

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2024

Contact: Letitia Austin
Public & Government Relations Manager
laustin@portofh.org
(805) 816-8324

Navigating the Global Future: Port of Hueneme Spotlights Current Trade and AI Innovations during World Trade Week

Department of Commerce, Consuls, Industry, and Businesses Participate in Trade-Focused Event

[Port Hueneme, CA] – World Trade Week was established in 1935 by President Roosevelt and was created to recognize the importance and benefits of global trade to the local and national economy. This year, the Port of Hueneme welcomed trade partners from around the world with a focus on “Supply Chain and AI” that included Department of Commerce officials and local elected officials as well as business leaders and consuls in attendance to share information focused on the current state of the supply chain, the economy, and artificial intelligence.



11th World Trade Week Event hosted at the Port of Hueneme

The Port’s 11th annual World Trade Week event was held on May 2, 2024 at the FATHOMWERX lab located at the Port of Hueneme and welcomed almost 100 people from around the globe with an interest and involvement in international trade.

Drew Rodriguez, Public & Community Relations Senior Representative at the Port of Hueneme, was this year's emcee. Oxnard Harbor District President, Celina Zacarias, welcomed attendees by stating that international trade is important to the Port of Hueneme and to the region.

"It is my distinct honor to be here to celebrate World Trade Week and its connection to us all here in Ventura County," President Zaracias said. "We are gathered here at the Port of Hueneme—the birthplace of the FATHOMWERX technology lab—to continue to explore the world trade and supply chain landscape and its interconnection to technology and its potential for the Ventura County region."



Celina Zacarias, President of the Oxnard Harbor District, Board of Harbor Comissioners giving welcoming remarks.

Kristin Decas, CEO & Port Director, provided an overview of port operations, the current state of the supply chain, an update on the Port's international trade partners, and the economic impact the Port has on the region.

"Happy World Trade Day!" Decas declared before jumping into her presentation about the Port. "We just came back from a trade mission and had quite an amazing experience in both South Korea and Japan," she said. "We signed two MOUs (memorandum of understanding) and these MOUs really homed in not only on economic development, customer relations, building business, but importantly, about building green corridors and sustainability and moving towards a footprint of decarbonization."



Kristin Decas, Port of Hueneme CEO/Port Director providing port update.

Trade updates from the Port's global partners from the countries of Mexico, Lithuania, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom shared key information about how their country's traditional exports and emerging markets are fostering growth and investment opportunities.

Ambassador Ricardo Santana, Consulado de Mexico en Oxnard, said: "Our ongoing trade partnership continues to grow. For us, the Port is very important because of its location—strategically situated on the Central Coast of California for its infrastructure with the modern docks, storage facilities, and railway access. In 2022, bilateral trade between Mexico and California amounted to \$73.7 billion dollars."

Mantas Zamzickas, Commercial Attaché of Lithuania to the USA, Consulate General of Lithuania in Los Angeles said: "The Port of Klaipeda is the biggest in Lithuania and started a collaboration with the Port of Hueneme just last year. Hopefully, in upcoming years, the (trade) numbers will increase."

Sean Kagan, Senior Trade Policy Advisor, British Consulate-General Los Angeles, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office said: "The U.S. is the U.K.'s largest export market for goods and services, so it is a really important trade relationship for the United Kingdom. U.S./U.K. bilateral invest is worth over \$1.5 trillion—supporting more than 2.7 million jobs. It's great to be at a port where you can see that happening. You can see the goods coming in."

Betty Young, Business Development Officer, Hong Kong Trade Development Council said: "We are here to connect international companies to meet many of the rising opportunities in this market and in growing sectors. Hong Kong can facilitate new opportunities in innovation and technology, medical and healthcare, sustainability, and creative."



Trade Updates from Global Partners (Left to Right) Ambassador Ricardo Santana, Consulado de Mexico en Oxnard; Mantas Zamzickas, Commercial Attaché of Lithuania to the USA, Consulate General of Lithuania in Los Angeles; Sean Kagan, Senior Trade Policy Advisor, British Consulate-General Los Angeles, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office; and Betty Young, Business Development Officer, Hong Kong Trade Development Council.

A special pre-recorded welcome message of Grant T. Harris, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Industry & Analysis, was shared with attendees: “Enhancing supply chain resiliency is central to our work at the Department of Commerce,” he said. “Together, with industry partners like the Port of Hueneme, we are working to address and get ahead of supply chain issues facing American businesses. By building stronger and more resilient supply chains, we will strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness, protect our national security, and support good paying jobs in communities across the country.”

This year’s keynote speaker was Caroline Kaufman, Industries Team Lead in the Office of Supply Chain Services and the International Trade Administration which is a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce.



Keynote Speaker Caroline Kaufman, Industries Team Lead in the Office of Supply Chain Services (SCS), International Trade Administration, a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce delivering speech.

“The Department recognizes the critical role that maritime services and ports such as the Port of Hueneme play in ensuring strong supply chains and the smooth movement of goods throughout the United States and around the world,” Kaufman said. “The Department of Commerce has one overarching goal: That goal is to improve America’s economic competitiveness. Ports are a critical piece to the resiliency equation.”

After a lunch break, Richard Swanson, a Senior Advisor for the Office of the Regional Director - Pacific South Network, U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service, International Trade Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Maryanne Burke, Director of the U.S. Commercial Service for the U.S. Export Assistance Center office located at the Port of Hueneme provided a regional update, discussed the District Export Council of Southern California, and shared foreign direct investment information.



The Role of AI In International Trade Roundtable Panel Discussion. (Left to Right) Moderator: Simona Racek, Trade Specialist at EDC SBDC & Co-CEO of TradeZiris; Todd Smith Founder & CEO of KYG Trade; Vincent Iacopella, EVP Growth & Strategy of Alba Wheels Up International; and Ray Bowman, Director of the Economic Development Collaborative Small Business Development Center (EDC SBDC)

A roundtable discussion moderated by Simona Racek, Trade Specialist at EDC SBDC & Co-CEO of TradeZiris focused on the role of AI in international trade.

“It is a true pleasure to be here and to be joined by three top exports in our Southern California community,” Racek said. “What our speakers have in common is that they are already transforming trade operations by applying AI to international trade.”

The panel included Todd Smith, Founder & CEO of KYG Trade; Vincent Iacopella, EVP Growth & Strategy of Alba Wheels Up International; and Ray Bowman, Director of the Economic Development Collaborative Small Business Development Center.

To close the event, the Oxnard Harbor District Board of Commissioners presented special awards focused on companies who export goods through the Port of Hueneme.

The Auto Export Achievement was presented to Toyota Motor North America by Celina Zacarias, President of the Oxnard Harbor District, the Container Export Achievement was awarded to Allied Potato by Oxnard Harbor Commissioner, Maryanne Rooney, and the EDC World Trade Advocacy Award was awarded to Moorpark College by the Economic Development Center of Ventura County.

A Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Commercial Service was awarded to the Port of Hueneme by Maryanne Burke, Director of the U.S. Commercial Service U.S. Export Assistance

Center office at the Port of Hueneme and Richard Swanson, Senior Advisor for the Office of the Regional Director, Pacific South Network, U.S Commercial Service.



Container Export Achievement Awarded to Allied Potato Presented by Mary Anne Rooney, Port of Hueneme Harbor Commissioner on behalf of the Port of Hueneme.



Auto Export Achievement Awarded to Toyota Motor North America Presented by Celina Zacarias, President of the Oxnard Harbor District, Board of Harbor Commissioners on behalf of the Port of Hueneme.



EDC World Trade Advocacy Award Awarded to Moorpark College Presented by Ray Bowman, Director of the Economic Development Collaborative Small Business Development Center (EDC SBDC), on behalf of the Economic Development Center of Ventura County.



U.S. Commercial Service, Certificate of Appreciation Awarded to Port of Hueneme Presented by Maryanne Burke, Director of the US Commercial Service U.S. Export Assistance Center office at the Port of Hueneme and Richard Swanson, Senior Advisor for the Office of the Regional Director, Pacific South Network, U.S Commercial Service. Award was received by Port of Hueneme Board of Harbor Comissioners, CEO/Port Director, Port Staff, Port Customers, and Port Partners.

READ MORE ABOUT THE OXNARD WORLD TRADE CENTER HERE:

<https://www.portofhueneme.org/business/world-trade-center/>



About the Port of Hueneme *The Port of Hueneme is one of the most productive and efficient commercial trade gateways for niche cargo on the West Coast. Five locally elected Port Commissioners govern the Port. The Port consistently ranks among the top ten U.S. ports for automobiles and fresh produce. Port operations support the community by bringing \$2.8 billion in economic activity and creating 24,997 trade-related jobs. Trade through the Port of Hueneme generates more than \$236 million in direct and related state and local taxes, which fund vital community services. In 2017, the Port of Hueneme became the first port in California to become Green Marine certified and was voted the Greenest Port in the U.S. at the Green Shipping Summit. www.portofh.org.*

#