

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

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Diaz speaks of continued growth and future plans for Houston Airport System

In mid-July, Mario C. Diaz, director of Aviation for the Houston Airport System (HAS), presented an informative update on Houston's three aviation facilities during a luncheon meeting of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. Diaz spoke before a "packed house" at the general membership meeting held at Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas.

Diaz is responsible for the overall management of George Bush Intercontinental Airport, William P. Hobby Airport and Ellington Airport. He is one of the industry's leading authorities in the study of future developments in commercial aviation.

Since his arrival in Houston in 2010, Diaz has led efforts along three broad strategic fronts: establishing Intercontinental as the region's long-haul, full-service international airport; converting Hobby to a regional international airport of the Americas; and developing Ellington as the nation's 10th licensed spaceport.

Houston airports are America's Global Gateway

Diaz reported that Houston's airports are experiencing unprecedented growth. Bush Intercontinental Airport has seen an international passenger traffic boom showing 43 percent growth over the last 10 years. Ten new international air carriers have been added over the last three years with existing airlines adding non-stop routes at a record pace. The airport reaches almost 200 destinations in the U.S. and around the globe, making Houston the only city in North America with nonstop service to all inhabitable continental regions, Diaz noted.

Tremendous growth is also taking place at Hobby Airport. Its passenger totals are soaring showing 42 percent growth over the last 10 years. The number of nonstop destinations has doubled in the past decade. In 2015 alone, Southwest Airlines added nine new international destinations.

With growth come challenges

This kind of growth over a relatively short time frame does not come without its challenges including crowded terminals and runways, limited aircraft gates that can accommodate larger aircraft, and dated facilities.

Diaz spoke about infrastructure investments and airport improvements. At Hobby Airport, a new, 280,000 square foot international concourse opened last year. Passengers are also enjoying a new and expanded Southwest Airlines ticket lobby.

A new, four-level parking garage at Hobby Airport is making life a bit easier for travelers. With 3,300 spaces, the garage is attached to the new concourse by an air-conditioned, elevated connector. The garage features a real time space locator system which makes it easier to find a space.

HAS is obviously doing many things right. Skytrax is the leading global air transport rating organization. The organization gave Hobby Airport a four-star rating for 2016. Hobby is now one of just



Mario C. Diaz
Director of Aviation, Houston Airport System

three airports in the United States to earn a four-star rating.

Bush Intercontinental expands

A new International Terminal D, named after Mickey Leland, will eventually replace the current Terminal D. It is to be completed in phases: Demolition work on the current Terminal D is scheduled to start in 2017 with the new terminal to

be operational by year-end 2021. It will feature 15 wide-body gates with four gates that can accommodate the A-380 super jumbo jetliner. The new terminal will be 58 percent larger, have enhanced aesthetics with natural light and airfield views, modern concessions that reflect best practices, diplomatic suites, clubrooms, and a performance stage.

New Terminal C North's construction

started in May 2015. The 265,000 square foot facility will house 11 boarding gates for all types of United Airline carriers. Upon its completion in early 2017, the old North Concourse will be demolished to be used for reconstruction of the Mickey Leland International Terminal D.

Ellington Airport prime for development

Ellington Airport was acquired by the City of Houston in 1984 and now supports the operations of the United States military, NASA, and a variety of general aviation tenants. It features three active runways and will have a new air traffic control tower that is scheduled for completion in 2017.

Ellington became the 10th licensed commercial spaceport in the nation in June 2015. With a comprehensive aviation infrastructure already in place, the spaceport will support aviation-style launch vehicle operations, which means that aircraft will execute horizontal launches, rather than vertical, similar to commercial

planes.

Diaz spoke about the Houston Aerospace Support Center. The Houston Airport System acquired this 53,000 square foot building in November 2015 as its first dedicated piece of infrastructure for the Houston Spaceport. It is a first class, high bay facility with office space.

The Houston Spaceport offers ample land for development, according to Diaz. Houston Spaceport Phase 1 includes 90 acres for development, 70 acres of leasable ground, 1.25 million square feet of building space, and ongoing opportunities with potential tenants.

More plans revealed

Diaz also mentioned a number of customer improvements that are underway. Additionally, he spoke of expanding air service options to Africa and air service connectivity in West Africa. Phase 2 development of the Houston Spaceport is on the horizon, as well.

In closing, Diaz said that his goal is to "establish the Houston Airport System as a five-star global air service gateway where the magic of flight is celebrated."

Mitchell adds Bay Area Houston perspective to HBJ power breakfast panel on regional growth



In the photo at left, Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, speaks with Giselle Greenwood, editor-in-chief of the *Houston Business Journal*.

Greenwood moderated a power breakfast panel in June at Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas, that offered a range of perspectives on regional growth.

Joining Mitchell on the panel were Roger Quiroga,

Port of Galveston; Brad Ballard, NewCoast Properties; and Stephen Campbell, University of Texas Medical Branch.

The region's robust healthcare industry was noted by the panelists. "We're very fortunate to have all the primary jobs that support a great housing market and retail market," Mitchell said. "Our healthcare industry is probably the fastest growing industry we have."

BAHEP welcomes Community Strategies and MyBayArea as newest members

Community Strategies

Founded in 1993, Community Strategies is a full-service public relations firm that delivers results-driven, quality services for international, national and regional clients.

Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, welcomed Community Strategies as a new member of BAHEP stating, "Community Strategies has an impressive track record of accomplishments. Owner Kathy Thomas is quite knowledgeable in

"As a public relations professional, I am very familiar with the work of BAHEP, since Bob and his team are so well known. There is incredible growth in the region, and it is an excellent time to become involved with this dynamic organization."

Whether it's a crisis communications plan for a huge plant in the Middle East or branding and marketing for a national startup, Community Strategies has the expertise to get the job done. Thomas stated, "We analyze their needs, craft a strategic plan

ual needs and budget."

Community Strategies holds state and federal woman-owned business certifications. Its client list is made up largely of energy, healthcare and real estate development companies, including BP, Shell, The University of Texas Medical Branch, Regent Care Centers, Maris Environmental Consultancy and Engineering, NextDecade, LLC, and IHI Engineering & Construction.

Community Strategies is located in both Houston and Galveston, Texas. For additional information, call 409.789.9284, email Kathy@com-strats.com or visit www.com-strats.com.

MyBayArea

MyBayArea is a local online source for information, news, events and businesses in the Houston Bay Area. The company is the newest member of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

BAHEP President Bob Mitchell welcomed MyBayArea saying, "An in-

formed community can make better decisions, and MyBayArea adds a personal touch to the wealth of information that makes this region a great place to live and conduct business. We're happy to welcome them to the organization."

grate business leaders with community non-profit and similar organizations through engaging content that makes a difference. With a unique model for advertising and marketing, we are able to help businesses grow while support-



From La Porte to Friendswood to Galveston, MyBayArea has been covering the community since 2011. Owners Lauren and Nate Stockard stated, "Over the years, we've learned about the amazing work of BAHEP and met many of its members. We felt it was time join them and further our efforts to support the Bay Area Houston region."

Lauren added, "We inte-

ing the community."

MyBayArea's parent company, Blue Atlas, specializes in web marketing, which includes website development, SEO, video, graphic design and social media. MyBayArea is located at 1322 Space Park, #B180, Houston, Texas 77058. Call 832.209.8856, email lauren@mybayarea.community or visit MyBayArea's website for more information, www.mybayarea.community.



Community Strategies

government and community affairs and is a welcome addition to our membership."

Thomas commented,

and bring decades of public relations savvy to help achieve their goals by assembling teams of experts to fit each client's individ-

BUSINESS
to BUSINESS is a monthly Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership publication in partnership with the *Houston Chronicle*. BAHEP is a member-driven organization in southeastern Texas that includes more than 265 business partners encompassing 14 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, the Houston Airport System, and the Port of Houston Authority. For membership information, contact Membership Director Harriet Lukee at 832.536.3250.
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