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North America's Energy
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Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor

Linking North America's
top energy and agricultural
regions, **the Ports-to-Plains
Corridor** helps deliver
food and fuel to the city,
and keeps the Heartland
economy humming.



“Trade is a lifeline for our communities. As an agricultural, energy-producing rural area, we don’t have enough people here to buy the goods we produce, so we have to export—it’s vital to our success as a region,” says Michael Reeves, president of the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition.

The region that Reeves refers to is the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor, a 2,333-mile economic area that stretches between Laredo, Texas, and Alberta, Canada, and includes nine U.S. states: Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

The area is a major commerce hub, generating \$166.7 billion in trade with Canada and Mexico – nearly 20 percent of total North American trade. It is home to six cross-border ports, including North America’s second- and 15th-busiest crossings (Laredo, Texas-Nuevo Laredo, Mexico; and Sweetgrass, Mont.-Coutts, Alberta, Canada, respectively).

With such an emphasis on trade, it is not surprising that the region is laser-focused on promoting its transportation assets and improving its infrastructure deficits. “Transportation is the investment upon which all other investments rely,” explains Joe Kiely, the Coalition’s vice president of operations.

“All the major industries in the Corridor depend on efficient transportation,” adds Reeves. “Farmers need to get crops to market; the oil and gas industry has to

transport equipment and reach pipelines; and our emerging alternative energy companies need to transport the tools to build and service wind farms.”

GOING WITH THE WIND

Ensuring that transportation is available to further the development of wind farms is crucial to the City of Sweetwater, Texas, located just east of the Corridor off Interstate 20. Sweetwater is in Nolan County, West Texas, which is home to more than 1,200 wind turbines. The wind

industry accounted for 20 percent of the area’s workforce in 2008. Three years ago, GE Wind chose Sweetwater to locate a wind data collection center that employs 90 people – the first facility of its kind that GE has developed in North America.

“The Ports-to-Plains Corridor runs right through the center of the wind corridor, making the area a natural fit for wind energy development,” says Ken Becker, executive director of Sweetwater Enterprise for Economic Development.

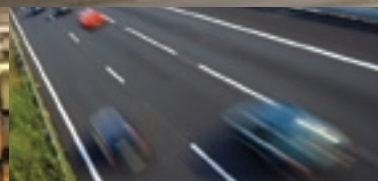
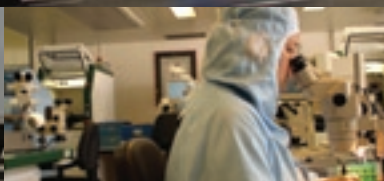
Transportation is a key component of

Wind farms like this one in Alberta, Canada, continue to crop up along the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor.





PORTS-TO-PLAINS TRADE CORRIDOR



securing the benefits of trade

Transportation creates jobs. It's been that way throughout history; be it seaports, rivers, railroads or the roadways of today, economic growth is a natural byproduct of our highways and byways. And that's what the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is all about - bringing new jobs and opportunities to communities throughout the region.

A global economy means a world of opportunities for the communities along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, and our success invariably depends on our connection to these new markets. Ports-to-Plains aims to provide that connection, while also improving highway safety and creating a secure, efficient corridor in which to move freight.

By developing the infrastructure to support the region's growing renewable energy market, Ports-to-Plains will help lead the charge in reducing our dependency on foreign oil - an approach that will inevitably lead to more investment in wind energy and biofuels. That means more investment in our communities. The result? More jobs for the people of our region.

PORTS-TO-PLAINS
TRADE CORRIDOR

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The Corridor's Reach

Covering more than 2,300 miles, the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor spans from Laredo, Texas, to Alberta, Canada, and includes nine U.S. states and one Canadian province.



wind development. Because of the size of the parts needed to build and service wind turbines – 250-foot towers and 120-foot blades, for example – it takes eight to 10 trucks just to haul the major equipment for one wind turbine.

Since Nolan County began hosting wind farms in the early 2000s, some 12,500 trucks have traveled to and from the county, hauling wind turbine parts. “As wind towers continue to get larger, the trucks delivering them get larger,” Becker notes. “Having bigger, better roads throughout the Ports-to-Plains Corridor will help the wind industry grow.”

TRANSPORTATION: THE REGION'S BACKBONE

Making those bigger, better roads a reality is where the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition comes in. Based in Lubbock, Texas, the Coalition began as a local government initiative to secure funding for Interstate Highway 27 in Texas. It has expanded to become a bipartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes the policy, trade, and investment priorities for the entire Ports-to-Plains region. Its members include economic development corporations; chambers of commerce; expressway associations, including the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (*see sidebar, page 70*); corporations; and cities, states, counties, and provinces in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

“Support for the Ports-to-Plains Coalition has really grown over the past 12 years,” says Duffy Hinkle, the Coalition’s vice president of membership and marketing. “The group began organizing in 1997 with a handful of members, and includes more than 150 members in nine states and the province of Alberta. Our supporting members are the lifeline of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, and without them the organization would cease to exist.

“Several universities and colleges are Coalition members,” Hinkle adds. “We are beginning to team these institutions for assistance with additional research and studies that are necessary for future

Growing the Great Plains Region



The Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (TRE) is the Northern third of the Ports to Plains Alliance.

It runs from Rapid City, SD to Canada through the Port of Raymond in Montana, and flows through the cities of Spearfish, Belle Fourche, Bowman, Belfield, Watford City, Williston, Culbertson, Plentywood, and finally through the Port of Raymond into Canada.

TRE provides a transportation corridor for oil rigs, pipe, steel, and supplies from Edmonton, Calgary, and Regina to the north and Houston, Dallas, and Denver from the south. TRE is a collector corridor for six major east-west highway systems that service major oil development areas, and provides a safe and efficient highway for over 300 oil service companies and crew transport throughout the Williston Basin.

The TRE will stimulate transportation opportunities in a 100+ mile area on either side of the highway by improving trade efficiency, adding economic growth opportunities, and improving overall highway safety. The opportunities that this corridor will provide are invaluable to the future of this region.

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development of the Corridor.”

Many of the Corridor's roadways are currently two-lane thoroughfares that are not ideal for trade and transportation. One of the Coalition's major goals is to upgrade these roads to create a four-lane divided highway that runs the entire length of the Corridor. Once completed, this highway will help the area siphon traffic away from congested roadways, such as Interstate 35 in Texas and Interstate 25 in Colorado.

A major factor in achieving these goals is the upcoming reauthoriza-

region attract new jobs and businesses.

“Individually, these small cities have almost no national voice; but combine the impact of cities from Texas all the way to Montana, and into Canada, and elected officials begin to understand why the region is so important,” explains Kiely.

The Coalition also acts as a booster for economic development activity, working to help member communities attract site selectors. “We focus on providing members the tools they need to sell the Ports-to-Plains concept as a benefit for

its status as a cost-cutting day's drive to numerous metropolitan areas—3.5 hours to Albuquerque, and Santa Fe, N.M., as well as Oklahoma City; 4.5 hours to Denver; and 6.5 hours to the Dallas metro area. “The location makes us a natural stopping ground for truckers,” Running says.

The city also offers a trade area of 85,000 people, and a workforce of “blue-collar professionals who are prepared to take on distribution positions,” Running notes.

Another key part of Dumas' appeal is its rail access via Texas North Western, a shortline railroad that connects to BNSF.

“We have a great relationship with Texas North Western,” Running notes. “If a company is interested in our community but requires rail access, Texas North Western will say, ‘Tell us where and when.’”

Rail access is also a key selling point for the Ports-to-Plains-area city of Levelland, Texas. Situated 30 miles west of Lubbock, the city is served by Permian Basin Railways, a shortline railroad that connects to BNSF in Lubbock.

This connection is at the heart of the city's new Levelland Industrial Rail Park, a roughly 280-acre rail industrial park currently under development. The park will entice manufacturers and distributors with its combination of low costs and access to global markets via the connection to BNSF, says Dave Quinn, executive director, Levelland Economic Development Corp.

“We're lowering the barrier to entry for companies to ship and receive goods via rail,” Quinn says. “The park will allow smaller companies bringing in goods from Mexico or through the Port of Houston to rail ship to Levelland, then truck the goods within the 500-mile region.”

Two companies have already committed to building at the rail park—Tex-Rail Commodities, which ships cottonseed and other commodities; and a wood products manufacturing firm.

Quinn knows that part of Levelland's draw for new business development is its proximity to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. “The Ports-to-Plains Coalition's



MASS(IVE) TRANSIT: Trucks transporting huge wind energy equipment are a common sight along the Corridor. It takes eight to 10 trucks just to haul the major equipment for one wind turbine, which might include a 250-foot tower and 120-foot blades.

tion of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU)—which authorizes federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit. “The Coalition is spending a great deal of time and effort to add programs and funding into the reauthorization bill that will support our goals,” Kiely explains.

MORE THAN JUST A ROAD

But the Ports-to-Plains Coalition is not only about improving highway infrastructure—the group also acts as a common voice for its members, working to push policies and programs that can help the

companies interested in locating in their communities,” says Reeves.

“Coalition membership helps us recruit businesses to our area,” explains Mike Running, executive director of the Dumas (Texas) Economic Development Corporation. “Many companies are not aware that Dumas is near the Corridor. Mentioning that we are part of the Coalition helps them understand how our location can benefit their business.”

Dumas' location within the Ports-to-Plains Corridor—on Highway 287 just north of Amarillo, Texas—is the reason the city is actively courting companies in the distribution industry. It is pitching



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initiatives will have a significant impact not only on the towns directly in the Corridor, but on the outlying communities as well," he says. "We are positioning ourselves in the center so we can distribute goods in a local or regional market."

Distributing goods on a global scale is also part of the Coalition's plans. Stretching through all three North American countries, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor is a major player in North American trade.

"The communities along the Corridor are

becoming the gateway to trade throughout North America," Reeves explains. "By increasing trade between Mexico, Canada, and the United States, all three nations will continue to see a rise in their regional mobility and economic status."

NORTHERN PASSAGE:

The Theodore Roosevelt Expressway

Making up the northern third of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (TRE) runs from Rapid City, S.D., to Canada through the Port of Raymond in Montana. A collector corridor for six major east-west highway systems that service major oil development areas, the expressway conveys oil rigs, pipe, steel, and supplies from Edmonton, Calgary, and Regina to the north and Houston, Dallas, and Denver from the south. Each day, tens of thousands of barrels of daily oil production move on the TRE to tank farms for pipeline transport.

For the communities that lie along the TRE's path, the expressway is nothing short of a lifeline. One such community is Williston, N.D., located in the northwest corner of North Dakota, about 60 miles from the Canadian border. "As a natural resources- and commodity-based production region for the United States, we are even more reliant than most on adequate surface transportation to move our goods to market," says Williston City Commissioner Brad Bekkedahl. "We are an export economy that produces much more than our needs in terms of energy and agriculture."

Williston, and the region as a whole, stand to benefit greatly from the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway Association (TREA) and the Ports-to-Plains Coalition's efforts to improve the surrounding transportation infrastructure.

"A key to Bowman County's economic development is getting commodities moved from point A to point B safely and quickly," says Ashley Alderson, executive director, Bowman County Development Corp. "The Theodore Roosevelt Expressway not only moves people and product, but also enhances commerce and trade in the heart of our towns."

Members of the TREA seek to update the Corridor's current, standard two-lane route into a super highway by widening the shoulders, adding passing lanes on hills, and placing turn lanes at intersections. Once that goal is achieved, the association hopes to complete a four-

lane infrastructure that provides system continuity with the rest of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, and offers capabilities to handle increased traffic demands that will be generated from the southern sections of the Corridor.

"Commonalities of agriculture, energy, manufacturing, and tourism represent the future for agricultural rural economic development for the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and its alliance partners at the Heartland Expressway and Ports-to-Plains," says TREA Executive Director Cal Klewin. "It is our mission to promote infrastructure improvements along the north-south corridor that enhance those opportunities."

ON THE ROAD TO GROWTH

With more than 300 oil service companies transporting product throughout the region, a lot is riding on the TRE. "Unlike most of the country, this area experiences a sustained, healthy economy that is much less volatile than the national economy," says Gaylon Baker, economic development executive vice president in Dickinson, N.D. "Our growing manufacturing base and oil production increases have boosted traffic and commerce here. We need the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway to help us secure delivery to markets and to connect us with our trading partners to the north and south."

Those trading partners are eager to see the TREA succeed in its goals. "The completion of more than 50 of the 85 miles of South Dakota's four-lane divided segment of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor have transformed our Black Hills communities in terms of population growth, business activity, and better access for residents, travelers, and trade," says Linda Rabe, president and CEO of the Rapid City, S.D.-area Chamber of Commerce.

"As the regional center connecting South Dakota's Heartland Expressway to Nebraska and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway to North Dakota, our area is realizing the tremendous value of the trade corridor," she adds.

Improvements to the TRE are expected to elevate trade efficiency, add economic growth opportunities, and boost overall highway safety within the region.



Energy. Agriculture. Transportation. Commerce.

As the northern anchor of the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor, Alberta Canada is a diverse economic region where businesses flourish and individuals succeed. Alberta is an energy-rich province with a large agricultural industry supported by an excellent transportation network. Combined, these have helped Alberta become a prospering centre for commerce.

In Alberta, opportunity awaits.



For more information, please contact:

Doug Cameron, Government of Alberta

Phone: 780-427-6702

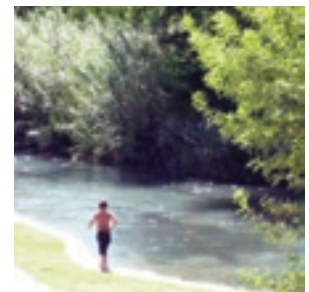
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Ports-to-Plains



The economy of Del Rio, Texas, goes hand-in-hand with that of its sister city, Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, home to numerous factories manufacturing goods for U.S. trade (above). Del Rio is also committed to promoting activities that contribute to its overall quality of life (right).

For many southern U.S. border towns in the Ports-to-Plains region, economic development activity centers on manufacturing in the maquila plants – Mexican factories used by American companies to manufacture goods and high-tech

components for export back to the United States. The economy of Del Rio, Texas, for example, goes hand-in-hand with that of its sister city, Ciudad Acuña, Mexico.

“Ciudad Acuña boasts the highest per-capita concentration of maquilas between

Tijuana/San Diego and Matamoros/Brownsville, and has become the maquila mecca for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor,” says Fabio E. Angell, economic development director for the City of Del Rio.

Del Rio orchestrates U.S. distribution, logistics, and transportation support for companies such as Alcoa, GE, and Sunbeam, which use Ciudad Acuña’s maquilas – and have been doing so for 40 years. Del Rio provides these companies some of the fastest truck-crossing times along the border, while Ciudad Acuña offers manufacturers a workforce of some 30,000 skilled individuals and strong government-industry partnership opportunities for enhancing workforce development.

“We have worked in partnership with Ciudad Acuña to develop the different industries we have here today,” says Angell. “Together, we consider ourselves the first bi-national metropolitan statistical area in North America.”

It is this bi-national, bi-cultural outlook that Angell believes can be an asset to the communities along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Del Rio functions as a gateway into and out of the Latin American market because of its location on the U.S.-Mexico

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Wind Energy Services	GE Wind
Wind Energy Turbine Services	E.ON
Northwind Solutions	Siemens
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Hytorc	EMA – Electromechanics LLC
Fastenal	Wavewind
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border. As a gateway city, Del Rio can help other cities and counties all along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor reduce dependence on goods manufactured in China.

"Within the next five years, we should be able to offer quality products that are made in Mexico and Latin America – instead of in China – and shipped along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor all the way to Canada," Angell says. "Instead of being flooded with Chinese goods, we need to nurture the North American trading bloc."

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The scenario Angell describes would work nicely for the province of Alberta, Canada, which became the Coalition's newest member in May 2009.

"Mexico can offer competitive prices for goods that we need; and we have

an excellent trading relationship with Mexico for oil and gas service, as well as equipment," says Doug Cameron, senior director, U.S. trade and investment for Alberta International & Intergovernmental Relations.

Like its Ports-to-Plains Corridor neighbors in the United States, Alberta's economy is centered on oil, natural gas, and agriculture, with a growing alternative energy sector. The province already trades these commodities heavily with the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

The United States accounts for more than 80 percent of Alberta's trade volume, and Texas, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and North Dakota rank among Alberta's top 25 export markets. And, as a largely rural and agricultural region, Alberta shares some of the same challenges and

history as the states in the U.S. heartland.

"There are huge elements of our province's rural area economies that we want to involve in greater trade development," Cameron explains. "The Ports-to-Plains Coalition is one way to do that."

In particular, Alberta is focused on developing its oil sands, which contain one of the largest concentrations of oil in the world. While the natural resources are plentiful in Alberta, the materials and services needed to bring the oil from the sands to the marketplace are not.

"To build these multi-million-dollar oil sands plants, we need to import a large volume of materials," says Cameron. "The Ports-to-Plains initiatives for streamlining transportation infrastructure will help make that process more efficient."

The province's goal of competing in the

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Del Rio is in the heart of the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor and we are open for your business.

Del Rio, Texas is the first crossing point into Mexico off of the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor. Our community is business-friendly looking to partner with industrial, retail and entertainment developers. We have a great quality of life, the infrastructure and the transportation network necessary for successful business development.

We are a modern city with a treasured history—join us to work, play, and live.



a city of heart & soul

alternative energy and clean technology fields will also be boosted by the infrastructure improvements that the Coalition is promoting.

And after all, becoming more competitive – both in the region and worldwide – is what the Coalition is about.

“The member regions’ goals go hand-in-hand,” Kiely says. “By improving the highway and increasing traffic through the Ports-to-Plains communities, we will encourage manufacturers to locate along the Corridor. That will boost economic development and create jobs and opportunities for all these cities and counties.” ■





For information on featuring your region in an Economic Development Supplement, contact James O. Armstrong at 815-334-9945 or Jim@InboundLogistics.com.




OIL FUTURES: Alberta's relatively untapped oil sands contain one of the world's largest oil concentrations. To build processing plants, the province must import a large volume of materials.

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