



PANAMA & TEXAS

“A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP”

PANAMA WEEK TEXAS 2018

Consulate of Panama in Houston

U.S.-Panama Business Council

Houston, Texas

November 29 – December 1, 2018



CONSULATE OF PANAMA
HOUSTON, TEXAS

September 24, 2018

Dear Friends of Panama and Texas:

The Consulate of Panama in Houston, with the support of the U.S.-Panama Business Council (USPA) and other business associations of the United States and Panama, will be celebrating "Panama Week Texas 2018" from November 29 to December 1, 2018 in the City of Houston. This is part of the "Strategic Partnership" promotion between Panama and Texas in recognition of the importance of the business and peoples' relationship between the Republic of Panama and its #1 trade/investment partner, the State of Texas.

As a follow-up to the five trade missions to Panama that the consulate has organized since 2014 and the four trade missions from Panama to Texas, "Panama Week Texas 2018" is designed to strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two and promote Houston-Panama-Asia as The Great Connection: "connecting countries, people, and businesses". This reflects the importance of the Asia-Panama Canal-Coast of Texas route and the benefits that the expansion of the Panama Canal brings, some of them already implemented in the last twenty-four months.

We extend an invitation for you to participate in the conference and share with the audience of Texas and Panama the opportunities that Panama offers as a Hemispheric Hub, with a leading role in several sectors of the economy. Enclosed is the preliminary agenda that will cover economic sectors such as trade, maritime, education, transportation, logistics, investment, energy, oil & gas, logistics, security, technology, tourism, and others.

The program includes forums, conferences, lunches, receptions, field trips, a celebration of "Mes de la Patria" with the Panamanian community of Texas, bilateral meetings organized for the specific objective of match-making, and a Diplomatic-Business luncheon featuring the Minister of Maritime Affairs of Panama Jorge Barakat Pitty as the keynote speaker. The program begins on Thursday, November 29 and ends on Saturday, December 1. For Panamanians making the trip to Houston, if they are interested in attending the NFL game between the Houston Texans and the Cleveland Browns on Sunday, December 2, please contact the U.S.-Panama Business Council, for they will gladly make arrangements. The Deadline is October 26.

We thank you for your consideration and hope to see you in "Panama Week Texas 2018".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juan B. Sosa".

Amb. Juan B. Sosa
Consul General of Panama in Houston

PANAMA WEEK TEXAS 2018

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

AM and PM TRAVEL TO HOUSTON
(Host Hotel: St. Regis, 1919 Briar Oaks Ln, Houston TX 77027)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

9 AM – 12 PM SPECIFIC FIELD TRIPS AND BI-LATERAL MEETINGS
The morning of Thursday, November 29 has been reserved for specific custom-made field trips and/or bilateral meetings upon request.

2:00 PM MARITIME FORUM
Host organization: International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC)
3657 Briarpark Drive, Suite 200 / Houston, TX 77042

5:00 PM RECEPTION

Evening OPEN

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30

(Venue: St. Regis Hotel, 1919 Briar Oaks Ln, Houston TX 77027 – Astor Foyer – Room 1 &2)

9 AM – 12 N BUSINESS FORUM

12:30 – 2 PM DIPLOMATIC – BUSINESS LUNCH (Confirmed)

Keynote Speaker: H.E. Jorge Barakat Pitty, Minister of Maritime Affairs
Presentation of recognitions

**2 - 3 PM BILATERAL MATCH MAKING MEETINGS PER SPECIFIC REQUEST
FIELD TRIPS PER SPECIFIC REQUEST**

7:00 PM DINNER INVITATION TO GUESTS FROM PANAMA

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

(Venue: Dai-Ichi Shotokan Karate-Do – 2435 Texas Pkwy Suite G, Missouri City, TX 77489)

1-5 PM “MES DE LA PATRIA” – Featuring the music of Galo Gutierrez
Panamanian community of Texas
Music / Food / Cultural activities

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

Return to Panama.

Optional: Houston Texans vs Cleveland Browns-NFL game-NRG Stadium. Return to PTY on Monday 3

PANAMA WEEK TEXAS 2018

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS AND BENEFITS

Gold - \$5,000

- Recognition as Gold sponsor in all promotional material, program & website
- Opportunity to make a presentation or deliver short remarks at one of the events
- Assistance with arranging private appointments
- Corporate table of eight at Diplomatic-Business luncheon 11/30
- Place at the head table of Diplomatic-Business Luncheon 11/30
- Four registrations to all events
- Two hotel rooms at St. Regis Hotel for four nights
- Transportation and meals to all group events
- Transportation from and to the airport

Silver - \$3,000

- Recognition as silver sponsor in all promotional material, program & website
- Opportunity to make a presentation at one of the events
- Assistance with arranging private appointments
- Four seats at a VIP table at Diplomatic-Business Luncheon (11/30)
- Two registrations to all events
- One hotel room for four nights at the St. Regis Hotel
- Transportation and meals to all group events
- Transportation to and from the airport

Individual Participation

Individual: - \$2,000 / Early registration November 1 - \$1,750

Couple: - \$2,500 / Early registration November 1 - \$2,200

- Participation to all events
- One hotel room (double) for four nights at the St. Regis Hotel
- Transportation to events and meals at all group events
- Personal assistance

11/30 BUSINESS FORUM AND DIPLOMATIC-BUSINESS LUNCH ONLY: \$200

PANAMA WEEK TEXAS 2018 – REGISTRATION FORM

Complete the registration form and e-mail it to uspanama@msn.com, mail it to US-Panama Business Council, 5353 Memorial Drive #2061, Houston, Texas 77007 or fax it to (713) 863-8781.

Name _____

Title _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

Check Level of Participation

___ **SPONSORSHIP:** ___ **Gold** - \$5,000 ___ **Silver** - \$3,000

(Sponsorship and individual participation include hotel room. Please see benefits)

___ **INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION:** ___ **Single** - \$2,000. ----- **Couple** - \$2,500 (All events).

Note: The registration includes room for four nights.

There is a special price for early registration 11/1. \$1,750 single and \$2,200 couple. Please see benefits).

___ (OPTIONAL): Houston Texans vs Cleveland Browns 12/2 - \$300 (ticket, transportation & extra night at hotel)

___ **SINGLE DAY PARTICIPATION** – Registration Fee \$200

Note: This registration only applies to Business Forum and Diplomatic-Business Lunch (11/30)

\$ _____ **TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE PAID.**

Method of Payment for Participation:

___ Please charge my CREDIT CARD: *American Express* _____ / *Visa* _____ / *Mastercard* _____ (check one)

CC # _____ Exp: _____

Signature: _____

___ CHECK. If mailed make payable to U.S.-Panama Business Council

5353 Memorial Drive #2061 / Houston, Texas 77007

___ E-MAIL: Send registration with credit card information to: uspanama@msn.com

___ FAX: Send registration to (713) 863-8781

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL TELEPHONE (713) 408-1767, send a fax to (713) 863-8781 or e-mail uspanama@msn.com

Hotel Accommodation & Reservations (Will be done by the U.S.-Panama Business Council)

St. Regis Hotel, 1919 Briar Oaks Ln, Houston TX 77027 / Tel. (713) 840-7600

Four nights at St. Regis Hotel are included in the registration fee

Date of Arrival: _____ Airline, flight # and time of arrival: _____

Please specify preference: *Dbl. Occupancy* _____ *Single Occupancy* _____ *Smoking* _____ *Non-Smoking* _____

Date of Departure: _____ Airline, flight # and time of departure: _____

St. Regis Hotel is in the famous Galleria Shopping District. St. Regis Hotel provides shuttle service to La Galleria. Duty-free attractive prices during the Christmas season.

PROFILE OF TEXAS

To make it easier to assess the benefits of participating in the Trade Mission, below is a brief profile of key sectors of the Texas economy (By alphabetical order)

Agriculture. Texas is an exporter of agricultural products and livestock. The ports of Texas are an important factor in the export of grain and the Port of Houston is building a perishable products terminal for imports.

Air Transportation. Texas has two of the major airports in the United States, Dallas/Fort Worth and Houston Intercontinental. In addition, there are international airports in San Antonio and Austin. Houston Intercontinental is ranked as the third airport in USA in number of fights to Latin America. Since 2016 Hobby Airport also serves the Latin America market. Texas is host to the USA headquarters of American Airlines (Dallas), Southwest (Dallas), and as regional Latin America Headquarters to United Airlines (Houston).

Business Services and Franchising. Houston is the fourth largest market in the United States, and as such, major business services companies have operations in Houston. Dallas-Fort Worth is the fifth largest, and the two plus San Antonio are in the top twenty-five markets in the United States. Texas is also host to several global franchises.

Consumer Products. Texas is a large consumer market. Because of its extensive Latino population it is an importer of ethnic products from Mexico, Central America, Colombia and other Latin countries. Texas has two major super market chains with strong Latino support, H-E-B and Fiesta.

Education. Texas has several well regarded universities, some of them heavily attended by Panamanian students such as Texas A&M and the University of Texas. Other universities include TCU, SMU, Rice, Prairie View A&M, Trinity, St. Mary's, Houston, Saint Edwards and others. There are also important community colleges. Texas is the #1 destination of Panamanian students in the United States.

Energy. Houston is considered the energy capital of the world. This is enhanced now that the U.S. can export oil & gas. Sabine Pass in East Texas is now exporting LNG through the Panama Canal while Corpus Christi and Port Freeport are also getting ready to export LNG. Texas has become one of the top states in solar and wind energy. Several Texas companies in the energy field have businesses relations in Panama.

Finance. Texas is a regional finance center. Being a maritime center as well, Texas is potentially an important market for financial services to the maritime industry.

Headquarter for Multinationals. Some Texas companies have Regional Headquarters in Panama. The most notable is Dell which has close to 3,000 employees. Haliburton of Houston uses Panama as a regional hub for services to the oil & gas industry of the region. United Airlines operates a regional hub with Copa Airlines to transport passengers to South America and the Caribbean.

Industrial Products. Texas is the number one manufacturing center in the United States which has led to the establishment of companies dedicated to the manufacturing of industrial products. Panama is an importer of manufactured products from Texas, and the Panama Canal is key to Texas exports to Asia.

Infrastructure. Because of the large needs of the oil & gas sector, petrochemical industries, and the extensive port infrastructure along the coast of Texas in the Gulf of Mexico, Texas has large companies dedicated to infrastructure projects such as Fluor, Bechtel, CBI, and others.

Life Sciences. The Texas Medical Center of Houston is considered the top medical center in the world. Some of the companies in the Texas Medical Center have established relationships with hospitals in Panama and others are in the process of establishing cooperative agreements. Other centers such as Dallas and San Antonio also have reputable Life Sciences centers.

Logistics. Texas is the top logistic centers of the United States. Houston is the #1 logistics center of the region thanks to its port, railroad and road infrastructure. In addition to its large market it has also become the #1 manufacturing center in the country. Dallas-Fort Worth is the largest in-land port of the United States while San Antonio is the anchor of the “NAFTA road” that links Mexico with Canada thru the United States. Several logistics companies in Texas have operations or cooperation agreements with Panamanian companies.

Maritime. Texas has nine deep water ports which makes it the #1 state with deep water ports in the United States. It is also the most important state in offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and has a maritime infrastructure that includes schools, banks, engineering firms and industrial companies among others. It is also one of the most professional maritime law centers in the United States. The Consulate of Panama in Houston is one of the “Merchant Marine” consulates of the Panama Ship Registry and recently established Segumar Houston, an office specialized in servicing offshore drilling activities.

Mining. Texas has industrial companies that manufacture mining and drilling equipment. The University of Texas-El Paso’s School of Mines is considered one of the top mining schools in the country.

Ports. The Port of Houston is the second largest port in tonnage in the United States and the first in international tonnage. It has recently updated their two container ports to be able to receive NeoPanamax vessels with 8,000 TEUs. The Port has also built a new perishable products terminal. The Port of Houston, Port Arthur/Beaumont, Port Freeport, Corpus Christi and Galveston receive ships that transit the Panama Canal.

Real Estate. Houston has a well-organized Real Estate establishment with many Spanish-speaking realtors because of its close relationship with Mexico. ACOBIR, the Real Estate Association of Panama, has had discussions with the Houston Association of Realtors (HAR) and FIACI Houston Chapter.

Sea Transportation. Thirty-eight percent of the ships that arrive at the Port of Houston transit the Panama Canal. Maersk has a Central America-Panama route every two weeks from the Port of Houston and MSC a by-weekly service from Port Freeport. Cosco from China recently changed its USA headquarters to Houston and also has a route to Panama. Port Freeport serves as host to Auto-Liner that brings autos from Asia through the Panama Canal and Cheniere at Sabine Pass is exporting LNG to Asia through the Canal.

Security. Texas is host to several security firms and it is especially knowledgeable about cyber security because of the important manufacturing facilities throughout the region. Also some universities specialize in this curriculum. In the last twelve months elite groups of the Panama Ministry of Security have received specialized training in San Antonio and Houston in areas such as swat teams, hostage negotiations, ballistics, and crowd control.

Telecom, Technology and Innovation. Texas is host to several global companies in this sector including AT&T (Dallas), Dell (Austin) and others. Austin is considered one of the top cities in the United States in technology. Houston, Dallas and San Antonio are making important strides in this sector.

Tourism. Texas has several cities with large tourism that include San Antonio with more than 32 million tourists, Austin, Dallas and Houston. Texas tourism is strongly connected to Mexico and as such it has an infrastructure to handle Spanish-speaking travelers. The port of Galveston is host to cruises, some of them transiting the Panama Canal.

Trade and Investment. Texas is the #1 state in international trade in the United States and Houston is the #1 metropolitan region in international trade as well as the #1 trading partner of Panama. Panama imports more than U.S. \$12 billion a year, half of it from the United States, making it Panama's #1 trading partner. The U.S. and Panama have a Free Trade Agreement formalized in 2012 and an Overseas Private Investment Corporation Agreement to guarantee U.S. investments in Panama.

PROFILE OF PANAMA

To make it easier to assess the benefits of participating in the Trade Mission, below is a brief profile of key sectors of Panama's economy (By alphabetical order).

Agriculture. Panama is a net importer of agricultural products and the U.S. is its #1 trading partner. As far of exports they are concentrated in fruits (bananas, pineapples) and fish products (shrimp, tuna and others).

Air Transportation. Tocumen International Airport has undergone two expansions in the last ten years and become one of the most important airports in Latin America. Panama serves as a hub to connect South America and the Caribbean with the United States thru United Airlines, especially with Texas. Since April 2018 Air China started two weekly flights to Houston-Panama.

Business Services and Franchising. Panama is an attractive market for consultancy services especially in the fields of economics, engineering, finance, technology and architecture among others. Most of the global firms in the express mail sector and accounting have operations in Panama. The country is one of the most developed and successful in establishing U.S. franchises.

Consumer Products. Panama has a large middle class and a high demand for consumer products. The country also serves as a shopping center from some countries in Central & South America, especially for cosmetics and electronics.

Education. Texas is the #1 destination for Panamanian students in the United States. In Panama there are several institutions from USA with campuses or programs in Panama offering bachelor and master degree programs, some in connection with USA-based campuses. The City of Knowledge in Panama has become a hub for innovation and technology.

Energy. Most of Panama's energy market is privatized, offering opportunities to businesses. Several U.S. companies, many of them from Texas, have operations in Panama. Besides fossil fuels which is the #1 import of Panama, Panama is making progress in the renewable energy sector including hydro, solar and wind.

Finance. Panama has developed a competitive regional banking center with more than 80 banks operating in the country which is an attractive market for services and technology designed for banking services.

Headquarter for Multinationals. More than 150 companies from all over the world, including Texas companies such as Dell and Halliburton, have established Regional Headquarters in Panama, taking advantage of the connectivity, quality of life of the country, and tax incentives.

Industrial Products. Panama imports most of its industrial needs including factories and smaller products. The electricity market is especially attractive to industrial products.

Infrastructure. Investment over the years has been quite extensive covering ports, roads, bridges, housing, utilities and projects related to the Panama Canal Cluster, leading to new investments in infrastructure and other complementary projects.

Life Sciences. Panama has a well-developed public and private medical sector with U.S. institutions, such as John Hopkins, working in Panama. Panama has quietly and successfully been positioning itself as a medical tourism destination.

Logistics. The Panama Canal expansion and the location of the Colon Free Zone -the largest free zone in the world outside of Hong Kong- have made Panama a logistics and transshipment hub. The expansion of the Panama Canal will open additional opportunities and interest from U.S. retailers to use Panama as a logistics center for South American countries.

Maritime. Panama is surrounded by 1,600 Km. of coasts with ports in the Pacific and the Atlantic. The Panama Ship Registry is the largest in the world with over 8,000 ships registered and provides a 24/7 service.

Mining. There are mining projects being developed in copper, gold and the possibility of shale.

Ports. The ports in the Pacific and Atlantic, linked by the Trans-isthmian railroad, transship more than 8 million TEUs (container of 20 feet) a year, making it the most developed port system in Latin America and the Caribbean. There are more container cranes in Panama than all of Latin American countries combined.

Real Estate. Panama has an international professional level real estate market that follows guidelines of the National Association of Realtors (NAR). It has become one of the most attractive countries for retirement and for second residences.

Sea Transportation. More than 14,000 ships transit The Panama Canal annually and the United States is the main user. The Asia-Texas/Texas Coast through the Canal has become the most important route and provides competitive access to U.S. products in Asia and Asian products to the U.S.

Security. Because of its strategic location Panama is mindful of the importance of having a strong security network. This applies to the Canal, to Panama's borders, and its internal security. Recently the San Antonio Police Department and the Houston Police Department have signed MOUs with the Ministry of Public Security of Panama and several officials have already received advanced training.

Telecom, Technology and Innovation. Panama plays an important role in innovation, science, and technology. Known as a hub for international communications thanks to its extensive bandwidth infrastructure and connection of ocean cables, the country has taken full advantage and created technology parks attractive to technology oriented companies. The City of Knowledge has become instrumental in the development of this sector.

Tourism. Tourism is Panama's second most important economic sector. In addition, Panama's flag airline -COPA- has the best connectivity of any airline between the United States and Latin America. Several sites in Panama are World Heritage sites and Panama City is celebrating its 500th anniversary in 2019. There are several direct flights between Texas cities and Panama.

Trade and Investment. Panama imports more than U.S. \$12 billion Dollars a year and the United States is Panama's #1 trading partner. The U.S. and Panama have a Free Trade Agreement formalized in 2012 and an Overseas Private Investment Corporation Agreement that guarantees U.S. investments in Panama.