SPECIAL ISSUE
SEPTEMBER 2025

LAREDO IS ON THE RISE!

Border Insight



32nd Anniversary

Featured Article

PATHWAYS FOR TRADE:
THE LOGISTICS AND MANUFACTURING SYMPOSIUM

THE NEW ERA OF TRADE
PERSPECTIVES & OPPORTUNITIES

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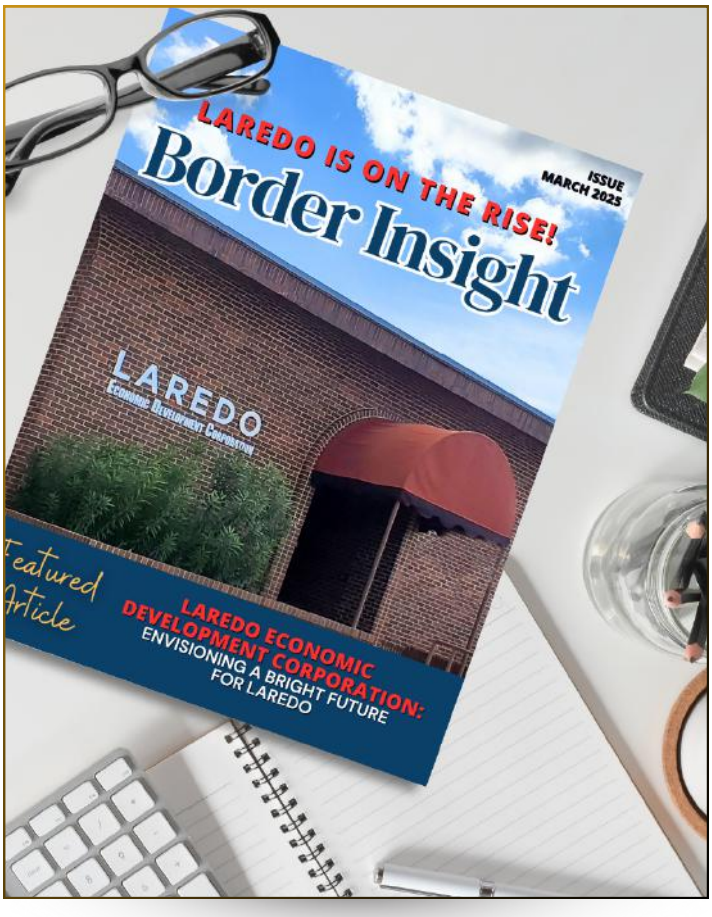


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32nd Anniversary

Pathways for Trade

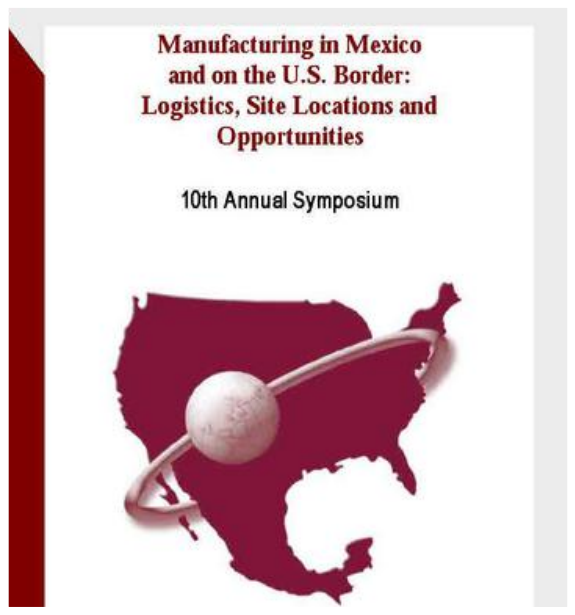
The Logistics & Manufacturing Symposium

THE NEW ERA OF TRADE: PERSPECTIVES & OPPORTUNITIES

August 27-28, 2025 ▪ Laredo Country Club



LAREDO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION







32 YEARS OF BINATIONAL COLLABORATION: A LEGACY OF THE SYMPOSIUM

A Vision That Began in 1994

What began as a local initiative to foster dialogue between industry leaders and government officials quickly grew into a respected forum that has, for three decades, strengthened the partnership between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.

Mr. Ed Sherwood, Mark Pease, William Green, and Jerry Brochin (Founders of LMA) contributed their vision, helping to guide discussions and ensure the symposium remained a valuable platform for collaboration. Their efforts have been instrumental in establishing the symposium as a cornerstone of cross-border dialogue.

Over the years, this forum has evolved into a vital platform for discussing cross-border trade, economic development, trade and logistics, infrastructure investment, public health, sustainable development, workforce growth and other shared opportunities.

The symposium's longevity is a testament to the leadership and dedication of individuals who recognized its importance.

The annual symposium draw participants from diverse sectors, including business, politics, and academia, fostering a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding. This ongoing dialogue not only addresses immediate concerns but also anticipates future opportunities in an ever-changing global landscape.

Expanding Reach and Prestige

Over the years, the symposium has evolved significantly, hosting its events in diverse venues that reflect its growing stature. Initially held at Texas A&M International University, the symposium benefited from an academic setting that emphasized its ties to education and research. More recently, the event has taken place at the Laredo Country Club, elevating it to a more sophisticated level by offering a luxurious conference environment. This change has enhanced the symposium's appeal, providing participants with an extraordinary setting for networking and in-depth discussions.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 and 2021, the symposium demonstrated remarkable adaptability by shifting to a virtual format. This transition was crucial in maintaining its mission, ensuring that essential conversations continued despite the global challenges in trade and public health during this critical period.

Commemorating the 32nd Anniversary

The 32nd Anniversary Commemorative Symposium was more than just a celebration of its past achievements; it was a reaffirmation of the event's fundamental mission. Attendees took the opportunity to reflect on the journey that began with the first meeting at La Posada Hotel, recognizing the importance of further enhancing this legacy.

This milestone event underscored the significant progress made through continuous dialogue among industry, government, and community leaders. It also provided a platform to look ahead, acknowledging that emerging challenges such as climate change, evolving global trade dynamics, and rapid technological advancements demand even stronger binational cooperation. The symposium continues to be an essential forum for addressing these pressing issues and fostering collaboration across borders.









Looking Ahead

As the symposium entered its 32nd year and beyond, its role as a model of binational cooperation is as vital today as it was in 1994. By honoring the vision of its founders and the commitment of participants, the symposium continues to embody the spirit of unity, resilience, and shared progress.

Under the leadership of the Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), the event has evolved into the Pathways for Trade Symposium—a premier platform for industry leaders, policymakers, and educators to discuss the future of a technology-driven supply chain. The symposium now focuses on innovations that enhance efficiency, security, and economic competitiveness across North America, ensuring that the region stays ahead in a rapidly evolving global marketplace.

As industries continue to transform through digitization, automation, and sustainable practices, LEDC's guidance ensures that the region remains at the forefront of these advancements. By fostering a robust trade environment and embracing innovation, the symposium continues to prepare the region for the future—ensuring that the next generation inherits a thriving, competitive, and sustainable North American trade corridor.

From its humble beginnings to its presence at major venues like La Posada Hotel, Texas A&M International University, the Laredo Country Club, and even virtual platforms during the pandemic, the symposium has proven its adaptability, resilience, and vision. Above all, it has shown that when communities work together across borders, the results can be transformative.

Building the Next Chapter

Looking into the future, the Pathways for Trade Symposium will continue to grow in scale and impact, with plans to expand participation, attract global thought leaders, and introduce new formats that foster deeper collaboration.

By enhancing its reach and influence, the symposium is poised to become an even ***bigger, stronger, and more innovative*** **conference**—one that not only reflects the progress of the past 32 years but also sets the course for an even brighter future in binational trade and cooperation.

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2025 Distinguished Keynote Speaker



Ryan M. Rawding

Vice President,
Homeland Security Sector, BigBear.ai

Mr. Ryan Rawding serves as the Vice President for BigBear.ai's Homeland Security Sector, where he leads strategic initiatives focused on advancing national security through cutting-edge data analytics, artificial intelligence, and mission-critical technologies.

He also serves as the Project Lead for development Anomaly Detection Algorithms utilized by Customs agencies, driving innovation to enhance global trade security and enforcement. Prior to joining BigBear.ai, Mr. Rawding served as the Acting Assistant Director of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) National Targeting Center (NTC).

In this role, he oversaw one of the agency's most mission-critical operations, leading a team of over 400 federal officers, analysts, and support personnel. His portfolio spanned national security threats including terrorism, trade-based money laundering, transnational criminal organizations, alien smuggling, illegal migration, and narcotics trafficking. Throughout his CBP career, Mr. Rawding was a key architect of next-generation targeting systems. He led the implementation of machine learning, facial recognition, predictive modeling, robotic process automation, and artificial intelligence technologies across CBP operations—transforming how data is leveraged to secure U.S. borders and trade. His work enabled agency-wide innovation, driving both operational efficiency and mission impact.

Mr. Rawding began his CBP career at John F. Kennedy International Airport, where he served for over 13 years with distinction as a frontline CBP Officer before advancing through leadership roles at the National Targeting Center.
In addition to his civilian service, Mr. Rawding is a Chief Petty Officer in the United States Coast Guard Reserve, with over 22 years of service in maritime law enforcement and homeland security. As a Maritime Enforcement Specialist, he has operated in key mission areas including port and waterway security, counter-narcotics, migrant interdiction, and vessel boarding operations. He is a certified Coast Guard Boarding Officer Ashore, with specialized expertise in enforcing maritime laws at critical infrastructure sites and ports. Mr. Rawding currently serves with U.S. Coast Guard Sector Maryland–National Capital Region, responsible for the safety and security of the Chesapeake Bay, the Port of Baltimore, and surrounding waterways in the National Capital Region.

Mr. Rawding brings a unique blend of operational leadership, policy insight, and technical acumen to his work, making him a trusted voice on the future of maritime security, trade enforcement, and emerging technology integration.

2025 Distinguished Keynote Speaker

Christine Clermont

Air & Sea Vice President, Gulf Region & Warehousing
DSV Global Transport and Logistics



With over 25 years of experience in global logistics, supply chain management, and warehousing operations, Christine Clermont is a seasoned industry leader currently serving as Vice President of US Air & Sea Warehousing & Logistics at DSV – Global Transport and Logistics. In this role, she leads strategic initiatives to optimize air & sea warehousing operations across the U.S., ensuring scalable, efficient, and customer-focused logistics solutions.

Since joining DSV in 2022, Christine has held progressive leadership roles, including Director and Senior Development Manager within the US Warehousing & Air & Sea Logistics divisions.

Prior to DSV, she spent over nine years at Agility in key roles such as Director of Supply Chain Programs and Senior Manager of Operations Excellence, where she led transformative projects to improve operational performance and customer satisfaction.

Earlier in her career, Christine held leadership positions at C.H. Robinson, where she built a strong foundation in freight forwarding, global trade, and branch operations management.
Christine holds a Bachelor of Science in International Business and Spanish from Clemson University and brings a deep understanding of cross-border commerce and multicultural business environments. Known for her results-driven leadership, Christine continues to drive innovation and excellence across complex logistics networks.

Outside of work, Christine is an avid tennis player who enjoys spending time outdoors along with her husband and fur babies. She values a balanced lifestyle that blends professional achievement with personal well-being and active living.

2025 Distinguished Keynote Speaker



John Brooks

Executive Vice-President and Chief Marketing Officer
Canadian Pacific Kansas City

As Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of CPKC, John Brooks is responsible for CPKC's business units and leads a group of highly capable sales and marketing professionals across North America.

Mr. Brooks is also responsible for strengthening partnerships with existing customers, generating new opportunities for growth, enhancing the value of the company's service offerings and developing strategies to optimize CPKC's book of business.

With more than 25 years in the railroading business, Mr. Brooks brings a breadth of experience to the CMO role that is pivotal to CPKC's growth and success.

Previously, Mr. Brooks served as Executive Vice-President and Chief Marketing Officer at Canadian Pacific (CP). Throughout Mr. Brooks' sales and marketing career, he has held senior responsibilities in all lines of business, including coal, chemicals, merchandise products, grain and intermodal.

He began his railroading career with Union Pacific and later helped start I&M Rail Link, LLC, which was purchased by the Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad (DM&E) in 2002. Mr. Brooks was Vice-President of Marketing at the DM&E prior to it being acquired by CP in 2007.

At the Celebration of 30 Years of Progress, LEDC unveils the...

Pathways for Trade Ambassador Award



In 2023, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Pathways for Trade Symposium, the Laredo Economic Development Corporation marked a milestone moment by introducing a new tradition to its annual celebration.

That year, the Symposium unveiled the ***Pathways for Trade Ambassador Award***, a distinguished honor created to recognize individuals who have made a significant impact on the growth and advancement of the logistics and manufacturing industry.

As the Symposium continues to evolve, the introduction of this award underscores LEDC's commitment to honoring excellence while setting the stage for future collaborations and opportunities that keep Laredo at the forefront of global trade.

The award is designed to highlight the vision, leadership, and dedication of those who have helped shape and strengthen one of the region's most vital economic sectors.

By acknowledging these contributions, LEDC seeks not only to celebrate the achievements of industry leaders but also to inspire the next generation of professionals committed to fostering innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness in international trade.

Previous PFT Ambassador Award Recipients



Lic. Eduardo A. Garza Robles
Uni-Trade



Lic. Mario Palos Garza
Grupo Palos Garza, Inc.



Gerald Schwebel
Executive Vice President, Corporate International Division, IBC Bank



2025 Pathways for Trade Ambassador Award

The 2025 Pathways for Trade Symposium celebrated a milestone evening as it recognized INDEX Nuevo Laredo with the prestigious ***Pathways for Trade Ambassador Award***.

This year's dinner highlighted INDEX Nuevo Laredo's enduring contributions to the logistics and manufacturing industry along the U.S.-Mexico border.

For over two decades, INDEX Nuevo Laredo had served as a pillar of leadership in the maquiladora industry, fostering growth, innovation, and cross-border collaboration. Through tireless advocacy, regional partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to operational excellence, INDEX played a vital role in strengthening the binational trade corridor.

This recognition marked a well-deserved tribute to their impact and visionary leadership in shaping the future of trade.

The evening program began with welcoming remarks delivered by David A. Stedman, Sr., President and CEO of the Laredo Economic Development Corporation.

Alma Acevedo, President and CEO of Global Tooling Specialties, Inc., presented the Trade Ambassador Recognition to INDEX Nuevo Laredo President Ing. Enrique Moran. During the event, a special recognition was presented to INDEX Nacional President Ing. Humberto Martínez Cantú by Ignacio Urrabazo, Jr., President and CEO of Commerce Bank and LEDC Chairman of the Board.

The program concluded with remarks from Ing. Enrique Moran, and Ing. Humberto Martínez Cantú, who both expressed their gratitude and reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the region's economic growth and global competitiveness.





Pathways for Trade Symposium 2025: The New Era of Trade: Perspectives & Opportunities

On Thursday, August 28, 2025, the Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) hosted the *32nd annual Pathways for Trade: The Logistics & Manufacturing Symposium*. This year's theme, ***"The New Era of Trade: Perspectives & Opportunities,"*** brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators to explore the evolving dynamics of global trade and logistics.

The program began with opening remarks by Ignacio Urrabazo, Jr., President and CEO of Commerce Bank and LEDC Chairman of the Board, along with David A. Stedman, President and CEO of Laredo EDC.

The invocation was offered by Webb County Judge Tano Tijerina, and Alma Acevedo, President of Global Tooling Specialties, Inc., served as Master of Ceremonies.













MORNING KEYNOTE PRESENTATION FEATURING

RYAN M. RAWDING

The morning keynote presentation featured Ryan M. Rawding, Vice President of the Homeland Security Sector at BigBear.ai, who provided a compelling overview of the delicate balance between safeguarding national security and facilitating global trade.

Rawding stressed that promoting open trade while protecting national interests is essential to sustaining economic growth and ensuring national resilience.

"As global markets become increasingly interconnected, it is vital that we pursue trade opportunities without compromising our security," Rawding stated. "This balance requires strategic collaboration, innovative solutions, and a clear understanding of the risks and responsibilities that come with global engagement."

Throughout his presentation, Rawding illustrated key points with real-world examples and case studies, demonstrating how security and trade intersect in today's rapidly evolving global landscape.

He highlighted that effective trade management empowers leaders to make data-driven decisions keep goods moving, strengthens supply chains, and supports a robust economy.

"When people ask me where the future of trade will be written, I will look back and point to Laredo"

His keynote underscored the importance of leadership, strategic collaboration, and technological innovation in ensuring that global trade remains secure, efficient, and resilient.

Attendees left with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing modern trade, and the critical role that thoughtful decision-making plays in shaping the future of commerce.

"Trade is not slowing down, It's accelerating, evolving, and reshaping our economies. The challenge—and the opportunity—is to build systems that leverage technology, foster partnerships, and make trade flourish while keeping our borders secure."



Session 1: "Foreign Trade, Foreign Relations: Perspectives and Relations"

The initial panel of the event set the tone for the day by concentrating on pivotal trade matters and the emerging opportunities that are shaping the landscape of international commerce. This session offered a comprehensive overview of the challenges and potential growth areas within the manufacturing sector, laying the groundwork for insightful discussions and future collaborations among industry leaders.

Titled ***"Foreign Trade, Foreign Relations: Perspectives and Relations,"*** the session was moderated by César G. Hernández, COO of MileOne, who guided the conversation with a group of speakers from INDEX (Asociación de Maquiladoras de Exportación)—the national association representing Mexico's maquiladora and export manufacturing industry, which plays a vital role in cross-border trade and economic development while supporting manufacturing operations throughout the country.

- **Ing. Humberto Martínez Cantú, President of INDEX Nacional**, delivered an in-depth analysis of the current trade environment and its implications for both national and international markets, highlighting INDEX's leadership in fostering competitive manufacturing operations across Mexico.
- **Ing. Enrique Morán, President of INDEX Nuevo Laredo**, shared his perspective on regional trade dynamics, emphasizing the strategic importance of border trade relations and INDEX's role in strengthening the manufacturing ecosystem in Nuevo Laredo and the broader border region.
- **Ing. Israel Morales, Member of the National Committee of MX-US Affairs & International Agreements at INDEX Council**, discussed the intricacies of international agreements and their direct impact on trade between Mexico and the United States, underscoring how INDEX helps align industry needs with evolving trade policies.

By providing attendees with a rich understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, this panel served as a valuable platform for dialogue—reinforcing INDEX's critical role in sustaining cross-border manufacturing and advancing international trade.

Session 2: "Transformation Via SmartShoring"



The program continued with Session 2: ***"Transformation Via SmartShoring,"*** which was moderated by **Justin Heather** from Killam Development, featured:

- ***Joseph Neeb, City Manager,*** City of Laredo
- ***Ing. Francisco Ivan Torres***, City of Nuevo Laredo Economic Development Office
- ***Devorah Karren***, International Affairs Director, State of Nuevo Leon & Port Colombia-Laredo Promotion Director



Laredo City Manager Joseph Neeb highlighted how Port Laredo is driving the future of North American trade through smart-shoring during his recent presentation.

As the number one port in the United States, Laredo processes more than 18,000 commercial trucks daily — more than any other U.S. port. Neeb emphasized that the city's leadership is not only measured by trade volume but also by its readiness to meet future challenges.



On their presentations, Ing. Francisco Iván Torres, from Economic Development Office in Nuevo Laredo, and Devorah Karren, Port Colombia–Laredo Promotion Director, highlighted the joint initiatives and improvements underway with the City of Laredo to strengthen the region's role in international trade.

Smart-shoring, he explained, combines re-shoring U.S. manufacturing with near-shoring in Mexico, creating secure and resilient supply chains.

Looking ahead, Laredo's vision is to remain the nation's top port, expand infrastructure, and become the center of innovation and technology-driven trade.

By positioning itself as the front door to smart-shoring, Laredo is set to drive economic growth and strengthen North American competitiveness for years to come.

Session 3: "The Competitive Advantages of FTZs"

The session ***"The Competitive Advantages of FTZs"*** featured insights from **James Grogan,** Managing Director of Trade & Customs at Kroll, LLC, and was moderated by **Victoria Nicholls-Reyes**, J.D., LCB, General Counsel of EELCO.

Together, they highlighted what an FTZ is, how Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) provide powerful benefits for U.S. businesses and communities, and the role of several bonded programs.

FTZs have grown into a nationwide program with thousands of sites serving industries from automotive and life sciences to energy and large-scale distribution. Companies use FTZs to streamline imports, reduce costs, and strengthen supply chain efficiency.

Beyond day-to-day operations, the program generates more than half a million U.S. jobs and is recognized as a trusted public-private partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection—fostering compliance while enhancing competitiveness.

Speakers emphasized that while tariffs remain a challenge, FTZs offer companies the flexibility to manage costs and decide how and when goods enter U.S. commerce. Today, FTZs are increasingly viewed as strategic supply chain tools rather than solely tariff-deferral programs, offering advantages such as inventory staging, reduced merchandise processing fees, supply chain acceleration, and—in Texas—significant savings through inventory tax reductions.

Port Laredo has emerged as a leading example of how FTZs drive regional economic development.



In just the past 21 months, the port has recorded:

- 43% growth in FTZ usage
- 46% increase in operators
- 40% rise in FTZ sites
- 50% job growth in the FTZ sector

Laredo now leads Texas in FTZ activity outside of Houston, reflecting the city's growing role in trade and logistics. Grogan noted that FTZs serve as an economic development tool at their core—promoting jobs, incentivizing exports, and attracting investment. With the clustering of supply chains and zone-to-zone transfers, FTZs not only benefit individual businesses but also strengthen entire communities.

The session underscored that FTZs are far more than regulatory mechanisms. They are strategic advantages that help companies navigate uncertainty, foster innovation, and drive sustainable economic growth in both national and regional markets.



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Luncheon Keynote Presentation Featuring John Brooks

John Brooks, Executive Vice-President and Chief Marketing Officer of Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), delivered a compelling presentation highlighting the power of CPKC's tri-national rail network and the critical role Laredo plays in North American trade. Brooks emphasized that the company's 20,000-mile rail system, connecting Canada, the United States, and Mexico, is unique and unmatched in the industry. He described the network as a funnel — stretching from Vancouver and St. John's across Canada, filtering through the Twin Cities, Chicago, Kansas City, and Shreveport, and ultimately converging at Laredo, the single most important hub of the system.

Brooks outlined what CPKC calls the Laredo Advantage, a set of key characteristics that attract global shippers:

- A pro-business environment not found in every region.
- An unparalleled rail network offering seamless cross-border connections.
- State-of-the-art border technology ensuring 100% cargo scanning, enhancing both security and efficiency.
- Continuous investment in infrastructure, safety, and growth capacity.

Brooks also showcased CPKC's efforts to drive industry-leading growth through innovation:

- Mexico Midwest Express: A premium, high-speed service launched on day one of the CPKC-KCS combination, connecting San Luis Potosí, Mexico to Chicago in just four days. Designed to compete directly with single-driver trucking, MMX has become the "poster child" of what efficient rail operations can achieve.
- Expansion of mineral product services, which rely on efficient throughput at key hubs like Cuperato.
- Continued focus on safety infrastructure and grade separation projects, ensuring smooth movement through every community along the network.

Brooks noted that even amid tariff shifts and industry consolidation, the long-term thesis remains the same: a North American rail system benefits all three countries. By leveraging its unmatched connectivity, technological advances, and ongoing investments, CPKC is poised to remain a cornerstone of cross-border trade.

"Every minute matters," Brooks concluded, underscoring CPKC's commitment to keeping goods moving efficiently, securely, and reliably across North America".

We are excited to share that the
Laredo Economic Development Corporation
has been awarded
TWO Bronze Level Excellence in
Economic Development Awards for 2025
by the International Economic Development Council.



Border Insight: Laredo is on the Rise!

Magazine & Newsletter Category



LEDC's Economic Development Week (EDW) 2024

Innovation in Economic Development Week (EDW) Category

SHOUTOUT TO OUR AMAZING TEAM FOR BRINGING HOME THESE AWARDS!

LEDC TEAM: DAVID A. STEDMAN, SR., PRESIDENT & CEO, YVETTE PEÑA, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, JOSEPH MENDIOLA, VP OF BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION, REY REYES, VP OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RECRUITMENT, ANA L. BENAVIDES - DEL BOSQUE, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SPECIALIST

MILEONE TEAM: CESAR G. HERNANDEZ, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND MARIBEL VILLARREAL, MARKETING COORDINATOR

Session 4: "Exploring the USMCA Landscape: Key Takeaways and Opportunities"



In a session moderated by ***Rachel Connell***, Vice President at NASCO, trade experts shared valuable perspectives on the historical context of trade policy and the pivotal role of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in shaping the future of commerce in North America.

Featured Speakers:

- **Gerald Schwebel**, Executive Vice President, International Bank of Commerce
- **Dan Ujczo**, Senior Counsel, Thompson Hine
- **Laurie A. Tannous, J.D.**, Vice President, Government Relations and General Counsel, Russell A. Farrow Limited

The discussion focused on the changing trade landscape influenced by USMCA, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges faced by companies engaged in cross-border commerce. Dan Ujczo stressed the necessity of comprehending the new rules of origin and regulatory requirements to fully leverage the benefits of USMCA. Businesses must diligently monitor their supply chains to ensure compliance and avoid potential penalties.

The discussion opened with a reflection on the evolution of trade across three historical "eras": the era of revenue (when tariffs served primarily to generate income), the era of restriction (characterized by high, protectionist tariffs), and today's era of reciprocity (built on mutual agreements and cooperation).

The USMCA, as the modern framework for North American trade, stands firmly in this third phase. Speakers emphasized an important distinction: the upcoming process is not a renegotiation of the USMCA, but rather a scheduled review. The goal is to protect and preserve the agreement as it exists, while also exploring opportunities for improvement. With the current political climate making renegotiation unlikely, the panel underscored that the focus should be on strengthening the agreement and addressing unresolved issues without risking its foundation.

Panelists also reflected on the global perspective of North American trade. Laurie A. Tannous shared an experience during the Brexit negotiations in Belfast, where European officials asked how North America manages to trade so seamlessly despite crises such as 9/11, changes in government administrations, and global disruptions. That question, they noted, highlighted how much North Americans may take for granted the strength of their trilateral relationship and the resilience of their integrated supply chains.

The consensus among the panel was clear: the USMCA is too valuable to jeopardize through a renegotiation. Instead, the upcoming review offers a chance to reinforce the agreement, preserve stability, and ensure that the U.S., Mexico, and Canada remain competitive and connected in the global marketplace.

The session highlighted that the USMCA remains a cornerstone of North American trade, and its future lies not in rewriting the agreement, but in refining it to meet modern challenges while safeguarding the spirit of reciprocity that drives it.



Session 5: "Digital Infrastructure"

During Session 6, moderated by ***Alaster Love***, CTO at PANACEA, the focus was on the importance of energy, fiber, and data centers for the future of trade, technology, and community development in Laredo.

Featured Speakers:

- **Matt Leach**, Director of Public Sector, FiberLight, LLC
- **Xavier Rivera Marzan**, Managing Partner, XiR Group
- **Dave Irek**, VP of Business Development, Duos Edge AI

The region aims to be a hub for smart cities and technology corridors, boosting trade, jobs, and education. Neglecting digital infrastructure could lead to severe consequences. Businesses must consider the economic impact of downtime from power or connectivity issues. Climate events, grid vulnerabilities, and water scarcity are significant threats.

Marzan stressed that power and utilities are essential. Leaders should discuss responsibly using local resources like natural gas and water for the next 5, 10, and 20 years, while Irek compared the AI race to the 1960s space race, warning the U.S. could fall behind China. Success depends on energy, computing capacity, and fiber. Texas is a hub for hyperscale facilities, but Laredo lacks Tier 3 or 4 data centers. Edge facilities will be vital for AI industries.

Leach emphasized fiber connectivity's importance, urging it to be developed with the same foresight as water and power utilities.



Digital infrastructure is key to Laredo's economic and social future, ensuring it becomes a future-ready smart city.

SESSION 6: "THE EVOLUTION OF TRUCKING & LOGISTICS IN TRADE"



At the Pathways for Trade Symposium, Session 6, ***"The Evolution of Trucking & Logistics in Trade,"*** brought forward critical insights into the shifting landscape of transportation and supply chains.

The session was moderated by ***Priscilla Pantoja*** of the Laredo Motor Carriers Association and featured ***Carlos Llanes***, CEO of Spartan Carrier Group, and ***Sherman Barnes***, Regional Vice President of Bennet Motor Express.

Llanes shared how his success—having founded 14 companies—has been built on problem-solving, agility, and innovation. He emphasized that global disruptions such as COVID-19, geopolitical shifts, and nearshoring have accelerated the reorganization of supply chains, underscoring the importance of adaptability and client-centered strategies.



Barnes provided perspective from Bennet Motor Express, a leader in Full Truck Load and over-dimensional transport. He highlighted the ongoing challenges of the "Great Freight Recession," marked by excess capacity, rising costs, and especially high insurance rates.

In this environment, he noted, building strong relationships has become essential for finding opportunities and sustaining growth.

Both panelists agreed that technology, particularly AI, along with evolving regulations, will define the next decade of trucking and logistics.

They also stressed the increasing importance of North American trade integration, while calling for greater stability in pricing to help the industry manage inflation and economic pressures.

This session highlighted how trucking and logistics continue to serve as a backbone of international commerce, adapting to new realities while paving the way for a more resilient future.

Evening Keynote Presentation Featuring Christine Clermot



The afternoon keynote presentation at the Pathways for Trade Symposium featured **Gerald Schwebel**, Executive Vice President of IBC Bank, who introduced **Christine Clermont**, Vice President of US Warehousing & Logistics at DSV Global Transport and Logistics.

Attendees were treated to a deep dive into how one of the world's leading logistics companies is transforming global supply chains through technology and innovation.

DSV operates in 90 countries with more than 3,000 offices, and its operations are organized into three divisions: Air & Sea, Road, and Contract Logistics. Headquartered in Denmark, the company's presence in Laredo is strengthened by its Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) and bonded facilities, which play a critical role in facilitating seamless cross-border trade.

Clermont shared that automation and integration are at the heart of DSV's strategy. The company's Warehouse Management System (WMS) is fully integrated with its Transportation Management System (TMS) and client applications, creating a connected network that ensures supply chains run smoothly. This technology-driven approach not only improves efficiency but also strengthens both safety and data security, protecting sensitive information while maintaining operational excellence.

"Automation and integration is important to our company and we utilize technology to our advantage," Clermont explained. "It allows us to oversee the entire supply chain with precision, ensuring safety, reliability, and trust for our partners and the broader community."

By combining global reach, advanced technology, and local expertise, DSV continues to drive innovation in logistics, while reinforcing Laredo's role as a vital hub for international trade. The presentation offered attendees a clear view of how strategic investments in technology and infrastructure can transform supply chain operations and strengthen economic connections across borders.

Looking ahead, DSV is expanding its footprint in Laredo. For 2026, the company acquired 42 acres to build an 850,000 sq. ft. logistics facility, with a groundbreaking ceremony held in July 2025. This major investment underscores DSV's long-term commitment to the region and its role as a key logistics hub.

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SESSION 7: "AUTOMOTIVE CLUSTER AND SUPPLY CHAIN"

Session 7 of the Pathways for Trade Symposium, titled ***"Automotive Cluster and Supply Chain,"*** explored the region's growing role in North America's automotive industry.

Moderated by **Uriel Verazzi** of Site Pro Rentals, the panel featured **Dr. Manuel Montoya O.,** General Director of Automotive Cluster of Nuevo Leon, and **Gereon Hempel**, CEO of 21. Consulting.

Panelists noted Mexico's position as the world's fifth-largest producer of automobiles, contributing 4 million cars annually to North America's 15 million output. The conversation focused on the potential for a future Tamaulipas Automotive Cluster and Texas integration into this ecosystem, fueled by new policies that have raised North American content in cars from 62% to 75%.

The discussion highlighted the importance of the Triple Helix model—government, education, and private sector collaboration—to strengthen the supply chain. Organized clusters were praised for addressing targeted needs such as specialized engineering programs, while education and apprenticeships were emphasized as crucial for attracting young talent.

Finally, the session underscored the complementary strengths of Los Dos Laredos: Mexico's labor-intensive operations and the U.S.'s advanced technologies. Panelists also stressed that quality of life in Laredo plays a key role in attracting and retaining skilled workers.



Pathways for Trade

The Logistics & Manufacturing Symposium

THE NEW ERA OF TRADE: PERSPECTIVES & OPPORTUNITIES

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NIGHT OF TRADE DINNER

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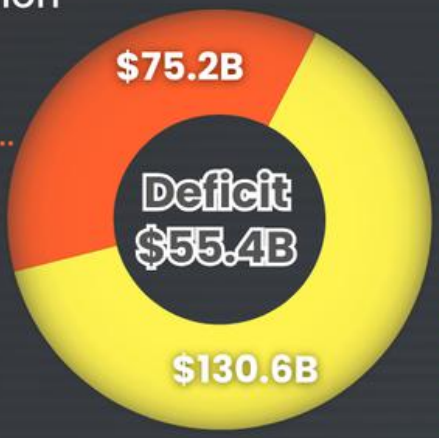
Colliers Engineering & Design

YEAR-TO-DATE, PORT LAREDOS' TRADE JULY 2025

OVERVIEW

Port Laredo **Exports** totaled **$75.2** billion +0.85% from July 2024

While **Imports** were valued at **$130.64** billion +8.99% from July 2024



TOP TRADE PARTNERS

MEXICO $200.37B
Exports $75.13B Imports $125.2B
Rose 0.85% Rose 8.75%

CHINA $954.29M
Exports $52,925 Imports $818.31M
Rose 18.5% Fell -13.33%

FRANCE $622.48M
Exports $0 Imports $622.48M
F Rose 1.03%

JAPAN $611.6M
Exports $7.19M Imports $604.41M
Fell -0.19% Rose 77.46%

NICARAGUA $489.68M
Exports $85.33M Imports $404.35M
Rose 5.63% Fell -3.27%

PORT LAREDO EXPORTS

Motor Vehicle Parts fell -0.82% compared to last year
$8.41B

Gasoline, other fuels rose 29.97% compared to last year
$2.9B

Diesel engines fell -8.33% compared to last year
$1.79B

Civilian aircraft, parts rose 117.19% compared to last year
$1.71B

Electric storage batteries fell -18.94% compared to last year
$1.49B

PORT LAREDO IMPORTS

Motor Vehicle Parts fell -2.63 % compared to last year
$15.19B

Computers rose 178.16% compared to last year
$14.21B

Passenger vehicles rose 12.42% compared to last year
$9.84B

Cell phones, related equipment rose 40.28% compared to last year
$5.17B

Commercial vehicles fell -22.89% compared to last year
$4.98B

Source: US Trade Numbers-WorldCity

Compiled by Laredo Economic Development Corporation

Economic DASHBOARD
August 2025 Year-over-Year Report

LAREDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

*Workforce

Employment
116,461
▲ + 1.72.% from 2024

Labor Force
1122,551
▲ + 2.42% from 2024

Unemployment Rate
5.0%
▲ + 16.28% from 2024

Indicator	Aug 2025	Aug 2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
Employment	116,461	114,497	1.72%	▲ Positive Growth
Labor Force	122,551	119,658	2.42%	▲ Growth
Unemployment	6,090	5,161	18.00%	▲ Risen
Unemployment Rate	5%	4.30%	16.28%	▲ Risen

*Sales Tax

Sales Tax Revenue $5.8M
▲+7.36% from 2024

Indicator	Aug 2025	Jul 2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
Sales Tax Revenue	$5,855,375	$5,454,091	7.36%	▲ Increase

*Bridge Traffic Distribution (Southbound)

Indicator	Aug 2025	Aug 2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
Pedestrians	204,067	199,490	2.29%	▲ Increase
Non Comm. Vehicles	451,678	433,400	4.22%	▲ Increase
Buses	2,700	2,945	-8.32%	▼ Decrease
Commercial Vehicles	249,445	261,638	-4.66%	▼ Decrease
Non Comm. Vehicles (AVI)	157,975	154,054	2.55%	▲ Increase
Total Vehicles	703,823	697,983	0.84%	▲ Increase

Bridge Traffic Distribution (Northbound)

Indicator	Aug 2025	Aug 2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
*Pedestrians	251,144	244,496	2.72%	▲ Increase
*Non Comm. Vehicles	450,639	430,890	4.58%	▲ Increase
*Buses	2,497	3,004	-17%	▼ Decrease
*Commercial Vehicles	247,274	263,414	-6.10%	▼ Decrease

Data Sources:

*Texas Labor Market Information *Texas State Comptroller *City of Laredo Bridge System
*U.S. CBP-Inbound Traveler & Conveyance Data *U.S. DOT-Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Prepared by Ana Laura Benavides-Del Bosque

Economic DASHBOARD
August 2025 Year-to-Date Report

LAREDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

*Workforce

Employment
116,105
▲ + 2.60% from 2024

Labor Force
121,772
▲ +2.97 from 2024

Unemployment Rate
4.7%
▲ +8.6% from 2024

Indicator	Jan-Aug-2025	Jan-Aug-2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
Employment	116,105	113,158	2.60%	▲ Positive Growth
Labor Force	121,772	118,256	2.97%	▲ Growth
Unemployment	5,667	5,098	11.2%	▲ Risen
Unemployment Rate	4.7%	4.3%	8.6%	▲ Risen

*Sales Tax

Sales Tax Revenue $45.8M
▲ + 5.76% from 2024

Indicator	Jan-Aug-2025	Jan-Aug-2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
Sales Tax Revenue	$45,815,190	$43,319,099	5.76%	▲ Positive Growth

*Bridge Traffic Distribution (Southbound)

Indicator	Jan-Aug-2025	Jan-Aug-2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
Pedestrians	1,581,953	1,547,787	2.21%	▲ Increase
Non Comm. Vehicles	3,313,927	3,326,491	-0.38%	▼ Decrease
Buses	20,889	22,257	-6.15%	▼ Decrease
Commercial Vehicles	1,979,746	2,029,165	-2.44%	▼ Decrease
Non Comm. Vehicles (AVI)	1,207,324	1,176,131	2.65%	▲ Increase
Total Vehicles	5,314,562	5,377,913	-1.18%	▼ Decrease

Bridge Traffic Distribution (Northbound)

Indicator	Jan-Aug-2025	Jan-Aug-2024	% Change (YoY)	Trend
*Pedestrians	1,967,965	1,908,738	3.10%	▲ Increase
*Non Comm. Vehicles	3,351,617	3,359,003	-0.22%	▼ Decrease
*Buses	17,704	23,473	-24.58%	▼ Decrease
*Commercial Vehicles	1,994,623	2,055,944	-2.98%	▼ Decrease

Data Sources:

*Texas Labor Market Information *Texas State Comptroller *City of Laredo Bridge System
*U.S. CBP-Inbound Traveler & Conveyance Data *U.S. DOT-Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Prepared by Ana Laura Benavides-Del Bosque

Let's Welcome

OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!



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LEDC MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Laredo EDC proudly recognizes a distinguished Member in its monthly Border Insight for:

- The company's commitment to the betterment of the community
- Special Efforts above and beyond the normal scope of job and performance services

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For 160 years, we have been committed to providing our clients with great service and powerful financial expertise to help them meet their financial goals.

We congratulate PNC BAK as the Laredo EDC Member of the Month for their contribution to the development efforts in our region.



Laredo Economic Development Corporation Wins Two Bronze Level - 2025 IEDC Excellence Awards

Detroit, MI — September 17, 2025 — The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) announced the winners of its 2025 Excellence in Economic Development Awards, a program that this year recognized 191 outstanding achievements from organizations and communities around the world. The awards, judged by a distinguished panel of experts, honor the creativity, innovation, and leadership that drive sustainable economic growth and community prosperity.

Among the honorees, the **Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)** earned two prestigious awards that highlight its dedication to promoting innovation and advancing Laredo's position as a hub for international trade and investment.
Border Insight: Laredo is on the Rise! — Magazine & Newsletter Category
LEDC's Economic Development Week 2024 — Innovation in Economic Development Week Category.

Representing LEDC at the Annual Conference in Detroit to receive the awards was Cesar G. Hernandez, COO of MileOne, who joined economic development leaders from across the globe in celebrating this year's accomplishments.

"This year's winners truly embody the spirit of innovation and excellence in economic development," said Nathan Ohle, IEDC President and CEO. "Their efforts have not only enhanced their own communities but serve as a benchmark for impactful and sustainable development worldwide."

David A. Stedman, Sr., President & CEO says "With more than 11,000 economic development organizations nationwide, including the LEDC, our team has worked diligently to set ourselves apart, both nationally and internationally, and their hard work has truly been rewarded. These accolades are a testament to our commitment to nurturing growth and innovation within our community. Acknowledging the challenges of earning these awards emphasizes our staff's steadfast dedication to improving Laredo's economic landscape. Our success stems from a diverse and talented team, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each member. Their unique skills and enthusiasm have been crucial to our collective accomplishments. As we look to the future, we are more determined than ever to attract new businesses, support local ventures, and create opportunities for everyone. Together, we are shaping a brighter and more prosperous Laredo. The staff and I are profoundly thankful to our Board of Directors, members, and community stakeholders for their continued support and collaboration on this journey. Exciting developments are on the horizon."

Mission:
Incorporated on November 17, 1966, the mission of the Laredo Economic Development Corporation is to promote and foster the economic and industrial development of the Laredo and the Webb County region.

Vision:
The Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is an organization defined by its visionary leadership, recognized for its integrity and contributions towards the economic development and vitality of Los Dos Laredos.

The Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) was first certified as the 17th Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) in the nation, first in Texas, by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in 2000. The LEDC has maintained its international standing with its most recent re-certifications in 2014, 2018 and 2022, and is 1 of only 83 in the nation as an accredited economic development organization.



In addition, the LEDC and MileOne were world-wide recognized in 2023 with 2 Silver Awards at IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Award ceremony in Dallas, Texas for its annual "Innovation in Economic Development Week for 2022" and "Entrepreneurship" (MileOne) programs, respectively. Since 2011, the Laredo Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) has played a crucial role in enhancing the community's economic landscape. It has successfully facilitated close to $1.5 billion in capital investments, leading to the creation of more than 6,600 new jobs, the retention of over 500 positions, and an increase of over $239 million in new expansions.

These achievements highlight the LEDC's commitment to fostering economic growth and sustainability within the Laredo and Webb County region. The organization's strategic initiatives have not only attracted new businesses but have also supported existing enterprises, ensuring a resilient economic infrastructure.

There's no doubt the community's transformation over the past decade is a testament to the power of strategic planning and collaborative effort, showcasing how targeted investments can lead to substantial economic benefits. Through these efforts, the LEDC has helped position Laredo as a vibrant hub for commerce and industry, drawing attention from national and international investors. The focus on infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and community engagement has created a thriving ecosystem. As Laredo continues to grow, the LEDC remains committed to its mission of economic empowerment, striving to create a prosperous future for generations to come.

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Silvia Jiménez
Access Bars Consciousness

Empowering Laredo Through Access Bars and Conscious Living

Hi, beautiful beings! My name is Silvia Jiménez, and I am an empowerment coach and a Certified Access Bars Facilitator. My passion is helping people release the blocks and limiting beliefs that keep them from living the life they truly desire. By combining my business expertise with transformational tools from Access Consciousness®, I guide my clients toward clarity, freedom, and joy in every aspect of their lives.



YOU HAVE THE POWER, USE IT IN YOUR FAVOR.

From the very beginning of my journey, I knew I wanted to help people break free from the patterns that hold them back. Access Bars has been one of the most powerful tools in my practice. Activating the Bars is like giving your mind a reset—it creates space for clarity, presence, and conscious choice. I have seen clients experience deep relaxation, renewed energy, and even "over create" their reality, opening their lives to ease, joy, and flow.

Mile One has been an essential part of my journey. Having a professional space in Laredo allows me to host clients in person while also reaching people online from all over the world. This space has given me the opportunity to expand my work, provide meaningful sessions, and grow a community of empowered individuals. Beyond coaching, I offer Access Consciousness books and my own transformational workbook, Your Life, Your Spell, designed to awaken inner magic and inspire conscious, life-changing choices.

My purpose is simple yet powerful: to help you reconnect with yourself and realize that you already have the tools and power to create the life you want. Every session I lead is an invitation to explore what else is possible, to step beyond comfort zones, and to open doors to new possibilities. In the universe of Access Consciousness, everything in life can arrive with ease, joy, and glory. It's about lowering barriers, embracing contributions, and living consciously every day.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ROCK SERIES: MARKETING

The Women Entrepreneurs Rock Series returned in September with a powerful session focused on helping women business owners grow their brand, connect with clients, and leverage digital marketing to stand out in today's competitive landscape.

Attendees gained actionable strategies to boost visibility, engage audiences, and strengthen client relationships. The session emphasized the importance of creating a strong brand presence while navigating the fast-paced world of social media, email marketing, and other digital tools.



Sponsored by PNC, WERS continues to provide a platform for women entrepreneurs in Laredo to network, learn, and gain practical insights that can be applied directly to their businesses. "This series is designed to equip women business owners with the knowledge and resources they need to succeed," said one attendee. "It's inspiring to see so many local entrepreneurs taking their growth seriously."



The next session, "Leveraging Your Business with AI," will be presented by Janie Martinez Gonzalez, CEO of Webhead, on Thursday, October 23. Participants will learn how artificial intelligence can optimize business operations, enhance customer engagement, and elevate overall business strategy.

Women business owners are encouraged to mark their calendars and RSVP early for this upcoming session to continue building skills, expanding networks, and finding support from the thriving MileOne entrepreneurial community.









EMPOWERING FUTURES: YES CAMP LAPTOP DISTRIBUTION

On May 31 and June 7, 2025, MileOne proudly hosted its inaugural Youth Entrepreneur Skills (YES) Camp, a two-day experience that welcomed 20 students ages 13–15 for an inspiring journey into leadership, creativity, and entrepreneurship. In collaboration with Las Promesas de Laredo, the camp ignited an entrepreneurial mindset through hands-on learning and mentorship.

The impact of YES Camp extended far beyond the workshops. Thanks to a grant submitted by MileOne, AT&T donated 50 refurbished laptops to participating students, ensuring they have the tools to continue their entrepreneurial and educational journeys. The distribution ceremony, held in collaboration with External Affairs Officer Mario Barragán and Texas State Representative Richard Peña Raymond, highlighted the importance of digital access for today's youth.

This milestone was made possible through the support of Las Promesas de Laredo, with dedicated leadership from Director Azeneth Galván and the mentorship of their service coordinators. Together, these partners created an environment where students not only gained practical skills but also the confidence to pursue big ideas with the right tools in hand.

The YES Camp marks an exciting step in MileOne's mission to empower youth through education, mentorship, and access to resources. With the support of community partners and organizations like AT&T, the seeds of entrepreneurship are being planted in Laredo's next generation of leaders.

1ST ANNUAL BOWLING WITH HEART FUNDRAISER

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR LOCAL KIDS

MileOne proudly co-hosted the 1st Annual Bowling with Heart Fundraiser with the Children's Miracle Network Hospital, bringing together community members for an afternoon of fun and giving back. Thanks to the amazing support of participants and sponsors, the event raised over $2,000, directly benefiting local children and families in need. Guests of all ages enjoyed bowling, friendly competition, and connecting while supporting a cause that truly matters.









A huge thank you to Juan Aleman and the Children's Miracle Network Laredo for trusting MileOne to help make this event possible, and to our generous sponsors for their support. Events like this remind us of the power of community, and MileOne remains committed to creating opportunities that uplift, engage, and positively impact the lives of children and families in Laredo.

EVENT 20 SCHEDULE 25

2 OCT

TEXAS VENTURE FEST

LAREDO EDITION

11 OCT

HARVEST AT THE BORDER

COFFEE & RAVE AT
THE PATCH

23 OCT

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ROCK SERIES

AI FOR EVERY BUSINESS OWNER

25 OCT

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS SKILLS CAMP

MILEONE

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2026 National Small Business Week

May 3–9, 2026



NOMINATE A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER TODAY!

For more than 60 years, the SBA has celebrated National Small Business Week, highlighting the vital contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners.

DEADLINE:

DECEMBER 8, 2025 AT 7 AM ET

SCAN the QR Code **VISIT** *sba.gov/nsbw* to download nomination forms and guidelines.

All SBA programs and services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. 8/2025

DISTRICT OFFICE INFORMATION:

Local District Office: SAN ANTONIO

Office Website: https://www.sba.gov/district/san-antonio

Contact: GEORGIA.GABRIELLA@SBA.GOV

SBA

U.S. Small Business Administration

BOOTS 'N BLING

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY (EDI) AWARDS

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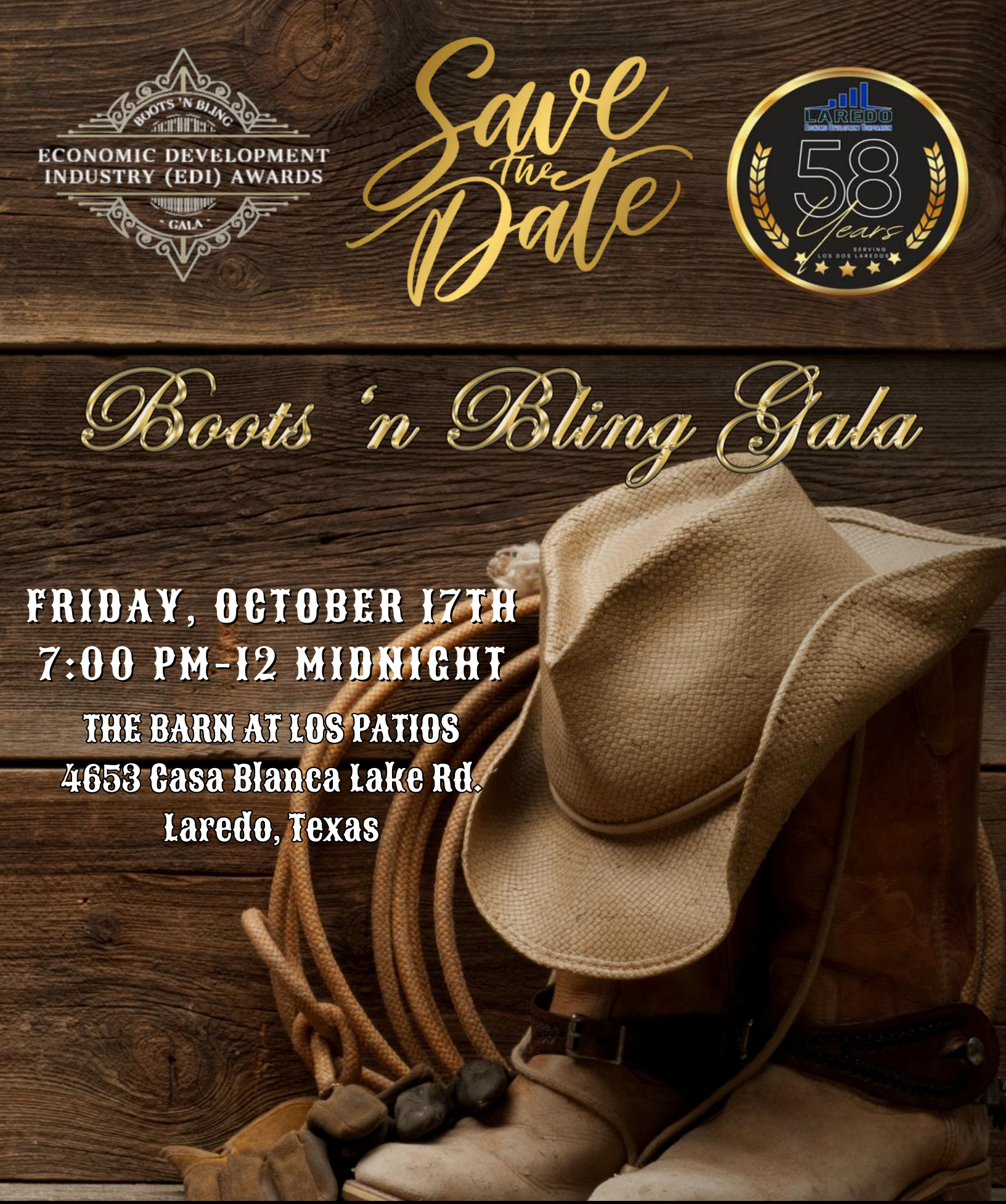
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Boots 'n Bling Gala



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
7:00 PM-12 MIDNIGHT

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For more information, visit our website at
https://ledc-edi-gala.com/ or contact the LEDC staff at (956) 722-0563

LAREDO
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For more information contact:
Ana L. Benavides – Del Bosque at
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All ads must be in png format and due by the specified closing date.

UPCOMING ISSUES

Month	Featured Article	Topics	Closing Date
October 2025	2025 Boots N Bling Gala	• Honorees • Past Honorees • History	October 18th
November 2025	Featured Article: Mexico Consulate Office	• Who they are • Services/Programs • Projects	November 18th

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