

Laredo hosted state-wide customs broker's conference

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Using Laredo's port and its trading status as a backdrop, the Texas Brokers and Forwarders Association met in this Texas Gateway city from Oct. 7-9.

This year's annual conference titled "Secure Ports, Secure Trade" happened at the Embassy Suites. Made possible through the efforts of six participating Texas brokers and freight forwarding associations, the state conference provided two and a half days of fully packed educational sessions on current topics affecting customs brokers, freight forwarders and international trade in general, and qualifies for continuing education points. The best and brightest of presenters were scheduled to be in Laredo from around the country to bring attendees and members up to date on the latest issues.

"We are very excited to have the state organization here; the Laredo Licensed U.S. Customs Brokers Association together with our partners, have worked hard to put forth a great program and show-case our community at the same time," stated Jose D. Gonzalez, local broker and president of the LLUSCBA. "We have several tours, a golf outing, and other opportunities for our guests to experience the best of what Laredo has to offer."

The 2010 Conference focused on secure trade and included a tour of the Laredo District U.S. Customs and Border Protection's World Trade Bridge operation, which allowed for a live-lab atmosphere and



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assisted with creating a better understanding of how to comply and react to recent governmental regulatory changes.

Affiliated associations responsible for this event are the Brownsville Customs Brokers Association, the Houston Customhouse Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association, Laredo Licensed U.S. Customs Brokers Association, Inc., the North Texas Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association, the Rio Grande Valley Customs Brokers Association and the West Texas/New Mexico Customs Brokers Association.

One of the conference goals was to improve and strengthen the working relationship between the industry and the federal regulatory authorities that are a constant for customs brokers and freight forwarders. This conference opportunity also supported the advancement of the field by allowing global logistics leaders to network with each other and share best practices.

"Today, perhaps more than at any other time in our history, we are confronted with rapid and sweeping changes both within the industry and in the marketplace," added Gonzalez, lead organizer of the conference. "One of the keys to dealing successfully with these changes is knowledge."

The conference presentations, workshops and World Trade Bridge tour focused on the latest industry issues and trends, and provide the platform for attendees to both hone their respective special expertise and expand their general knowledge about all facets of the industry.

"Secure Ports, Secure Trade" organizers saw approximately 200 attendees this year and look forward to creating a number of ambassadors that will relay their positive experiences to other parts of the state of Texas about the secure trading environment of Laredo and its history-rich, advanced trade handling community.