



News release

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Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership overcomes the unexpected in 2010

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – The challenges of 2010 were significant, not only for the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership but worldwide, as well. This article reflects on just a few of BAHEP’s considerable activities throughout the year.

Leadership takes on national perspective

The federal administration’s announcement on Feb. 1 concerning a course change for NASA sent shockwaves throughout the NASA centers and the communities surrounding them. BAHEP quickly realized that it would take a phenomenal effort to preserve the core competency and knowledge base of Johnson Space Center. The leadership and staff of BAHEP never accepted failure as an option.

Perhaps as in no other year since the organization was founded 34 years ago, 2010 became the year of op-eds. These opinion / editorial pieces informed unknown thousands of people of issues vital to this country, locally and in national publications.

Opportunities were abundant, as well, to communicate the urgency of bipartisan congressional support for a robust, NASA-led, human spaceflight program - one which would preserve America’s leadership position. An abbreviated summary of BAHEP’s accomplishments surrounding the NASA budget includes: 34 speaking engagements, four trips to Washington, D.C., 111 appearances in print and electronic media, and 57 interviews on broadcast media.

Membership record set

Despite one of the most challenging recessionary periods this country has had since the Great Depression, BAHEP can sum up its membership efforts by saying, “This organization now has

the most funding members in its history and the best membership recruitment year in five years with 29 new members.”

Additionally in 2010, BAHEP’s general membership meetings focused on a variety of topics of particular relevance to its members. These meetings featured Congressmen Pete Olson and John Culberson, economists Dr. Ray Perryman and Dr. Bob Hodgins, retired General Carl E. Vuono, Port of Houston Executive Director Alec Dreyer, City of Houston Mayor Annise Parker, former Space Shuttle Program Manager Wayne Hale, and Dr. Robert Stein, an expert on urban politics and public policy.

Advocacy efforts expand

Advocacy has been a fundamental BAHEP priority since its inception. Much of the advocacy work supports five major industry clusters: aerospace, specialty chemical, maritime, healthcare and education. Each of these clusters has a BAHEP committee that guides advocacy work done both in Austin and Washington, D.C.

The Maritime Committee saw its storm surge suppression work move forward with the formation of the Gulf Coast Community Protection and Recovery District, a six-county coalition that was formed in response to their call to evaluate the benefits of the Ike Dike.

Maritime classes began this year in Pasadena ISD due to the efforts of both the Maritime Committee and the Education and Workforce Development Committee. By collaborating with the Port of Houston Maritime Academy Committee, a definitive plan was put into place. Pasadena, La Porte and Houston ISD, together with San Jacinto College, Texas A&M Galveston, and the University of Houston - Clear Lake, are all now involved in a maritime curriculum for students from high school to grad school.

This year’s annual Power Breakfast was hosted by BAHEP’s Healthcare Committee. The main speaker at the event highlighted what the new healthcare bill will mean to local businesses.

The Chemical Industry Committee integrated BAHEP into statewide and regional chemical industry associations. It also coordinated a forum with Congressman Pete Olson and participated in a panel discussion with Senator John Cornyn to share concerns on trending topics affecting the industry.

BAHEP has always been a leader in aerospace advocacy, and this year it moved its efforts up a few notches. Shortly after the president announced his new plan for NASA, a delegation of 30 travelers from five states traveled to Washington, D.C. The group targeted 87 House and Senate members on key committees related to the NASA budget.

BAHEP’s Citizens for Space Exploration-Texas returned to Washington in May for its 19th annual trip. In just two days, 145 travelers met with a record 355 congressional offices. The main elements of CSE’s message looked remarkably like the language that was in the final bill approved by Congress and signed by the president this fall.

Created new opportunities at Ellington

As a result of the continuing efforts of BAHEP’s Ellington Field Task Force, Ellington Field is several steps closer to realizing the goal of being formally recognized as a true Joint Reserve Base - a designation which means eligibility for enhanced federal funding. This funding will allow for new shared-use facilities to be built, like a commissary, small arms range, as well as a shared medical clinic, and will make Ellington less vulnerable to future base realignment and closure activity.

Ellington Field is enjoying a building boom and has 10 buildings under construction valued at more than \$80 million. Additionally, the new Coast Guard sector headquarters facility should be ready for occupancy in the fall of 2012. This fusion center will maintain security along the entire Gulf Coast.

Jobs and investment increase

With the downturn of the national economy looming large on everyone's mind, BAHEP forged through the year attending national tradeshow seeking industry leads and courting site consultants and international business delegates from across the world to our region in order to keep our pipeline of qualified prospects flowing.

In 2010, four companies new to the state announced they will open operations in this region, while two additional local companies announced significant investments in upgrading and expanding operations at their local site. BAHEP is proud to have played a major role in landing these projects. In total, these represent more than 1,500 higher wage direct and indirect jobs, \$390 million in capital investments, and \$72 million in salary impacts for the region.

Next year looks equally exciting with more than 35 active prospects from industries such as manufacturing, specialty chemical, aviation, defense, bioscience, and healthcare.

Built legislative agenda

In the past, BAHEP has been so successful in building effective legislative agendas for its human spaceflight, specialty chemical, and education initiatives, that its leadership decided to use the same proven process throughout the entire committee structure this year to create an expanded, early-draft legislative agenda for the 82nd Texas Legislative Session, which convenes in January.

This expanded effort led to the creation of seven position papers covering not only aerospace and education, but also franchise tax reform, priorities at Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base, and revisions to the state sales tax to preserve Texas maritime jobs, among others.

The effort culminated in a briefing, led by BAHEP Chairman Dennis Petersen, to the local legislative delegation, including Senator Mike Jackson, and Representatives Larry Taylor, John Davis, Randy Weber, and Ken Legler on Nov. 15. The BAHEP leadership believes the region is better prepared, legislatively, than any time in the past, and Senator Jackson commended BAHEP for this effort to bring the agenda to them in advance of the session.

SATOP assists 90 businesses in 2010

Since the Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program (www.spacetechnolutions.com) started 11 years ago, more than 700 Texas businesses have overcome technical problems that they were having with development of their products. SATOP is administered by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It is a NASA and State of Texas funded initiative. In 2010 SATOP had another great year with 90 businesses receiving technical assistance.

Senator John Cornyn and Representative Ron Paul sponsored legislation that secured BAHEP \$1,000,000 for 2011 to lead the National SATOP Program. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison submitted a \$2,000,000 funding request for SATOP to use in 2012, and BAHEP awaits word on its passage.

Overcoming the unexpected

The year 2010 saw the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership overcoming the unexpected on several fronts. Communication and leadership were the cornerstones of much of BAHEP's work.

American journalist and author Sydney J. Harris wrote, “The two words ‘information’ and ‘communication’ are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.”
In 2010 BAHEP got through!

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The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeast Texas. Its members include more than 260 investor companies, business professionals, local governments, and educational institutions encompassing 13 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, and the Port of Houston Authority. Visit www.bayareahouston.com.

Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program is administered by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It is a State of Texas funded initiative designed to transfer the knowledge and technology of the U.S. Space Program to small businesses to solve technical challenges they are unable to solve themselves. Visit www.spacetechsolutions.com/bahep.