

Ports-to-Plains Alliance Corridor

North America's Energy and Agricultural Heartland



Spanning the U.S. heartland and reaching into Canada and Mexico, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance corridor links North America's vital agricultural and industrial communities.

Pulsing through the heart of rural North America, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance corridor represents an economic lifeline from the U.S.-Mexico border to the northern border with Canada.

Counties, cities, and towns located within the corridor – which comprises the states of Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming – depend on the region's transportation infrastructure for both access to and export of a vast array of goods and services.

"Connectivity is not a matter of convenience to us; it is an economic necessity," explains Michael Reeves, president of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes policy, trade, and investment priorities for the region. "The population has declined significantly throughout the Great Plains, and much of this region has not seen much job creation recently. If our economy is going to be successful, we need to grow and upgrade our infrastructure."

"As North America's energy and agricultural corridor, Ports-to-Plains highways are critical to growing opportunities in the energy and agricultural sectors," adds Joe Kiely, the Alliance's vice president. "Safely moving freight – including the over-size and large combination vehicles common to our industries here – alongside local and tourist traffic is critical to the economies of our member communities."

Bringing jobs and opportunities to the Ports-to-Plains region is another focus of the Alliance's mission. The group works closely with area economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, corporations, and expressway organizations to lobby for transportation, infrastructure, and economic development projects critical to the economic prospects of the Ports-to-Plains region.

"Individually, it is easy for the voices of our rural cities and communities to be lost. We have less representation in Congress in smaller, less-populated areas, but the Alliance is working to make sure that we're not forgotten when decisions affecting our region are made at state and federal levels," says Duffy Hinkle, Alliance vice president.

ACTING AS ADVOCATES

Currently, the Alliance is working to ensure specific policies are included in the next transportation reauthorization bill – the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), which authorizes federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit. The Alliance wants the new bill to include a focus on rural transportation

The Corridor's Reach

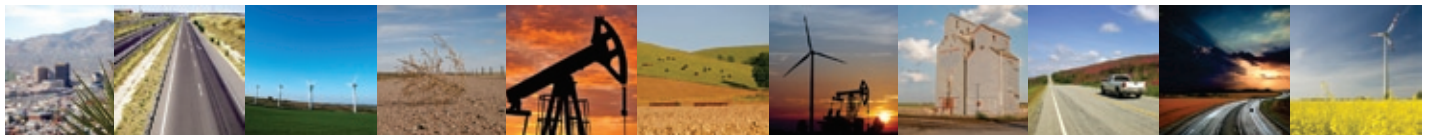
Covering more than 2,300 miles, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance corridor spans from Coahuila, Mexico, to Alberta, Canada, and includes 10 U.S. states, one Mexican state, and one Canadian province.



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ALLIANCE

**Securing the Benefits of Commerce to
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There is a different type of attitude here in the heartland of North America. One of camaraderie, of community, a helping hand for a neighbor. Now the heartland extends that helping hand to all Americans as the Port-to-Plains Corridor becomes the **Corridor that Feeds, Clothes and Powers North America.**

efficiency, rural connectivity, safety, and mobility; as well as border issues and infrastructure in border towns.

To date, the Alliance has worked with state departments of transportation and the federal government to make more than \$1 billion in infrastructure improvements. Current construction projects totaling more than \$192 million are underway in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana.

That advocacy effort is a large part of what draws members to the Ports-to-Plains Alliance. "Having the Alliance speak for the entire state or corridor is so much more powerful than a single county trying to do it individually," says Tricia Allen, vice president of Colorado's Adams County Economic Development, one of the Alliance's earliest supporters. Adams



ADAMS COUNTY ASSETS: The local economy in Adams County gets a boost from companies such as (left to right) the bioscience organizations located in the Fitzsimons Life Science District, communications leader Avaya, and General Motors.

County supports the Ports-to-Plains Alliance transportation initiatives for a variety of reasons, including improved infrastructure for logistics activities and to ease current congestion.

"Interstates 25, 70, 76, and 85 run through Adams County, along with Highways 200 and 7, so transportation infrastructure is a key issue for us," Allen explains.

The County's solid highway network – along with its proximity to the Denver metro area; access to Front Range Airport, a general aviation airport; and rail service from both Union Pacific and BNSF – has helped make the region a hotbed of logistics and transportation activity. Adams County has identified logistics and transportation as a target cluster for economic development activities and has attracted a number of transportation businesses including Navajo, Voyager Express, and YRC Transportation. In addition, FedEx Freight and FedEx Ground both completed major expansion projects in Commerce City, Colo. The FedEx Freight facility is the company's second-largest distribution center in the western United States.

Adams County's assets also lured photovoltaic film manufacturer Ascent Solar to the region recently. The company is planning a major expansion in Thornton, Colo., expecting to double its current 250-employee workforce within the next two years. Rocky Mountain Natural Meats, which supplies bison to Whole Foods and the Ted's Montana Grill restaurant chain, is also located in the county.

In addition, Adams County boasts a strong warehousing district along the I-70 corridor, which includes facilities such as the Majestic Commerce Center – a 1,000-acre industrial complex that is home to warehousing facilities for L'Oreal and Atkins Neutraceuticals – and ProLogis Park 70, where General Motors and Furniture Row maintain distribution centers. "These companies look to Adams County because of our pro-business climate," Allen says.

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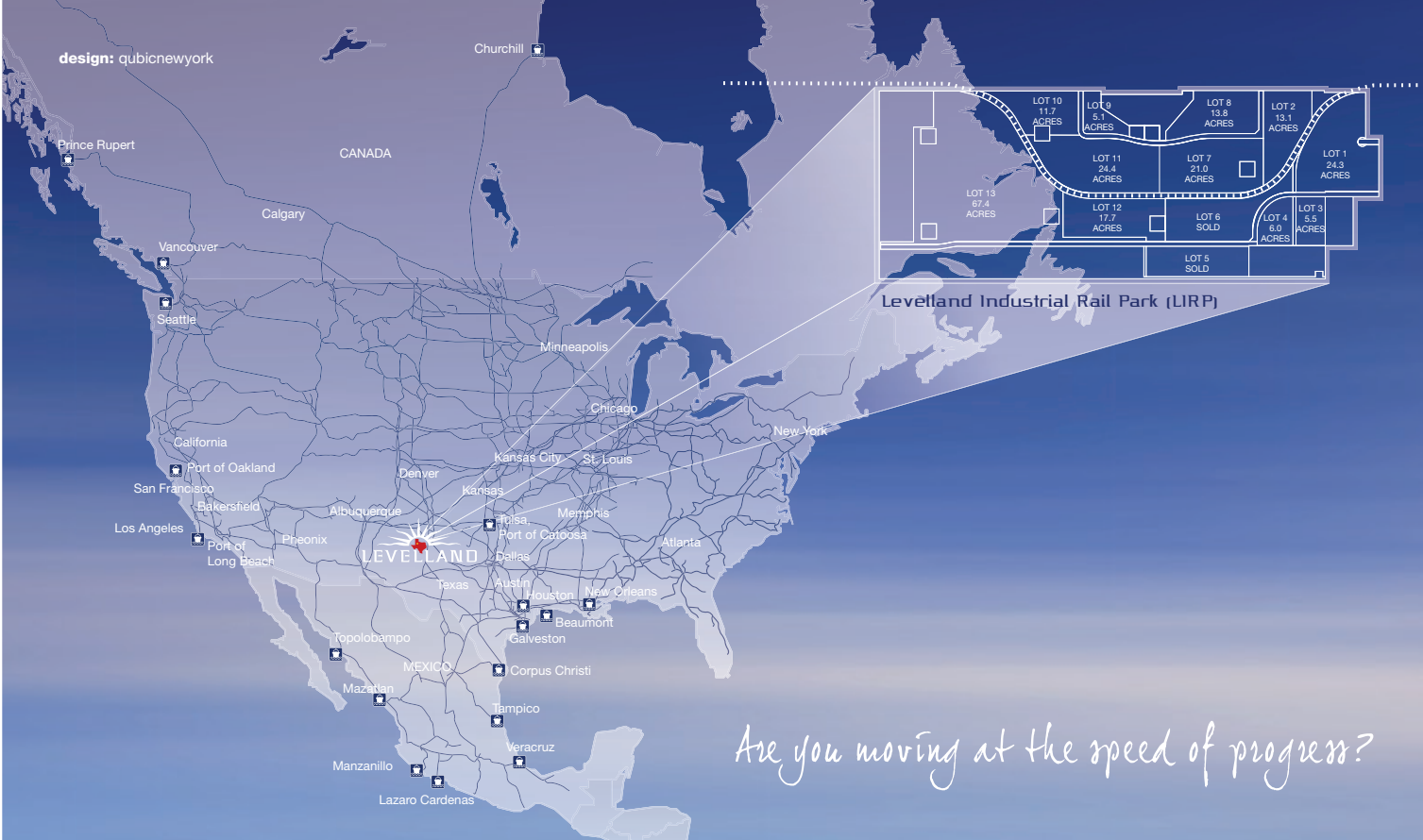
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Another Ports-to-Plains community that prides itself on supporting business is Levelland, Texas, which offers business grant incentives, tax abatements, and a local banking network to companies looking to locate or expand there.

“Our workforce pool of more than 200,000; access to a global transportation network via road and rail; low electric utility rates; inexpensive land; and aggressive pro-business environment make Levelland a great place to locate,” says

Industrial Rail Park (LIRP), a 240-acre rail-served industrial park. Tenants include Independent Electric, which is expanding into a new \$700,000 office/training/warehouse facility, and Tex-Rail Commodities, which operates a new \$3-million facility in LIRP.

Levelland’s location in the Ports-to-Plains corridor puts the city in a very good position from a logistics standpoint, Quinn adds. Not surprisingly, several trucking companies serving the area’s oil

by partnering with other communities located along the corridor and create a brighter future for Levelland citizens.”

BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

This shared mindset echoes across the Ports-to-Plains region, where similar challenges, industries, and opportunities bring the people and economies of the vast corridor together. “The Alliance is advocating for this transportation pipeline that reaches north and south to new and expanding domestic and international markets so that we can bring new opportunities to our communities,” Kiely explains.

One of those member communities is Lubbock, Texas, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance’s birthplace and headquarters. The continued success of the city’s agriculture- and energy-based economy rests on the transportation initiatives that the Alliance is tackling, says Marc Farmer, director of business recruitment for the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance.

“Completing the Ports-to-Plains corridor will lower transportation costs for our agriculture and energy producers and all our businesses, making them more competitive,” he explains. “Being located along a major trade corridor also makes Lubbock a more attractive location for businesses.”

The city is already a draw for distribution and manufacturing firms, thanks to its central U.S. location and road access for serving both the East and West Coasts, as well as markets north and south of the city. “We’re located on I-27, and Highways 114, 84, 87, 62, and 82 all come through Lubbock, so businesses here are well-positioned to get anywhere they need to go,” Farmer says.

The Lubbock Economic Development Alliance has invested \$20 million in infrastructure for its Lubbock Business Park and Lubbock Rail Port, two new industrial facilities located on I-27. Companies including O’Reilly Auto Parts, Verizon Wireless, Monsanto, WestTX Packaging, and Budweiser distributor Standard



QUICK DRAW: Metropolitan Amarillo, Texas, offers services and shopping that bring residents from neighboring states to town via the area’s convenient highway access.

Dave Quinn, executive director of the Levelland Economic Development Corp.

Situated 30 minutes west of I-27 on U.S. Highway 385 in close proximity to State Highway 114 – a four-lane divided road – Levelland offers an ideal road transportation network to a variety of businesses in the oil and gas operations, agriculture, education, and medical services industries.

Levelland also boasts excellent rail access. The city is installing more than 21,000 track feet of rail infrastructure connected to both BNSF and Union Pacific via the West Texas and Lubbock Railroad. It is also home to the Levelland

and gas and agricultural businesses are headquartered in Levelland, including Musslewhite Trucking, Pate Trucking, and Titan Trucking.

“Levelland also has large amounts of available land that can be used as lay down areas for wind farm and distribution line construction,” says Quinn, noting that the city hopes to capitalize on wind power, biofuels, and other innovative industries driving America’s economic recovery.

“Being part of an aggressive advocacy group like the Ports-to-Plains Alliance gives Levelland another partner in progress,” Quinn says. “We can leverage our investments in infrastructure

Sales Company have all decided to locate there. Lubbock is also home to Texas Tech University, the United Supermarkets grocery chain, Covenant Health Systems, and AT&T – all of which are major employers.

The city is also a burgeoning spot for wind farm development, and the location for X-FAB, one of two wafer-chip foundries in the United States.

As the second-largest town west of I-35 – the area's 29-county regional population totals more than 600,000 – Lubbock is also a natural draw for retail, health care, and restaurant business. "Lubbock has always been known as the hub of the Plains – for distribution of goods, medical services, and education," Farmer explains. "Our spokes go out to all of West Texas, the Panhandle, and eastern New Mexico."

Making sure all the hubs and spokes in

the Ports-to-Plains region are connected by reliable infrastructure is one of the Alliance's main goals. Because the region is a major commercial and industrial center – but one that is largely rural and, in some places, isolated and remote – the ability to distribute goods quickly and efficiently is crucial.

"We are producing goods that have to be moved out and exported to market," Reeves explains. "We need that transportation connection for our economies to operate."

CONNECTIVITY IS KEY

The main piece of the "transportation connection" puzzle is the Alliance's goal of upgrading numerous roadways in the region from two-lane thoroughfares to the four-lane divided highways that are

needed to support major transportation and distribution efforts. A four-lane highway running the length of the corridor would improve the region's ability to attract business and commerce, and would help ease congestion on the roads that enable much of the region's current trade and transportation activity.

"The existing highways are inadequate to meet the region's – and nation's – current and future needs," explains Kiely. "To promote economic security and prosperity throughout America's energy and agricultural heartland, these high-priority corridors must be upgraded and modernized."

Buzz David, president and CEO of the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation in Amarillo, Texas, agrees. "Transportation access on the highway

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Ports-to-Plains

system is critical to our continued livelihood,” David says. “We depend on big truck traffic, so the Ports-to-Plains corridor is an extremely important piece of infrastructure to our communities and to the region.”

WINDY CITIES

Connectivity to points north, south, east, and west is crucial to Amarillo's position as a regional hub for transportation, distribution, and retail activity, as well as its role in the area's burgeoning alternative-energy industry. Amarillo's prowess as a retail center – the city boasts four Walmart Super Centers, two Lowe's, two Home Depots, and one Sam's Club store, and draws shoppers from as far away as New Mexico, Kansas, and Oklahoma – rests squarely on its highway infrastructure. The metro area is located on Interstate 40 at the intersection of Interstate 27, U.S. Highway 287, and U.S. Highway 87, making it a convenient access point from many cities and states.

Amarillo's prime location has also

helped the city lure several manufacturers in the wind industry. “The wind industry is one of our major target areas,” David says, noting two big wins recently: Zarges Tubesca, a German manufacturer of the ladders, lift systems, and platforms inside wind turbines and towers, is constructing an 80,000-square-foot plant in Amarillo's CenterPort Business Park, and turbine manufacturer Alstom Power Inc. is building a new turbine plant in Amarillo.

“Part of the reason they selected us was our connectivity and transportation access to the rest of the West and the wind corridor,” David notes.

Improving transportation in the Ports-to-Plains corridor is crucial to Amarillo's continued growth in the wind industry, David says. Though the city has attracted wind components manufacturers, those



LOVING LUBBOCK: The big Texas sky stretches over downtown Lubbock, the second-largest town west of I-35.

components still need to be transported to the locations where they will be installed.

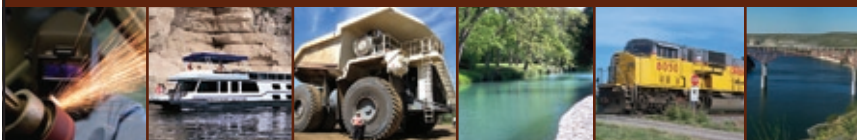
“Sometimes the installation sites are within 100 miles, but sometimes components must be shipped into South or North Dakota or other locations along the Great Plains wind corridor,” David explains. “Transportation access is key to this area's economic development.”

Just north of Amarillo on U.S. Highway 287 sits Dumas, Texas, one of several other Ports-to-Plains communities finding success in the wind and renewable energy industry. The city is home to a new 50-megawatt Sunray wind farm, and Continental Carbon just completed a \$24-million renewable energy project, bringing 17 new jobs to the city.

“We have only seen a hint of the opportunities the renewable energy industry brings to our region,” says Mike Running, executive director of the Dumas Economic Development Corporation. “The Ports-to-Plains corridor will become a major player in the logistics and distribution of energy components and products, and even the energy itself. That means better opportunities and more jobs for rural communities like Dumas.”

The new Wind and Renewable Energy Training Program at Amarillo College-Moore County Campus is one way Dumas is working to help create jobs and opportunities in the renewable energy business. The program helps train qualified wind

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technicians, and Dumas has partnered with the college to install a wind tower in its business park for training purposes.

"Additional plans include developing a Green Technology Center to bolster new ideas and provide hands-on training opportunities for students," Running explains.

In addition to renewable energy, Dumas boasts a strong number of companies in the oil and natural gas; distribution and trucking; aviation; and agricultural industries – including JBS Beef Processing, which recently completed a \$209-million expansion and added 350 employees. These companies all benefit from Dumas' prime location just 40 miles north of I-40 and two hours east of I-25 and south of I-70. The city also provides quick and easy rail access through North West Rail and

a 6,000-foot runway with available space at its aviation business park.

A new addition is the Dumas Business Success Center, a 16,000-square-foot, six-unit facility with dock-high loading. "The Center provides a great place for firms wanting to test the water in Dumas before making a major construction or purchase investment," Running explains.

TRADE BEYOND BORDERS

While the bulk of the Ports-to-Plains region lies in the United States, the corridor stretches through all three North American countries, making it vital for international trade. The region is home to a number of U.S. border towns and cross-border ports, including the 15th-busiest crossing, which links Sweetgrass, Mont., with the Province of Alberta, Canada,

one of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance's newest members.

Like its neighbors on the U.S. side of the corridor, Alberta's economy is centered on oil, natural gas, alternative energy, manufacturing, and agriculture. Alberta's oil sands, in particular, provide a great economic opportunity for many counties in the Province, including Paintearth County. Paintearth's central location on Highway 36, which leads to the oil sands, makes the County well-situated for redistribution, logistics, and off-loading facilities, explains Larry Davidson, economic development officer for the Paintearth Economic Partnership Society (PEPS).

"Highway 36 is Alberta's 'high-load' highway, which means there are no height, weight, or width restrictions for truck

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and knows what *truly* matters.**



Dumas is uniquely positioned in the center of the United States. Countless carriers use US 287 to move goods from Mexico to Canada and all points in between. Our location along the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor and large-scale transportation initiatives by the state of Texas make Dumas a great fit for any national distributor. With truck and rail access in all directions, low business costs, economic stability, and easy market access, we're sure to help reduce your distribution costs!



transportation,” Davidson says. “All the goods coming out of Texas going to the oil sands come right by our doorstep.”

Capitalizing on that location is the Crowfoot Crossing Industrial Park, adjacent to the Town of Castor, which is perched at the junction of Highway 36 and Highway 12, an east-west route that runs from Red Deer to Saskatchewan. The park includes 77 acres available for both commercial and light industrial businesses.

Paintearth is also well-situated for other energy plays, including biofuel and coal opportunities. And the largest wind farm in Alberta is slated for installation between the Paintearth County towns of Halkirk and Castor. The first phase of the project, scheduled to begin in fall 2010, will include 83 1.8-megawatt wind turbines. When both phases are completed in fall 2011, the project will provide 300 megawatts of green energy. In addition,

PEPS owns all of the county’s formerly used rail lands and is using the space to “create new industrial and commercial opportunities,” Davidson says.

When it comes to opportunities, being part of the global linkage the Ports-to-Plains corridor offers is a booster for both Paintearth and the Province of Alberta.

“As Canada’s largest trading partner, the United States ensures opportunities for businesses in Canada to export their goods and services, and for investment from American companies looking to expand their own markets,” Davidson explains. “It’s a good partnership.”

That two-way street also extends south to the U.S.-Mexico border, where cross-border trade and commerce flourish. The



FAVORITE HANGOUTS: M&B Hangers operates facilities in both the Mexican state of Coahuila and across the border in Maverick County, Texas.

THE PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE CORRIDOR

By the Numbers

- Comprises 2,333 miles of highway, **14% of total U.S. GDP (\$1.7 trillion)**, and 38.5 million citizens
- Generates **\$166.7 billion in trade with Canada and Mexico**, nearly 20% of total U.S.-North America trade
- Includes **7 of the top 10 U.S. states for installed and wind energy potential**, generating more than 5,185 megawatts, nearly 45% of the U.S. total
- Includes **6 of the top 10 oil-producing states** and 5 of the top 6 natural-gas producing states
- Home to nearly **25% of U.S. ethanol refining capacity**, with 33 existing refineries
- Includes **6 of the top 10 farm states**, producing \$44.3 billion of agricultural goods, 25% of the U.S. total

Source: Ports-to-Plains Alliance

AdamsLovesBiz.com



growing number of companies shifting manufacturing from Asia to Mexico to take advantage of reduced transportation costs has increased Mexico's role in global trade. As a result, U.S. cities in close proximity to the maquiladora manufacturing plants are in a key position as the gateway to trade between the two countries.

ALL EYES ON MEXICO

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance has recently focused its energy on building partnerships in Mexico. Mexico's Querétaro State, near Mexico City, is interested in Ports-to-Plains activities, and the State of Coahuila, located along a 318-mile stretch of the border adjacent to Texas, joined the Alliance.

"The city of Torreon, Coahuila, is a major producer of textiles and blue jeans, and our corridor runs through America's cotton-producing region in Texas, creating a good synergy," Reeves explains.

"Also, the industries most prevalent in our corridor – agriculture and energy – involve big equipment such as wind towers and drilling equipment. A lot of that heavy equipment can be strategically located in Mexico, where labor rates are lower, and still moved easily throughout the corridor," Reeves adds. "Transportation routes through our border with Mexico are very important to the entire region."

One area well aware of Mexico's importance is Maverick County, whose county seat, the City of Eagle Pass, Texas, is located on the U.S. border with the Mexican city of Piedras Negras. The Eagle Pass-Piedras Negras Metropolitan Area is one of six binational metropolitan areas along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"The Eagle Pass Port of Entry is the most important entry port for U.S. trade with the State of Coahuila," says Raul Perez, executive director of the Maverick County Development Corporation. "This is the starting point for most of the commercial, industrial, and retail goods bound for Coahuila."

Directly across the border from Maverick County, Piedras Negras boasts six industrial parks and 28 maquiladoras



PICTURE PAINTEARTH: In addition to proximity to Alberta's oil sands, Paintearth County offers alternative energy resources such as wind power.

conducting manufacturing for industries such as automotive and electronics. Many companies using the plants are Fortune 500 firms, and most have situated their logistics and distribution activities in Maverick County.

"Companies including Takata, M&B

Hangers, Littelfuse, and Neese Industries – a raincoat manufacturer based in Louisiana – use Eagle Pass to handle warehousing and distribution for their plants in Mexico," says Perez.

"And, we're going to be the gateway to one of the largest brewery plants in Central and South America," says Perez of the \$500-million plant that Grupo Modelo, makers of Corona beer, completed in May 2010. The plant is located in Nava, Coahuila, about 20 miles from the border cities.

Thanks to its infrastructure, Maverick County is well appointed to support the logistics and distribution of goods manufactured in Mexico. It is home to two international bridges – one of which is the key commercial route with minimum crossing time into Mexico. The state of Texas is currently investing in infrastructure upgrades to connect this bridge, via Outer Loop 480, to U.S. Highway 277, which will help alleviate congestion.

The county also sits on Texas Highway 57, which offers convenient access all the



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Raul E. Perez, Executive Director
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way to Mexico City in the south, and from Maverick County north to San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas.

"We also have the largest rail crossing in Texas going through our Eagle Pass Port of Entry to Piedras Negras," says Perez. "For the past three months, we have surpassed the Laredo crossing, and we are very proud." Rail service is provided by Union Pacific and Ferromex in Mexico.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEETS TRADE

While the U.S.-Mexico border crossings are important centers of global trade and commerce, they sometimes fall prey to congestion and delays, particularly as supply chain security measures have increased. Not so at the Del Rio Port of Entry, which links the city of Del Rio, Texas, with Ciudad Acuña, its sister city in Mexico.

"Our new, \$29-million state-of-the-art

Port of Entry provides technology-based support to expedite customs processing and cut crossing times for commercial and vehicular traffic to between 30 and 45 minutes," explains Fabio E. Angell, economic development director for the City of Del Rio. "That is opposed to the 10 to 15 hours it takes elsewhere for commercial traffic to cross."

In addition to speedy border crossings, Del Rio boosts the manufacturing industry in Ciudad Acuña with logistics support and a highly skilled workforce in the automotive, small manufacturing, plastics, and packaging industries. Also, the presence in Del Rio of the Laughlin Air Force Base and a number of federal agencies, including the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, means Del Rio also boasts nearly 5,000 well-

trained professionals in specialties such as communications, planning, engineering, operations, aeronautics, maintenance, and data processing.

"These civilian workers, upon retirement or discharge, represent an asset to Del Rio in expanding local industry and recruiting new companies," Angell notes.

But the greatest benefit Del Rio offers to companies and communities located along the Ports-to-Plains corridor is its example as an International Metropolitan Area (IMA). Del Rio and Ciudad Acuña operate as an international dual-city economy, exchanging products and services across the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo.

"We are glued together by a bicultural, bilingual class of business professionals, merchants, and specialized workers who travel back and forth every day as if within a single city," Angell explains.

"We serve as a key link between the English-speaking North and Spanish-speaking South within NAFTA and beyond," Angell adds. "Expanding the Ports-to-Plains corridor into Coahuila is a significant step and our IMA was instrumental in bringing this to fruition."

Serving as a key link between different companies, communities, and currencies is also the goal of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance as a whole. With transportation and infrastructure as its platform, the Alliance seeks to help the entire Ports-to-Plains region in the United States and beyond, improving its prospects for economic prosperity.

"Strengthening the transportation network in the Ports-to-Plains corridor is beneficial for developing manufacturing, logistics, and distribution opportunities, and expanding into markets in Canada and Mexico," says Joe Kiely. "The ability to do that will add key value for the communities and businesses of the Ports-to-Plains region."


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