

***Economic Development and Strategies Committee Discussion Regarding
International Trade Policies and Priorities for San Diego
September 17, 2012***

Item 1 D. Presentation from Christina Luhn, Ph.D., director, Mega-Region Initiative at San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, regarding: “Cali Baja Bi-National Mega-Region Initiative Priorities and Related Recommendations for San Diego.”

The Cali-Baja Mega-Region Initiative is a long-term economic development strategy partnering San Diego County, Imperial County and Baja California in Mexico for global competition. Initially a partnership between San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (SDREDC) and Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation (IVEDC), the Cali Baja Bi-National Mega-Region Initiative began as a first-of-its-kind federal grant to bring together business, civic and government leaders to assess the advantages and challenges of doing business in the bi-national region, and ultimately market the region internationally.

➤ **History:**

- In March of 2008, the San Diego Regional EDC partnered with Imperial Valley EDC under the Mega-Region Initiative to market the two respective regions and Baja California to compete in an increasingly global economy. The Economic Development Administration (EDA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, awarded a \$225,000 grant to develop this strategy, the first of its kind awarded by the Federal Government.

➤ **Next Steps:**

- With the signing of the Marketing “Rules of Engagement” Memorandum of Understanding in June 2011, the partnership now includes Tijuana EDC, Economic Promotion Commission of Ensenada, Economic Promotion Commission of Tecate, and Industrial Development Commission of Mexicali. A Mega-Region marketing team was organized and is working on several concrete efforts including a commitment to participate in marketing and trade shows, updating the CaliBaja website and developing the asset map.
- The initiative continues with support of private and public stakeholders including Bank of America, CDT, County of San Diego, EW Corporation, Imperial County Workforce Development Board, Imperial Irrigation District, Kyocera, Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch, San Diego Gas & Electric, San Diego State University, San Diego Workforce Partnership, Solar Turbines, Unified Port of San Diego, and Walmart Foundation.
- The Cali Baja Mega-Region Initiative for the first time articulates the intimately enmeshed international economies of San Diego and Imperial Counties (USA) and Baja California (Mexico) as a distinctly advantageous development zone for global commerce. Developed through an extensive outreach effort, which includes a wide range of public and private stakeholders, the combined area is now well-poised to pursue economic development as a single economic powerhouse. This positions CaliBaja as the emerging 12th economic “mega

***Economic Development and Strategies Committee Discussion Regarding
International Trade Policies and Priorities for San Diego
September 17, 2012***

region” in North America, with distinct advantages compared to the Southern California Region immediately to the north, centered on Los Angeles County.

- Conceived, secured funding, developed community-wide consensus and commitment, and implemented bi-national strategy based firmly in current economic development theory and best practices. Responsibilities include:
 - Executed \$310,000 federal grant to develop program among diverse stakeholders.
 - Organized industry and stakeholder workshops to produce the Mega-Region’s first five-year sustainability plan.
 - Developed and led a bi-county workforce machinist training program that attracted a two-year WalMart America Works grant (\$500,000).
 - Successfully developed and managed process incorporating six diverse stakeholder institutions that resulted in first bi-national marketing memorandum of understanding (MOU) for this region.
 - Developing bi-national website and online interactive asset map to focus on the unique blend of economic support the Cali Baja Mega-Region has for targeted strategic industries.
 - Project lead on San Diego Imperial Regional Broadband Consortium (SDIRBC) California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) three-year grant to deliver broadband access to unserved and under-served areas. Work with regional stakeholders and ISPs to secure California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) funding for specific projects. (Source: <http://calibaja.net/cbdb/p/>)

Website: http://www.calibaja.org/aboutus_ourhistory.html

Dr. Christina Luhn:

Christina Anne Luhn, Ph.D., currently serves as director of the Mega-Region Initiative, a position she has held since April 2008. Luhn’s primary responsibility is the Mega-Region Initiative, a long-term economic development strategy partnering San Diego County, Imperial County and Baja California for global competition. This includes significant outreach to industry, government and non-profit stakeholders in all three regions, execution of the strategic plan’s workforce, infrastructure and business climate priority outcomes and marketing. She joined the San Diego Regional EDC as part of the Public Policy team in June 2007.

Prior to joining the EDC, Dr. Luhn taught Latin American History, U.S. History and World History at SDSU and City College in San Diego, and at various institutions of higher education in the greater Kansas City metropolitan region. She continues as guest lecturer at UCSD, USD and SDSU.

***Economic Development and Strategies Committee Discussion Regarding
International Trade Policies and Priorities for San Diego
September 17, 2012***

Dr. Luhn's professional and academic experience has focused on international relations and foreign policy. As project manager at the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris, France, she developed and executed an energy information exchange program with Latin America that became a permanent IEA policy and produced non-member country energy profiles.

In her tenure as staff assistant at the National Security Council at the White House, she provided analysis and conducted briefings for the senior staff, the National Security Advisor and the President. Highlights included preparations for the United Nations General Assembly, the Central American Energy Initiatives, and the President's Trip to China. She also acted as NSC liaison for the Central American Public Diplomacy Strategy at the State Department.

As a legislative assistant on Capital Hill, she drafted and tracked legislation. Issues she focused on included defense, foreign relations and agriculture.

Dr. Luhn graduated with an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in history and education from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Dr. Luhn is a historian of international relations. Her dissertation research, a case study of U.S. relations with Brazil, examined how education became an essential feature of U.S. Cold War development assistance overseas. As a non-matriculating graduate history student at Georgetown University, she was a graduate student researcher at the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. She is a recipient of the Arthur Mag Graduate Fellowship, Chancellors Doctoral Fellowship, School of Graduate Studies Dissertation Research Fellowship, Kemper Graduate Fellowship and Women's Council Research Grant. Dr. Luhn received her bachelor's in political science from Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Missouri.