



NORTH AMERICA'S SUPERCORRIDOR COALITION, INC.

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NASCO Conference 2008 at Guanajuato Reaches New Heights

State estimates economic impact of gathering at \$3.5 Million

GUANAJUATO -- More than 500 leaders from local, state, national and international governments and businesses of every size from across North America attended North America's SuperCorridor Coalition's (NASCO) annual NASCO Conference 2008 hosted by the State Government of Guanajuato and Guanajuato Inland Port June 4-6, in the capital of this central state.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa sent Mexican Energy Secretary Georgina Kessel as his personal representative to deliver conference inaugural remarks. Kessel emphasized that Mexico recognizes that growing global trade and rising North American trade flows "have generated challenges in infrastructure, logistics and public policy." She praised the nonprofit, tri-national NASCO and its efforts to unite public and private sector trade and transport stakeholders to overcome these challenges and "promote a secure, efficient transport system in North America that facilitates cross-border trade." Guanajuato Tourism Secretary Sergio Enrique Rodríguez Herrera estimated the three-day conference produced a positive economic impact to the state of \$3.5 million U.S., spread across the city of Guanajuato, the capital of León, and nearby Silao.

The Leaders Summit, an annual meeting of North American Governors and Premiers, was held during the NASCO Conference, and was attended by Premier Gary Doer of the Canadian Province of Manitoba and Premier Jean Charest of the Province of Québec. Host Governor Juan Manuel Oliva was joined by the Governors of the Mexican states of Nuevo León, Zacatecas and Michoacán. Illinois State Senator Martin Sandoval, Chair of the Illinois Senate Commerce and Economic Development Committee, participated in the Leaders' Summit, as well.

The NASCO Conference was attended by numerous high-level officials of Canadian provinces and Mexican and U.S. states, including more than a dozen state Secretaries of Economic Development and their senior staffs, along with major leaders of inland ports and intermodal facilities and seaport directors. Top company executives in attendance included Mike Haverty, CEO of Kansas City Southern Railroad; officials from Mexico's Ferromex Railroad; Roberto González Barrera of food/tortilla giant Grupo Maseca and Banorte Bank; senior executives from FedEx; and leaders of small, mid- and large-sized trade, logistics and transportation firms across North America. The event took place on the site of the new Guanajuato Inland Port outside the city of the same name.

NASCO President George Blackwood told the conference that greater cooperation with U.S. trading partners Canada and Mexico is essential to future prosperity in North America and that boosting economic development through greater security, innovation and cooperation initiatives is NASCO's mission. "Our focus is on promoting all that enhances efficiency, transportation security and a more competitive infrastructure in North America," Blackwood said.

Governor Oliva said the Conference and its panels "delved deeply into collaboration in North America on cross-border cooperation, increased economic competitiveness to meet challenges emerging in other world trading blocs, and the use of alternative fuels and energies that can improve the environment of our countries."

The Guanajuato Tourism Secretary described the NASCO Conference as “a great platform to allow a large number of regional and national business leaders from across the continent to see tourism and economic development opportunities of this and others states and Mexico. These leaders can see they have many potential business partners here and with confidence can invest and establish themselves here to generate economic development with benefits for all our countries.”

Rodríguez Herrera reported that the conference stimulated direct relations with counterparts of the provinces of Québec and Manitoba. The latter now will work with Guanajuato state to develop tourism and culture exchange programs across the Corridor. Meanwhile, Québec officials told him they now plan to study opening a provincial office in Guanajuato. Historic UNESCO World Heritage cities Guanajuato (designated 1988) and Québec (1985) are considering becoming sister cities, he said. He noted the NASCO Board selected Québec for the honor of succeeding Guanajuato as host of the rotating, annual NASCO Conference June 4-6, 2009.

NASCO is supported by the annual dues paid by private sector leaders and cities, counties, states and provinces of the U.S., Mexico and Canada, an overwhelming majority of whom have been members more than 10 years, NASCO Executive Director Tiffany Melvin said.

Over the past thirteen years, she noted, NASCO has succeeded in establishing an important network of public and private sector entities critical to international trade and transportation. Members of NASCO cooperate and collaborate through immediate access to the network, which provides business development opportunities and leading-edge business information and insights of far-reaching value to companies involved.

The existing NASCO SuperCorridor includes the Pembina, ND-Emerson, Manitoba, commercial border crossing, the busiest Canadian commercial border crossing in western Canada, and the largest commercial border crossing in North America at The Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Canada, as well as the second largest commercial border crossing at Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

More than eight states of Mexico and many private sector companies belong to NASCO, as well as the busiest West Coast Mexican Container Ports of Manzanillo, Colima, and Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán.

NASCO's membership truly reflects the international scope of the Corridor and the regions it impacts and provides an established, substantive and settled test bed for deployment of innovative transportation technology and new logistics and environmental best practices, core initiatives of NASCO.

At the conference, Undersecretary of Transport for Mexico Humberto Treviño informed attendees of President Calderón's aggressive National Infrastructure Plan to invest \$45 billion in public/private funds in Mexico's national transportation infrastructure, including in highways, tollroads, railroad network expansion, modernization and expansion of airports, air cargo terminals, seaports and port terminals as well as in major electricity grid transmission equipment and networks and oil and gas pipelines and electric power plants. He also laid out his department's development of the National Multimodal Corridor Plan, a guide for directing federal, state and domestic and international infrastructure investment to cover the gaps left needed to convert Mexico into one of the world's leading transportation and logistics platforms and hubs for international global trade. Mexico has free trade agreements with 49 nations representing 75 percent of the world Gross Domestic Product, he said. Mexico sees national connectivity with the NASCO Corridor from Mexico, through the U.S. and Canada as critically important.

NASCO Mexico Committee President Carlos Moreno Lopez highlighted advances of the last year in winning the confidence of the Mexican Administration. The Transportation Department included NASCO in its National Study on Multimodal Corridors and the committee signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Mexican House of Representatives' Transportation Committee. The NASCO Mexico Committee also advised on the development of priorities within the Mexico National Logistics Plan.

NASCO has developed a network of contacts with public and private sector individuals, organizations, companies and public entities, institutes and centers of knowledge, as well as with governmental entities from the local, state, provincial and Federal governments of Mexico, the United States and Canada.

Through interaction and exchanging of information and problems, concerns, experiences and relationships, NASCO and its members are able to drive projects forward that the private sector and public sector players find difficult to achieve on their own. NASCO has a highly credible, 13-year track record of successful advances in policies, projects and accomplishments.

Please visit our website at www.nascocorridor.com.

About NASCO

NASCO is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing economic development activity while supporting multi-modal infrastructure improvements, technology / security innovations and environmental initiatives along the NASCO Corridor, and to stimulate the dialogue between the public and private sectors about critical, corridor-wide trade and transportation challenges.

NASCO members include cities, counties, states, provinces and private sector representatives along the Corridor in Canada, the United States and Mexico, dedicated to maximizing the efficiency and security of their existing trade and transportation infrastructure.

The NASCO Corridor represents the existing trade and multi-modal transportation infrastructure roughly shadowing U.S. Interstate Highways 35, 29 and 94, and the connecting transportation infrastructure in Canada and Mexico critical to national and international trade. This includes major intermodal "inland ports" along the corridor and under development.