

BAHEP extends its sincere appreciation for the continued support of the *Houston Chronicle* through this monthly supplement.

## Region's legislators give personal perspectives on results of 84th Texas legislative session

Approximately 20 percent of the bills that were introduced during Texas' 84th Legislature passed. At first glance, that doesn't seem like a lot until you look at the actual numbers. Of 6,476 bills introduced, 1,323 survived.

Eight Bay Area Houston legislators spoke of their successes and disappointments during the legislative session at a General Membership Meeting of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership held at South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center on July 15, 2015. The meeting was hosted by BAHEP's Political Protocol Committee.

Sen. Larry Taylor noted with the passage of the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) bill, TWIA's funding level is healthy enough to cover a 1 in 100-year storm, having \$4.88 billion in total funds available to pay claims this year.

Sen. Sylvia Garcia reported that one of the most important accomplishments for the entire region was the nearly \$300 million taken from the \$1.3 billion Rainy Day Fund that will be applied toward re-



The region's state legislators participated on a panel to give their perspectives on Texas' 84th legislative session. Shown (l to r) are: Reps. Gilbert Peña (District 144), Dennis Paul (District 129), Wayne Faircloth (District 23), Greg Bonnen, M.D. (District 24), Ed Thompson (District 29), Wayne Smith (District 128), and Sens. Sylvia Garcia (District 6) and Larry Taylor (District 11). The Political Protocol Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership hosted the meeting at South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center on July 15, 2015. BAHEP President Bob Mitchell gave introductory remarks and introduced elected officials who were in attendance. BAHEP Board Chair Vic Pierson, president, Moody National Bank, served as event moderator.

gional transportation issues.

Most of the legislators commented on a storm surge suppression system for Galveston Bay that is also known as the Ike Dike Concept. BAHEP, in partnership with Texas A&M University at Galveston, has been advocating for this system for over four years.

The legislature's Joint Interim Committee to Study a Coastal Barrier System was approved for another two years. Rep. Greg Bonnen, M.D., stated that a coastal barrier system has to be a joint effort between the state and federal governments. Sen. Taylor said that there is a lot of support at the state level for the system. "They get it," he emphasized.

## Navigating the land of social media

Social media – powerful, far reaching, permanent. Love it or hate it, social media is here to stay. It is arguably one of the fastest ways to get out a message to people worldwide.

Companies that have a product to sell, a mission to achieve or uphold, or a cause to promote have found that social media is a very effective marketing tool.

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership publishes two informative and successful quarterly newsletters. Local newspapers publish a monthly BAHEP insert, as well as news releases, which highlight the organization's activities and initiatives.

However, when BAHEP jumped headfirst into the social media pool just a few years ago, it soon became apparent that Facebook and Twitter would become indelibly inked into the organization's marketing strategy.

BAHEP's Facebook page has evolved from a barely there presence in the Facebook universe to one that has seen considerable growth in a short amount of time.

BAHEP's top seven posts in the past 15 months have reached 497,928 people in 44 cities across Texas and in 38

countries, and that number goes up daily. Those posts included information about transportation issues, new restaurants, retail outlets and entertainment venues.

BAHEP's stated mission is to provide the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment, and its Facebook posts vary to include information on the region's largest industry clusters: aerospace, healthcare, maritime, specialty chemical, and tourism /

recreation. A popular truism used by economists worldwide states that economic development doesn't happen by itself, and those posts serve to illustrate that statement.

BAHEP has learned along the way that certain categories of posts spur dramatic increases in Face-

book "likes." As statistics accrued and demographics became clearer, BAHEP's marketing team discovered that it was essential to intermingle specialized posts with those that spoke of advocacy efforts and traditional economic development initiatives that attract and grow companies. With

that knowledge, BAHEP drew even greater interest in its ever changing Facebook page.

Interestingly, women comprise three quarters of the people who have "liked" BAHEP's Facebook page, and by far the most popular post was actually a repost of a video

of the new Baybrook Mall expansion that was originally featured on the General Growth Properties' Vimeo page.

All companies must "evolve with the times" in order to capture their market share – to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. Social media has made a remarkable difference in BAHEP's marketing and communications outreach. Learning to navigate the land of Facebook and Twitter has proven to be well worth the effort.



## BAHEP welcomes MDA US Systems, LLC, Mutual of Omaha Bank, and Ayrshire Corporation as newest members of organization

### MDA US Systems, LLC

MDA US Systems, LLC, is a small, local office of the larger MDA Corporation, which has multiple facilities across North America.



It has recently become a member of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

BAHEP President Bob Mitchell stated, "NASA contractors such as MDA US Systems, LLC, provide so much of the critical expertise needed by our nation's space program. We look forward to working together with MDA US Systems, LLC, in support of the missions of NASA Johnson Space Center."

The Houston office for MDA US Systems, LLC, was founded in 1985 as Dynacs Engineering. MDA provides robotics and automation for difficult missions to include space, medical and nuclear applications. Its largest ongoing activity in Houston is in support of the MDA robotics on the International Space Station (Canadarm2 [MSS/RMS] and Dextre [SPDM]) through NASA Johnson Space Center.

Stayne Hoff is director of Business Development with MDA US Systems, LLC, and Group Lead

Ruch Deemer will represent the company within BAHEP. Hoff commented, "Good relationships pave the way for business opportunity and growth. MDA US Systems,

LLC, seeks to strengthen its current relationships and form new ones through membership in BAHEP."

MDA US Systems, LLC, is located at 1300 Hercules Avenue, #210 in the Clear Lake area. Find out more at [www.mdacorp-us.com](http://www.mdacorp-us.com) or by calling 713.352.5900.

### Mutual of Omaha Bank

Mutual of Omaha Bank is a full-service bank providing financial solutions to individuals and businesses across the United States. With nearly \$7 billion in assets, Mutual of Omaha Bank is a subsidiary of Mutual of Omaha, a Fortune 500 insurance and financial services company founded in 1909.

Bob Mitchell, president of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, said, "With many of Houston's business sectors showing consider-

able growth, Mutual of Omaha Bank's Houston-based commercial and corporate banking group is definitely located in the right place at the right time. We look forward to working together to help further expand the regional economy."

Randy Gartz is the manager of Corporate and Commercial Relationship Banking with Houston's Mutual of Omaha Bank. He stated, "Mutual of Omaha Bank offers financial resources and expertise that make us a value-added partner. We believe that BAHEP is a value-added partner in the community, as well, and we are excited about joining the organization."

Gartz further explained, "Mutual of Omaha Bank is uniquely positioned to provide full-service banking to companies involved in manufacturing, service and distribution. Our expert banking talent is positioned to help companies achieve their long- and



**Mutual of Omaha Bank**

short-term goals through the delivery of capital structure guidance, debt financing and treasury and risk management services."

Mutual of Omaha Bank is located at 520 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 700 in Houston. For more information, contact Randy Gartz at 713.405.1562 or at [randy.gartz@mutualofomahabank.com](mailto:randy.gartz@mutualofomahabank.com). Visit [www.mutualofomahabank.com](http://www.mutualofomahabank.com), as well.

### Ayrshire Corporation

Since 1946, Ayrshire Corporation has devoted its energies to creating a broad spectrum of real estate projects singularly responsive to market needs. Ayrshire has managed the development of more than 35,000 acres in residential mixed-use communities and has built more than 12 million square feet of office, retail and hotel space in metropolitan centers.

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership President Bob Mitchell welcomed Ayrshire Corporation saying, "BAHEP has had a relationship with Ayrshire Corporation that spans decades. It is great to be working with them once again toward the development of the region."

Ayrshire Corporation President William F. (Billy) Burge, III, will represent the company within BAHEP. "BAHEP does a great job of marketing the area, and we're looking forward to furthering an

already great relationship with the organization," he stated.

As the developer partner with ANACO in the development of South Shore Harbour, Ayrshire Corporation was one of the original 10 founding members of the Clear Lake Area Economic Development Foundation (CLAEDF), which was renamed the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership in 2003. Additionally, Ayrshire invested in the first private space launch in history. Dek Slayton was then president and David Hannah, chairman.

Throughout its history, Ayrshire Corporation has



established long-standing relationships with leading lenders, developers, and corporate owners across the country – relationships that can be sustained only through performance. Ayrshire projects are developed whenever opportunity and market demand intersect, with recent activities concentrated in Houston, Dallas, New York, Atlanta, New Orleans and Los Angeles.

Ayrshire Corporation is located at 2028 Buffalo Terrace, Houston, Texas 77019. Call 713.524.4676 for more information or email [bburgeiii@ayrshire-hou.com](mailto:bburgeiii@ayrshire-hou.com).

**BUSINESS**  
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