PANAMA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TEXAS

A TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION

PANAMA TEXAS WEEK 26

"Celebrating a decade of the Panama Canal expansion"

PANAMA CITY, PANAMA

SEPTEMBER 28 – 30, 2026

HOST ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

A Note of Appreciation – Juan B. Sosa

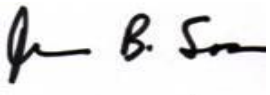
On behalf of the U.S.-Panama Business Council, I would like to thank everybody that contributed to the success of "Panama Texas Week 26". The list is long and prestigious and I am taking a risk of leaving someone out. If I do, I apologize.

Government officials that participated were great in their presentations, in answering questions, and welcoming the delegation. The spectacular dinner offered by Foreign Minister in charge Carlos A. Hoyos at the iconic building of the Foreign Ministry, and the full Panamanian breakfast offered by Administrator of the Panama Canal Ilya Marotta by the historic site of the Goethals monument at the administration building of the Canal, were a reminder of the strong bonds that exist between the United States and Panama. Their messages reinforced the special relationship between Panama, USA and Texas.

Administrator of ProPanama Walter Cohen, National Director of Economic Planning of Ministry of Economy & Finance Rodolfo Sabonge, and Administrator of Panama Pacifico Javier Suarez had outstanding presentations and the participation of high-profile government officials in the events such as Secretary General of Panama Maritime Authority Volney Guinard and presidential advisor Roberto Brenes, were very much welcomed as well as the presence of interim Deputy Administrator of the Panama Canal Ruben Gustavo Perez Pinzón, the incoming Deputy Administrator Miguel Lorenzo Fabrega, and Vice President of communication and Corporate Relations, Eduardo Quiros.

We are specially indebted to H.E. José Miguel Alemán Healy, Ambassador of Panama to the United States that made a special trip to co-host the Ambassadors luncheon and Ms. Laura Hochla, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of United States in Panama. Their presence and participation in the luncheon were outstanding. The private sector also had an impacting presence with the presidents of two supporting associations, Aurelio Barria, the Panama Chamber of Commerce, and Ricardo Lince, of the National Maritime Association of Panama (MAPA), and coordinators of discussion panels Carlos Urriola, Maritime; Jorge Barnett, Logistics; Juan Manuel Urriola, Energy; and Pete Garcia, Aviation. I also thank the twenty panelists from both countries that had very engaging interventions.

Programs like this are possible only by the generous contributions of sponsors and we thank San Antonio International Airport, Callam Marine, Puerto Baru, Targa Resources, Great Houston Port Bureau, Energy Transfer, Caterpillar, Copa Airlines, Quos, Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce, SAA Marine MIT, Houston Airports System Development Corporation, Empresas Bern, Maersk, and AUSA for their support. And to the members of the delegation from Texas, led by Captain Eric Carrero, CEO of Greater Houston Port Bureau, for their enthusiasm and continuous search to learn more about Panama and its opportunities. In this effort, the support of the Consulate of Panama in Houston and its Consul General, Manuel Salerno Abad, was invaluable.

God bless you. Juancho Sosa 

TEXAS-PANAMA: AN “STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP”



TEXAS-PANAMA “AN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP”

Over the years, Panama and Texas have established a ”Strategic Partnership”. Initially anchored in Houston by the relationship between the Port of Houston and the Panama Canal, and between the Bush Intercontinental Airport and Tocumen Airport in Panama - “The Hub of the Americas”-, the relationship has blossomed in the last decade since the expansion of the Canal, that had great impact in regions across Texas, improving the access of goods to the region and their exports easier and more competitive.

At the same time, blue chip companies of Texas included Panama in their expansion plans, some even establishing regional headquarters such as Dell Technologies, Halliburton and others. In addition, companies such as United Airlines and Chevron have solid operations in Panama, with regional implications. There are other Texas companies such as American Airlines, Sysco, Bell Helicopter, Kimberly Clark and others with operations in Panama. Paralleled to this, higher education has become an important factor, with Texas becoming one of the top 3 states for Panamanians students, highlighting the universities of Texas A&M, University of Texas, TCU, SMU, Rice, Houston, UTSA and others.

CO-HOSTS AND CORPORATE SPONSORS



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Co-hosts of the conference were the Ministry of Commerce & Industry of Panama, ProPanama, the international promotional arm of the Government of Panama, and the U.S.-Panama Business Council. The Embassy of Panama in Washington DC, and the Consulate of Panama in Houston provided invaluable support.

Initiatives like this can only be implemented with the generous support from corporate sponsors. We thank the companies from the United States and Panama, and the government agencies of Panama, not only for their financial support, but their enthusiastic participation as well, that contributed to make “Panama Texas Week 26” a success.

AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE

Day 1: Monday, September 28

- Arrival in Panama City. Host hotel Miramar Intercontinental
- 8 PM - "Ice Breaker" for the delegation at the Pacific Terrace on the fifth floor

Day 2: Tuesday, September 29

- 8 AM – Welcome Breakfast at the ballroom of the hotel Miramar
- Hosts: Walter Cohen, PROPANAMA - Rodolfo Sabonge, Economy & Finance - Aurelio Barria, Panama Chamber of Commerce
- 9 AM - Business Forums of economic sectors: 9 AM Maritime / 10 AM Logistics / 11 AM Energy
- 12:30 PM – Ambassadors Luncheon – H.E. José Miguel Alemán, Panama Amb. to USA – Hon. Laura Hochla, DCM, USA Embassy
- 2 PM Continuation of Business Forums: 2 PM Infrastructure / 3 PM Aviation
- 7:30 PM – Reception at the Ministry of Foreign Relations at Casco Antiguo. Host: Minister in Charge H.E. Carlos A. Hoyos

Day 3: Wednesday, September 30

- 8:30 AM - Breakfast-Forum at the Panama Canal Authority
- Host: Eng. Ilya Espino de Marotta, Administrator (CEO) of the Panama Canal
- Presentations on: New container terminals project / LPG pipeline project / Expansion of the watershed of the Panama Canal
- 11 AM – Visit to the Cocoli NeoPanamax Locks
- Host: Miguel Lorenzo Fabrega - Deputy Administrator of the Panama Canal
- 12 Noon - Visit to Panama Pacifico Business Park – Host: Javier Suarez Pinzon, Administrator of Panama Pacifico
- 7 PM – Closing Dinner – Miramar Intercontinental

“ICE BREAKER” RECEPTION HOST –JUAN B. SOSA

An “Ice breaker” reception was held for the delegation at the Miramar Suite of the Miramar Intercontinental Hotel. The purpose of the reception was for the delegation to get to know each other and to hear final details of the program and any changes if there had been any. The host also wanted to brief the delegation on the importance of establishing personal relationships during the visit which would be helpful in doing business. A theme during the whole conference was the exceptional friendship that exist between the United States and Panama, a relationship that has been building for 170 years, since 1849 when a railroad between Panama and Colon started construction, to be a bridge for travelers from the east coast to the west coast of U.S., being lured by the prospects of California’s gold.

During the construction of the railroad, a Texas Ranger from Brazoria TX, Randolph “Ran” Runnels, showed up in Panama, bought two hotels at the terminal cities of Panama and Colon, and provided accommodations and protection crossing the isthmus. At the time the isthmus was the subject of robberies and criminal activities. Ranger Ran Runnels, hired by the Panama Railroad Company, got the area rid of crime and the legend of “Ranger Runnels” was born. This was documented by historian Juan B. Sosa (my grandfather) and is the first direct connection between a Texan and Panama recorded in history. An impersonator of Runnels was present at the reception. During the early days some Americans crossing the isthmus stayed in Panama and built families, creating over the years a web of relationships that has expanded throughout the decades, making Panama and USA two countries that always have had friendship, cooperation and family relations.







Ran Runnels

WELCOME BREAKFAST

HOSTS: MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY / PROPANAMA / MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & FINANCE

Walter Cohen, Administrator of PROPANAMA, gave the welcoming remarks on behalf of Minister of Commerce & Industry Julio Moltó, co-host of the conference. Cohen reviewed Panama's historical vocation as a country dedicated to international commerce and highlighted some of the efforts of the Ministry and ProPanama, in bringing international corporations as headquarters for Latin America, the several trade treaties which makes Panama accessible to international markets, and the interconnectivity by sea and air which makes it easy to import and export with Panama. Panama's historical role as a bridge with other continents has been highly relevant in the position of leadership that Panama has in international trade.

Rodolfo Sabonge of the Ministry of Economy & Finance, speaking on behalf of Minister of Economy & Finance Felipe Chapman, reviewed projects that Panama is undertaken in the Panama-Colon corridor and in the rest of the country, to strengthen the economy that has been growing at more than 4%, the highest in Latin America. Director Sabonge mentioned specific projects that will facilitate trade across the isthmus, with ambitious infrastructure projects such as a fourth bridge over the Panama Canal, an air cargo hub in Panama City, the building of a railroad from Panama City to the province of Chiriquí and others. Of importance is the expansion that Panama has had in the tourism sector that has grown 14% in the last twelve months that complements the relocation of international executives.

Aurelio Barria, President of the Panama Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Panama, the oldest trade association in Panama, highlighted factors that the government and the private sector have been emphasizing for years, to have the country keep investment grade, provide incentives to companies to relocate in Panama, and promote pro-business laws that are important to local as well as foreign capital attraction. The Chamber and the government cooperate in creating economic policies that are pro-business and assist in the generation of employment. The Panama Chamber of Commerce has branches in several regions of the country, which makes it a strong association at the national level.

Ambassador Juan B. Sosa served as master of ceremonies of the breakfast.






AMBASSADORS LUNCH

H.E. JOSE MIGUEL ALEMAN H., AMB. OF PANAMA TO USA / MRS. LAURA HOCHLA, DCM, USA EMBASSY / CAPT. ERIC CARRERO, CHAIR OF MISSION

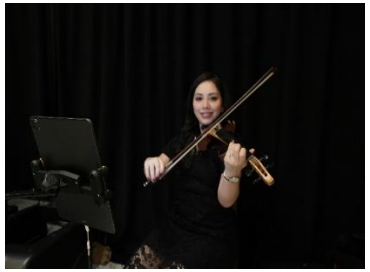
A diplomatic luncheon was held between business panels, featuring H.E. Jose Miguel Alemán Healy, who made a special trip from Washington DC, and Mrs. Laura Hochla, DCM of the USA Embassy in Panama, acting as Charge d'Affaires, in the absence of Ambassador Kevin Cabrera who was in USA on a special mission. Ambassador Juan B. Sosa had initial remarks in which he highlighted the special relationship that has existed between Panama and the United States, built out of intermarriages that created a web of family relationships, important in the friendship and cooperation that exist between the two countries.

Ambassador Alemán Healy, whose father and brother Jaime Alemán, preceded him as ambassadors to the United States, made a historic analysis of the relationship since the beginning of the Panama Railroad through the construction of the Panama Canal, the importance of the Canal during World War II, the negotiations of the Panama Canal treaty, the transfer of the administration of the Canal at the beginning of the new millennium, the expansion of new locks and the role it is playing today in trade, energy, and others, as one of the most important waterways in the world. Mrs. Hochla expanded in the traditional relationship between the United States and Panama, and the importance the Panama Canal has had in trade and economic expansion in Panama and in the United States. DCM Hochla highlighted some of the activities of the Embassy in Panama and around the region. Capt. Eric Carrero, CEO of the Greater Houston Port Bureau, thanked the two diplomats for sharing their views and experiences.

Ambassador Alemán Healy and DCM Hochla were presented two recently printed books covering the history of the first transit of the Canal in 1914 and the recent expansion 102 years later, and Capt. Carrero was presented with a Panama hat. The luncheon was accompanied by an accomplished violinist.







MARITIME BUSINESS PANEL

BUSINESS PANEL – MARITIME **MODERATOR: CARLOS URRIOLA TAM**

PANELISTS: RODOLFO SABONGE, MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & FINANCE / ERIC CARRERO, GHPB / SERGIO CHAPA, POTEN & PARTNERS

The maritime sector is the heart of the economy of Panama, led by the Panama Canal. The sector, including logistics, constitutes close to 25% of the GDP of the country. The Canal is complemented by five container terminals in the Pacific and Atlantic, by the Panama Ship Registry, maritime auxiliary services and others, providing full service to the maritime community. Panama has had recent differences with China and their company Hutchison Whampoa, that controlled terminals at the entrance of the Canal in both oceans; their operations have been suspended and are facing litigation. These differences are being discussed at present. In the meantime, Maersk and MSC are managing the two ports in question, Balboa and Cristobal, under short-term agreements until a final decision is made regarding their future management.

Panama handles more than 10 million TEUs a year, more than any other country in the Americas. As trade through the Canal has grown, so has the need for transshipment. At present the Panama Canal has an initiative in place whereas two areas: Telfers Island in the Atlantic and Corozal in the Pacific, will be auctioned, bringing to seven the container terminals in the Panama-Colon corridor. The project is in the pre-qualification stage and the Canal is working on the model that will ultimately apply. The Canal is also working on an LPG pipeline that would allow it to increase their slots for commodities such as containers and LNG. The Canal is also working on a project to incorporate a new watershed and improve water supply to the Canal.

Containers are by far the #1 commodity through the Canal. However, gas (LPG and in lesser amount LNG) and chemicals are strong segments, making the Canal an “energy canal” as well. There are other port projects in the country that offer opportunities like Puerto Barú in the occidental province of Chiriquí, an inland port that would lower the cost of fuel and become a logistics regional force transporting products for exports and interconnecting with the Southeast of Costa Rica.







LOGISTICS BUSINESS PANEL

BUSINESS PANEL – LOGISTICS **MODERATOR: JORGE BARNETT**

PANELISTS: MARCIA FASCHINGBAUER, EXCARGO / MANUEL ARIAS, PANAMA-DAVID TRAIN / DEMOSTENES PEREZ, LP GROUP / ISMAEL GONZALEZ, PUERTO BARU

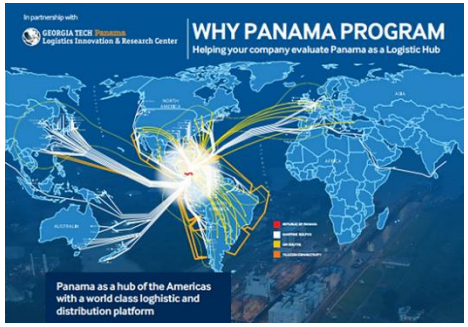
Panama has become a premier logistics Center in the Americas. The fifty-mile corridor, Panama City in the Pacific and Colón in the Atlantic, controls more than 70% of the GDP of the country, and the Panama Canal, the cargo railroad between Panama and the City of Colón, and the highway between the two terminal cities, provide a state-of-the-art logistics corridor. In addition, the Isthmus is used as interconnection of cables for international telecom, and the Airport of Tocumen in Panama City is a cargo hub which is at present in expansion.

Logistics in the world and especially in the Americas have faced challenges in the last few years with alteration of routes as a result of "El Niño" draught, the Ukraine-Russa war, and more recently the Middle East confrontation that has closed routes, diverted traffic, increased costs, caused delays and other factors that damage the orderly flow of goods. There is a constant pressure to reduce costs, establish rate benchmarking, streamline operations, enhance resilience and contract reliable carrier partners. The system is being put to a test regularly and the Logistics Center of Panama has responded well to these challenges and is constantly looking how to improve its operations.

Panama has established a dedicated organization, a "Logistics Cabinet", to review constantly changes in the market and factors that impact the system. While progress has been made, there is a lot to be done to improve performance of land transportation, transfers in the multimodal system, improvement and sharing of information to address problems more professionally, and the continuous training of capable personnel.

Panama is fortunate to have the Georgia Tech Panama Logistics Innovation and Research Center, a public-private-partnership between the Government of Panama and the Logistics Center of Georgia Tech, one of the most prestigious in the world, to evaluate permanently the logistics center and propose actions to improve it.







ENERGY BUSINESS PANEL

BUSINESS PANELS – ENERGY **MODERATOR: JUAN MANUEL URRIOLA TAM**

PANELISTS: FREDDY OBANDO PRESTOL, AES / FERNANDO ARAMBURU PORRAS, CONSULTANT / SERGIO CHAPA, POTEN & PARTNERS

Panama has undergone fundamental changes in its energy market and opportunities. The country has an excess capacity of energy and is exporting to the Central America grid, has just purchased the minority (41%) equity of the oil pipeline in the Province of Chiriqui, Petroterminal de Panama (PTP), it is using LNG domestically, it is taking steps to establish an electricity interconnection with Colombia, and the Panama Canal is considering the construction of a LPG pipeline, which would vacate ship slots in the Canal to be used to transit more profitable commodities. It has become an "energy country".

In the late 90's the country privatized the generation of electricity which has been able to expand continuously to meet market demand. It also developed hydroelectric infrastructure that has allowed the country to produce locally most of its electricity. However, hydro depends on water level of lakes, and the recent experience with "El Niño" has affected the generation of electricity. As of today, the debate is beginning to center on the possibility of constructing an LPG pipeline paralleled to the Panama Canal and ACP (Panama Canal Authority) is currently in the process of reviewing documents for prequalification. It is also working on a model that will define ownership, equity, investment and other factors that are important in the construction of a project that could require an investment of $8 billion.

The pre-qualification process should be defined before the end of the year. Independent of the Canal plans, questions have risen regarding future plans of PTP which by some is considered as a viable, less costly option for an LPG pipeline. In addition, the government should decide whether to retain or not Northville Industries, the former owner of the minority equity of PTP, to manage the pipeline after the twelve-months that the contract provides. Thus, in the next few months the Government of Panama and ACP will be making significant decisions.







INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PANEL

BUSINESS PANEL – INFRASTRUCTURE MODERATOR: JUAN B. SOSA

PANELISTS: ROBERTO CHIARI, PANAMA PACIFICO / CAMILO GARCIA TORRES, QUOS / CHRIS WALLACE, NORTH TEXAS COMMISSION

Panama has improved its infrastructure considerably since the transfer of the Canal and the areas around it to Panama. There was a challenge of finding the proper use for the thirteen military bases that USA operated in Panama, but the country has been able to establish a strategy and a process to address it. As a result of this, Clayton Army Base was converted into an international Education Center that has been successful in attracting education institutions from abroad. Howard Air Force Base has become the most modern business park in the Americas. Two naval bases have been converted to container terminals, and other infrastructure converted to good use.

In the meantime, Panama has continued to expand its infrastructure. It is constructing a fourth bridge over the Canal to improve connectivity between the city and the interior of the country, is building access routes that will improve transportation efficiency, it is expanding its metro to incorporate areas west of the Canal, it is conducting studies to build a 300 miles+ train from Panama City to Chiriquí, and is building infrastructure to improve access of tourism areas, among others. The aviation sector is also benefiting with the building of a third runway at Tocumen Airport and other projects around the airport, and there are opportunities in the Panama Pacific airport and in regional airports in key regions of Panama.

The interior of the country is also improving infrastructure. Puerto Armuelles in the Pacific of Chiriqui is modernizing its wharf and will be building a deep-water port and logistics park, Puerto Barú, an inland port in Chiriqui, is about ready to start construction, and access roads in agricultural areas are being improved or built. The Panama Canal on its own, has infrastructure projects related to water supply, pipelines, and container terminals. Panama's infrastructure is ready to contribute to the expansion of the economy.







AVIATION BUSINESS PANEL

BUSINESS PANEL– AVIATION MODERATOR: PETE GARCIA

PANELISTS: JESUS SAENZ, SAN ANTONIO AIRPORT / ROBERT MONTGOMERY, COPA AIRLINES / EDUARDO IGLESIAS, HASDC

Panama has a well-developed aviation system. It is the “Hub of the Americas”, is the #1 airport in gates in Latin America, it has two runways and soon will be building a third one, and is continuously expanding operations. It is also developing a cargo hub. COPA Airlines is the main tenant of Tocumen Airport. It uses Tocumen as its hub, and has built seven banks of passengers connecting at Tocumen from over eighty destinations. COPA operates Boeing planes and has the best on-time record of any airline in the Americas. Years ago, it created the “Stopover” program where a traveler can stay in Panama for a few days when traveling to another country, and is not assessed a penalty for exchanging the ticket or having two routes in separate days. This program has been instrumental in increasing passengers to Panama which has reflected a 14% increase in the last year.

COPA Airlines opened in 2026 the Panama City-Raleigh/Durham and the San Diego, California routes and is preparing a major expansion for 2028. COPA connects to all capitals of the Americas and has seventeen destinations to the United States, including five weekly frequencies to Austin, Texas and has a marketing agreement with United Airlines with two daily flights from Houston and three during the season. There is the possibility of a route Panama City-San Antonio. Panama is in the process of opening concessions to administer and maintain regional airports in Rio Hato, Cocle province, and David, Chiriqui province in the western part of the country, bordering with Costa Rica. Tocumen airport is undergoing a study to improve navigation around the airport and several airports are undergoing technological improvements. It is also in the process of rebuilding the Bocas del Toro airport, a major tourism destination.







PANAMA-TEXAS INTERNATIONAL DINNER

HOST: CARLOS A. HOYOS, MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS IN CHARGE

The City of Panama was founded in 1513, the first Spanish settlement in the Pacific. It was destroyed in 1671 and rebuilt in 1673 at the space where the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the presidency, and other public institutions are located. It is an iconic area known as "Casco Antiguo" (Old quarters), is a UNESCO Heritage site, and host to restaurants, museums, the arts, around its quaint cobble stones streets. It has become a major tourism destination. Foreign Minister in charge, H.E. Carlos A. Hoyos, welcomed the delegation at Padre Guardia suite, facing the beautiful Bay of Panama with a view of the high rises in mid-town. To reach the venue the delegation went through the spectacular "Hall of Flags".

The excellent cuisine and perfect arrangements of the dinner were true examples of Panamanian hospitality which Minister Hoyos highlighted in his remarks to the delegation. Relations of Panama with the United States date back to the XIX century when the Panama Railroad was built by American entrepreneurs. This relationship continued to be enhanced until the beginning of the XX century when the Panama Canal was built, starting a century of cooperation between the two countries. Today, this relationship covers many areas including international politics, economic development, security, education, science and others. Minister in charge Hoyos mentioned that the current minister Javier Martinez Acha, who is traveling, is a graduate of Texas A&M, the current Administrator of the Canal Ilya Espino de Marotta is also a graduate of Texas A&M, and two presidents, Martin Torrijos Espino and Laurentino Cortizo Cohen are graduates of Texas A&M and the University of Texas respectively.

Minister Hoyos, on behalf of the Government of Panama, reassured the delegation of Panama's continuous commitment to strengthen the relationship with the United States.







PANAMA CANAL BREAKFAST

HOST: ENG. ILYA ESPINO DE MAROTTA, ADMINISTRATOR (CEO) OF THE PANAMA CANAL AUTHORITY

The Panama Canal Authority (PCA) is the largest organization in Panama in terms of revenues and employees working within the country. Its administration was transferred from the UnIted States to Panama on December 31, 1999. Since then, it has had four administrators, three of them graduates from Texas universities (two from Texas A&M, one from the University of Texas, and one from Lamar). Houston is the #1 partner of the Panama Canal among all ports and makes Texas the most connected state with the Canal with eight deep-water ports. The Texas delegation was received by Ruben Perez, Interim Deputy Administrator, and Eduardo Quiros, VP of Communication and Corporate Image. A hearty “Panamanian Breakfast” was served. One of the photos below shows the spread partially.

In 2006 Panamanians approved in a referendum, the widening and deepening of the Canal, and the construction of a new set of locks, capable to transit large ships. The expansion, that doubled capacity of cargo, was finished in 2016, hence the celebration this year of ”A decade of the Expansion of the Canal”. The impact of the widening has been positive for Texas, especially for the Port of Houston, with a dramatic increase in the handling of containers from Asia Pacific and the export of resins. The Port of Houston will be finishing next year Project 11, widening of its own ship channel to improve navigation and be more compatible with the Panama Canal. Infrastructure projects have been built in other ports to be compatible with the expansion of the Canal.

CEO of the Canal, Ilya Espino de Marotta, a Texas A&M graduate, gave a profound explanation of the vision of the Canal and the responsibility that the Board of Directors and the close to 10,000 employees of the Canal feel, to continue providing a first-class service for the benefit of Panama and the international shipping community. CEO Marotta was presented by Amb. Sosa, and Captain Carrero, CEO of the Greater Houston Port Bureau and chair of the delegation, the “Friendship Award”, the highest recognition of the Council.

Captain Carrero announced that in 2027 Houston will be welcoming a trade delegation from Panama to continue building the “Strategic Partnership” that has been created between Panama and Texas.








PANAMA CANAL BUSINESS FORUM

PRESENTERS: REBECA CACERES, CONTAINER TERMINALS / RICAURTE SALAMIN, ENERGY CORRIDOR / JOHN LAGMAN, RIO INDIO RESERVOIR

Corozal and Telfers Island container terminals / LPG pipeline parallel to the Canal / Rio Indio water reservoir

The Panama Canal has undertaken a number of large infrastructure projects that are changing the face of the Canal that no longer is only a channel for the transit of vessels from one ocean to another. It has become a corridor linking 1,920 ports worldwide, economies, and nations that are impacting the world. Three of these projects were discussed in a Business Forum organized exclusively for the Texas delegation: Two new container terminals, an Energy Corridor, and the addition of the Rio Indio Watershed to the water supply of the Canal. These three projects will exceed a $10 billion investment.

Container terminals. Panama is the #1 country in handling containers in the Americas with over 10 million TEUS (containers of 20 feet). The growth took place after the expansion of the Canal in 2016 that allowed transiting of vessels with more than 14,000 TEUS, compared to the original Canal that could take up to 4,000 TEUS. Two terminals, Corozal in the Pacific and Telfers Island in the Atlantic will be build. At present the Canal is in the process of pre-qualifying companies.

LPG Pipeline. Transit of LPG has become one of the most important commodities for the Canal. Their transit is taking up valuable slots that could be utilized for higher-value commodities. At present the Canal is in the process of pre-qualifying companies that will be able to bid. It is also working on the operational and financial model.

Water supply. Panama is undergoing its second ”El Niño” draught in five years. To address the dwindling water supply, a key factor in the transiting of vessels and human consumption of water in Panama City, studies have been completed to add the watershed of Rio Indio that will guarantee water supply for the next forty years minimum. The project is in the phase of preparing to relocate families in the area and begin construction.

After the forum, a group photo was taken at the monument of George Washington Goethals, an army officer who directed, under the U.S. Corps of Engineers, the construction of the Panama Canal and was the first civilian Governor of the Canal Zone.








PANAMA CANAL COCOLI NEOPANAMAX LOCKS

HOST: ENG. MIGUEL LORENZO FABREGA, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PANAMA CANAL

At the turn of the century the Panama Canal had reached capacity and was unable to transit large vessels. It had also ceased to be a military asset since war ships could no longer transit the Canal. In 2006 Panama began a process that led in 2009 to the construction of new and bigger locks and the deepening and widening of the navigation channel, finishing in 2016. 2026 celebrates the tenth anniversary of the new locks that have changed transportation routes in the world, with the Canal accommodating 6% of maritime trade and more than 15% of USA maritime trade.

The Texas delegation was received by Eng. Miguel Lorenzo Fábrega, a University of Texas graduate, one day before he was taking over as Deputy Administrator of the Canal, a position that was vacated when Eng. Ilya Marotta was elevated to the position of Administrator. At Cocoli locks the delegation was received by a highly professional team that took time to explain the operation of the locks, transit routes, the types of ships transiting the Canal and others. The Canal transits 36 vessels a day, of which approximately ten are through the NeoPanamax locks; however, these locks account for more than 50% of the tonnage through the Canal.

While container continues to be the dominant commodity, gas has increased considerable as LPG and LNG have been able to be exported since 2016, coinciding with the expansion of the Canal. LPG and LNG are predominantly exports from the Gulf to Pacific Asia, and that is why the Panama Canal has become such an important route in USA energy exports. As was explained in the morning forum, in studying the possibility of a LPG pipeline, the Canal would be able to use those slots in LNG and additional container transits. The entrance to the Cocoli locks is at the western side of the Canal.

The Canal operates in daylight and has a system whereby in the morning ships enter the Canal from both oceans, cross at Gatun Lake during the day, and exit the Canal in the afternoon at both sides, Pacific and Atlantic. It takes about eight hours to transit the Canal.








PANAMA PACIFICO BUSINESS PARK

HOST: JAVIER SUAREZ PINZON, ADMINISTRATOR OF PANAMA PACIFICO AREA

The Panama Pacifico Area is an ambitious planned community that is combining housing, commerce, logistics, air transportation, infrastructure, education, natural space and other features to developed the premier business park in the Americas, with 415 companies generating more than 17,000 jobs. It is the former Howard Air Force Base, the largest air force base of the United States in the Americas that was transferred to Panama as part of the Torrijos-Carter Canal treaty of 1977. It has 3,500 acres of which 2,000 are devised for development and 1,500 for preservation. It is located at the western side of the entrance of the Panama Canal, facing the Pacific Ocean and its master developer is London Regional Panama. Administrator Javier Suarez Pinzon made a presentation to the delegation.

Panama Pacífico has a concession granted by the Republic of Panama at the turn of the century, after the transfer of the Canal to Panama as part of the Canal Treaty. The business park has been heavily inclined to logistics, taking advantage of its proximity to the Panama Canal and its ports, and having its own airport. However, there are a few American corporations established in Panama Pacifico, the star being Dell Technologies from Round Rock (Austin Region), that uses Panama as regional headquarters for Latin America, and has more than 2000 workers at Panama Pacifico dedicated to technical and client support. 3M, Grainger, and AES are other American companies located in Panama Pacifico, and now Liberty Media that acquired Cable & Wireless.

The Panama Pacifico International Airport is a business unit of its own. Low-cost airline Wingo uses the airport as its base of operations in Panama, with five destinations to Colombia and one to Havanna, Cuba. It generates more than 300,000 passengers a year and could become a successful regional airport if more activity is generated. It also has the potential for cargo. The airport is part of Panama Pacifico's assets. Panama Pacifico Area will also reap benefits from the access roads to the new fourth Bridge over the Canal and the extension of the Metro to the cities of Arraijan and La Chorrera, west of the Panama Canal.









TRADE MISSION CLOSING DINNER

The closing dinner of the trade mission was an elegant affair at the Miramar Intercontinental, attended by high level public officials, business leaders and the Texas delegation. It was a relaxed affair with little ceremony, aimed at establishing and expanding relationships and networking. From the maritime community were present among others Volney Guinard, Secretary General of the Maritime Authority of Panama and Mrs. Ginard, , Ricardo Lince, President of the National Maritime Association (MAPA) and Mrs. Lince, Presidential Advisor Roberto Brenes and Mrs. Brenes were present and the main table was completed by Nestor Sanchez from Caterpillar, a Gold Sponsor of the conference, Ruth Hughs, former Secretary of State of Texas, Eric Carrero and Juan B. Sosa.

Tables center at the dinner had reproductions of the new country brand “Panama, Host to the World” (Panama, Anfitrión del Mundo) which will be used in Panama’s international promotion. Several groups were present such as AUSA (Association of USA Armies - Panama chapter) that for years has maintained a relationship with the USA military, several business leaders from the maritime, aviation, logistics, and energy sectors. During the dinner an announcement was made that next year Texas will host two “Texas-Panama” conferences, one in the Houston region oriented to maritime, energy, logistics and heavy manufacturing in the first semester of 2027 and one at Irving, North Texas, oriented to energy, industry, finance and logistics in the second semester.

“Panama Texas Week 26” completes USPA’s programs for 2026. Besides the two programs announced in the United States for 2027, USPA will be coordinating new programs in Panama, together with a new organization, ”United States-Panama Partnership” that will be operating next year.







ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUTURE PROGRAMS

TEXAS – PANAMA WEEK 27 - FIRST SEMESTER OF 2027

HOUSTON, TEXAS

MARITIME/AVIATION/ENERGY/LOGISTICS/MANUFACTURING

TEXAS – PANAMA WEEK 27 - SECOND SEMESTER OF 2027

IRVING, NORTH TEXAS

INDUSTRY/SEMICONDUCTORS/LOGISTICS/ENERGY/AVIATION

PHOTOS OF NETWORKING ACTIVITIES



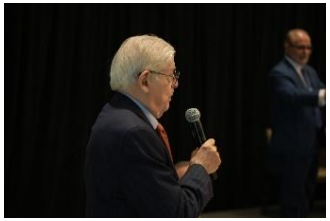















PHOTOS OF LUNCHES AND DINNERS

















PHOTOS– FIELD TRIP PANAMA CANAL















GEORGE WASHINGTON GOETHALS MONUMENT

