

MAYOR MCF'S SPEECH SAPATERO FESTIVAL OPENING CEREMONIES

Years ago, Marikina enjoyed the prestige as the **Shoe Capital of the Philippines**. At that time, Marikina was supplying about 70% of the shoe requirements of the entire Filipino people. But the competitiveness of our local shoe industry was adversely affected by the globalization which saw the influx of imported shoes, particularly from China. Suddenly, we found our shoe industry beleaguered by the onslaught of these imported shoes which offered quite a stiff competition never before known and experienced in the history of our local shoe industry. Several attempts were made to resuscitate the local shoe industry but the challenges were just too awesome to hurdle.

It is in this light that we thought of coming up with innovative strategies that would boost our shoe industry. We have launched a number of Shoe caravans that proved to be effective. But it has to be reinforced by other activities. This brought to the fore the launching of the Sapatero Festival which will run for forty five (45) days. This festival will allow our shoe manufacturers to promote and sell their products. It is also hoped that this festival will help drum-up awareness about the ingenuity and craftsmanship of our shoe designers and the world class quality of Marikina-made shoes.

The Sapatero Festival is a way of revisiting the past to trace the roots of our two-century old shoe industry with a sense of nostalgia. This activity reflects our determination to regain the old glory of Marikina as the ***Shoe Capital of the Philippines***. Shoe industry is endeared to the hearts of every Marikino, but it is not enough that it remains in our hearts. We must exert our best efforts to see its full revival and growth. This is what the Sapatero Festival is all about.

This afternoon's program will also feature the launching of the commemorative plates and City Postal Stamps. Both projects are meant to promote our city and at the same time generate additional revenues. I am counting on your full support in these worthy endeavors.

Let us continue to ***work hard, work well*** and ***work together***. It is in this spirit that we can make a difference.

Thank you.