



Strengthening International Business Connections

Manatee County may not always come to mind for trade commissioners representing countries desiring to do business with the state. Generally, Miami-Dade and other southeast Florida communities are top of mind. The Miami area has developed strong international business ties and successfully promoted this region as a key international hub.

Florida benefits from geography and strong business ties with the entire western hemisphere have developed as a result. With Port Manatee strategically located as the closest deep water port in the United States to the expanded Panama Canal – shouldn't we promote our region as a key international trade hub? We believe so.

Through the Chamber's work with the International Trade Hub at Port Manatee along with other key partners, including leadership from the Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation, Manatee County Government and Port Manatee, we are expanding global connections for Port Manatee and the Manatee area business community, resulting in job growth and business opportunities.

Early in 2017, the Chamber led a group of 16 business and economic development partners on a trade mission to Cuba. Providing area businesses insight on how to do business with Cuba and placing Manatee County and Port Manatee on Cuba's radar. Since then, the International Trade Hub at Port Manatee has spearheaded an effort to bring trade

commissioners, business representatives and government officials from various countries to Manatee County. To date we've received representatives from Guatemala, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Spain and Japan. Country delegates are provided rich insight regarding the significant benefits associated with developing commercial ties with Port Manatee, including the opportunity to access nearly 10 million consumers within a two-hour drive of the Port. Besides exposure to our slice of west coast paradise, these groups also learned about the important business resources offered by our economic development partners.

This important work creates trade opportunities between Manatee County and other countries that may otherwise pass over our community as they continue business relations in Southeast Florida. These valuable engagements here and abroad educate international business representatives of the goods and services located in our community and exposes them to area businesses and opportunities throughout the Manatee County region.

We are proud to advocate on behalf of the business community to build a strong business ties internationally.



Port Director Carlos Buqueras and International Trade Hub Coordinator Ivan Mutis



Chamber Cuba Trade Mission Business Representatives



Reception with Guatemalas Trade Commissioner, Government and Business Representatives