



Louisiana District Export Council (LDEC) General Meeting

Thursday, July 24, 2025

Meeting 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM (light lunch included)

In person – Greater New Orleans, Inc.

1100 Poydras St #3475, New Orleans, LA 70163

Minutes

List of Attendees

In Person-

Jerry Hingle- International Trade Associates
Charlotte Conerly- U.S. Commercial Service Center Louisiana
Brenda Stelly- Oil Center Research International
Emily Maran- U.S. Commercial Service Center Louisiana
Claire Reifschneider- U.S. Commercial Service Center Louisiana
India Bellard- LED
Sarah Lognion - U.S. Customs Broker Fed Ex
Tania Zachari- Technic Intl Corporation
Amber Menendez- IDC
Ben Dreessen- FBI New Orleans
Dave Domingue- Lafayette International Trade Development
Harrison Crabtree- World Trade Center
Jon Renthrope- Cajun Fire Brewing Company
John Hyatt- Consultant

Online-

John Henry Jackson- U.S. Commercial Service Center Louisiana
Warren Bares- J Maxime Roy Lafayette
Onika Jervis- Maraka Consulting
Ben Elder- Aerowest International
Caitlin Cain- Heirloom Carbon
Sharron Herron Williams- Southern University, Study Louisiana
Raynell Lewis Ogiugo- PHI Aviation
Keiana Palmer- Jones Walker Law Firm
Robert Soha- Conrad Shipyards
Bryan Greenwood- Louisiana SBDC Network
Geraldyn Contini- Africa Global Schaffer
Sami Parbhoo- Lafayette International Center
Christophe Pilut- Lafayette International Center
Janine Moreau Mansour- Port of New Orleans

Treasurer's Report – Bryan Greenwood motioned to accept; Brenda Stelly seconded; unanimously approved

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Previous Meeting Minutes – Ben Elder motioned to accept; Bryan Greenwood seconded; unanimously approved

Guest Speaker- Supervisory Special Agent Ben Dressen

National Security and International Business

China: Risks to Corporate America and Hybrid Commercial Threats

- Threats to Critical Infrastructure
 - Anticipating major conflict with the U.S. in the near future
 - Operational goals: interfere with US military deployments, induce panic, impede decision making in the White House
- Volt Typhoon
 - Infiltrating infrastructure via cyber means waiting for a conflict to induce chaos by shutting down or slowing down infrastructure
- Salt Typhoon
 - Targeted at telecommunications providers
 - Steal customers' information and law enforcement data (including FBI data)
- Risks to Corporate America
 - China is prolific when it comes to collecting IP
 - National strategy for at least 40 years
 - Traditional Collection
 - Espionage and spying
 - Intelligence officers and people they recruit
 - Non- Traditional Collection
 - People with no training but selected and tasked by Chinese government to collect IP info and proprietary data
 - Military-Civil Fusion
 - Line of demarcation between education, commercial enterprise, and military sectors
 - Not the case for China, all serve the purpose of the military and the intelligence enterprise
 - Leverages China's civilian industry resources
 - Whole of Society Approach
 - Technology transfer via intelligence services, talent recruitment programs (recruit researchers involved in advanced or emerging technology)
 - Legal and regulatory environment as a weapon
 - Hybrid Commercial Threats
 - Enterprise that has a legitimate reason for existence but behind the scenes they are directed and controlled by the Chinese government
 - Enable the transfer of tech and IP to China or give Chinese government access to critical infrastructure



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- Ex. China Telecom- take data packets which originate in in LA and intended for DC
 - Instead route them to China and then DC
 - Legal and Regulatory Environment
 - 10 data security and national security laws in China that form a pre-tense where the Chinese government can gain access to your files, network, offices, etc.
- China's Five-year Plan for Worldwide Monopolies
 - Spell out strategic goals and list industries they need to dominate in by procuring others IP
 - Targeting the Mississippi River System
 - Major port cities (St. Louis, and Chicago) establishing business and buying properties
 - Ports in Southern Louisiana- gateway to the rest of the system and interior of the U.S.
 - Access to and control of supply chains, economic ties leveraged for political influence, ability to disrupt and collect intelligence
- What can you do to reduce risks
 - Evaluate business partners (address with skepticism)
 - Employee background checks
 - Evaluate contracts (scrutinize language, opening for acquisition of proprietary data)
 - Consider information controls
- Discussion
 - On the contract side- how do you protect your IP if China's regulatory framework does not respect privacy laws
 - Not much that can be done
 - Be aware of Chinese laws and travel related precautions- additional documents to be circulated
 - In an event where a business is already in a compromised position, the best bet is to reach out to FBI directly
 - Other nations to consider
 - Russia, North Korea, Iran
 - What resources are available to companies to conduct background checks?
 - Data alliable in open source
 - Ropes and Gray- specialized in research in China
 - International Company Profile Service by the Commercial Service Center

Louisiana Economic Development Update- India Bellard

- Strategic Plan- located on website, outlay of initiatives to support business expansion, extension, and attraction
 - Whole of Government Initiative- Partnerships through Executive Branch
 - Not going to each agency but holistic approach
 - Optimal Sectors: Energy and Process Industries, Logistics, Aerospace and Defense, Agri Business, Life Sciences, Technology, Professional Services



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- Pillars to support initiatives
 - Ease of doing business- position LA to compete and win
 - High impact jobs initiative (incentive to lift parish average wage)
 - Thriving regions
 - Optimize legacy industries
 - Strong year in receiving capital investments (upwards 6 billion dollars)
 - 500 companies within last administration- goal for next year is 500+
 - International strategy- presentation and outlay coming soon
- FY 2023 STEP Grant Program
 - Closing out FY 23 with 40 companies in program
 - 600k
- FY 2024 STEP Grant Program
 - 500k, 40 companies
- FY 2025 STEP Grant Program
 - Trade shows, export training workshop, ADIPEC
 - Reverse trade missions, commercial service subscription services, business development engagement

Trade Update- Jerry Hingle

- Record trade deficit
 - Increase imports aided by strong USD
 - Headwind of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to exports
- Agriculture is taking an unprecedented hit
 - Brazil brings in 7b in agriculture- trade deficit
- Currency manipulation
 - Ex. Egypt- Egyptian pound devaluation have induced recurring crises
- Trade disputes and agreements
 - Things are moving fast and weekly
 - China- by far the greatest threat
 - Tariff war will not end soon despite recent agreements
- Biggest Markets
 - Canada- taxes on digital services, 25% tariff on US goods and US threatening 30% by August 1st
 - EU- digital services, steel/ aluminum, pause extended to August 1st
 - UK- progress on free trade
 - Mexico- capitulated retaliatory tariffs, threat at 30% come August 1st
 - Brazil- purely political
 - South Africa- 30% announced
- Washington strategy ditched multilateral agreements for one-on-one



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Upcoming Events / Current Operations of U.S. Commercial Service Louisiana

- Pending nominate window for DEC
- 3 Export bootcamps in the next fiscal year
 - Supported by LED and Jones Walker
- ADIPEC
 - DEC supporting 100% of travel
- Us-Mexico-Canada SME Dialogue- Brenda sending information
- Current status of agency travel budgets and hiring
- Louisiana Energy Research Symposium- October 3rd
 - Academic and federal government partnership as it relates to energy matters