



National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

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OMAN BUSINESS ROAD SHOW TO THE UNITED STATES KICKS OFF IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

*Minister of Commerce & Industry Leads
Largest Business Delegation to the USA in Two Decades*

*In a Historic First, Omani Ambassador to the USA and
U.S. Ambassador to Oman Participate in the Road Show,
Supported by the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce*

The Oman Business Road Show, the largest and highest level government and business delegation from the Sultanate of Oman to the United States in the past two decades, is now underway. The trade & investment mission has just completed its first stop – in Houston, Texas – with additional stops planned for Chicago and New York City.

Leading the commercial Road Show is H.E. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Oman's Minister of Commerce and Industry, who is joined by Oman's Ambassador to the United States – Her Excellency Hunaina Al-Mughairy – and the U.S. Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, the Honorable



VIPs attending the Houston Business Briefing include (left to right): David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC; H.E. Hunaina Al Mughairy, Oman's Ambassador to the United States; Bob Harvey, President & CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership; H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy, Oman's Minister of Commerce & Industry; Hon. Greta Holtz, U.S. Ambassador to Oman; Hon. Chase Untermeyer, former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar.



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Greta C. Holtz. The delegation is composed of more than 40 business leaders, representing many of the strongest companies in Oman, as well as a handful of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Road Show is being organized by the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce.

“Our presence here in the United States is a reflection of the growing commercial relationship between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States,” said Minister Al Sunaidy in his speech to the Houston business community. “Oman is embarking on the largest-scale infrastructural and commercial expansion in our nation’s history, and we are giving U.S. companies an opportunity to be an important part of that expansion.”

He concluded, “Oman, because of its very long maritime history, has served as a gateway to far-flung markets for centuries. But never before have we been so well positioned to partner with American companies.”

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Hon. Andrew Card (left), former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and morning speaker, receives a gift of appreciation from H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy.

In Texas, Minister Al Sunaidy, the ambassadors, and the delegation were received at the highest levels. Some of the officials meeting with the delegation included the Acting Governor of the State of Texas, the Honorable David Dewhurst, the Mayor of Houston, the Honorable Annise Parker, and the Texas Secretary of State, the Honorable John Steen.

The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor of the State of Texas, was outside the United States at the time of the visit, but he prepared an official proclamation of welcome for the Omani delegation. Gov. Perry said, “On the occasion of your visit, I extend a warm welcome to this land of

great diversity. From high plains to pine forests and rugged mountains to coastal beaches, there is something for everyone in Texas . . . Everywhere you go, you will find that Texans are friendly, proud and independent folks.”



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Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst, in his capacity as Acting Governor, highlighted the longstanding relationship between Texas and Oman. This has historically revolved around oil & gas, he suggested. "On a per-barrel basis, Texas is essentially an oil-producing nation unto itself," he said. "Whether you ask me or the CEOs of countless companies, there's no better place in America to do business."

Expressing his appreciation for the fact that the Oman Business Road Show kicked off in Texas, Gov. Dewhurst highlighted some of his state's recent records and accolades:

- * Best state in which to do business, according to *CEO* magazine
- * Top exporting state in the USA for the past ten years
- * #1 state in America for job development
- * Texas has the strongest economy in the USA
- * Houston is the top manufacturing city in America

These are some of the reasons why Oman's Ministry of Commerce and Industry chose Houston as a target city, following a rigorous survey of 17 sectors and dozens of U.S. cities. In the end, top priority was given to four sectors: manufacturing, transportation & logistics, tourism, and healthcare – of particular interest and expertise in Texas.



H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy and H.E. Hunaina Al Mughairy (right), Oman's Ambassador to the United States, receive a Proclamation from Texas Governor Rick Perry, delivered by Texas Secretary of State, John Steen. Also pictured is Hon. Chase Untermeyer (far left), former U.S. Ambassador to Qatar.

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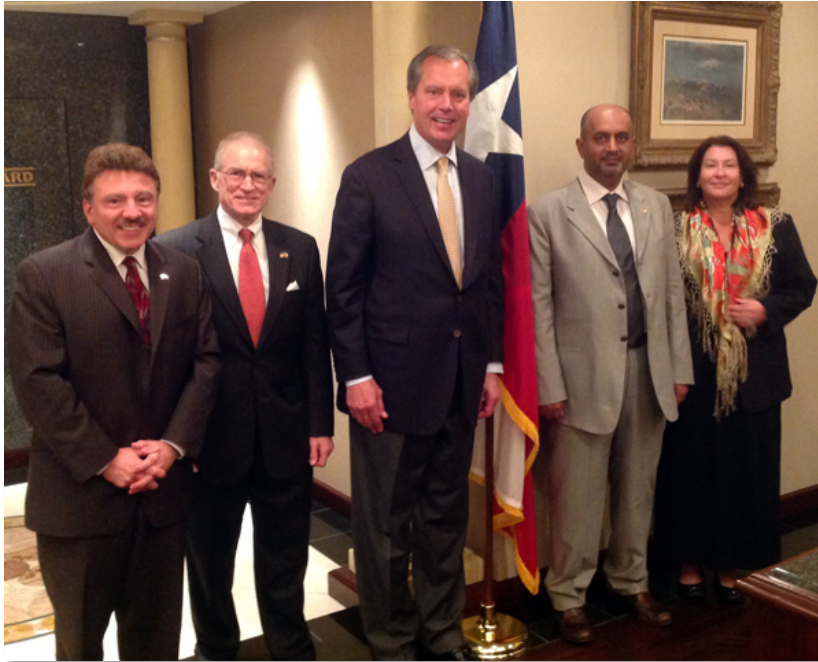
The Oman Business Road Show kicked off with a half-day briefing on business opportunities in Oman for Houston companies. Welcoming Minister Al Sunaidy and the Omani delegation to Houston was the Honorable Andrew Card, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and White House Chief of Staff.

In a heartfelt welcome speech, he said, "Oman has been a loyal friend to the United States for a



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very long time. The U.S. cherishes, respects and celebrates this friendship.” Secretary Card noted that the Oman Business Road Show sends a strong message to the U.S. private sector that “Oman is open for business” and that this represents an opportunity for “mutual benefit and mutual success.” This is important to the U.S. – Oman bilateral relationship, he said, “and the region depends on it.”



Meeting with the Texas Lt. Governor (from left to right): David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO; Hon. Chase Untermeyer; Lt. Governor David Dewhurst; H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy; Hon. Greta Holtz, U.S. Ambassador to Oman.

members of the Houston business community interested in investment opportunities in Oman.”

Harvey highlighted two-way trade between Houston and Oman. “Houston is proud to be Oman’s largest U.S. trade partner,” he noted, with two-way trade totaling about \$600 million per year. More than 230 companies in the Houston region have business ties to Oman, he pointed out, and “thirteen companies headquartered in Houston operate 20 affiliated subsidiary locations in Oman.”

Harvey noted that total trade between Houston and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

At lunch, a keynote address was provided by Robert Harvey, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership (GHP), the voice of Houston’s business community and one of two Houston-based partners of the Oman Business Road Show. (The other partner was the U.S. Export Assistance Center, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.)

Harvey noted, “We are honored that you chose Houston as your port-of-entry and first stop” in the United States. “GHP is pleased to provide a platform to connect the Omani delegation with



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region has grown by a compounded annual growth rate of 11.3 percent since the year 2000.

Key to Houston's success, Harvey said, has been the city's port and airport systems. Among U.S. seaports, he noted, the Port of Houston has ranked first in foreign tonnage for 17 consecutive years, first in import tonnage for 22 years, and second in total tonnage for 21 years. "These foreign shipments were valued at over \$175 billion in 2012," Harvey said.

The Houston Airport System, Harvey pointed out, serves 117 domestic and 68 international destinations. He noted that Houston is Oman's largest U.S.-based seaborne and air cargo trade partner.

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Hon. Annise Parker, Mayor of Houston, exchanges gifts of appreciation with H.E. Ali Al Sunaidy

Minister Al Sunaidy highlighted the important contributions in capacity-building provided by Occidental Petroleum (Oxy), which hosted the Omani delegation in Houston and served as a nationwide sponsor of the Road Show. Oxy employs over 2,000 Omanis, and the company provides extensive opportunities for professional development through training, internships, mentorships, career fairs, and support for Omani start-ups. Through its cross-posting initiative, Oxy brings some of Oman's best & brightest to the United States for intensive training and full immersion in the Oxy corporate culture. Minister Al Sunaidy described

this as a "model program for public / private partnership between the Government of Oman and an outstanding U.S. company."

He continued, "Oman has something that distinguishes us from the vast majority of other nations: a Free Trade Agreement with the United States. This means that most U.S. exporters can ship their goods duty-free to Oman . . . for the Omani market, or for re-export to other markets around the globe." The Free Trade Agreement, he suggested, has begun to bear fruit:



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- In 2006 (pre-FTA), exports from the United States totaled \$829 million. In 2012 (post-FTA), these exports had more than doubled to \$1.7 billion.
- Total bilateral trade has also grown considerably, from \$1.7 billion in 2006 to \$3.1 billion in 2012.
- Exports of U.S. goods and services to Oman are roughly doubling every four years. According to the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce, these exports are on track to double between 2012 and 2016, to \$4.5 billion.

As part of this export initiative, Minister Al Sunaidy said, “I see a special role for small & medium-sized enterprises, which are scalable and a ‘good fit’ for the Omani market. In our country, like yours, SMEs are considered the backbone of the economy and may contribute greatly to the nation’s economic growth and job creation.”

* * *

In Houston, Omani delegates met with dozens of U.S. companies in business-to-business (B2B) sessions. The delegates also visited the Port of Houston and some of the city’s top medical facilities, including such institutions as: Texas Medical Center, the largest medical center in the world; St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital, part of a faith-based system with 87 hospitals; Texas Institute of Rehabilitation & Research, Memorial Hermann, a teaching hospital for the Baylor College of Medicine; Methodist Hospital, named among the country’s top hospitals in 13 of 16 specialties.



B2B meetings connected Omani and U.S. companies to explore business leads.

The Sultanate is committed to building capacity among young Omanis, Minister Al Sunaidy said, and healthcare, information & communications technologies (ICT), and higher education constitute an important part of this initiative. That said, almost 90 percent of U.S. Foreign Direct Investment in Oman has gone into energy production, but this, too, provides opportunities for growth in human resources.



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The Port of Houston hosted Omani transportation and logistics experts for a tour and discussion of operations at one of the busiest ports in the United States.

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David Hamod, President & CEO of the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, summed up the first stop of the Oman Business Road Show this way: "The Sultanate has always enjoyed a wellspring of goodwill and respect among Americans. What this visit has done, through the leadership of Minister Al Sunaidy and the two ambassadors, is to make a powerful statement about Oman's substantial economic development initiatives and the Sultanate's desire to forge even stronger partnerships with America's private sector."

For more information about the Oman Business Road Show, click on:

www.OmanRoadShow.com



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Delegates of the Oman Business Road Show enjoyed full days of company site visits and meetings with U.S. companies.

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Arab world, is in touch with business communities across the United States and serves as the U.S. point of contact for the national chambers of commerce in the 22 Arab nations. On a daily basis, NUSACC works closely with leaders throughout the Arab world, as well as high-level decision makers in the U.S. business community, public policy research centers, multilateral institutions, nongovernmental organizations, media, and the U.S. Government.