



# PORTS-TO-PLAINS INFORMATION HIGHWAY

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**Ports-to-Plains Coalition**  
**Michael Reeves-President**  
5401 N. MLK Blvd.,  
Unit 395  
Lubbock, TX 79403  
Phone: (806) 775-2338  
Fax: (806) 775-3981

## Great Plains International Conference

Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition leaders and communities celebrate energy and trade security, wind power, and new Canadian partnerships, at Great Plains International Conference in Denver, September 19-21, 2007

*By: Coalition staff, September 28, 2007*

On September 19-21, the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition hosted the Great Plains International Conference 2007 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Denver, Colorado, gathering hundreds of elected and government officials, business leaders, communities and citizens from Laredo, Texas, and the Alberta-Montana border, to examine how to work together to secure the benefits of trade, promote energy security and strengthen trade linkages to western Canada, on behalf of the communities of the Great Plains, North America's energy and agricultural heartland. The Colorado Department of Transportation and Texas Department of Transportation were co-hosts.

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## State Ready To Develop Finance Plan For Ports-to-Plains Corridor

DENVER - Texas transportation officials say it is time to come up with a plan to pay for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, which many local officials predict will create new jobs and economic opportunity for West Texas.

The Texas Department of Transportation announced it will form a working group to develop a financial master plan for Ports-to-Plains.

"It is time to establish the financial plan so we know exactly what we're aiming for," said Fred Underwood, member of the Texas Transportation Commission. "Our agency will devote the resources to getting this done in partnership with the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition. We must make this corridor a reality and make Ports-to-Plains a familiar name to communities along this route who will benefit tremendously from its completion."

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## Great Plains International Conference - continued from page page 1

Major events of the conference included: Texas Transportation Commissioner Fred Underwood announced TxDOT would develop financial master plan for the Ports-to-Plains project; Len Mitzel, a Member of Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, Canada's energy powerhouse and a potential candidate for Coalition membership, spoke on behalf of the Alberta Minister of Transportation, and invited Coalition leadership (including state officials) to Alberta for follow-up meetings; and wind energy leaders, including the former U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chair and former chair of the Texas Public Utility Commission, provided valuable guidance and encouragement for the Coalition's proposed integrated highway-wind power infrastructure program.



Len Mitzel, member of Alberta Legislative Assembly, Monica Heron, Senior Trade Commissioner The Consulate General of Canada, Denver, Joe Kiely, Ports to Plains Vice President and Ron Covais, President, CBD, The Americas Lockheed Martin, at the Great Plains International Conference.

The Great Plains International Conference was the first formal gathering of three Congressionally-designated north-south High Priority Corridors that, together, form the primary trade corridor serving the states of the Great Plains: Ports-to-Plains (from Laredo to Denver); The Heartland Expressway (from Denver to Rapid City, South Dakota); and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (from Rapid City to the Canadian border provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan). Over 200 people attended the 3-day conference, whose agenda focused on three primary themes:

- Working together to finance and expeditiously maintain or improve secure, efficient trade infrastructure investment to help the largely rural communities of the Great Plains region to secure the benefits of trade.
- Collaborating to better capitalize upon new trends in the global economy, and enhance the competitiveness of Great Plains industries, workers and communities relative to the global marketplace, and to enhance the attractiveness of Great Plains communities as sites for new investment.
- Regional strategies to promote the new Midwest energy economy, including conventional sectors like Alberta's oil sands, and the emerging renewables sector (including biofuels and wind power), to ensure abundant affordable fuels for our own growth and to reduce our dependence foreign governments for crude oil.

According to Ports-to-Plains President Michael Reeves, "Ports-to-Plains is America's rural freight alternative, offering shippers, carriers, the energy and agricultural communities, first responders and the military, a low density, low congestion, high-mobility alternative to America's major interurban super-corridors. In Texas, Ports-to-Plains is also a pathway for expediting Texas' booming wind power sector. It is a model for integrated infrastructure planning we hope to replicate in other Coalition states."

Mr. Reeves' vision is grounded in existing reality. By expanding its membership to include the nine Great Plains states, including the three existing High Priority Corridor groups, the Coalition's assets would include:

- A major U.S. trading region with 38.5 million citizens generating 14% of total U.S. GDP (\$1.7 trillion), including \$166.7 billion in trade with Canada and Mexico, nearly 20% of total U.S.-NAFTA trade.
- A powerful and effective U.S. Congressional Caucus; together, we have secured over \$270 million to develop, build and improve the Corridor in all 9 Coalition states.
- 6 major cross-border ports to Canada & Mexico, including NAFTA's #2 and #15 busiest crossings (Laredo-Nuevo Laredo & Sweetgrass-Coutts).
- 7 of the top 10 U.S. states for installed and potential wind energy, generating over 5185MW, nearly 45% of the U.S. total.
- North America's agricultural heartland, producing \$44.3 billion of agricultural goods, or 22.1% of the U.S. total; 6 of the top 10 farm states.
- Nearly 25% of U.S. ethanol refining capacity, with 33 existing refineries and more underway.

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## State Ready To Develop Finance Plan - *continued from page 1*

Underwood spoke at the Great Plains International Conference in Denver, Colorado Sept. 20.

Ports-to-Plains is a proposed divided highway corridor stretching from Laredo through West Texas to Denver, Colorado. Designated as a High Priority Corridor by Congress in 1998, the Ports-to-Plains corridor is intended to expand economic opportunity and serve international trade from Mexico to Canada.

Despite the congressional designation, adequate federal funding has not been provided to cover the cost of the project.

"TxDOT and Commissioner Underwood understand the need for innovative transportation solutions is not limited to metropolitan areas" said Michael Reeves, president of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Coalition.

"We look forward to partnering with them to find the best financing plan that will work for our rural corridor. Ports-to-Plains and TxDOT have worked together to secure the benefits of trade for West Texas, and we are excited to be taking the next step."

In addition to being a catalyst for economic development and job creation, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor could provide a way to transfer energy generated by wind turbines in West Texas to other parts of Texas and the southwest, according to Underwood.

"If you drive through West Texas, you will likely see large wind turbines that dot the horizon," Underwood said. "These turbines are creating vast amounts of clean and renewable energy."

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor would provide a fantastic opportunity to move this energy to cities in need of power."

West Texas agriculture will also benefit from Ports-to-Plains, according to Reeves.

"Today 40 percent of all U.S. agriculture products are exported," he said. "Ports-to-Plains is vital for West Texas farmers and ranchers to compete in a global market."

Earlier this year, Cambridge Systematics issued a report to TxDOT outlining the rural development opportunities if Ports-to-Plains is built as part of the proposed Trans-Texas Corridor project.

"As Texas grows by 1,000 people a day, the Trans-Texas Corridor is about making transportation safer, faster and more reliable," said Underwood. "It will improve mobility by providing additional driving lanes, options for rail travel, and routes to divert long-distance traffic from local roadways."

## Great Plains International Conference - *continued from page page 2*

To validate the Great Plains strategy, the Coalition invited some of America's top trade, infrastructure and energy leaders to offer their perspectives. Fred Underwood, Texas Transportation Commissioner, chose the Great Plains International Conference to announce a TxDOT work group to develop a financial master plan to complete the Ports-to-Plains corridor. "It is time to establish the financial plan so we know exactly what we are aiming for," Underwood said in Denver. "We must make this corridor a reality and make Ports-to-Plains a familiar name to communities along this route who will benefit tremendously from its completion."

Mr. Mitzel attended the Great Plains conference on behalf of Alberta Minister of Transportation Luke Ouellette. Alberta has the second largest proven oil reserves in the world; only Saudi Arabia has more proven reserves. "It's fortunate for both the U.S. and Alberta that the world's second largest energy resource is located right next door to the world's largest energy market." Mr. Mitzel said. "Who would you rather buy your energy from?" he asked.



CDOT Executive Director Russ George, Texas Transportation Commissioner Fred Underwood and Colorado Transportation Commission Chairman Doug Aden visit at a reception at the Great Plains International Conference.

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## Great Plains International Conference - *continued from page page 3*

"Alberta's boom is North America's boom," Mr. Mitzel said. Like communities in Texas, Alberta needs new infrastructure to sustain its prosperity and to support the heavy new flows of trade across its borders. Much of that traffic is made up of American trucks carrying U.S. products to the Alberta oil patch: machinery; base metal tools; vehicle parts; iron and steel products; medical equipment; plastics and chemicals; and produce.

Alberta views the Ports-to-Plains coalition as a means of promoting a project it considers vital to secure, efficient, reliable Alberta-U.S. trade. Almost all Alberta-U.S. truck trade crosses at Sweetgrass, MT-Coutts, AB crossing, the 4th busiest port of entry on the U.S.-Canada border and the only 24-hour crossing between Alberta and the U.S. Alberta and Montana have begun to work together to lobby for a second 24-hour crossing that would provide more direct, efficient, and uncongested access to the booming oil sands region of northeast Alberta.

In a presentation entitled, "Wind, The Other Kind of Highway," former FERC Chair Pat Wood, now a private wind power developer, remarked upon the Ports-to-Plains corridor's "beautiful wind profile," due to its alignment through some of America's top wind power states. He endorsed the coalition approach and offered encouragement for the Ports-to-Plains wind power strategy. "Where the highways go, the business activity, population growth and the load goes," he said.

Colorado Agriculture Commissioner John Stulp, a farmer and successful wind entrepreneur, spoke from his personal experience developing a wind operation on his family farm and how, as a commissioner of Prowers County Colorado, he helped his community expand local tax base, build new schools and create new local jobs through the promotion of wind power in the county. "How do you measure hope?" he asked, in conclusion. Today, he noted, young people are coming back home, excited by the opportunity to preserve the rural way of life, while becoming a part of an exciting new energy economy.

Ron Covais, President of Lockheed Martin Americas, and U.S. Chair, North American Competitiveness Council, reported upon the recent Montebello Summit of the NAFTA heads of state, and the recent NACC report on the NAFTA Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). Two post-9/11 realities dominate NACC activities, he said: 1) After 9/11, international business and homeland security are intertwined; and 2) North American business will increasingly grapple with intense competition from the "BRIC" nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Under the circumstances, it is both necessary and appropriate to have the private sector on the front lines helping NAFTA governments to develop strategies for a secure, prosperous North America.

In his closing remarks, TxDOT Interim Executive Director Steve Simmons emphasized the impending funding crisis America's departments of transportation face in the very near future. He called on Coalition members to be active, make full use of the Coalition, and figure out new ways to get resources to maintain and improve the region's increasingly degraded infrastructure. Borrowing a phrase from Texas football, he concluded by calling on Coalition members and friends to "Come early, be loud and stay late."

The Great Plains conference helped to demonstrate that the Ports-to-Plains coalition has significant potential as a NAFTA-wide program, embracing interests from Coahuila to Alberta. Coalition staff and leadership have begun planning on next steps to more fully engage U.S. states and Canadian provinces on the northern end of the Great Plains region, particularly those at key connection points at the border, including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana.

"The Ports-to-Plains corridor have already done much of the spade work necessary to build the road from Laredo to Denver," said Sid Cauthorn, Chairman of the Board of the Ports-to-Plains coalition. "Now, we can focus on how to use that asset to achieve our longer term goals: to create jobs; to attract new investment; to promote exciting new renewable industries like wind power and biofuels; and to reduce America's dependence on hostile sources of crude oil. And as Len Mitzel told us, we haven't even begun to fully appreciate or explore the abundant opportunities north of the border."

"Ports-to-Plains is not just about pot-holes anymore," said Michael Reeves after the conference. "Mind you, we will always care about pot-holes. But now, we can begin to look down our new road at the future, and the new possibilities that road will open up for our communities."

## Prairie-to-Ports Gateway & SmartPort

The Prairie-to-Ports Gateway and SmartPort is a new initiative based in the province of Saskatchewan. One of the main focuses is to inter-connect the Canadian Prairie with the Great Plains International Corridor.

At the present time the Canadian Prairies and U.S. Great Plains exporters from all sectors struggle with costly and difficult access to export containers to send products to export markets. Many of these products have greater value to foreign customers when packaged in containers. This economic challenge is made even more frustrating when juxtaposed with extensive container traffic passing through the Canadian prairies, most of which are empty on their return to coastal ports.

An integrated, full-service Prairie-to-Ports Gateway & SmartPort, that can be proven to increase system efficiencies, will generate compelling reasons for empty container traffic to stop and reload in the tri-city region of Moose Jaw, Regina and Saskatoon in the province of Saskatchewan.

Borrowing from the successful experience of the Kansas City SmartPort and elsewhere, this Saskatchewan-based inland "smart port" is an integrated economic development zone or branded region designed to stimulate added trade flows and investment within a larger continental and global trade network. It is a virtual port based on integrating & coordinating the physical infrastructure within a region. It is not a single location, nor a single project, nor a specific investment. It is multiple locations with many projects and significant investments across the region, which together can be much more than any one single location.

The growing export volumes of containerized agricultural products (e.g. pulse crops, processed meats and organics) will be able to fill empty backhauls at cost advantages to shippers. Inbound containers will be trans-loaded and re-packed to truck traffic or other freight movement for its longer continental journey. A rapid "container feeding cycle" will be generated, with enhanced container recycling from North America in days rather than weeks. Alternative trans-loading sites within the Prairie Gateway region will relieve coastal congestion along the North American West Coast as well as relieve the current congestion in other inland sites like Chicago and Toronto.

The primary focus of Prairie Gateway project is to provide competitive trans-load and re-load, custom clearing, enhanced security, intelligent transportation services; and a host of other value-adding services to:

- Attract volumes of in-bound marine containers to the province to foreign trade zones [economic development centres] for transloading and distribution; and
- Source the required out-bound [i.e. balanced] volume of prairie regional goods (including northern U.S. States), for each month of the year, that are destined for export.
- Promote the SmartPort assets of roads, rail and air networks and transportation business support services.

For more information, contact Doug Campbell, CEO, Prairie-to-Ports Gateway and SmartPort at [doug.campbell@prairiegateway.ca](mailto:doug.campbell@prairiegateway.ca) or 403-831-3475.

### Staff Contact Information

#### Ports-to-Plains Corridor Coalition

5401 N MLK Blvd. Unit 395  
Lubbock, TX 79403  
phone: (806) 775-3373  
fax: (806) 775-3981

#### Michael Reeves-President

5401 N MLK Blvd. Unit 395  
Lubbock, TX 79403  
Phone (806) 775-2338 Fax (806) 775-3981  
E-mail - [michael.reeves@ports-to-plains.com](mailto:michael.reeves@ports-to-plains.com)

#### Joe Kiely-Vice President

P.O. Box 9  
Limon, CO 80828  
Phone (719) 775-2346 Fax (719) 775-9073  
E-mail - [joe.kiely@ports-to-plains.com](mailto:joe.kiely@ports-to-plains.com)

#### Duffy Hinkle-Vice President

5401 N MLK Blvd. Unit 395  
Lubbock, TX 79403  
Phone (806) 775-3373 Fax (806) 775-3981  
E-mail - [duffy.hinkle@ports-to-plains.com](mailto:duffy.hinkle@ports-to-plains.com)

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## TxDOT Selects Executive Director

AUSTIN - Amadeo Saenz, a transportation engineer with 29 years state experience, including leadership roles in Pharr and Austin, is the new executive director of the Texas Department of Transportation, becoming the first Hispanic to head the agency in its 90-year history.

Saenz, 51, was named to the state's top transportation position September 27 by the Texas Transportation Commission. He becomes the 19th person to head the transportation agency since it was created in 1917.

"Amadeo has the unique combination of experience, knowledge and skill necessary to lead TxDOT and meet the growing transportation challenge we face in Texas," said Ric Williamson, Texas Transportation Commission chairman.

Since 2001, Saenz has served as TxDOT's assistant executive director for engineering operations. He has been instrumental in implementing the department's strategies to use all financial options

to build transportation projects, empower local and regional leaders to solve transportation problems, increase competition to reduce costs and make consumer-driven decisions.

"Amadeo is eminently qualified to focus the employees of the department on reducing congestion, enhancing safety, expanding economic opportunity, improving air quality and increasing the value of the state's transportation assets," said commission member Fred Underwood.

Saenz, a native of Hebbronville, was district engineer in TxDOT's Pharr District from 1993 to 2001 and was in charge of all department activities in an eight-county region. He oversaw TxDOT's response when the Queen Isabella Causeway was hit by a barge in 2001 and directed emergency repairs, which were completed in less than three months.

Saenz held numerous other engineering positions in the Pharr District after joining TxDOT in 1978.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Quiz:

How will Texas Keep Ports to Plains Moving?

- a. Bake Sale.
- b. Michael Reeves will mow lawns.
- c. Innovative partnerships.

For the answer to this and so much more go to:

[www.KeepTexasMoving.com](http://www.KeepTexasMoving.com)

and click on Ports to Plains.

P.S. Enjoy the conference!



## Ports-to-Plains Investors in Progress

Municipal Investors	County Government Investors
<p>City of Abernathy - TX            City of Amarillo - TX            City of Big Spring - TX            City of Boise City - OK            Town of Clayton - NM            City of Del Rio - TX            City of Dumas - TX            Town of Eads - CO            City of Hale Center - TX            City of Happy - TX            City of Lamar - CO            City of Lamesa - TX            Town of Limon - CO            City of Lubbock - TX            City of New Deal - TX            City of Plainview - TX            City of Raton - NM            City of San Angelo - TX            Town of Springfield - CO            City of Stratford - TX            City of Sonora - TX            City of Tahoka - TX            City of Tulia - TX</p>	<p>Cheyenne County - CO            Cimarron County - OK            Colfax County - NM            Elbert County - CO            Hale County - TX            Howard County - TX            Kiowa County - CO            Lincoln County - CO            Lubbock County - TX            Maverick County - TX            Moore County - TX            Prowers County - CO            Sherman County - TX            Sterling County - TX            Sutton County - TX            Tom Green County - TX            Union County - NM            Val Verde County - TX</p>
Economic Development Corp. Investors	Chamber of Commerce Investors
<p>Amarillo Economic Development Corporation - TX            Adams County Economic Development - CO            Canyon Economic Development Corp. - TX            Metro Denver Economic Development Corp. - CO            Dumas Economic Development Corporation - TX            Lamesa Economic Development Corporation - TX            Laredo Development Foundation - TX            Lincoln County Economic Development - CO            Lubbock Economic Development Alliance - TX            Maverick County Development Corporation - TX            Moore Development for Big Spring - TX            Plainview/Hale County Industrial Foundation Inc. - TX            Sonora Industrial Development - TX            I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership - CO</p>	<p>Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce - TX            Chamber of the Americas            Cimarron County Chamber of Commerce - OK            Dalhart Chamber of Commerce - TX            Dumas/Moore County Chamber of Commerce - TX            Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce - TX            Lamesa Chamber of Commerce - TX            Lubbock Chamber of Commerce - TX            San Angelo Chamber of Commerce - TX            Stratford Chamber of Commerce - TX            Sonora Chamber of Commerce - TX</p>
Other Investors	Conference Investors
<p>Amarillo College - TX            Central 57 Importers &amp; Exporters, Inc. - TX            Colorado Motor Carriers Association - CO            Ehler &amp; Hettler, LLP - TX            Lubbock Christian University - TX            Panhandle Regional Planning Commission - TX            Plainview Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau - TX            South Plains Association of Governments - TX            Texas Tech University - TX            TransPort - CO            Wayland Baptist University - TX            West Texas A&amp;M University - TX</p>	<p>Del Rio Economic Dev. Corp. and City of Acuña            Além International Management, Inc.            Aquila            The Bank &amp; Trust            City and County of Denver            Colorado Asphalt Paving Association            Colorado Contractors Association            Colorado Office of Economic Development/Eastern Colorado            Colorado Motor Carriers Association            DMJM+HARRIS            Dumas Economic Development Corporation            Hugo Reed &amp; Associates, Inc.            Laredo Development Foundation            Metro Denver Economic Development Corp.            Panhandle Area Development District            Parkhill, Smith &amp; Cooper, Inc.            Pate Engineers, Inc./Pate Transportation Partners            Peoples Bank            Reece Albert, Inc.            State National Bank            Stratford Grain Company            Texas Good Roads            Theodore Roosevelt Expressway            Turner Collie &amp; Braden            Valero Energy            Xcel Energy - Colorado Region            Xcel Energy - Texas Region</p>