION** discusses the City Government's 2023 plan on new roads and parks during the Satong Aramon program hosted by CEPPIO Head Allen Reondanga.

The city government has already constructed the Balatas National High School to ease the strain on the Camarines Sur National High School, the Naga City Event Center II, the New Naga City Hospital, of which the construction is ongoing, the Urban Agriculture Training and Demo Farm Center, and an expanse of land where the Center for Safety and Resiliency will be put up. Soon to rise at the new development area is a large satellite market and bagsakan center for agricultural products to be put up by businessman Robert Obiedo, who is the proprietor of the Villa Caceres Hotel.

Soon to start also this year is the re-blocking and widening project along the Balatas-Cararayan-San Isidro-Carolina road with P300-M budget. The project will link with the already-widened portion of the road from Cararayan to San Isidro.

In an interview, the city mayor also disclosed that as part of the Department of Public Works and highways' regular programing, the government agency has appropriated around P55-M for the implementation of its continued road widening project along the San Felipe-Pacol-Carolina road.

Regarding the construction of the 2.1-kilometer Almeda-Mabolo Bypass Road, the mayor said that the project has already an available complete budget of P400 million (P200-M for the construction of the bridge, and another P200-M for the road construction in Mabolo section) that is expected to be completed in year 2024.

**STA CRUZ NEW DEVELOPMENT AREA** Access Road from Queborac Drive to Sta. Cruz Poro, Naga City.





**PANGANIBAN BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT** along Panganiban Road, Naga City.



**PLAZA RIZAL SIDEWALKS**

## ► KAN NAKALIHIS NA TAON 2022

Base sa records kan City Engineer's Office, an syudad nin Naga, sa lindong kan liderato ni Alkalde Nelson Legacion, nakapagpahaman nin mga infrastructure development projects na nag-abot sa P436,898,362.00 an kantidad kan taon 2022. An mga proyektong ini iyo an pagpakonstruir nin mga tinampo, riprap, asin paglaag nin asphalt overlay, P172, 975, 300.00; drainage, P62, 613, 200.00; improvements, rehabilitation, expansion kan laen-laen na mga buildings, P154,834,462.00; earth-filling, P480,000.00; Centro Naga Pedestrianization project, padyak terminals, canopy/cladding kan Sta. Cruz Evacuation Center asin iba pa, P45,995,400.00.

► **RESULTA:** Nakakoa an syudad nin P1-B, laen pa sa pundong nakabali sa 2023 General Appropriations Act o an prosopwesto kan gobyerno nasyunal para sa taon 2023.

## ► NGONIAN NA TAON 2023

Apesar kan pigsasapong kaltas na P150-M sa 2023 National Tax Allocation (dating pig-aapod na Internal Revenue Allotment), dae nagtugot an syudad na pabaya an sanang nakatiwangwang an mga proyektong madara nin kauswagan sa buhay kan mga pamilyang Nagueño. Huli sa higos kan saaiyang lideratong nangangataman, pigsasarigan asin piglalaoman, nagin matrayumpo an alkalde sa pagkonsigir nin mga pundo tanging maibosol an implementasyon kan mga proyekto.

## ► P2.1-B INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Plantsado na an magiging implementasyon kan mga priority development projects sa lindong kan Legacion Administration na nakapalaman sa 2023 General Appropriations Act pagkatapos na ibali kan National Economic Development Authority sa 2024-28 Regional Development Investment Program an mga proyektong nagkakantidad P2.1-B.

An mga gagastusan kan P2.1-B iyo pagpahaman kan Center for Safety and Resiliency (CeSaR) na igwa na nin P145-M alagad nangangaipuhan pa nin dugang na P260-M kun kaya pighagad ni Legacion na maherasan nin dawa P120-M gikan sa P2.1-B; Convention Center na popoonan an construction sa paagi nin P100-M na pundo (ready for bidding) asin tatawan nin P200-M gikan sa P2.1-B na pundo; mga bagong tinampo, Bicol River Esplanade/Boulevard, Park and Recreation Center, asin Cultural Center.

Sinabi kan alkalde na suhay sa P2.1-B na pundo an sarong grupo nin manlaenlaen na proyektong igwa nin kantidad P500-M na pighagad kan alkalde na makalaog sa Regional Development Investment Program kan NEDA siring kan Metro Naga Road Network na dae mababa sa P5-B an kantidad.

Matatawan benepisyo kan proposed road network bako sana an Naga, alagad magin an mga banwaan na kataid kaini na nagdadayo sa laog kan syudad bilang sentro nin komersyo, edukasyon, asin trabaho.



**REHABILITATION OF DRAINAGE AND ROAD REBLOCKING** (Garcia and Sabang).



**STORM DRAINAGE PROJECT** (Balatas National High School to Usiwag Balatas to Balcon Village).



**BICOL RIVER ESPLANADE**

## ► CIRCUMFERENTIAL ROADS

Laen kan mga infra projects, pigsisibotan kan alkalde an pagpahaman nin mga plano para sa paglatag nin tolong circumferential roads bilang project kan Metro Naga Development Council (MNDC) na saiyang pigpapamayuhan bilang chairman.

Piglalaoman na mapopoonan an proyektong ini sa tahaw na parte kan taon 2024.

Sakop kan enot na circumferential road an Liboton, Magsaysay Avenue, Roxas Avenue (dating diversion road) pasiring Barangay Sabang, Bagumbayan Sur (Sitio Queborac) asin Liboton. An ikaduwang circumferential road mapoon sa mga barangay na harani sa lenderos kan mga banwaan nin Milaor, Gainza, Canaman, dagos na sa iba pang banwaan na yaon sa palibot kan Naga mantang an ikatolong circumferential road mabagtas sa Barangay Panicuason pasiring sa mga banwaan kan Pili, Minalabac, Calabanga, Cabusao, Libmanan asin nagkakapira pa.

Sinabi kan alkalde na an tolong circumferential roads gabos 4-lane o igwa nin lakbang na 14 metros asin gigibohan ni mga sangang tinampo o radial roads na mapoon sa mga munisipyo direktang pasiring sa syudad.

Segun pa sa alkalde, igwa nang mga eksistidong tinampo na magiging parte kan circumferential roads,



alagad dae pa kumpletong haman asin kaipuhan na sumpayan o lakbangan. Igwa na man nin nagkakapirang eksistidong radial roads na kaipuhan sa sanang isusog sa tamang specification o design.

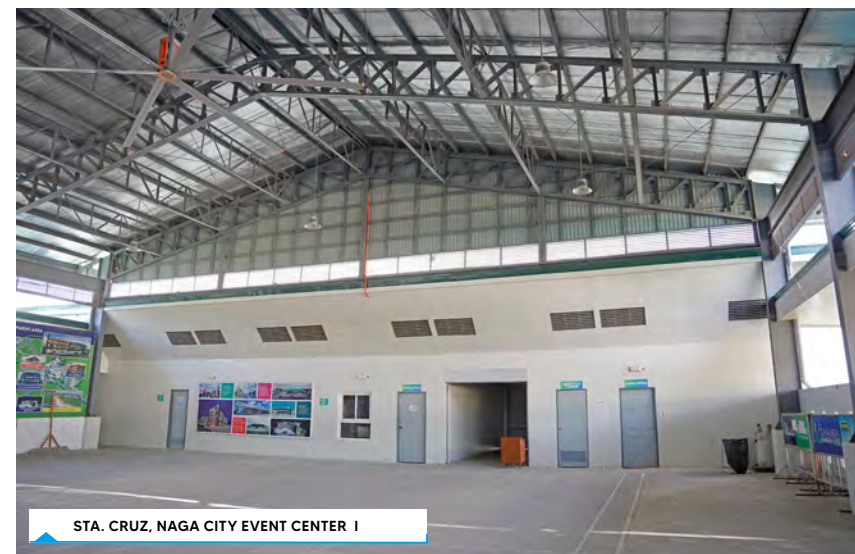
An mga circumferential roads higit na pigbobosol kan mga pamayo nin Municipal Planning and Development Offices nin mga imbweltong banwaan. "Boot sabihon, an konsepto kan proyektong ini pigbilang asin pigtatarabangan na mahaman bako nin huli ta kagustuhan lang kan Naga, kondi kan gabos na member-LGUs kan MNDC," sabi kan alkalde.

Maogmang pigpahayag kan alkalde na sa ginibong orolay, yaon an mga representante kan imbweltong district engineering offices sa Camarines Sur.





GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE CENTER FOR SAFETY AND RESILIENCY



STA. CRUZ, NAGA CITY EVENT CENTER I

## > CENTER FOR SAFETY, RESILIENCY

Sa bulan nin Hulyo, ngonian na taon, nakatalaan poonan an pagkonstruir kan Center for Safety and Resiliency (CeSaR). Igwa nin bilog na kantidad P400-M, an dakula asin modernong edipisyong ini igwa nin state-of-the-art technology devices, popoonan na patindogon sa paagi kan inisyal na P145-M na pigkonsigir kan alkalde sa gobyerno nasyunal asin nakabali na sa General Appropriations Act 2023.

Maogmang pigbareta kan alkalde na matabang an SM City Naga, sa paagi kan saindang adopt-a-city program. Nagpahayag an manehamyento kan SM City Naga na andam asin boot nindang gastosan an sarong aspeto kan technology requirement kan CeSaR siring kan mga CCTVs asin mga early warning devices na nagkakantidad P40-M.

Huli kan saiyang higos, maabot sa P1 bilyon an nakalap na pundo ni Legacion gikan sa manlaenlaen na opisina kan gobyerno nasyunal ngonian sanang taon. Alagad, pigheheling kan alkalde na magiging mas mapalad an syudad sa 2024 huli kan dakol pang tabang na resesibihon kan syudad hali sa mga opisyaes nin gobyerno na suportado an saiyang liderato asin administrasyon.



## > BAGONG NCPO HEADQUARTERS

Pagkatapos na gibohon an ground breaking para sa bagong police headquarters kan Abril 1, 2023, pigaasikaso na ngonian na malagan nin tinampo an mahiwas na lote kan Center for Safety and Resiliency (CeSaR) na iyo an magiging agihan kan fire trucks kan Bureau of Fire, asin service vehicles kan City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, asin Public Safety Office.

Pundo kan Philippine National Police an gagastuson sa pagtugdok kan NCPO headquarters mantang donasyon kan syudad an lote na bubogtakan kan nasambit na mga opisina.



MABOLO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

## > SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Huli kan pagpahalaga sa edukasyon asin kaligtasan kan kaakian, padagos na pigtatawan nin lugar kan administrasyon ni Mayor Legacion an pagpatindog nin mga eskwelahan asin school buildings na harani sana sa barangay na saindang pig eestaran.

An grupo nin mga eskwelahan na on-going an construction:

- **Sta. Cruz National High School, 2 storeys, 8 classroom**
- **San Isidro National School, 2 storeys, 6 classrooms**
- **Yabu Elementary School, 2 storeys, 4 classrooms**
- **Balatas National High School, 4 storeys, 16 classrooms, for bidding**
- **Mabolo National High School, 2 storeys 6 classrooms**
- **Del Rosario High School, 2 storeys 4 classrooms**



## AN GRUPO NIN MGA ESKWELAHAN NA IGWANG PROPOSED PROJECTS PARA SA 2023:

### 2023 PROPOSED PROJECT

NO.	PROJECTS	LOCATION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
1	2-STORY 4-CLASSROOM SCHOOL BLDG.	PACOL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	P20,000,000.00
2	FENCE AND GATE	SAN ISIDRO HIGHSCHOOL	P900,000.00
3	ENTRANCE GATE	CAROLINA HIGHSCHOOL	P850,000.00
4	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT OF THREE-CLASSROOM SCHOOL BLDG.	MAC MARIANO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BRGY. BALATAS	P1,500,000.00
5	MULTI-PURPOSE BLDG.	CAROLINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	P3,500,000.00
6	DETACHED COMFORT ROOMS	CALAUAG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	P1,800,000.00
7	DETACHED COMFORT ROOMS	TABUCO CENTRAL SCHOOL	P1,800,000.00
8	ROAD OPENING AND MACADAM ROAD	SITIO CAROMATIG, CAROLINA	P1,500,000.00
9	ROAD CONCRETING	ZONE 6 SITIO COPRADIA, SAN FELIPE	P1,950,000.00
10	ROAD CONCRETING AND DRAINAGE	ZONE 3 CHICO ST. TRIANGULO	P3,410,000.00
11	ROAD CONCRETING	DIVERSION ROAD TO NAGA HOPE CHRISTIAN, CONCEPCION PEQUEÑA	P7,000,000.00
12	ROAD CONCRETING	ST. ISIDORE VILLAGE, SAN ISIDRO	P2,000,000.00



STA. CRUZ NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

## > HOSPITAL DORMITORY (BND)A

Pigmarhay ni Senador Chiz Escudero na dugangan pa an enot nyang pigtaong P50-M para sa pagpatindog nin tolong eskalon na hospital dormitory. An P50-M yaon na ngonian sa DPWH. Sinabi kan Bikolanong senador na dudugangan niya pa nin P100-M an funding assistance huli sa pakioalay ni Alkalde Legacion para sa mas dakula asin mas haralangkaw na dormitel na bagay o angay sa mga haralangkaw na buildings sa laog kan Balatas New Development Area. Imbes na tolo o apat na eskalon, anom nang eskalon an papatindogon o magiging 6-storey building na an dormitel na igwa nin elevator. An pasilidad na ini saro sa mga popoonan na proyekto pagkatapos sana kan 2023.







LOCAL HISTORICAL MARKER UNVEILING, JUNE 09, 2023 | UNIVERSIDAD DE STA. ISABEL



LOCAL HISTORICAL MARKER UNVEILING, JUNE 15, 2023 | NAGA COLLEGE FOUNDATION, INC.



LOCAL HISTORICAL MARKER UNVEILING, JUNE 15, 2023 | UNIVERSITY OF NUEVA CACERES

## UNVEILING NAGA CITY'S CULTURAL RENAISSANCE: A JOURNEY OF HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY

By Allen L. Reondanga



**IN THE CITY'S GOAL** to preserving the Arts and Culture sector, the City Government of Naga opens up the first ever Tagboan Art Fair at the City Hall Grounds exhibiting the works of our local artists during the 2023 Peñafrancia Festival.

**B**EYOND the hustle and bustle of commerce and the city's progressive strides, Naga City reveals itself as a vibrant tapestry of cultural richness and artistic expression. Mayor Nelson Legacion, just seven months ago, through an Executive Order, entrusted the City Events, Protocol, and Public Information Office (CEPPIO) with the pivotal role of spearheading the city's arts and culture functions. This strategic move aimed to deliver a series of cultural programs, projects, and activities celebrating Naga's profound heritage, all while embracing innovation and creativity.



**A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE.** We were able to express our thanks to our judges during Miss Bicolandia 2023 by gifting them paintings made by our local artists, showcasing their talents, and sharing them beyond the city.



**THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF NAGA** officially unveils the C. Anciano Street (CBD II) and the Calamba City Street, branching from Leon SA. Aureus Street at Gimenez Park Subd. at Brgy. Concepcion Pequeña, in celebration of the Charter Anniversary last June 2023.



**CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF NAGA CITY WITH A MEMENTO!** Nagueños, led by Bicol Marketing Specialist Chief PPC, Ms. Nena Panganiban, and Postmaster PPC Naga, Ms. Lolita Degayo, together with our City Mayor Nelson Legacion, witnesses the ceremonial launching of the new commemorative stamp at the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary in celebration of the Diamond Anniversary of Naga being a chartered city.



**THE FIRST-EVER TAGBOAN:** Music, Food, and Arts Festival held at the City Hall Grounds commenced right after the Traslacion Procession last September 2023.

The CEPPIO wasted no time, promptly undergoing an organizational redefinition. A comprehensive audit and assessment of previously managed programs by its predecessor, the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Office, revealed pressing needs, prompting intervention. Addressing issues related to artists' welfare, enhancing art promotion, fostering networking and collaboration, managing cultural inventory and preservation, providing cultural education and training, and creating dedicated artistic spaces became crucial components of this cultural revitalization.







THE OPENING OF THE LOCAL ARTISTS CONCERT SERIES during the city's 75th Charter Anniversary was an opportunity to bring together great food and music to our Nagueños.

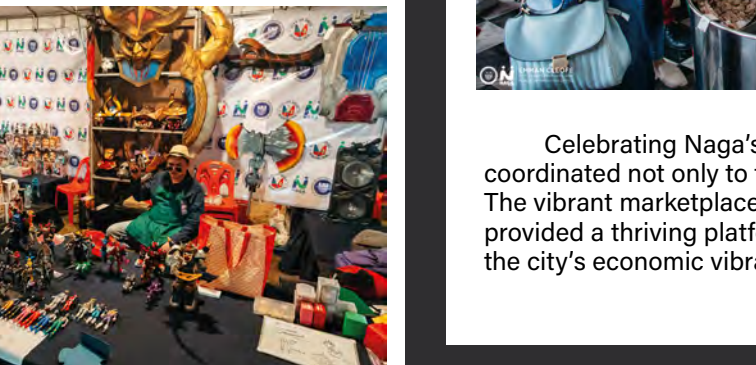


In response to concerns voiced by local musicians and to reconnect with the city's vibrant music sector, the Local Artists Concert, **Sulog**, was born. Going beyond mere entertainment, Sulog was meticulously designed to ensure fair compensation for artists. Serving as more than just a showcase of artistry, it contributes significantly to the standardization of performer fees, thereby honoring and supporting the city's esteemed artistic community.

The symphony of Naga City's cultural identity resonates through the melodious notes of the Symphonic Band Concerts. More than entertainment, these public concerts, participated in by concert bands from schools and universities in the city, serve as a space for musical excellence, fostering and nurturing an appreciation for diverse musical genres and orchestral performances.



In collaboration with the Universidad de Sta. Isabel, **Naga Lakaw** offers students of public and private schools a guided historical journey—an immersive walk through the city's past. This educational odyssey goes beyond a leisurely stroll, providing students with a firsthand encounter with Naga's historical gems, fostering a profound connection to their city's rich heritage.



OUR CITY MAYOR NELSON LEGACION, together with the participating local artists coming from different local art groups/organizations, poses for a group photo opportunity during the opening of the Tagboan Art Fair.

Naga City's commitment extends beyond simple art appreciation, reaching into economic empowerment through the Artists Economic Empowerment Program. This pioneering initiative partners with local arts groups, such as Salingoy Art Group and Kintab Art Group, to design, create, and supply tokens and merchandise for the city, empowering local artists while infusing creativity into everyday life, creating a sustainable ecosystem for artistic endeavors.

After many years of drought, the city has successfully organized an Art Exhibition during this year's Peñafrancia Celebration that transcends the boundaries of a typical display. It stands as a celebration of Naga and Bicol's artistic soul, showcasing diverse artworks for sale and acting as an economic catalyst, bolstering the city's art scene and providing a platform for local artists to shine, allowing residents to own unique pieces.



Celebrating Naga's culinary heritage, **Siram** and **Namit Banchettos** were coordinated not only to tantalize taste buds but also to ignite entrepreneurial dreams. The vibrant marketplaces not only showcased the city's gastronomic delights but also provided a thriving platform for local food entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to the city's economic vibrancy.







Naga City's commitment to preserving its heritage shines through the Local Historical Markers Program, highlighting significant sites such as the Universidad de Sta. Isabel, the oldest Normal school in Asia, the University of Nueva Caceres, the oldest University in Southern Luzon, and the Naga College Foundation, celebrating 75 years of providing economical yet quality education. This adds to the cultural dimension of the cityscape, ensuring that the stories of the past are not merely preserved but actively cherished.

The city has also extended support to various artists in attending and organizing various arts competitions and historical conferences, nurturing both artistic prowess and scholarly discourse. This commitment reflects Naga's dedication to fostering a deeper understanding of its rich history while celebrating contemporary artistic excellence.



The Peñafrancia Voyadores Festival, with its Street and Pilgrims Dance Competition, after three years of hiatus, was reintroduced to serve as a vibrant celebration encapsulating the fusion of faith and artistry. The event has showcased Naga's profound devotion and cultural identity.



PEÑAFRANCIA VOYADORES FESTIVAL AND STREET AND PILGRIMS DANCE COMPETITION

Just recently, in collaboration with multiple institutions, Naga City's Cultural Mapping Program, a collaborative effort to systematically document and preserve its cultural heritage, was adopted in partnership with the Metro Naga Development Council and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. This initiative, which will run for six months, will ensure that the city's identity remains intact for future generations, fostering a continuum of cultural richness.



**TRAINING FOR LOCAL CULTURAL MAPPERS.** As part of the creation of the Naga City Cultural Profile, the City Government began the Cultural Mapping Program through the guidance of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in collaboration with representatives from the Metro Naga Development Council (MNDC).

Looking ahead, Naga City's cultural journey continues with projects such as the establishment of the Naga City Gallery at Plaza Quezon and the Naga City Cultural Center (*Harong nin Kultura*) at the now-being-prepared People's Park and Recreational Center along the storied Bicol River in Tabuco, mural paintings depicting the city's history in prominent areas, an artist registry, and a citywide painting competition. These endeavors promise to further enrich the city's cultural fabric, bridging the past with a future where artistry thrives and the city's cultural heritage is celebrated with enduring vibrancy.



**NAGA CITY GALLERY.** Plaza Museum Building with Underground Parking proposal at Plaza Quezon.



## CELEBRATING THE TRIUMPHS OF THE NAGA CITY SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD

By Jaq Hernandez

**T**HE focus of assessment were viewed in light of the six award criteria, namely: Responsiveness of Legislative Agenda; Availability of Legislative Documents; Effectiveness of Performance of Sanggunian; Efficiency of Performance of Sanggunian; Legislative Citations and Awards; and Capacity of and Development for Legislators and Staff. Department of Interior and Local Government, in celebration of Local Government Month, handed out awards and commendations at the Regional Recognition Ceremony 2023 in Legazpi City, Albay on October 23, 2023. Vice Mayor Cecilia B. Veluz-De Asis, together with City Councillors Jessie Albeus, Joselito Del Rosario, Jose Perez, Salvador Del Castillo, and Sanggunian Secretary Gil De La Torre, received the Local Legislative Award 2023 which was bestowed on Naga City as the Outstanding Sanggunian in the Independent Component City Category.

The Assessment Methodology involved a three-pronged process to ensure a detailed evaluation of the performance of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Naga City. Firstly, the employment of Live Virtual (Hybrid) and Cloud-based evaluation wherein the Means of Verifications (MOV) submitted by the Sanggunian through Google Drive were carefully reviewed by the Regional Award Committee (RAC) members. An online interview with the representatives of the Sanggunian was subsequently conducted to validate key findings and clarify questions from the RAC.

Secondly, the RAC members individually rated the Sanggunian and descriptive statistics of averaging was applied. Lastly, the RAC considered the findings and noteworthy accomplishments of the Sanggunian based on the six award criteria. At this stage, the RAC made the final determination that the 13th Sangguniang Panlungsod of Naga City has more than satisfactorily

For the enactment of ordinances and resolutions that significantly contributed to the attainment of desirable socio-economic and environmental outcomes including the innovations and distinctive practices in local legislation worthy of replication by other sanggunians in the performance of their functions.

surpassed the criteria and qualified for endorsement to the National Awards Committee (NAC.)

The ordinances and resolutions that were reviewed by the Regional Awards Committee were enacted within the years 2019 - 2022, which fell under the term of the 13th Sanggunian Panlungsod. Newly-elected Vice Mayor Cecilia B. Veluz-De Asis served as the Presiding Officer of the 13th Sangguniang Panlungsod. Although this was her first term as Vice Mayor, she brought to the 13th SP a wealth of wisdom and experience cultivated in her more than three decades tour as a veteran public servant and legislator; 18 years of which as councilor in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Sanggunian.

As always, the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Naga pledges dedication towards supporting the development agenda of Mayor Nelson Legacion's administration, and commitment to push important legislations that will ensure fulfillment of the promises made to the people of Naga and the realization of a common vision for a Naga under a city government that is reliable, dependable, and caring.

Shortlisted for the National Award, the Sangguniang Panlungsod is firm and will not renege on its legal mandate to serve the best interest of Naga and her people; making sure that every program and project of the city government is implemented and executed within the framework of good governance, that is transparent, efficient, and responsive. And that is how a sanggunian wins accolades and distinction from award-giving bodies; and trust and approval from the people.



For more information about the award received by the 13th Sangguniang Panlungsod featured in this article, please visit this link:

[https://www2.naga.gov.ph/dilg-v-commends-14th-sangguniang-panlungsod-of-naga/?fbclid=IwAR1XuWUJq\\_jcYXzFo4tmTGRcbG\\_MYn-o90JqNepfCtmw3RYQNq2LDWSMXg](https://www2.naga.gov.ph/dilg-v-commends-14th-sangguniang-panlungsod-of-naga/?fbclid=IwAR1XuWUJq_jcYXzFo4tmTGRcbG_MYn-o90JqNepfCtmw3RYQNq2LDWSMXg)



# NAGA WINS LEGAL BATTLE VS MARIANOS NAGA CITY --- IT'S FINALLY OVER

By Jason B. Neola

**T**HE SUPREME COURT, SITTING EN BANC, has in the end decided to grant the city government of Naga and other government instrumentalities the right to possess the property, as well as the so-called Naga City Civic Center with its appurtenant structures, such as the Museo ni Jesse Robredo, as its own.

This, after almost 20 years of bitter legal tussle between the heirs of Jose and Helen Mariano and the City of Naga over possession of the contested 5-hectare land was finally resolved in favor of the city. The order also called for the City of Naga to pay the Marianos just compensation and the amount representing exemplary damages.

The amount of just compensation with legal interest of 6% per annum of the value of property at the time of the taking which is estimated to cost about P15M to P20M plus exemplary damages pegged at P1M.

The decision, voted 15-0 by the Supreme Court Justices was promulgated on October 18, 2022 but was released by the Supreme Court on June 8, 2023, just in time when Naga was celebrating its 75th or Diamond anniversary as a chartered city that culminated on June 18. The current mayor himself, Atty. Nelson Legacion, was the city legal officer during the infant stages of the case.

The case started sometime in 2004 during the incumbency of then Mayor Jesse Robredo when the Marianos filed a complaint of unlawful detainer alleging that there was no signed deed of donation to show between landowners Macario Mariano and Jose A. Gimenez and then Naga Mayor Monico Imperial sometime on August 21, 1954.

The case was first decided in favor of the city as possessor of the land by the Municipal Trial Court, Naga City but which was reversed and set aside by the Regional Trial Court that virtually prompted the Marianos to demand the city government to vacate the premises.

On March 12, 2018, the First Division of the Supreme Court overturned the amended decision rendered by the Court of Appeals and reinstated, albeit with modifications, the RTC's decision.

It was as if the city government had lost the case, ordered to pay large sum of money up to over P1B representing the use of the property since 1954 and its eventual eviction from the two properties where the city hall and the Naga City civic center are situated, that altogether occupy five hectares.

Unfazed, the city government brought the matter to the Supreme Court and found the First Division to have erred in ordering city hall and all the government offices situated in the contested property to "peacefully surrender and deliver the physical possession of the subject realty to petitioners (Marianos)."

The Supreme Court en banc stated that considering that the physical return of the subject property on which city hall and other government offices are erected is no longer feasible, and that the property was taken by the government for public use, the aggrieved owner (Marianos) may demand for payment of just compensation for the land taken.

With this, the controlling doctrine is that when there is actual taking by the government without expropriation proceedings, the owner of the property is entitled to just compensation which is pegged at the value of the property at the time of taking, the Supreme Court Resolution noted.

The Supreme Court resolution provided for the formula in computing the amount of just compensation reckoning August 16, 1954 as the time of taking.

Hereunder quoted is the dispositive portion of the Supreme Court resolution:

"THE FOREGOING DISQUISITIONS CONSIDERED, respondent City of Naga's Second Motion for Reconsideration is hereby PARTLY GRANTED. Accordingly, the Decision dated March 12, 2018 and the Resolution dated July 23, 2018 rendered by the First Division of this Court are AFFIRMED with MODIFICATIONS in that:

1. **The order for respondent and all government instrumentalities, agencies, and offices claiming right of possession through and under it to peacefully surrender and deliver to petitioners the physical possession of the land covered by Transfer of Certificate Title No. 671, including all improvements and structures erected thereon, is hereby DELETED;**
2. **The award of monthly rental in favor of petitioners is likewise DELETED;**
3. **Respondent City of Naga is ORDERED to pay petitioners just compensation in accordance with this ruling, with legal interest of six percent (6%) per annum on the value of the property at the time of taking, i.e., August 16, 1954, until full payment is made; and 4) Respondent City of Naga is ORDERED to pay petitioners exemplary damages in the amount of P1,000,000.00.**

"The case is REMANDED to Branch 26, Regional Trial Court of Naga City for the determination of just compensation. The said court is DIRECTED to resolve the instant case with dispatch."

In a press conference with local media reporters at city hall last Saturday, an elated Mayor Nelson Legacion thanked Atty. Jose Anselmo Cadiz for triumphantly handling the case pro bono from start to finish.

Cadiz himself revealed that it was his high school classmate, then Mayor Robredo who asked him to handle the case for the city. Atty. Cadiz was a private practitioner with law office in Manila. He was national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines before his appointment as Solicitor General by the Aquino administration. He ran for Camarines Sur governor and then as congressman in the 3rd district but lost in both instances.

Legacion also thanked former Naga City legal officer Angel Ojastro and incumbent city legal officer Mcgyver Gerard Orbina for ably handling the case in collaboration with Atty. Cadiz. The current mayor himself, Atty. Nelson Legacion, was the city legal officer during the infant stages of the case.

The former editor-in-chief of this paper, now Councilor Joe Perez was in 2006 cited for contempt and thereupon incarcerated for five days at the Naga City District Jail because of a controversial article written about the raging episodes of the legal battle between the Marianos and City Hall.



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# SA GOBYERNONG MARHAY, USWAG PA! NAGA CITY

**OVER-ALL MOST COMPETITIVE COMPONENT CITY  
IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR 2021, 2022, & 2023**



## INNOVATION

Innovation assesses a city's dedication to nurturing innovation and technology adoption, looking at R&D, educational institutions, tech hubs, and digital connectivity. Cities promoting innovation are magnets for knowledge-based businesses and talent.

**1ST PLACE**



## INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure pillar evaluates a city's physical and digital infrastructure quality and availability, encompassing transportation, utilities, internet access, and essential services. Strong infrastructure supports efficient mobility, trade, and economic growth.

**1ST PLACE**



## RESILIENCY

Resiliency gauges a city's ability to endure and bounce back from various shocks or disasters, considering preparedness, healthcare, social services, and disaster-resistant infrastructure. A resilient city is well-prepared to handle emergencies and protect its residents.

**2ND PLACE**



## ECONOMIC DYNAMISM

Economic dynamism evaluates a city's economic vitality, considering factors like business activity, industry presence, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship. High economic dynamism indicates a robust local economy and a favorable business environment.

**4TH PLACE**



## GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Government efficiency measures how well a local government delivers public services, considering factors like ease of business, transparency, permit processing speed, and financial management. High government efficiency suggests a responsive and well-run local government.

**5TH PLACE**