A VISIT TO REMEMBER. AND TO CELEBRATE! PANAMA CANAL - SEPTEMBER 2026







The "Panama-Texas Week 26" trade mission visit the Panama Canal on September 2026, was a visit for the ages. The delegation was received with a hearty "Panamanian breakfast" followed by an exclusive, private business forum. The event, organized by Eduardo Quiros, VP for Communication and Corporate Image of the Canal, begun with welcoming remarks by Ruben Perez, Interim Deputy Administrator, and was followed by Eng. Ilya Espino de Marotta, CEO of the Canal, that welcomed the delegation and shared the Canal's view as an impacting force in the future of the country and the global maritime community, highlighting the excellent relationship with USA and the state of Texas. CEO Marotta, a graduate of Texas A&M, was presented with the "Friendship Award" of the U.S.-Panama Business Council, its highest recognition. Captain Eric Carrero and Amb, Sosa were presented gifts by CEO Marotta.











PANAMA CANAL BUSINESS FORUM - “CELEBRATING A DECADE OF THE EXPANSION OF THE PANAMA CANAL”








The business forum had presentations by Rebeca Caceres on container terminals, Ricaurte Salamin on the Energy corridor, and John Lagman on Rio Indio Reservoir and water supply of the Canal. These three projects exceed an investment of $10 billon and are in the pre-qualification phase in the case of container terminals and the energy corridor, while Rio Indio is close to begin implementation.











EXPANSION OF THE CANAL – COCOLI NEOPANAMAX LOCKS – INAUGURATED IN 2016







In 2006 Panama approved in a referendum, the expansion of the Panama Canal and the construction of a new set of locks that would duplicate its capacity. allow bigger vessels to transit, and be more in tune with the size of new vessels that were being built. In June 2016 the new locks were inaugurated. The opening of the new locks doubled the capacity of the Canal to more than 500 million tons of cargo a year, while allowing 36 transits a day. The Canal recovered its recognition as one of the "choke points" of the world, with enormous impact in trade, economics, and geopolitics in the world. The cost of the expansion was $5.25 billion and was financed by Canal's resources and loans from five multilateral financial organizations. The construction was finished within the approved budget.

The expansion coincided with the development of fracking technology in the United States and the release of permits to export hydrocarbons. It brought costs down to competitive levels for transporting containers from Asia Pacific to the Gulf and Eastern coasts of the United States, giving an immediate boost to Texas and its eight deep-water ports, that have become the #1 northbound destination of the Canal. Commodities such as LPG and to a lesser degree LNG, are now part of the commodity mix of the Canal, and are driving the NeoPanamax locks to near capacity, much earlier than anticipated.

The delegation was received at Cocoli locks at the western bank of the Canal in the Pacific, by Eng. Miguel Lorenzo Fabrega, a graduate of the University of Texas, and incoming Deputy Administrator of the Canal, who together with his team of professionals, gave explanations of the work of the locks, type of transits, and general operation and maintenance of the Canal. Photos capture the interest shown by members of the delegation and the exceptional treatment received by Eng. Lorenzo Fabrega and his team.







MONUMENT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON GOETHALS AND ADMINISTRATION BUILDING OF THE CANAL



The Panama-Canal Treaty was signed in 1903 and began construction in 1904. The beginning was slow and needed the eradication of malaria & yellow fever, and new designs. At the end of 1907 president Theodore Roosevelt, after two Chief Engineers had resigned, appointed George Washington Goethals, an army officer, as Chairman & Chief Engineer of the Isthmian Canal Commission. The project was inaugurated in August 1914, two years ahead of schedule, and on budget. In 1917 Goethals was appointed as the first civilian governor of the Canal Zone.

The administration building (background in the photo of the delegation) , headquarters of the Canal, was inaugurated in July 1914, one month before the opening of the Canal. It is an imposing multi-story structure of 12,000 square feet, on a hill, with a high-domed rotunda and a prominent bell tower. From the building you can appreciate the entrance of the Canal and the Miraflores locks. The Goethals monument was built in 1954 by the Panamanian company Martinz, and symbolizes the continental divide and the locks of the Canal by each side.