



“ARIZONA & MEXICO”

COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

**Douglas
Nogales
Tucson
Yuma
Scottsdale**

Douglas Community Town Hall on “Arizona & Mexico”

March 10, 2016

Attributes of the economic and business relationship between Arizona and Mexico

The Cities of Douglas and Agua Prieta have very strong economic and business ties. Both communities have a low cost of living and inexpensive land process. Key industries in the Douglas-Agua Prieta region such as manufacturing, cattle and produce bring regional, national and international benefits. The people in the region are also an asset and are especially knowledgeable in the areas of engineering, culture, sports and arts.

Encouraging development of Arizona and Mexico as a regional hub for international commerce

The Cities of Douglas and Agua Prieta should work together to develop the Douglas-Agua Prieta region as a business hub in South Eastern Arizona and North Eastern Sonora. They should work together to establish a binational cultural exchange program; showcase assets; promote the safety of the communities, and provide shared educational and economic opportunities.

Douglas and Agua Prieta have good educational institutions. Students can attain a four-year college degree in any of the two communities. We should enhance the existing agreement between Cochise College and Tecnológico de Agua Prieta where Agua Prieta students pay in-state tuition while attending Cochise College. These agreements should be expanded to other educational institutions.

Both communities need to showcase the available and qualified workforce on both sides of the border, develop a comprehensive binational economic development plan for both communities and the region, promote small industries in the region, and develop a joint business incubator and value-added chain industries to the copper that is produced in the region.

The Cities of Douglas and Agua Prieta should consider the benefits that I-11 will bring to the Douglas-Agua Prieta region and capitalize on the congestion at the Nogales Port of Entry and Querobabi Military Inspection Point, as well as the proximity to the I-10 and rail services in Agua Prieta. Douglas and Agua Prieta also need to work on improving the issuance of border crossing cards (B1/B2 Visas) and passports to facilitate cross border trade between the two cities. Improving and enhancing port of entry infrastructure on both sides of the border is also important. New infrastructure is necessary to remove hazardous material from crossing through the urbanized footprint of Douglas and Agua Prieta.

Both communities need to jointly identify and fulfill the various community needs on both sides of the border (restaurants, movie theatres, etc.) in order to bring economic benefits to the region and minimize any economic leakages. Both communities also should capitalize on abandoned buildings and structures and work together to create tax incentives and tax breaks that spur economic development opportunities. The communities should also develop and expand housing opportunities on both side of the border, and jointly apply for grant opportunities.

Both communities need to provide more activities for the youth. Youth need to be given more opportunities so that they are not lured by the very profitable drug trade. Both sides of the border also need to train or guide more Latinas to take on the role of community leaders.

If you could tell Arizona's elected leaders just one thing....

People feel safe in Douglas and Agua Prieta. Elected leaders in Phoenix and Washington need to realize that this is a safe area and that we are not at war with Mexico.

Elected leaders also need to find ways to stabilize the Mexican Peso and reinstate the guest worker Visa program.

Elected leaders in Douglas need to grow our relationship with Mexico.

What one action will you take as a result of this conversation?

As individuals, we need to showcase both communities as welcoming, fun and safe. We can all work to connect more American, Canadian and Mexican Businesses and people through Douglas and Agua Prieta.

Nogales Community Town Hall on "Arizona & Mexico"

March 17, 2016

Attributes of the economic and business relationship between Arizona and Mexico

Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora share a common border and similar culture. Cross-border marriages are common. On both sides of the border there is a blending of bloodlines, mingling Caucasian, Indian and Hispanic ethnicity. Dual citizenship is fairly common. For the most part people share a Christian heritage, belief system and values.

Realistically Nogales is one city with one border running through it. Highway systems in both nations come together in Nogales, which serves as a natural gateway between western Mexico and the U.S. Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora have entered into a sisterhood agreement promoting community cooperation and coordination at the local level.

Mexico benefits from its proximity to the U.S. in many ways. Mexican beach resorts attract U.S. visitors, particularly over spring break. Mining, cattle, agriculture, and manufacturing all find markets across the border in Arizona. Many U.S. retirees live in Mexico, where they enjoy a lower cost of living and love the vibrant culture. Mexico enjoys the protection and peace of mind that flows from living next to a generally benevolent world power. Mexicans view the U.S. and Canada almost as siblings who support one another as family.

Arizona benefits from its proximity to Mexico. Nogales ports of entry are among the busiest in the U.S. and offer companies great access to large markets in Sonora and beyond, and a large workforce. Mexico is the gateway to Latin and Central America, and is viewed as a leader in Latin America. Cross-border tourism is a major economic driver for both Arizona and Sonora. The international border softened the impact of the recent recession on Arizona, as Mexico continued to grow despite the recession.

To strengthen and improve the relationship between Arizona and Mexico we should view both as part of a single economic region competing in a global economy, with shared challenges and shared solutions. There should be better coordination and collaboration at the state, federal, and local levels. Regional collaboration will result in Nogales having a larger voice at the state and federal level. Effective and unified political leadership can make a huge difference. The rhetoric of U.S. presidential elections undermines the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico. After years of strained political relationships there appears to be new synergy between the governors of Arizona and Sonora. It is important that this relationship have substance, with backing at the national level, and that it continue from one administration to the next.

The benefits of Arizona's relationship with Mexico, and the potential for Nogales to become a regional economic hub and a great place to invest and do business, is one of the state's best kept secrets. Although the Arizona Mexico Commission and the Universities have developed a tremendous amount of information and data about Arizona's economic relationship with Mexico, that information has not reached the consciousness of the general public. Most Americans, even Arizonans, are not aware that Nogales enjoys a more temperate climate than much of Arizona and is a beautiful place to live, visit and do business. Despite the best efforts of the Arizona Republic and local media, good news is not news. Because of media focus on bad or sensational news, the average person views Nogales as a place plagued by violence, drug trafficking and immigration issues, rather than as a relatively safe and beautiful place to live, work, play, and shop.

These perceptions must be changed. Elected officials in Arizona are not aware of the importance of Mexico as Arizona's #1 trading partner. People in other parts of Arizona think there is nothing south of Tucson, and investment at the state level does not extend beyond the "State of Maricopa." Efforts should be made to educate public officials and the general public in the U.S. about the benefits of trade and tourism involving Mexico.

Encouraging development of Arizona and Mexico as a regional hub for international commerce

When it comes to increasing international trade with Mexico, Arizona is in competition with Texas and California. Those states have been quicker to recognize that Mexico is a fast-growing economy that offers great opportunities for its trading partners. For example, San Diego and Tijuana have developed a joint airport facility. Arizona needs to communicate the message that "the cold war is over" and that Arizona welcomes Mexican visitors and businesses.

To optimize the trade relationships, a number of actions should be considered. The Arizona Mexico Commission has been in existence for 57 years, and could take more of a leadership role in coordinating cross-border economic development activities. Although the AMC economic development committee partners with Sonoran officials on a project by project basis, economic development opportunities often are not shared because communities on both sides of the border are competing for the same opportunities. Economic development in the region could be strengthened through regional cooperation. For example, the Maricopa Association of Governments is working on the creating of a database that identifies all companies present in Arizona that are engaged in international commerce. ProMexico is compiling information about Mexican companies that are doing business in the U.S., alone or through partnerships or investments in U.S. companies. These should be statewide efforts.

To support more trade with Mexico Arizona must invest in improving infrastructure in and around Nogales, making the port of entry more efficient while maintaining security and safety.

Highways, rail systems, pipelines, and an international airport serve trade on both sides of the border and should be viewed as regional assets that require regional investment. This means that, despite the complexity of the issues, the local community must develop a shared vision, and become advocates who communicate with their elected representatives. Community leaders must educate the community and the state about complex funding issues, and advocate for the community vision in a unified manner. The Port Authority is a well-organized conglomeration that includes many key community leaders, and is an important partner in these efforts.

Transportation infrastructure serving the port of Nogales requires improvement. The planned improvements to SR 189/Mariposa Rd. to accommodate more truck traffic should be the first priority. These improvements are estimated to cost between \$64 and \$140 million, a relatively small investment when compared with \$22.9 billion annual trade revenues that flow to Nogales and Tucson through that route. With improvements the capacity of this route could be increased from a maximum of 1700 trucks per day to as many as 4000 trucks per day. Although state officials say they have prioritized the SR 189 project, other projects in other parts of Arizona, including SR 83, have taken precedence.

At statewide transportation meetings people talk about Mexico, but focus attention primarily on east-west routes. Many do not realize that there is a robust east-west rail line just south of the border, and that strengthening connections to that line would be beneficial for trade. I-19 between Nogales and Tucson also should be improved to accommodate more traffic.

Infrastructure is more than just roads – it includes rail and air transportation, commercial land development, utilities, and internet service. Although a single rail line crosses the border at Nogales, there is abundant undeveloped land in Nogales, Arizona near the international airport and the railway that has industrial and commercial zoning. This land could be developed for international trade-related purposes, and would benefit from construction of one or more spur lines leading to a substantial east-west rail network south of the border.

At the international border infrastructure also includes border checkpoints. Currently the checkpoint north of Nogales is temporary, and capacity is limited as a result. If the checkpoint were made permanent, with dedicated trust lane, that would benefit both the border patrol and the port. Adequate staffing of the Border Patrol is critically important. The Nogales facility is not fully staffed, and the lack of staff create a bottleneck for border traffic.

It is also important to maintain critical infrastructure. A rupture of the decaying Nogales Wash and International Outfall Interceptor, the cross-border pipeline that carries millions of gallons of wastewater from Nogales, Sonora through the port to Nogales, Arizona, would jeopardize rail and electric lines and the smooth functioning of the port. A release of sewage into the Nogales Wash also jeopardizes public health and safety. Necessary maintenance work should be completed with cooperation of the state and local governments as well as the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Large capital investments must be made to maintain and improve critical infrastructure serving the port of Nogales. Nogales is a small and relatively poor community that has been unable to assemble the needed capital. Efforts should be made at the state, local and national level to attract the needed capital to the region and the state. Border banking issues should be addressed. In times of fiscal austerity public monies are not abundant, and Nogales should look to the private sector, and private public partnerships, as a source of capital. For this to be successful local residents must better understand the opportunities for public private

partnerships, and there must be better communication between business and government/public sector. Businesses and industries that resist tolls might become more supportive if they understood how impacts are equalized and what benefits would be achieved through the use of tolls as part of a public private partnership for the financing of infrastructure improvements.

In addition, government at all levels should be more welcoming to business. Government should become more service oriented, so that people who want to do business here do not face a lot of red tape. Details regarding project scope and costs should be made available to the public and to businesses.

The City of Nogales is working with local chambers of commerce to attract more business, and get input on issues, problems, codes, and barriers to development.

Both Arizona and Mexico should recognize the beneficial impacts of educational exchanges and encourage such exchanges. These opportunities are not limited to students. Many young professionals could benefit from spending time working with a business across the border, and forging relationships and networks that will spread technical information and good will.

If you could tell Arizona's elected leaders just one thing....

The most important message to Arizona's elected leaders is "It begins in Nogales! Come and see for yourselves, and take that message back to your constituents." Arizona has more than 110,000 jobs that rely on trade with Mexico, yet many legislators are not talking about Mexico in a positive light and don't realize the opportunities from the ports of entry. Trade with Mexico is a huge economic driver for Arizona, and it should be the focus of positive attention. Advocacy from Phoenix and Tucson, as well as Nogales, is essential if we are to optimize this important trade relationship.

Perception is everything. Businesses and individuals throughout the state must know that it is safe to do business in Nogales. Santa Cruz County had not one single homicide over last two years, and the most recent homicide involved domestic violence, not international actors. In contrast, Tucson and Phoenix have much more violence. Instead of spreading the message that Mexicans are taking jobs away from Arizonans, which is a great injustice to our principal trading partner, we should be spreading the word that our relationship with Mexico is a two-way street, and that trade between the two creates jobs and substantial economic impacts for both. Mexico is the 14th largest economy in the world, and Arizona benefits from its connections to that economy. The US Chamber of Commerce Border Report includes a map that shows how much each state in the U.S. benefits from trade with Mexico. This information should be widely shared as part of a marketing effort to change attitudes across the U.S. toward its biggest international trading partner.

Perceptions on the Mexican side of the border also are important. SB 1070 still haunts Arizona, and many Mexicans will not visit the state because of the perception that Arizona is hostile to Mexicans. We need to make it personal to the average American—Mexicans are not here to take your job or hurt your family, they are here to buy your products and contribute to your economy.

Nogales also needs to step up its game. It should bring state officials and congressional staffers from around the state to Nogales to tour the area and become educated about its importance and funding needs. It should bring in customs officials who don't normally come to

Nogales. It should also make sure that other communities encourage Mexican visitors, e.g. by recognizing that traffic laws in Mexico are different, and being more lenient with minor violations, rather than setting speed traps on routes leading from the border.

What one action will you take as a result of this conversation?

Individuals can take a number of actions to address the concerns identified during this discussion, including the following:

- Talk about the issues with a united message. Use all platforms and opportunities to communicate.
- Attend the 108th Arizona Town Hall on Arizona and Mexico (April 24-27, 2016) to spread the word statewide.
- Communicate with elected officials in person, by phone, and through letters.
- Take advantage of marketing opportunities in connection with local events that may get national attention (e.g., marathon from Mexico to U.S. via Nogales, in April, and the Little League Regional Championships in July); use these events as an opportunity to promote hotels, restaurants and the hospitality of Nogales; these efforts should reach across the border.
- Promote the construction of a new 9 story hotel in Nogales, Sonora (Marriott).

Tucson Community Town Hall on “Arizona & Mexico”

March 23, 2016

Attributes of the economic and business relationship between Arizona and Mexico

There are many factors that tie Arizona and Mexico together including family ties that go back for generations. The border creates a geographical proximity that promotes business, cultural and personal relationships. There are also shared industrial and business interests such as aerospace, produce and tourism.

Arizona benefits from its proximity with Mexico economically as a result of the ports and the opportunities relating to worldwide supply chains that increase when working in partnership with Mexico. Arizona also benefits from Mexican tourists who visit and shop in Arizona. The cultural aspects of bordering Mexico add immense value to the quality of life for Arizonans. Southern Arizona in particular has a stronger shared culture with Mexico than neighboring counties to the north. The shared appreciation for the Sonoran Desert is another tie that binds Southern Arizona and Mexico in a way that builds relationships and adds to a shared vision for quality economic development that protects this shared natural resource.

Sonora is one of the safer border states and has a fast-growing middle-class that presents growing opportunities for Arizona exports and shared manufacturing. Arizona and Sonora have a stronger connection than many other border areas. There are many shared familial, and business relationships that create additional opportunities for Sonora and Arizona to work together on mutually beneficial economic and educational efforts.

Mexico also has important opportunities for free trade with other countries that can create additional opportunities for Arizona businesses that work with their Mexican counterparts.

The benefits of bordering each other are reciprocal. Mexico benefits from Arizona tourists, shared cultures, business partnerships and growing business opportunities. As a bi-national region, we all benefit when we work together to promote international trade and tourism and when we support educational partnerships as well as medical and sports tourism.

As trading partners, there are some very effective efforts in specific areas such as the produce industry but there are many opportunities for improvement. We could have more impact if we were more aligned and better coordinated. The Arizona-Mexico Commission is an asset that can be better utilized in accomplishing this goal. The Arizona-Mexican Commission should lead an effort to coordinate interested groups. The effort should include the creation of a regional brand and marketing strategy. The efforts should also include a strategic plan that creates goals, aligns the efforts of different organizations, focuses on quality and meaningful economic development and that also considers opportunities with all of Mexico (not just border communities that are in the geographical region).

Our relationship with Mexico is enhanced when our elected civic and business leaders recognize the value of the border community and do not engage the media with inflammatory comments relating to Mexico. Educational institutions also play a critical role in strengthening the relationships between Arizona and Mexico as do efforts to create systems that allow families to work more effectively with cross-border social services. Initiatives that focus on the region as opposed to the border have a positive impact in many ways—whether these initiatives focus on transportation, education or regional business opportunities. Symbolic visits by dignitaries and elected leaders can play a role in transforming the types of stories currently carried in the media. To strengthen and improve the opportunities, we must all make efforts to change the current rhetoric that focuses too much on the negative aspects of the border while excluding the economic and cultural benefits that result from our border with Mexico. As individuals and organizations, we can all take efforts to share the value of having a border region, including the cultural and business opportunities. We should also promote the learning and use of the Spanish language as well as cultural education so that we're better able to maximize our multi-faceted relationship with Mexico.

Mexico can improve its relationship with Arizona by continuing and strengthening its efforts to have economic development representatives visit with Arizona. It would also be beneficial to have Mexican representatives as a part of efforts to brand the region and develop a strategic plan for strengthening the regional economy.

Encouraging development of Arizona and Mexico as a regional hub for international commerce

We should first determine what kind of regional hub makes the most sense (logistics, research and development, supply chain, financial etc.). We need to select a goal or focus area and then determine how best to become a world-class hub in the area or areas we choose. In prioritizing our preferences for regional hubs, we need to consider which types of hubs create quality jobs and economic opportunities, the opportunities of value-added supply chains, what is needed to make regional hubs a success including workforce development and infrastructure needs (such an energy, water and transportation) as well as what industries have the greatest potential growth opportunities for the bi-national region. For example, the federal designation of I-11 and state route 189 and the Sonoran Corridor create great prospects for a logistics hub but a logistics hub does not necessarily bring with it the highest paying job opportunities.

If we want to compete with Texas and other border states, we need to be better organized and invested in promoting and advertising the ports and regional hubs we have. As part of strengthening regional hubs, we need to better fund the marketing of existing ports. Our efforts should include strengthening business relationships in addition to supporting bi-national government relationships.

We should explore how we can better promote foreign direct investment by Mexico. Reaching out and promoting personal relationships with Mexican business interests is important as is having the Arizona-Mexico Commission focus on this goal.

It's also important to reach out to and educate investors around the world about the opportunities for investing in this area as a regional economic hub. Presenting a unified brand as a bi-national economic region as part of a unified strategy would be a powerful tool for encouraging worldwide investment in the region.

If you could tell Arizona's elected leaders just one thing....

By 2050, Mexico will be the fifth largest economy in the world. We need to take advantage of this opportunity now. We need to continue with efforts to take business people and elected leaders into Mexico, and to otherwise develop understanding and personal relationships across the border. The investment of efforts in this way and in education is important.

We need to invest more in education so that we can achieve the level of workforce development needed to support the economic development we are hoping to have for the future.

We also need to explore how to more effectively manage the border so that it does not unnecessarily inhibit economic prosperity by delaying tourists and trade. Investing in inspectors on the border provides a good return on investment. For every inspector added, the region gets two million dollars in return.

It's also important that we work on changing Arizona's negative image in Mexico and around the world as a state that is not open to diversity. The perception is that Arizona is hostile to Mexico. On the other hand, the perception of many Arizonans is that Mexico is unsafe. These perceptions impact our ability to strengthen the economic region. We need a public relations effort in Mexico to change this image.

Finally, our elected state leaders should take the HURF money that was swept to add DPS personal on the border and instead use it to fund the 189.

What one action will you take as a result of this conversation?

As individuals, we will take advantage of platforms like the Arizona Town Hall and other gatherings to better educate others about the issues and to be advocates for promoting the bi-national region. We also will participate in the branding and work needed to make the vision of a stronger region a reality. This can include encouraging others to be participants in these conversations and in other sessions like the Town Hall – regardless of the topic. It might also include a joint legislative session with Arizona and Sonoran elected leaders as well as other educational partnerships and opportunities.

Yuma Community Town Hall on “Arizona & Mexico”

April 7, 2016

Attributes of the economic and business relationship between Arizona and Mexico

Even though Arizona and Mexico represent two different countries, the region has a shared history, shared cultures and shared economies. Simply put, we need each other.

One way to build upon our shared history and improve the relationship is through the use of more collaborations and partnerships. We should bring back the maquiladoras. We should also support the efforts educational institutions are making to have shared degrees and student exchange programs.

Free trade enhances the economic relationship of Arizona and Mexico. NAFTA has been an important element for strengthening the flow of many products between Arizona and Mexico. However, there were some trade areas that were negatively impacted that we should reconsider and revise. We should also implement tools for seamless cross-border financial transactions and more efficient border crossings.

Encouraging development of Arizona and Mexico as a regional hub for international commerce

Natural resources and the environment must be considered as part of our shared regional history and our shared future. Water is an important example. As a region that is defined not by state or country lines but by the flow of water, we need to come together to determine how best to protect and preserve this important resource for the entire region.

We should look for ways to utilize our existing capacities (including ports and transportation corridors) to expand the ways and methods that commerce and people can more effectively move between Arizona and Mexico.

Local governments, businesses and individuals can have a large impact on creating change through the development of local initiatives and through the development of collaborative relationships that view education, infrastructure, tourism and economic development through the lens of a regional collaborative effort that is focused on regional solutions.

If you could tell Arizona’s elected leaders just one thing....

Arizona’s elected leaders have taken an important step to reset the discussion by having the Governor and others take a team to Mexico to strengthen our relationship. Our elected leaders need to continue in these efforts. The negative rhetoric at the national level (that has also happened at the state level in Arizona) creates challenges for local efforts. Our state and federal elected representatives need to know that this rhetoric must change. Arizona and the United States have an important dependence on Mexico—especially in the global economy. Those who have engaged in negative rhetoric about Mexico have damaged this important relationship. We need to repair the damage that has been done and focus on how to come together as a region.

What one action will you take as a result of this conversation?

Much would be accomplished for all of us if we put as much effort on improving cross-border ties as we do on border challenges. As individuals, we should share information with others about the important interdependence of the region. We can also work with organizations and elected officials to encourage cooperation and build relationships that will reinforce our connections with each other. These collaborations can be everything from cross border bike rides that send a symbolic message, educational partnerships between higher education institutions, formal networking opportunities and regional conservation efforts that protect our shared environment and natural resources.

Scottsdale Community Town Hall on “Arizona & Mexico”

April 20, 2016

Attributes

Arizona and Mexico are more than just neighbors; we are roommates. We not only do \$16.5 billion in business together each year, that trade is highly integrated. Arizona has direct flights to Mexico, and a time zone advantage relative to companies located in other time zones. Mexican consumers love American products. Mexico is an excellent partner with Arizona, with favorable trade agreements, providing a foothold for relationships with other countries. Within this region there are a number of industries that have great cross-border synergy, including health care, mining, aerospace, and agribusiness. We should take advantage of these synergies.

There is a long tradition of relationship between Arizona and Mexico, which often is the key to a successful business relationship. The Arizona Mexico Commission has existed for more than 50 years, and has done much to promote and cement this relationship. There is also a long history of cross-border personal and family relationships.

What is needed/could be improved?

This roommate relationship is constrained by deficits in infrastructure—the doorways are too narrow, and the hallways are congested. We do have railway and natural gas connections, but we need to improve infrastructure in both countries to grow and improve the binational activities that will attract companies to this border region. We have invested significantly in our cross-border infrastructure, but more investment and improvement is needed. We need to assure that there are available and well functioning shipping and transportation corridors connecting Arizona to more cities in Mexico. We should use opportunities to add value to existing business activities, by locating related business activities in close proximity. We also should look for ways to make better use of existing infrastructure, and eliminate barriers to the use of that infrastructure, for example, by making the type of inspections that are needed available for all these modes of transportation.

Although Phoenix airports offer good connectivity to the rest of the world, and direct flights to Mexico, there is not sufficient competition for the Arizona-Mexico routes. More competition would bring down the cost of travel between Arizona and Mexico and would benefit people and companies in both places.

One of the aspects of Arizona's relationship with Mexico is mutual misunderstanding. Too many people in Arizona think Mexico is populated by narco-terrorists, and too many people in Mexico believe that Arizona is populated by gun-toting people who hate Mexicans.

There are opportunities to address these misunderstandings and improve the relationship between Arizona and Mexico. There is a great deal of information relevant to the relationship between Arizona and Mexico that is not well known. For example, Mexico has great universities and a well educated workforce—both attributes prized by business. This information should be more widely disseminated and viewed as a regional asset.

There are limited student exchange programs that work to improve mutual understanding; these programs should be expanded, they contribute greatly to better understanding and relationship building. There are opportunities for Arizonans to attend Mexican universities at no charge, but these opportunities are largely unused.

To encourage Arizonans to become global citizens, we should encourage them to obtain a world class education. This includes the requirement to learn more than one language. More Arizonans should learn Spanish, and Spanish language immersion programs should be more widely available. Arizona also could promote tourism and travel to Mexico.

Businesses need to understand and take strategic advantage of cost differentials, including labor costs, utility costs, and trade agreements. A large, international project involving both Arizona and Mexico would provide an opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of partnership, and could allow the project to take advantage of the best resources of both countries.

Currently Arizona ships primarily from the port of Long Beach. Mexico has four ports that are closer and greater use of these ports could provide advantages to both Arizona and Mexico.

What can we do?

Those interested in promoting Arizona's relationship with Mexico should share information about the attributes of this relationship and the benefits of doing business with Mexico. We should exploit the economy of knowledge. There are great universities on both sides of the border, which along with businesses produce information that can be communicated over the internet without the formalities of a border crossing.

More and better communication is essential. In the past most of the dialogue between Arizona and Mexico occurred between the federal and state governments. More recently that channel of communication has been less effective, but cities on both sides of the border have maintained a more robust and productive relationship. This city-to-city interaction is effective and should be expanded. Businesses need to better understand the attributes and opportunities available, and communicate their business needs. Business leaders should speak up about the benefits of trade and relationship between Arizona and Mexico. Arizona has an opportunity to improve its trading position with Mexico by providing a positive message that would counterbalance the current, poisonous political rhetoric. Arizonans can make it clear that we are open for business and want to do business with Mexico. Arizona and Mexico can brand this region as a trans-national corridor for trade that offers the best of both countries to companies who are interested in global business.

Arizonans could benefit from a better understanding of, and respect for, Mexican culture. Most Arizonans do not know much about Mexico, and do not think of opportunities to partner with Mexico. There is a perception problem in the U.S., where many view Mexico with fear rather than friendship and partnership. Mexicans do not want to come to the U.S. To take American jobs, and are not intent on kidnapping American tourists. In fact, Mexico's well-trained work force is an attribute to Arizona, providing workers for the produce industry and the high-tech industry, both of which have workforce shortages. We should do more to adjust the harmful mis-perceptions.

It is time for Arizona leaders to shift the regional focus from fear about immigration to understanding of the need for and benefits of cross-border business partnerships. It will take time and concerted effort by those who understand the importance of this regional relationship to change American perceptions and improve public understanding of the importance of our relationship with Mexico. Those who have a global perspective, who understand and appreciate the importance of Arizona's relationship with Mexico, must get involved in the process of educating the public and changing public perceptions, and keep following through on those efforts until perceptions change. Although it may take considerable time to change the parochial of average Americans, a relatively small group of global business leaders can and should take on responsibility for leading this effort.

Just One Thing

As global business leaders we would tell Arizona legislators the following:

1. See for yourself. Go deeper. Go to the ports of entry and see the flow of people and business. Travel to Mexico to meet with business people and see for yourself the opportunities. Do your own research, instead of relying on what you happen to read in the newspaper.
2. Instead of continuously running for reelection, and pandering to the fears and misperceptions of the public, do the job for which you were elected, and make decisions that are truly in the best interest of the people you serve.