



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2006

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Port of Corpus Christi to host DR-CAFTA conference with Ambassadors from Guatemala, Honduras and Minister Counselor of El Salvador

(Corpus Christi, TX) --- The Port of Corpus Christi in partnership with TradeRoots of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, The Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, The City of Robstown and the Corpus Christi Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will host a half-day conference focusing on the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). The Port is pleased to announce His Excellency Jose Guillermo Castillo (Guatemala), His Excellency Roberto Flores Bermudez (Honduras) and The Honorable Werner Romero (El Salvador) will be special guests and featured speakers of the conference.

“The Port of Corpus Christi is honored to host such a distinguished group of foreign dignitaries. We appreciate the diligent efforts of Congressman Solomon Ortiz for facilitating the appearance and participation of the ambassadors as part of the conference,” said Ruben Bonilla, Chairman of the Port of Corpus Christi.

DR-CAFTA will offer new opportunities for U.S. workers and manufacturers; expand markets for U.S. farmers and ranchers and textiles and apparel will unite to compete with Asia. Nearly 80 percent of imports from Central American and the Dominican Republic enter the United States duty-free, CAFTA will level the playing field by eliminating tariffs on U.S. goods exports and providing a comprehensive access to a wide range of services sectors. The Port of Corpus Christi has positioned itself as a major port of entry for CAFTA products with the successful and efficient import and distribution of melons from Guatemala earlier this year. The melon season for Guatemala runs from November through May and the Port is expecting melon shipments next month to start the season. The Port is also pursuing seafood, tropical fruit and textiles from the region.

Congressman Ortiz who voted in favor of DR-CAFTA will offer the keynote address at the conference focusing on the free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic and Central America and the new opportunities for South Texas Businesses. The Ambassadors and Minister Counselor will speak to the export opportunities in their respective countries and the effect American goods will have on the DR-CAFTA region



as a result of the new trade agreement. The conference will educate South Texas businesses of the opportunities available through DR-CAFTA and the role of the Port of Corpus Christi in facilitating maritime commerce to the region.

Ambassador Castillo previously served as minister (1999-2000) and vice minister of economy in charge of trade issues (1998-99). While serving as a delegate of the Ministry of Economy, he also coordinated and completed negotiations for a free trade agreement with Mexico (1996-2000). Before working in the public sector, Ambassador Castillo worked in banking, insurance and bonds as well as the industrial and commercial sectors in both Guatemala and abroad.

Ambassador Flores Bermúdez began diplomatic activities in 1977 when posted to London for a four-year tour of duty. He has been appointed twice to Washington, as well as to the United Nations in New York. Back home at the Foreign Ministry, he served as the Honduran Chief Negotiator in the Central American Peace Process of the late 1980s. In July of 1994, Ambassador Flores Bermúdez took up the post of Ambassador in Washington, DC, where he stayed until early 1998. In April 1998, he was posted as Ambassador to London. In February 1999, he returned to Honduras to become Minister of Foreign Affairs, where he served until January 2002. Later that year, he was appointed Ambassador of Honduras to Germany.

Minister Counselor Romero was promoted to Minister Counselor in June 2006, after being the Counselor for Economic Affairs at the Embassy of El Salvador in Washington, D.C. since 1997. Prior to arriving in Washington, Mr. Romero was the head of the Trade Regulations Division at the Trade Policy Office and the Ministry of Economy in San Salvador, where he was responsible for international trade negotiations on investment, competition policy, air transport and dispute settlement; and legal and technical advisor to the Minister of Economy. Currently, as Minister Counselor, Mr. Romero is in charge of legal and political affairs at the Salvadoran Embassy in Washington, D.C.

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