

SPECIAL
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A Pipeline for Progress

Ports-to-Plains Corridor

Stretching from Texas' U.S.-Mexico border to Alberta, Canada, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor represents a vital trade conduit for North America's energy and agriculture heartland.



Cutting a 2,300-mile swath through rural North America, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor represents an economic pipeline from the U.S.-Mexico border to the northern border with Canada.

Counties, cities, and towns located within the corridor – which comprises 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.

They also rely on the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, a bipartisan nonprofit organization that promotes policy, trade, and investment priorities for the region.

“Sometimes communities in rural areas get overlooked,” says Michael Reeves, president of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance. “But our group works at the local level to ensure cities and towns are doing all they can do to attract industry.”

Based in Lubbock, Texas, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is a community-driven group led by mayors, councilpersons, economic development officials, and business leaders from the 10-state economic development corridor.

The organization serves as the collective voice of the region, fighting for highway-improvement funding, and marketing the region as a logistics lane linking the central United States’ energy and agriculture industries with Canada and Mexico.

Over the past decade, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance has raised more than \$1 billion in federal funding for road improvements in the region. The alliance collaborates with industry partners, federal and state government officials, and their counterparts in Canada and Mexico to deliver the necessary infrastructure, food, and fuel to secure a strong quality of life in America’s cities.

At the same time, the organization embraces America’s new energy economy, and seeks to capitalize on wind power, biofuels, and other innovation sectors to renew the rural heartland.

Given the size and weight of wind turbines, their manufacturers have good reason to produce and erect them along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. “There is a great incentive for turbine manufacturers to locate near the best wind,” Reeves says. “And we are in the sweet spot.”

The corridor serves eight of the United States’ top 10 installed wind-generation states, generating more than 6,000 megawatts, or nearly 78 percent of total U.S. wind energy. A single wind tower requires 126 trucks for major parts, including the crane, concrete, or rebar. One planned wind farm in West Texas will install more than 2,600 towers, and put more than 21,000 trucks on the highways serving the site.

Developing the burgeoning renewable energy industry is critical to national security and economic growth. The energy generated in the corridor feeds into the national grid, benefiting all Americans. In addition to wind energy, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor serves 28 percent of the nation’s ethanol-refining

capacity, and five of the top six natural-gas-producing states.

Traditional energy industries are also well-represented in the region. The corridor serves seven of the top 10 oil-producing states.

This energy industry growth is putting tremendous pressure on the north-south highway network. For example, developing just one oil well requires an estimated 2,300 truck movements.

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.





PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE

Securing the Benefits of Commerce to
North America's Energy & Agricultural Heartland



NORTH AMERICA'S ENERGY AND AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND!

- Advocacy •
- Business Networks •
- Economic Development •
- Education & Research •



The Ports-to-Plains Alliance is a non-profit, non-partisan, community driven advocacy group led by mayors and other local elected officials, economic developers, business and other opinion leaders from a nine-state, 2300-plus mile economic development corridor between Texas, and Alberta, Canada.

Today, we collaborate with our federal and state leaders, partners in Canada and Mexico, and industry partners, to deliver the infrastructure that is needed to provide the food, fiber and fuel to secure the quality of life of America's great cities.

We embrace North America's new energy economy, and are capitalizing upon wind power, biofuels and other innovation sectors, as well as our traditional energy resources to renew one of North America's greatest legacies, the rural heartland.



Agriculture is another vital industry in the Ports-to-Plains region. The corridor runs through four of the top eight farm states that produce \$23 billion of agricultural goods, and 19.5 percent of all U.S. agriculture products. The food produced in this region is destined for cities and towns throughout the nation, and truck movements along the corridor are a critical part of the agricultural distribution network.

The corridor is also feeling the effects of increased international trade with Canada and Mexico. It is a major U.S.

trading region, generating \$280.4 billion in trade with Canada and Mexico, more than 25 percent of total U.S. trade with those countries. Much of this trade results in freight movement up and down the corridor, including spillover traffic from heavily congested parallel corridors.

Big News in Big Spring

"The Big Spring region is definitely growing," says Terry Wegman, executive director of the Big Spring Economic Development Corporation in Big Spring, Texas. "Tax receipts show double-digit

New manufacturing and distribution facilities are springing up all along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

increases month-over-month for the past two years."

One of the sweetest spots along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, Big Spring, the county seat of Howard County, is located in the Panhandle Plains region of West Texas at the crossroads of U.S. Interstate Highway 20, and State Highways 87, 350, and 176.

"We call ourselves the Crossroads of West Texas," Wegman says.

Big Spring's unique topography is a mixture of wide-open plains mixed with the convergence of the northern limit of the Edwards Plateau and the southernmost hills of the Caprock region. The city maintains a diverse and varied economy. Oil and gas production became a major economic force in the area in the early 1900s, and continues today. The economy has grown to include refining, manufacturing, wind-energy production, transportation, and government and healthcare services.

Companies are drawn to the community because of its friendly environment for companies and residents alike. With a population of 27,000, Big Spring has the flavor of a small town with the amenities of a big city.

Moreover, it offers extraordinary advantages for logistics providers, including Big Spring McMahon-Wrinkle Airport and Industrial Park. The former home of Webb Air Force Base, the facility now serves the community and region as a top-notch airport with an 8,800-foot newly upgraded runway that can accommodate large aircraft as well as smaller planes.

A newly refurbished rail spur connects the airport with the mainline railroad. The new rail, operated by Transport Handling Specialists, provides service to existing airport/industrial park customers, as well as creating opportunities for new clients.

"We are currently developing a rail terminal on the east side of town, which will create more warehousing and distribution opportunities, and strengthen the

An advertisement for Big Spring, Texas, featuring a large sign that reads "The upcoming Transportation HUB for Texas". The sign also includes the text "Rich History | Big Possibilities", "Big Spring Texas", and "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT". There are several smaller images on the sign: a map of Texas, a map of Big Spring, a photo of a train, and a photo of a highway interchange. At the bottom, there is a QR code and the website "www.bigspringtx.com * (432) 264-6032 * info@bigspringtx.com".

Ports-to-Plains Corridor,” Wegman says.

A soon-to-be-built relief around the west side near the airpark will provide additional opportunities for commercial development and utilization of the airpark.

Lubbock Leads the Way

“A lot of people may not have heard of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor,” says John Osborne, president and CEO of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) and its partner organization, Market Lubbock Inc. To change that, Osborne and his team are committed to working with members of both organizations to promote the area’s business benefits.

“Cooperation is a powerful tool to develop the corridor to its fullest potential,” says Chris Allen, director of the Foreign Trade Zone for the LEDA.

The extraordinary level of collaboration and cooperation inherent in the Ports-to-Plains Alliance has its roots in the history of the Plains region. The area’s pioneers were compelled to rely on each other when the region was sparsely populated.

“Over the course of decades, it became a farming community,” Osborne says. “That same spirit of cooperation remains today. Farmers still need to rely on each other. We need each other to survive and thrive.”

A healthy transportation system supports the Lubbock region, which proudly proclaims itself the “Hub City” for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Major interstates and highways, including Interstate 27, connect the city to the two major east-west interstate systems: Interstate 20 and Interstate 40.

The city offers rail access as well. Lubbock is located on the main line of the BNSF Railway, which connects the city to major metropolitan areas of the central and western United States. The Lubbock Rail Port, a 526-acre tract of land located just north of the Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport, provides convenient access to Interstate 27, BNSF Railway, and the airport.

“Having easy access to an international airport is critical in expediting exports and imports,” notes Allen.

The Lubbock Rail Port is currently buzzing with activity, thanks to new rail and road construction funded by a \$1.5-million matching grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

If all roads – not to mention airways and train tracks – lead to Lubbock, it also is fair to say that all winds blow in its direction.

Located on the high plains of West Texas, Lubbock is home to the National Institute for Renewable Energy, and Texas Tech University’s Wind Science and

Engineering Research Center. Texas Tech has been a leader in wind energy research for more than 40 years, and offers the country’s only Ph.D. program in Wind Science and Engineering.

Lubbock offers easy access to wind-generation farms, research facilities, and turbine manufacturing plants located in the Panhandle region.

Amarillo’s Ideal Spot

In Amarillo, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance has a strategic partner positioned mid-continent with access from California all the way to North Carolina. Interstate 40 runs east to west through the state and beyond, and Interstate 27 is the thoroughfare to the north and south.

It is little wonder, then, that the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is a key member of the alliance.

“Alliance is a perfect term,” says Ashton Allison, the Amarillo EDC’s director of marketing and communications. “All the communities align themselves, creating a carefully and thoughtfully constructed dialogue to advance the corridor’s interests.”

As one of the largest cities along the corridor, Amarillo benefits from the



The Ports-to-Plains Corridor serves eight of the United States’ top 10 installed wind-generation states, generating more than 6,000 megawatts, or nearly 78 percent of total U.S. wind energy.

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full array of economic development opportunities the Ports-to-Plains Alliance offers.

Another organization of like-minded interests, the High Ground of Texas, also serves the region. The 25-year-old organization represents some 75 members in the West Texas region. The group's principal purpose is to create jobs and increase the region's tax base.


"Within that coalition, all the communities work together in an unconventional way," Allison says. "We all recognize that what is good for any one of us is good for the region as a whole."

The Amarillo region's advantages are well-recognized. The city ranked 17th in the small cities category out of 179 metropolitan areas in the nation in the 2012 Milken Institute Best-Performing Cities Index, which ranks U.S. metropolitan areas by how well they are creating and sustaining jobs and economic growth. Factors considered for the distinction include job, wage and salary, and technology growth.

"Among Amarillo's strengths is its workforce," says Allison.

"Companies from outside the region that locate here often say the city's workforce is the best they have found anywhere."

The quality of life in Amarillo matches the quality of its workers. The city offers an ideal business climate, low cost of living, a safe environment, excellent schools, and diverse neighborhoods.



AMARILLO WILL BLOW YOU AWAY

- Mid-continent location at the intersection of Ports-to-Plains trade corridor. Coast-to-coast interstate highway access
- One of the largest international airport runways on Earth
- Home to Bell Helicopter's Military Aircraft Assembly Center, including the revolutionary V-22 Osprey; also home to the 525 Relentless Civilian Helicopter (pictured above)
- Headquarters of Alstom's North American Wind Division

Over the past 24 years, over 100 companies have chosen Amarillo. To see who and why, visit: amarilloedc.com/PortfolioOfSuccess.

AMARILLO TEXAS
The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation
amarilloedc.com 800.333.7892

These advantages set the stage for even more success for the city and the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, of which it is such an important part.

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor creates an intersection of opportunities and challenges. The opportunities are abundantly clear, and they are being embraced

not only in Big Spring, Lubbock, and Amarillo, but at all points along the corridor. In Texas alone, \$250 million has been approved for corridor-related projects in just the past two years, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance reports.

The challenges lie in transportation infrastructure. That's where the Ports-to-Plains Alliance comes in. "There is such a shortage of transportation funding nationwide that we really have to work together as advocates," Reeves says. "The needs in urban areas are different. We work with other rural organizations on behalf of our region."

The alliance's advocacy efforts are focused primarily on state legislatures, but the organization is also actively promoting relationships with Mexico and Canada.

"And we stay updated on what's going on in Washington, D.C.," Reeves adds, with lobbying targeted to transportation, energy, and agriculture issues.

"The Ports-to-Plains Corridor represents a great economic boom for our states and our country," says Reeves.

"We look forward to North American energy independence, but we must have the transportation infrastructure to get there."

For information on featuring your region in an Economic Development Supplement, contact James O. Armstrong at 314-984-9007 or jjm@inboundlogistics.com.



Amarillo Economic Development Corporation • amarilloedc.com

Currently ranked #17 out of 179 metros in the United States for creating and sustaining jobs and economic growth by the Milken Institute, Amarillo, which is located in America's breadbasket, provides one of the tastiest distribution centers in North America. Food processors find abundant growers, rail, air, and truck transportation, as well as a hard-working and productive labor force.

Big Spring Economic Development • www.bigspringtx.com

Big Spring is located at the crossroads of U.S. Interstate Highway 20, State Highway 87, State Highway 350 and State Highway 176 in West Texas. Big Spring has a diverse and varied economy. Oil and gas production became a major economic force in the early 1900s and continues today. Today the economy has grown to include refining, manufacturing, wind energy production, transportation, governmental services, and a broad range of healthcare services. To learn more about Big Spring's industrial community and economic development initiatives, visit the Web site.



Community Futures Southwest • www.cfsask.ca/southwest

Community Futures Southwest, which is based in Swift Current, SK, Canada, promotes economic and business development in its entire region. A part of their mandate is to work with communities in the Southwest part of Saskatchewan in stimulating the economy and developing a growth strategy. This organization also helps entrepreneurs get on their feet, one good idea at a time.

Lubbock Economic Development Alliance • lubbockeda.org

Lubbock's highly skilled and educated workforce, proximity and connection to major national and international markets, and affordable utility and living costs make it the ideal place to grow your business. Lubbock's diverse economy is based on manufacturing, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade services, as well as government, education and healthcare. Visit the Web site for more information.



Ports-to-Plains Alliance • www.portstoplains.com

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance, based in Lubbock, Texas, is a non-profit, non-partisan, community-driven advocacy group led by mayors, council representatives, economic development officials, business and other opinion leaders from a nine-state, 2,300-plus mile economic development corridor between Texas, and Alberta, Canada. Over the past decade, Ports-to-Plains Alliance members have raised more than \$1 billion in federal funding for road improvements in the Ports-to-Plains region. Today, the Alliance collaborates with federal and state leaders, partners in Canada and Mexico, and industry partners, to deliver the infrastructure, food, and fuel to secure the quality of life in America's great cities.