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Louisiana delegation seeks business opportunities in Mexico
More than 200 representatives gathered in Campeche

New Orleans, LA – More than 200 representatives from business, academia, and government from the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida as well as from five Mexican states gathered this week in Campeche, Mexico, to explore new business opportunities between the two countries. Organizing partners for the Gulf States Initiative Trade Mission included World Trade Center of New Orleans, Louisiana Committee of 100, Louisiana Economic Development, Mississippi Development Authority, Louisiana Oil and Gas Association, Lafayette Economic Development Authority and the Lafayette International Center.

“Louisiana and Mexico have a long and productive history as successful trade partners, and I was happy to be a part of the Gulf States Initiative trade mission to further strengthen those ties,” Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Don Pierson said. “In 2015, Louisiana sent \$5.82 billion in exports to Mexico, from crude oil to soybeans to machinery and many other products. Mexico is our second-largest export destination, and we will continue working to further expand our markets there.”

The Gulf States Initiative seeks to strengthen ties with Mexico by bolstering commonalities between the Gulf States of the United States and Mexico. The United States and Mexico maintain a robust trade relationship averaging over \$500 billion worth of trade per year across the U.S. - Mexico border. Mexico is also the third largest trading partner of the U.S. in addition to being the third-leading supplier of U.S. imports. U.S. exports to Mexico are up 468% from 1993 (pre-NAFTA) and accounted for 15.7% of overall U.S. exports in 2015.

“Mexico is a strategic trading partner for Louisiana,” said Caitlin Cain, CEO of the World Trade Center New Orleans. “The Campeche business to business Gulf States mission highlighted key sectors of opportunity for continued business growth and regional economic cooperation.”

The latest trade mission to Campeche followed previous missions between the Mexican and U.S. Border States along the Gulf of Mexico basin. The agenda included pre-arranged business matchmaking sessions organized by the Mexico office of Louisiana Economic Development, the Mississippi Development Authority, and the Office of Economic Development for the State of Campeche.

Industry areas of focus for the mission included energy (oil/gas), construction/commercial development, Gulf of Mexico environment (coast management), maritime/seaports, healthcare, agriculture/agri-business, workforce (immigration), higher education and air service. Speakers included officials from the States of Campeche, Yucatan, and Tabasco.

According to consul general of Mexico, Carlos Ponce Martínez, “The 42 US business people attending the event have been a record for the event to date and was an incredible job by the New Orleans World Trade Center and Louisiana Committee of C100, institutions to which I would like to congratulate for their incredible collaboration with the Consulate over several months of work.”

About the World Trade Center of New Orleans:

Founded as the International House in 1943 and as the International Trade Mart in 1945, these two predecessor organizations merged in 1985 and are now known as “The World Trade Center of New Orleans”; it is the oldest of over 300 World Trade Centers in over 100 countries. Notably, the World Trade Center of New Orleans spearheaded the establishment of Louisiana Tax Free Shopping in 1989, the first U.S. state to introduce such a program for international visitors, which has been used by more than 600,000 international customers and recorded over \$500 million in tax-free sales.

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