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Texas A&M International University

**Texas Center for Border Economic and
Enterprise Development**

QUARTERLY REPORT

Winter 2010

Laredo Hosts 1st City of Laredo-CAFTA Business Roundtable

During the month of February from the 24th-26th, 2010, the City of Laredo and Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) hosted the very first roundtable between the City of Laredo and Central American countries. The roundtable attracted over 350 representatives from the private and public sector. Companies from Central America, local and state organizations, and Mexican political leaders were among the ones who attended the roundtable. In addition, companies and investors from Spain, Argentina and Bolivia were in attendance. National companies such as Wal-Mart, Costco and HEB were also present. This event afforded representatives the opportunity to negotiate face-to-face.

The City of Laredo and the Federation of Export-Import Chambers of Central America (FECAEXCA) worked long hours to solidify an agenda. One conducive to conducting business and at the same time informative about the facilities and services the Laredo area has to offer.

Along with other University representatives, the Texas Center assisted in the planning and development of the roundtable. Hebert A. Molina, Director of the TCBEED, spent hours both in the City of Laredo's trade mission to Central America and in the planning meetings of the 1st Roundtable in Laredo, Texas. The TCBEED staff helped

along varied stages of the developmental meetings and at the roundtable itself.

The list of people who worked together includes Carlos Villarreal, City Manager; Miguel Conchas, President and General Manager of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce; Gene Garza, Customs Director of the Port of Laredo; Roger Creery, Director of the Laredo Development Foundation (LDF); Hector Vargas, Consultant, FTXperts; Jose Luis Flores, Director of Laredo's International Airport; Cyndi Collazo, Deputy City Manager; Blasita Lopez, Interim Manager of the Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau; Dr. Ray Keck, President, TAMIU; Candy Hein, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, TAMIU; Tim Franciscus-Timm, Industrial Development Specialist, LDF; Hector Vargas, FTXperts; Lic. Eduardo Garza Robles, CEO, Unitrade; and Luis Hinojosa, President, Unitrade.

From a non-descript call by Jose Luis Flores in October; to a whirlwind trade mission spanning eight days in Central America in November; to frenzied paced meetings in January and February 2010, all those involved in making the 1st City of Laredo-CAFTA Business Roundtable deserve the utmost congratulations for putting together an effective event—one on which to build on.

—Herbert A. Molina, Director of the TCBEED



Herbert A. Molina
Director of the TCBEED

The Mission

To marshal the knowledge and expertise of Texas A&M International University's faculty, students, and staff to provide effective leadership and support Laredo and the surrounding area in their economic development efforts

Dr. Stephen Sears Looks for Self-Governance at the A.R. Sanchez School of Business

Dr. Stephen Sears stated to all members of the A.R. Sanchez School of Business, that during his tenure as dean of the School, he expects all to participate in self-governance.

In addition to standing committees, work is being done by all members of the TCBEED as part of a Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) strategic plan audit. Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) reporting period alternates with the other system schools, and this year happens to be the review year for TAMIU. TAMIU's strategic plan for 2011-2015 encompasses all of the University's academic and administrative entities and integrates all their objectives and strategies under one binding plan.

The TCBEED employees are currently assigned to one of eight task forces which are distinct in nature. The task forces range in topic from students; faculty and staff; research; service, human, financial and physical resources; internationalization; and the vision, mission and core values of the A.R. Sanchez School of Business. Each TCBEED member was assigned according to their expertise.

The strategic plan is expected to be finished after lengthy reviews, discussions and modifications. The final draft to be submitted to the Office of the Provost and incorporated into the University's plan will be April 16, 2010.

The strategic plan is the roadmap of guidelines to follow in accomplishing the overall goals set by the University for the next five years.

Texas Center Hosts the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas-San Antonio Branch's '2010's Border Economic Forecast Luncheon'

On February 3, 2010, the Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development (TCBEED) hosted the "2010 Border Economic Forecast Luncheon" in WHTC 111 on the Texas A&M International University campus. Dr. Keith Phillips, Senior Economist and Policy Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas-San Antonio Branch and Dr. Agustín Del Río, Senior Economist, Banco de México-Monterrey Branch had been scheduled to present the forecast both for the U.S. and Mexico, but Dr. Del Río was unable to attend due to a scheduling issue. In his place,

Jesus Cañas, an Associate Economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas-El Paso Branch, presented the Mexican economic forecast.

The forecast luncheon was equally attended by faculty and students, as well as, attendees from the private sector, such as local bank representatives, local businessmen, and local politicians. Audience members listened to these area experts as they shared their views and opinions about the economic downturn and the two year recession, as well as, insights into 2010.

Dr. Keith Phillips stated that for the area in 2010, Laredo can expect an increase in job growth—between 3 to 4 percent. Dr. Phillips added, "when times are good, Laredo grows faster than the state of Texas.

He further explained, "that leading economic indicators were pointing toward the positive, and in general the border economies and trade would follow suit."

Mr. Jesus Cañas stated, "in 2010, weak growth is expected in Mexico, GDP (gross domestic product)

should be around 3.5 percent, and just through inertia, Mexico's economy must grow, and there should be a 10 percent increase in *maquila* [maquiladora] output."

The TCBEED will receive a DVD copy of the presentation. Contact us if you are interested in a copy.



From left to right, Dr. Stephen Sears, Dean, Sanchez School of Business, Keith Phillips, Jesus Cañas and Herbert Molina, Director of the TCBEED

The Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development working alongside you today for a better tomorrow.

Profile: Texas Center Data User



Timothy Franciscus-Timm
Industrial Development
Specialist, LDF

Timothy Franciscus-Timm is the Industrial Development Specialist for the Laredo Development Foundation. The Laredo Development Foundation (LDF) is recognized as one of twenty-

seven economic development organizations in the nation accredited by IEDC as an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO). The LDF, incorporated in November 1966, is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to the economic and industrial development of the Laredo economy.

Tim has more than 4 years of man-

ufacturing experience in South Texas. That knowledge helps him work with manufacturing prospects considering Laredo, TX/Webb County and Nuevo Laredo, MX. For data requests by prospects, Tim uses a variety of sources for data including the Texas Center for Enterprise and Economic Development. In addition to workforce demographic statistics, the border trade and border crossing information is of specific interest. These are often good indicators of the overall health of the Laredo economy.

On average, the LDF handles prospects ranging from outlet malls to automotive suppliers, all considering Laredo/Nuevo Laredo as a possible location for a future operation. Site selection work is either handled internally by the company, or they hire an outside site selection firm such as CB Richard Ellis, Best White, Grubb & Ellis, JP Morgan and Deloitte & Touche just to name a few. As part of their

due process, they require economic data to help them study the area they are considering. As Tim says, "These prospects demand accurate and updated information as they compile a comprehensive analysis of each location they are considering." Timm has worked with projects such as DKR Wind, PROLAMSA, the Rheem Expansion in Nuevo Laredo, Medline in Nuevo Laredo, as well as local and outside developers considering the area. He has provided information/statistics to companies from Korea, Japan, Canada, and Europe that have considered the Laredo/Nuevo Laredo region.

Tim holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology and a Minor in Business Administration from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Prior to A&M Kingsville, Tim studied Industrial Engineering at St. Mary's University in San Antonio. He has lived in South Texas for 16 years, and has resided in Laredo for the past 6 years.

Border Business Indicators

The *Border Business Indicators (BBI)*, a Texas Center publication from 1990 to the present, has been in existence in a variety of formats since the 1980s. In its present configuration, the *BBI* covers twenty-two economic indicators for cities along the Rio Grande from Brownsville to El Paso, Texas.

On March 2003, the *Border Business Indicators* was reformatted to provide a more concise and "fast read" of the economic indicators for those cities on the Texas-Mexico border. In this current iteration, U.S.-Mexico trade information was incorporated as part of the monthly offerings in the *BBI*. Along with the inclusion of trade data, the fifteen indicators in the *BBI* publication were synchronized to the searchable data sets available on the on the Texas Center web site: <http://texascenter.tamui.edu>.

Vision Economic Outlook Report

The Texas Center's ongoing work with business and community organizations may result in a variety of collaborative publications and materials. One such publication is the *Vision Economic Outlook Report*.

The *Vision Economic Outlook Report* is prepared in cooperation with the Laredo Chamber of Commerce and has been in publication since the 1990s. The publication is distributed at the Vision Conferences held annually. The Vision Report provides a view of the City of Laredo's economic indicators, trade data and a timely point of the interest to the community. It is published once a year and is freely available at the Center's web site: <http://texascenter.tamui.edu>.

Texas Center Web Site

Since it first came on-line in 1998, the Texas Center's web site has been available to the public and has provided economic and trade data. From 2001, the Center has added searchable data directly from our data sets. In addition, links to other resources were included to guide users to other sites with valuable data and information. Subsequently, specialty publications were added to the site providing insight into the region. As the new decade approaches, the Center staff is working on plans to offer new data searches, filters, and reports. If you have not visited our site recently, do so as we start to upgrade our site <http://texascenter.tamui.edu>.

Texas Center Quarterly Report

First published in the Summer of 2009, the *Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development Quarterly Report* provides current information regarding on-going projects, additions or modifications to data sets and personnel changes.



Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development Quarterly Reports are prepared by the Center's staff for the purpose of communicating to the public the Center's mission, activities and services available to the area.

Have any questions about the Center, feel free to contact us at:

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