



El Paso Chamber Holds Border Trade & Economic Forum

EL PASO, TX - Following the success of the recent Border Trade & Economic Forum hosted by the El Paso Chamber, the event has been lauded as a significant milestone in fostering discussions around the future of border trade and economic collaboration. The event, focused on enhancing cross-border cooperation and addressing the challenges faced by the region's businesses and supply chains, brought together a diverse group of subject matter experts from the US and Mexico.

"We at the El Paso Chamber take immense pride in curating a platform that brought together an exceptionally diverse group of speakers. From Mexico City to Canada, our panelists represented a spectrum of perspectives, enriching discussions on the future of trade and innovation," stated Mia Romero, Director of Advocacy for the El Paso Chamber. "Their collective expertise and insights not only broke barriers but also illuminated the vibrant potential of cross-border collaboration. As organizers, we're inspired by the impact of this convergence and committed to fostering further dialogue and progress within our community."

The Innovation Panel, led by Glenn Hamer from the Texas Association of Business (TAB), explored technological advancements and strategic solutions for current challenges, with valuable contributions from Miriam Kotkowski of Tecma, Dr. Victor Pimentel of New Mexico State University, and Ruben Ahedo of Freightwell. Emphasizing the importance of sustainability and future-proofing our supply-chains, the group discussed the use of artificial intelligence to enhance logistics efficiency, and the power of collaboration to navigate regulatory and customs issues. Key suggestions included educational initiatives in supply chain management and a strong focus on supporting local businesses and fostering a culture of mentorship and internships to empower the next generation. The panel also highlighted the challenges and opportunities in integrating AI into the transportation industry, underscoring the importance of innovation in driving future success.

The Policy Panel, led by Jerry Pacheco from the New Mexico Border Industrial Association, focused on the importance of international engagement and innovation to bolster US-Mexico relations, national security, and economic growth. Discussions highlighted the need for collaboration, advocacy, and leveraging the region's strengths to attract investment. The panel, which included Andrew Rudman of the Wilson Center and Kiersten Kullenberg of USGLC, emphasized actionable strategies to enhance the US-Mexico border's functionality and security, such as streamlining permit processes for new crossings and integrating AI in border operations. Additionally, the need for effective policy communication and the adoption of innovative technologies in supply chain management were discussed to ensure a balance between security and commerce, aiming to address trade disruptions and foster a robust economic relationship.



Both panels concluded with a strong message of collaboration, innovation, and resilience as essential components for navigating the complexities of border trade and economic relations. The forum not only provided a platform for sharing expert insights but also fostered networking and dialogue among stakeholders committed to building a more prosperous and sustainable future for cross-border commerce.

Mayra Maldonado of UTEP's Hunt Institute also highlighted the surge in private investment along the US-Mexico border, particularly in advanced manufacturing sectors like semiconductors, clean energy, and electric vehicles, driven by nearshoring and stronger US-Mexico economic ties, revealing breaking information that the Ysleta Port of Entry (PoE) recently rose to the number 2 spot in the top ten PoEs in manufacturing trade, through the entire US-Mexico border. This trend is notably strong in northern Mexican border states, attracting significant Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) post-pandemic, with international contributions bolstering the manufacturing sector's growth. The forum also showcased substantial investments from major companies such as Samsung, Intel, and Tesla in the US, and a \$19 billion investment in Mexico for battery complexes and energy infrastructure. These developments underscore the border's critical role in North America's economic landscape, highlighting increasing FDI and the strategic importance of the region's infrastructure and trade opportunities.

Andrea Hutchins of the El Paso Chamber closed off the event by spotlighting El Paso's unique position in helping businesses aiming to expand into the United States to achieve the American dream. She underscored the city's abundance of resources, including accountants, attorneys, and financial opportunities, essential for burgeoning enterprises. Hutchins elaborated on the significance of forging partnerships with local businesses to facilitate their expansion efforts and highlighted the importance of gathering feedback on the needs of expanding businesses. Moreover, plans for the creation of a "Dream Builder Center" were unveiled, aiming to serve as a comprehensive support hub for Mexican businesses navigating their journey to success in the U.S., reflecting El Paso's role as a modern-day gateway to the American dream for entrepreneurs.

"The El Paso Chamber of Commerce crafted one of the best economic events that I've been in since I moved here five years ago," said Dr. Victor Pimentel. "The amount and quality of people that attended this event says a lot about their work. I was not expecting it, but we had a full house, with people standing in the back. The quality of panelists was top-notch. We had people from all over, including people from out of the state. I believe it was a very powerful event for everybody."

As the Border Trade & Economic Forum concluded, participants left with renewed energy and a clearer vision for tackling the challenges and seizing the opportunities that lie ahead in the dynamic landscape of border trade and economics. The El Paso

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Chamber looks forward to continuing these important conversations and building on the momentum generated by this year's successful event.

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About the El Paso Chamber

Since 1899, the El Paso Chamber has driven connection and innovation in El Paso. Guided by our core pillars of leveraging data, fostering engagement, building relationships, and investing in partnerships, the El Paso Chamber works to move El Paso forward. Member-driven, the El Paso Chamber has been a part of every major business and social development in our region's history, and we are just getting started. Our brand is synonymous with business success. As it did more than a century ago, the El Paso Chamber keeps driving prosperity.

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