



PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE

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

News Release - For Immediate Release

March 8, 2016

Contact: Michael Reeves
(806) 775-2338
michael.reeves@portstoplains.com

Ports-to-Plains, LEDA host Energy and Ag Summit

"The fact is, this is different from anything we have ever seen, and what may have worked for you during the last downturn in the oil industry, may not work this time," said Baron Lukas, President of Vital Strategies. "This time it's not only different; it is in reality, the beginning of a new age. A time when the U.S. is on the verge of energy independence, global demographics are drastically changing, and the global strategic situation is becoming ever more unstable." Lukas will speak at the 2016 Ports-to-Plains Energy and Ag Summit co-hosted by the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, March 30 – 31 at the Arbor Hotel and Conference Center in Lubbock.

A retired Marine Corps Colonel and former COO of a privately held company in the oil and gas sector, Lukas has over 35 years of leadership, management, and mentoring experience. He spent 27 years as a commissioned officer and fighter pilot in the U.S. Marines. He served in numerous command, operational, training, staff, and diplomatic positions. Upon retirement from the military in 2007, Baron joined Western Commerce Group as Managing Director. Western Commerce group is a regional M&A investment banking, private equity, wealth management, and consulting group based in Fort Worth, Texas. In 2008, Baron was asked to join HSC as its COO. HSC is a privately held oilfield, industrial, and mining supply, services, and manufacturing company with more than 20 locations nationwide.

In spite of the recent slump in oil prices, energy continues to play a key role in economy of the Ports-to-Plains region that stretches from Alberta, Canada, through West Texas and on to Mexico's west coast. Traditional resources such as oil and gas, as well as renewable energy such as wind are responsible for many jobs throughout the region.

"Energy and agriculture are so important to our region, and it is vital that we understand the issues facing these industries," said Ports-to-Plains President Michael Reeves. "We have assembled a great lineup of speakers for this conference that will give you great insight into these critical economic drivers."

"The dynamic changes in our energy sector right now are of major interest to Lubbock businesses, as those changes drive business decisions both short-term and long-term. Likewise, agriculture continues to be the cornerstone of our community and an industry that will continue to drive Lubbock's economy for years to come," said Lubbock Economic Development Alliance CEO John Osborne.

Agriculture presentations include former House Ag Committee Chairman Larry Combest's insights on federal issues. Representatives from Monsanto and Continental Dairy Facilities Southwest will give updates on their recently announced projects that will be significant job creators on the South Plains. Texas Tech Health Science Center President Dr. Tedd Mitchell, M.D. is slated to provide an update on the proposed Texas Tech School of Veterinary Medicine. And Plains Cotton Growers Executive Vice President Steve Verett is one of the speakers addressing challenges in the cotton industry.

Energy presentations will showcase the region's diverse and productive energy production portfolio from oil and gas to renewable sources such as wind and solar.

The event will also draw international speakers and attendees. Consul General of Canada Sara Wilshaw will discuss trade opportunities with the United States largest trade partner and northern neighbor, while presentations from Ports-to-Plains partners in Mexico will share the developments in Texas' largest foreign trade market.

A strong transportation infrastructure is critical to moving the region's ag and energy products to market, and these issues will be featured as well. Lubbock Mayor and Ports-to-Plains Treasurer Glen Robertson will give an update on efforts to extend Interstate 27. Texas Department of Transportation Interim Director of Freight and International Trade will speak on the Texas Freight Mobility Plan and what it means for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Registration is required and information and full details about the Energy and Ag Summit are available on the Ports-to-Plains website at portstoplains.com.

Ports-to-Plains is a grassroots alliance of over 275 communities and businesses, including alliance partners Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor Coalition, whose mission is to advocate for a robust international transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland including Mexico to Canada. Additional information on the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is available at <http://www.portstoplains.com/>.