



WORLD TRADE CENTERS
ASSOCIATION

MERIDIAN™

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LOOKING BACK ON THE 50TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MERIDIAN™

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
WORLD TRADE CENTERS ASSOCIATION

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The World Trade Centers Association (WTCA) is a network of more than 300 highly-connected, mutually-supporting businesses and organizations in nearly 100 countries. As the owner of the “World Trade Center,” the tri-globe map design logo and “WTC” trademarks, the WTCA licenses exclusive rights to these brands for Members to use in conjunction with their independently-owned, iconic properties, facilities and trade services offerings. Through a robust portfolio of events, programming and resources that it offers its Members, the goal of the WTCA is to help local economies thrive by encouraging and facilitating trade and investment across the globe through Member engagement. To learn more visit www.wtca.org.

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Opportunity is knocking



John E. Drew
Chair, Board of Directors
World Trade Centers Association

The 50th WTCA General Assembly

Dear Members,

On the heels of the WTCA 50th General Assembly (GA) in Querétaro, Mexico, I welcome you to the May edition of the *WTCA Meridian*, which not only provides valuable insight and information of our network but also highlights the exciting GA we recently concluded. I am delighted to report the successes about the event to you.

Whether you were able to join us in person or followed the GA activities through our Association and Member social media accounts, it was clear that Mexico and the Latin American region of our Association are bustling with exciting business activity and opportunities. The feature article will remind those who attended of the valuable networking and information sharing that occurred, and will give those of you who were unable to travel to the GA more insight into the presentations and conversations. Our Member Perspective article, written by Melvin Torres of WTC Arkansas, gives a bird's-eye view of what it was like to bring a delegation to our GA, and what a Member might consider when doing so in the future, coupled with our Trends article on the current world of trade delegations. Finally, our Spotlight section covers the results of the 2019 Board elections which took place at this GA.

On behalf of our entire Board and Association, congratulations WTC Querétaro for all of your hard work in making our GA successful. This year's GA commenced our Association's 50th Anniversary and I look forward to the continued celebrations until next year's GA in Taipei. The attendance and participation at the GA this year was remarkable, from our Members as well as the companies that were able to join us. The presentations given by the Member Advisory Council Chairs prove that our members, when called upon and given the opportunity, bring forth many good ideas that will only increase the growth and strength of our Association. I also want to recognize the European Regional Advisory Council and the vibrant activity and collaboration that is resulting from their hard work. And, on a final note, a special thanks to WTC Mexico City for hosting our Board of Directors meeting just prior to the GA.

Thank you all for being active Members of our Association, and we hope you enjoy this issue.

Warmest Regards,



John E. Drew



FOUR SPECIAL DAYS IN THE HEART OF MEXICO

The Annual General Assembly (GA) is the premier event for the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA). Held in a different global region each year, it provides the host with an opportunity to showcase all that its home city has to offer. The 2019 GA was held April 7-11 in Querétaro, Mexico, a robust and growing economy in the region, and a demonstration of the increasing opportunities offered in Mexico and across Latin America. WTCA Members were treated to an in-depth view of what Querétaro has to offer for businesses, and a taste of its rich and diverse cultural heritage.

After a brief welcome from the host, day one of the event focused on WTCA business, including the Board Plenary when the Board of Directors and the Chairs of its committees report to all of Membership on their activities and priorities since the previous GA. The program also included a discussion of Headquarters activities, led by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Scott Ferguson, who detailed major accomplishments including that 2018 was the first in five years when the organization had an operating profit.

Member Advisory Council (MAC) Chairs Ed Allison-Wright (WTC Gibraltar), Virginie Blida (WTC Lille), Linda Conlin (WTC Greater Philadelphia), Pamela Pascual (WTC Metro Manila), and Cheryl Smith (WTC Las Vegas) presented on the joint Member projects their respective MACs are currently undertaking. At only one-year-old, the MACs are fast becoming critical conduits for networking and

collaboration, as well as network innovation.

The year-long 50th Anniversary campaign took center stage as it was officially kicked off in Querétaro, and Board elections were also held. The organization welcomed an incoming class of Directors that included some new faces, as well as existing Board Members returning for another term (see Spotlight on page 12 for full details).

A major highlight of the program on Monday also included a presentation by Moyo Nua—a student-led company from Ireland—which invented a seed planter for use in developing nations in Africa. The group was unanimously selected as the World Trade Centers Association Foundation (WTCAF) inaugural “Peace Through Trade” Competition winners, and was presented as such at the GA. Their invention accomplishes two critical objectives. First, it reduces physical injury and strain on workers, which helps productivity and health, and

THE 50TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY



second, sales of the product provide the re-investment of funds into educational programs that help young people find new opportunities (for more information, see the official WTCAF press release [here](#)).

The next two days were entitled the “Innovation, Technology and Sustainability” (ITS) Summit, opened by

Querétaro’s Governor Francisco Domínguez Servién, which offered workshops and presentations that both illustrated the opportunities in Querétaro, and covered key topics. From Member-run sessions on key programs or sectors, to those on USMCA, global health issues, innovative sustainable-energy solutions and visits to companies such



Continued from previous page

THE 50TH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY



as Bombardier and General Electric, the event promised something for everyone, including Business-to-Business (B2B) opportunities for visiting delegations. And to that end, multiple WTCs traveled with delegations who had interests in the region and area industries, and sought to explore new opportunities via the WTCA network (see Member

Perspective page 16 for one detailed account).

Finally, as with all WTCA events, the agenda provided ample opportunities for active networking and collaboration—including meetings for each of the WTCA's Member Advisory Councils—and plenty of social interaction. From a Welcome Reception, to a cocktail party at the Modern Art Museum and



of course, the Gala Dinner on the closing evening, there was no shortage of time to connect with fellow WTCA Members.

As with all GAs, the event closed with the official "Passing of the Goble," when the host city closes the event with a hand-off to the next WTCA Member to host the event. After a brief gift ceremony to hosting WTC Querétaro, WTC Taipei's

President and CEO, Walter Yeh accepted the responsibility with a promise to provide WTCA delegates with another stellar event to remember. Stay tuned for further updates and keep an eye out for communications on that event slated for March 1-4, 2020—it is a "must-attend" as we conclude the celebration of WTCA's 50th Anniversary!



MEMO:

Why YOU are our Greatest Salesperson

SCOTT FERGUSON

CEO, World Trade Centers Association

It is a well-known adage in business that an organization's touch-points must all reinforce the core values of that brand. That is especially true for the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA).

When we talk about the important work of the WTCA, I do not have to tell our Members that it is not what Headquarters is doing that makes us great, it is what our Members are doing on the ground. The work that WTCs undertake to encourage and attract investment to their home towns, or to help local SMEs find new markets, or to put on small-to-global trade conferences make us an indispensable resource to the local economies of WTCA cities around the world. What may be a bit less well-known is that as it turns out, our Members are also our greatest salespersons.

The strength of our network depends heavily on the quality of the Members we admit. As every license holder knows, there is a robust process in place to ensure that we are admitting new Members in diverse cities that will add something to our global family. Without the appropriate and well-conceived project plans, local government and community support, and demonstration of the financial strength to see out the ambitious plans applicants sub-

“
...it is not what Headquarters is doing that makes us great, it is what our Members are doing on the ground.”



mit to our Executive Committee, it is difficult to become a Member. That is why the best people to recognize strong, potential new members are those who are already a part of the WTCA. And the promise of a stronger network is not the only motivation we offer to help contribute to our growth.

For many years we have had a system of referral incentives in place to recognize the hard work and efforts of those Members who actively work to expand and grow our Association. For the first two successful referrals and Member makes—meaning those who work their way through the application process and are approved for Membership—

we offer a five percent incentive payout. For the third, ten percent. This means that in the course of a year, at current license pricing, there is an opportunity to earn \$50,000.

You understand deeply what it takes to be a Member of the WTCA, and you have every reason to want only the best to become a Member of this global network. We want to acknowledge the work it takes as our greatest spokespersons, and we hope you take advantage of this opportunity.

AROUND THE NETWORK

MEMBER POLL

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the World Trade Centers Association, we'd love to see what 50 years have looked like for Members. Do you have historical materials, photos or videos that you'd like to share? Tell us about it! We would love to get permission to use these as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary over the course of the next year. If you'd like to help, [let us know here!](#)

ASIA PACIFIC

TAIWANESE INVESTMENT DELEGATION

World Trade Center Bengaluru

World Trade Center Bengaluru in association with our counterpart in Taiwan, Taipei World Trade Center hosted an interactive session with Taiwan Investment...

[Full Story](#)

TALK ON ECONOMY, INDIA V/S CHINA

World Trade Center Bengaluru

World Trade Center Bengaluru organised a talk on "Is the Indian Economic Boom Sustainable? Or is the Global Future Chinese?" on March 20, 2019...

[Full Story](#)

SEMINAR ON AGRICULTURE EXPORTS FROM ODISHA

World Trade Center Bhubaneswar

World Trade Center Bhubaneswar and NABARD Regional Office Bhubaneswar organised a seminar on "Marketing & International Trade Focusing on Agriculture Exports..."

[Full Story](#)

TALK ON "MINDFULNESS AND WORKPLACE WELLNESS"

World Trade Center Kochi

The World Trade Center Kochi together with NASSCOM organized a talk on "Mindfulness and Workplace Wellness" at the NASSCOM office, Infopark. Mr. Gokul...

[Full Story](#)

SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

World Trade Center Navi Mumbai

World Trade Center (WTC) Navi Mumbai in association with the Ethiopian Consulate, IMC Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Raigad Chamber of Commerce...

[Full Story](#)

INDIA-IRAN TIES TO GET A BOOST WITH DTAA

World Trade Center Mumbai

An interactive meeting headed by Mr. Hamid Reza Foladgar, Member of Parliament of Iran along with the High-level Parliamentary Delegation of the Islamic...

[Full Story](#)

COMPUTEX 2019 LOOKS INTO FUTURE TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

World Trade Center Taipei

Taipei World Trade Center (TWTC) announced the 2019 COMPUTEX (May 28- June 1) exhibitor list during its kick-off press conference on April 16...

[Full Story](#)

FOOD TAIPEI 5-IN-1 MEGA EXPO IN JUNE

World Trade Center Taipei

Taipei World Trade Center (TWTC) aims to strengthen exchange and cooperation between international food importers and Taiwan's food...

[Full Story](#)

CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA

4TH YEAR OF WTC ASUNCIÓN BUSINESS BREAKFAST

World Trade Center Asunción

March 2019 marked the 4th consecutive year of this successful event, that gathers executives and CEOs of companies from all Paraguay. With an...

[Full Story](#)

Continued on next page

AROUND THE NETWORK

Continued from previous page

ITAIPU AND WTC CIUDAD DEL ESTE ON SUSTAINABILITY

World Trade Center Ciudad del Este

WTC Ciudad del Este participated on the ITS Summit, at the 2019 WTCA General Assembly on Querétaro, presenting Itaipú Binacional speakers Luis...

[Full Story](#)

WTC CIUDAD DEL ESTE FACILITATES BISECTORIAL TALK

World Trade Center Ciudad del Este

WTC Ciudad del Este, with the support of the chamber of commerce and Services of Ciudad del Este (CCyS), and the Council of development of the East...

[Full Story](#)

XVI EDITION OF EXPOCARIBE

World Trade Center Havana

WTC Havana is honored to invite you to the XVI edition of EXPOCARIBE, the second most important trade fair in Cuba, organised by the Ministry of Foreign...

[Full Story](#)

LAUNCHES WTCA OPERATIONS IN NUEVO LAREDO MEXICO

World Trade Center Nuevo Laredo

With the presence of World Trade Centers Association (WTCA) executives, the Governor of the State of Tamaulipas, Francisco Javier García Cabeza de Vaca...

[Full Story](#)

RESTBAR LAUNCH, THE SOLUTIONS FOR RESTAURANTS

World Trade Center Santiago

Restbar, launched in 2017, was born as part of the World Trade Center Santiago group, aimed to offering local and international cuisine products to...

[Full Story](#)

WTC BUSINESS COFFEE | INNOVATION FOR SMES

World Trade Center São Paulo

On March 26 we had more than 30 leaders attending to WTC Business Coffee, discussing Innovation for Small and Middle Market. The discussion had...

[Full Story](#)

WTC BUSINESS FORUM | CUSTOMER SUCCESS

World Trade Center São Paulo

On Thursday April 11 we organized the WTC Business Forum focusing on Customer Success. We had the experts Claudia Wharton (Customer Service Director at...

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WTC C-LEVEL MEETING

World Trade Center São Paulo

Today WTC São Paulo Business Club organised the WTC C-Level Meeting focusing on the Future of Companies. We had the pleasure of having Alessandra...

[Full Story](#)

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GA AT QUERÉTARO

World Trade Center Querétaro

The 50th edition of the General Assembly of the World Trade Centers Association was held with great success at the headquarters of Querétaro...

[Full Story](#)

EUROPE

BELFAST DOES THE BUSINESS AT MIPIM, CANNES

World Trade Center Belfast

A 100-strong cross sectoral delegation led by Belfast City Council attended the annual global real estate conference MIPIM in Cannes, France...

[Full Story](#)

WTC CYPRUS - WTC ALGIERS COLLABORATION

World Trade Center Cyprus

World Trade Center Cyprus and World Trade Center Algiers are working together on an exciting new venture to deliver Hospitality training to the Algerian...

[Full Story](#)

MADE IN CYPRUS ROADSHOW, UK

World Trade Center Cyprus

This spring, the WTC Cyprus team is busy making the preparations for the Made in Cyprus Roadshow, which, this June will be travelling to London for...

[Full Story](#)

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

World Trade Center Marseille Provence

As a modern, growing enterprise we believe that a work place must be an area for our co-workers to thrive in. This is why we regularly organise...

[Full Story](#)

WTC TRIESTE SUPPORTS "JOBS FOR YOUNG"

World Trade Center Trieste

World Trade Center Trieste is proud to once again participate in the "Jobs for Young 4.0 FVG" program, which supports the development of a highly skilled...

[Full Story](#)

NORTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

INDIA-SINGAPORE BUSINESS CONFERENCE

World Trade Center Anchorage

India-Singapore Business Conference on May 29, 2019 is a unique opportunity to learn more about two high-potential growth markets for Alaska and your company...

[Full Story](#)

EXPORT TRAINING DEVELOPING FOR ARKANSAS BUSINESSES

World Trade Center Arkansas

Export training programs for Italy-Arkansas trade could come to local businesses...

[Full Story](#)

VEHICLE TECH TO DOMINATE AT CES ASIA 2019

World Trade Center Las Vegas

The Consumer Technology Association (CTA)™, licensee for the World Trade Center Las Vegas, announced that CES Asia 2019 vehicle technology show floor...

[Full Story](#)

CES UNVEILED RETURNED TO EUROPE IN OCTOBER

World Trade Center Las Vegas

CES Unveiled, produced by the Consumer Technology Association™, licensee for the World Trade Center Las Vegas, returns to Europe in October 2019 to showcase the latest technology from the region.

[Full Story](#)

WTC ORLANDO PROMOTING CORECHAIR

World Trade Center Orlando

We at World Trade Center Orlando have signed an agreement with CoreChair to "promote awareness and interest in the CoreChair Product." It is designed...

[Full Story](#)

WTC SAN DIEGO HOSTS AFRICAN INVESTMENT ROUNDTABLE

World Trade Center San Diego

On March 7, WTC San Diego in partnership with Tendy LLC hosted a roundtable event which facilitated proactive conversations between business executives...

[Full Story](#)

GEORGIA'S INTERNATIONAL REPS VISIT SAVANNAH

World Trade Center Savannah

World Trade Center Savannah (WTCSav) hosted the Georgia Department of Economic Development's (GDEcD) international trade and investment representatives...

[Full Story](#)

SAVANNAH IN TOP 10 FOR ECONOMIC PROJECTS IN U.S.

World Trade Center Savannah

Site Selection magazine has ranked Savannah at No. 9 for economic projects across the country. The ranking is in the March issue of the magazine...

[Full Story](#)

CREATIVE GENIUS

World Trade Center Seattle

Arts and culture revs up our region's economic engine. Join World Trade Center Seattle and regional leaders of arts and culture organizations to investigate...

[Full Story](#)

QATARI TRADE AND INVESTMENT DELEGATION VISITS UTAH

World Trade Center Utah

A Qatari delegation, led by His Excellency Sheikh Meshal Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Ambassador Anne Patterson and Ambassador Khalid Bin Yousef Al-Sada, visited Utah...

[Full Story](#)

Reflections on the 2019 WTCA Board Election And Five Decades of Leadership

SCOTT RICHIE

Secretary to the Board

As we begin our yearlong celebration of WTCA's 50th Anniversary, we should be mindful of the leadership role our Board of Directors has played since the Association's inception. Over the span of five decades, nearly 150 dedicated men and women have volunteered their time and energy to serve as WTCA Directors, helping the Association expand from 15 original Members to nearly 330 Members in more than 90 countries today. This group of individuals fulfills the important task of governing the entire organization.

Last month marked the fifth biennial Board election since 2010, when WTCA instituted an open nomination process to elect its Directors and amended its Bylaws to establish eligibility criteria for those who serve in these important leadership positions. After a successful election period, three new Directors – Khair-Ull-Nissa (WTC Noida), Hongshan Zhang (WTC Harbin), and Freerk Faber (WTC Twente) – were selected by the Members to join the WTCA Board. They will be joining those who were elected in 2017 as well as those who were re-elected in 2019 to serve another four-year term. For the full list of Directors, please see next page.

Due to the success of this year's election, it is clear the Membership has embraced this open-election process, with more than 60 first-time candidates running for election since 2010 — nearly half of whom were voted into office. Equally important is the level of voter engagement in these elections. This year, 178 of the 292 Regular Members who were eligible to vote casted ballots in the Board election, representing a 61 percent participation rate – the highest voter turnout since 2010. Of these 178 Members who voted, 128 casted their ballots using WTCA's secure online voting portal, and 50 submitted secret ballots during the General Assembly in Querétaro.

As with each Board election, the real work begins now that the election results have been revealed. An orientation session was held for the newly elected and re-elected Directors during the GA in Querétaro on April 9, where

each Director received an updated Directors' Manual (a roadmap of WTCA's governing documents and policies) and legal guidance on the responsibilities of serving as a Director of a U.S.-based non-profit organization. Over the next three months, the newly constituted Board will make appointments to its five Standing Committees: the Executive Committee, Audit & Risk Committee, Digital Steering Committee, Investment Committee, and Nomination & Compensation Committee. These working Committees, each of which meets five or more times per year, are instrumental in guiding management in WTCA's day-to-day operations and ensuring that the Board's Strategic Plan and Business Plan initiatives are carried out.

Last month's Directors meeting in Mexico City marked the 138th Board meeting since the Association's founding Directors first convened on January 25, 1970. At that inaugural meeting, the Directors laid the groundwork for WTCA's first General Assembly held six months later in Tokyo. Twenty-five years later, also in Mexico City, the WTCA Board held its Spring Meeting to celebrate the Association's growth to more than 260 Members. WTCA's then-Chairman Tadayoshi Yamada of WTC Tokyo reminisced on the perseverance of WTCA's early Directors and Members, and their faith in the Association's mission:

"In the early days, only a few cities were interested in World Trade Centers, and there was little understanding of how this new idea could benefit international business. A number of us, however, were convinced that World Trade Centers could greatly benefit their respective regions. We also believed that World Trade Centers working together on a global basis could develop programs and services that a single World Trade Center could not produce on its own. The proliferation of World Trade Centers since those early days, and of the services they provide individually and collectively, is a dramatic validation of the concept."

Twenty-five years later, WTCA's Directors, and the Members who elected them, remain committed to the World Trade Center concept. The newest class of



Freerk Faber (WTC Twente)



Khair Ull-Nissa (WTC Noida)



Hongshan Zhang (WTC Harbin)

Directors – consisting of five women and 17 men – will meet three more times this year, with each meeting spread over the span of two days to carry out the mandate given to them by the Membership. The Board's newly instituted Member Advisory Councils have already provided insights and recommendations to the Directors on ways to assist Members in improving and expanding their trade services, exhibition and convention facilities, branded real estate holdings, and agriculture service networking. The Board's pilot Regional Advisory Council in Europe is currently underway and helping to bring WTCA governance closer to the grassroots level.

These accomplishments are part of the long-term strategic goals set by the Board and reflect the diversity of the Directors (and the Members they represent), as well as the common purpose of the Association: to facilitate international business connections and trade. The success of this mission and growth of the Association depend on the engagement of Members and the representatives they elect to the Board and entrust the governance of our organization. As WTCA's current Chair John Drew said in this year's call for election candidates:

"The nomination process will, once again, be based on the direct participation by you and WTCA's other Regular Members. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to play an active role in WTCA's governance and help us shape the future of the Association."

2019 Board of Directors

Name/Position	WTC Location
John Drew – <i>Chair</i>	WTC Washington D.C.
Rolf Draak – <i>Vice Chair-Treasurer</i>	WTC Nice
Remy Swaab – <i>Vice Chair-Secretary</i>	WTC Panama
Togbe Afede XIV	WTC Accra
Christiaan Huijg	WTC Amsterdam
Luciano Menezes	WTC Curitiba
Mehran Eftekhari	WTC Cyprus
Ghazi Abu Nahl	WTC Doha
Hongshan Zhang	WTC Harbin
Charlotte Gallogly	WTC Miami
Vijay Kalantri	WTC Mumbai
Khair Ull-Nissa	WTC Noida
Didier Kling	WTC Paris
Pedro Pablo Alamos	WTC Santiago
Scott Center	WTC Savannah
Jianrong Yang	WTC Shanghai
Catherine Lee	WTC Suzhou
Walter Yeh	WTC Taipei
Andrea Garwood	WTC Trieste
Freerk Faber	WTC Twente
Lew Cramer	WTC Utah
Mariette Mulaire	WTC Winnipeg



MAY
MEMBER
ANNIVERSARIES

The WTCA extends their warmest congratulations to those World Trade Centers celebrating yet another milestone. May marks the month when you joined our association. WTCA is stronger because you are a part of our community, and we wish you all a Happy Anniversary!

World Trade Center Barcelona	27 years
World Trade Center Taipei	23 years
World Trade Center Almaty	12 years
World Trade Center Luanda	11 years
World Trade Center Praia	11 years
World Trade Center Culiacan	11 years
World Trade Center Helsingborg	11 years
World Trade Center Lund	11 years

Editor's Note: World Trade Center Denver celebrated its 32 years in April 2019. Apologies for the oversight in last month's issue.



JOIN US ON **JUNE 12*** FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL “WTCA TRADE AND INVESTMENT REPORT”

In 2018 WTCA released its first-ever trade and investment report detailing how cities are rising to lead economic development worldwide, and how our Members play a critical role in that trade and investment ecosystem.

One-part original data analysis, and one-part Member insight, our research partners FP Analytics interviewed nearly four dozen World Trade Centers to craft our 2019 report.

Released live from Metz, France at the European Regional Meeting, we are organizing a panel to discuss the findings and what it means for the global economic outlook, our Members, and the communities they serve.

The event will also be streamed live online for all Members to take part and will be recorded for viewing after the report's release, So...

SAVE THE DATE • JUNE 12, 2019 • 16:00 CET

Details on how to tune in, and full Member media kits and materials are forthcoming. For any questions, please write to media@wtca.org.

**Wondering why we chose June 12? In 2002 then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City recognized June 12 as World Trade Centers Association Day, as did the office of the Secretary General of the United Nations. WTCA now uses this date as the day it releases its annual “WTCA Trade and Investment Report” as a way of demonstrating the ongoing importance and connectivity of our network. For more information write to the address above.*

From Arkansas to Querétaro: Reflections on a GA Trade Delegation

MELVIN TORRES

Director of Western Hemisphere Trade, WTC Arkansas

Exports sent from Arkansas to Mexico have grown over 700 percent since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was enacted in 1994. Of those, agricultural exports have grown over 911 percent during the same period. To accomplish milestones such as these, trade delegations are necessary as they search for unique opportunities for companies to discuss trade and do business in key countries. The World Trade Centers Association (WTCA) provides these types of opportunities by hosting an ideal environment for businesses to participate in a trade mission. The recent WTCA General Assembly (GA) was the perfect opportunity for our delegates to do business in Mexico as there are close ties between Arkansas and Querétaro, such as the Arkansas State University Querétaro Campus.

When our first delegate arrived in Querétaro on Sunday, April 7th, I was filled with excitement, which lasted all throughout the week at this year's GA. It was a gratifying feeling, resulting from months of logistics, communication strategies, and hard work that started back in December 2018.

Our initiative to bring a large delegation to this year's GA started with our team emailing over 68,000 Arkansas-based companies, organizations, and media, inviting them to in-person meetings to explain the trade mission opportunities available at the event. Our goal was to connect these companies with international organizations that would develop into business agreements and connections. In December, alongside Carlos Uribe, the Chief Operating Officer at World Trade Center Querétaro, we went on a two-day roadshow through three different cities to meet with various companies who responded to our request, covering most of Arkansas. Accompanying us in this journey were the Consul General of Mexico, Rodolfo Quilantan Arenas; two student interns from the University of Arkansas; our Trade Support Assistant, Matthew Guzak; and our Director of Grants and Finance, Trish Watkins; and our Director of Grants and Finance, Trish Watkins. As a result of our efforts, we brought the largest delegation to the GA with a total of 29 attendees and staff, and two speakers, and hosted a booth with multiple spaces for Arkansas companies to showcase their products and services at the Centro de Congresos of Querétaro.

On the first day of the GA, our Arkansas companies met with the Querétaro Secretary of Sustainable Development, the Secretary of Agricultural Development, the International



Relations Coordinator, and the Director of Agriculture and Sustainable Development over breakfast. We then visited Safran Landing Systems and the Arkansas State University Querétaro Campus (ASU Querétaro) where we had a networking session with government officials from the municipality of Colon and various business-to-business (B2B) meetings with local companies. While the meetings were taking place, Dr. Nonis from ASU Jonesboro, who was part of our delegation, gave a lecture to students at the ASU Querétaro Campus. An additional intern from a university in Querétaro, Gerardo Coronado quickly became an integral member of our delegation by helping to coordinate and facilitate before and during our visit.

The next day, our companies attended the Trade Show and networked with other businesses and World Trade Centers from around the world during the event. We also had a couple of speakers participate in panel discussions including Co-Founder of Farmers for Free Trade, Angela Marshall Hofmann (who also happens to be a World Trade Center Arkansas Board Member); and Executive Director of the Arkansas Aerospace and Defense Alliance, Chad Causey. Coinciding with the panel discussions, we had different groups of delegates that held business meetings at Agra Park in Querétaro, and still others who held meetings at local businesses throughout Querétaro.

On the final day of the GA, we met with the Secretary of Agriculture and the President of Coparmex Querétaro — an organization that brings local businesses together and represents them at a governmental level — inviting them to bring along a delegation of farmers and businesses from Querétaro to visit Arkansas. By the end of the GA, our companies had met with dozens of local and international organizations, businesses, and government officials. Some of our companies were able to secure agreements with Mexican companies while others built strong connections with potential customers and distributors. We were able to achieve and even exceed our initial goal by learning about the local culture, interacting with people

from around the world, and making new friends and connections. Additionally, the mix of delegates including Arkansas-based companies from different industries, professors, student interns, expert speakers, and even non-profit organizations, provided for a well-balanced and highly diverse group, making this the second largest trade delegation in the history of the World Trade Center Arkansas.

The GA now offers these terrific opportunities for Member World Trade Centers to invite trade delegations to this diverse networking event. But it takes a great deal of work and detailed planning to make them a success. Here are a few things to keep in mind as Members look to organize their own trade missions for next year's meeting in Taipei, or for other opportunities outside of WTCA events:

- ***Have a solid company-recruiting strategy.***
- ***Engage companies by understanding their needs and matching them to the foreign market.***
- ***Host multiple events for companies to network and conduct business-to-business meetings.***
- ***Connect relevant panel speakers from your region, who are leaders in their field, with the GA host country.***
- ***Facilitate meetings for companies with both government officials and private industry leaders.***

About World Trade Center Arkansas

The mission of the World Trade Center Arkansas is to grow trade and increase Arkansas exports by connecting Arkansas businesses to the world through international trade services. The Center is part of the University of Arkansas and serves as the official trade promotion arm for the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC).

For more information about our organization, please follow the World Trade Center Arkansas on Facebook and Twitter, or subscribe to the [World Trade Center Arkansas newsletter](#).

TRENDS

TRENDS

Four Emerging Business Trends **IN LATIN AMERICA**

Latin America has seen a drastic departure from business as usual. Many countries are dealing with monumental policy shifts that alter how their economies function, which of course have ripple effects on surrounding countries. Larger societal issues, such as immigration, can also have significant effects on the fundamentals of national economies.

With more than 325 World Trade Centers (WTCs) in 90+ countries around the world — and more than 40 in Latin America alone — understanding commercial trends in this region will help investors and business professionals stay ahead of the curve globally. Here are four prevailing trends to keep in mind.

1. FEWER U.S. PARTNERSHIPS BUT INTENSIFICATION OF OIL AND GREEN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Relations between Latin American countries and the U.S. have been upended as of late. Several factors such as U.S. tax reform, and changes in trade policy—including the dissolution of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the emergence of the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement—have led to fewer U.S. mergers and acquisitions in the region. As a result, new players such as China have supplanted America as a go-to partners for land, energy and development ventures.

One exception: large oil companies are exploring drilling in the less-constricted oilfields of Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. Additionally, at the same time,

much of Latin America is turning toward clean energy sources as oil prices surge, and severe air pollution plagues many urban areas. One harbinger of things to come includes the work being done in major economies like Brazil and Chile to develop wind, solar, and geothermal energy sources and applications. Other investments like those being made in hydroelectric power in Paraguay also point to the growing importance of sustainability in the region, and the seriousness of countries to develop this capacity.

2. MORE INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION AND STARTUP CULTURE

Latin American countries are working diligently to increase enrollment in K-12 schools and higher education. Although they face many obstacles, such as students living in rural areas and the technology gap, the statistics are ripe for change. To help address these challenges, local and international companies are busy developing education software for the Latin American market.

In Brazil, for example, private-university enrollment has more than doubled since 2005. In January 2018, 4.76 million students were enrolled in private universities in Brazil, which amounted to 72.7 percent throughout the country. Better educational offerings like these will provide Latin American workers much-needed skills to catapult into higher-wage jobs, and to help the region realize its upward potential.

Finally, high-tech jobs are so desirable that many



countries have been actively sponsoring startup ventures and environments. In fact,

Chile is home to “Chilecon Valley,” with entrepreneurs from 79 countries. Panama City, Panama, [now considered the most expensive city](#) in Latin America, has also welcomed investors and innovators from around the world.

3. AN INCREASE IN MANUFACTURING PARTNERSHIPS

Companies in countries throughout Latin America are also getting serious about working together to produce goods. Historically, this has not always been the case. New intergovernmental agreements, however, are helping to lower transaction costs and increase manufacturing opportunities, which helps encourage cross-border cooperation.

Specifically, in 2018 the Pacific Trade Alliance — which is made up of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru — started planning for a free trade agreement with Mercosur, the South American trade block of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Together these regional blocks have a combined population of nearly half a billion people, and [represent 90 percent of Latin American GDP](#).

In other indications of global engagement, Colombia joined Chile and Mexico in the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The OECD promotes policies that allow intergovernmental cooperation.

It is estimated that blending the 33 existing trade agreements in Latin America and the Caribbean could [add \\$11 billion in annual trade flows](#).

4. MARKETING TO A NEW MIDDLE CLASS

Businesses throughout the region are changing their marketing strategies to sell goods and services to a growing middle class. As they do so, they are working hand-in-hand with national governments to moderate inflation and prevent negative implications of trade negotiations.

Due to some recent developments and stumbling blocks, it is unclear how quickly this trend will take hold across the region. However, even given the challenges, it is clear that the growing power of consumers in the region will force both local and international companies to refocus how they market and sell, which is itself an indication of changes on the horizon.

Many of these business trends for Latin America are interlinked and dependent upon each individual country. As the region manages through various civil conflicts and economic crises, these countries will become better equipped to grow collectively and support one another. Opportunity is knocking in the region not only for businesses, but for the collective gain of the individual countries involved.



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