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High Technology Business Opportunities in Mexico under President Fox

On Friday, November 17th, 2000, Denver-based Latin American Trade and Technology Group (LATGO) hosted the Mexican Investment Board (MIB) seminar, *High Technology Business Opportunities in Mexico under President Fox*. The seminar featured José Treviño, Executive Vice President for North America, MIB; Fernando Lezama, President, Latin American Association of IT Organizations (ALETI); and Rafael Bernal, Mexican Association of the Industry of Information Technologies (AMITI). One hundred high technology business executives from the Rocky Mountain region attended this highly successful seminar.

The seminar was presented by the international law firm of Greenberg Traurig, LLP and its GT Americas™, comprehensive service. Corporate Sponsors included Gartner Solista, a unit of Gartner Consulting; Loews Giorgio Hotel; Mexicana Airlines; PaineWebber; R Systems; and Verio Association. Sponsors included the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry (CACI); Colorado Software & Internet Association; Daniels College of Business, University of Denver; Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Denver Telecom Professionals; and American Business English Internet School.

As Mexico's premier private/public sector partnership, the Mexican Investment Board is the leading agency helping foreign investors pursue business opportunities in Mexico. This non-profit organization, sponsored by the private sector and the Mexican government, has a strong track record working with companies such as General Electric, Lucent Technologies, and Motorola, to gain entry into the Mexican market.

The MIB has partnered with LATGO, a company founded to facilitate trade and technology business transactions between companies in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Latin America. LATGO is in the process of being appointed the exclusive representative of the MIB for the western United States.



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In July 2000, Mexico made a historic step toward democracy by holding the most competitive presidential election in the country's history. President Vicente Fox, a former Governor of Guanajuato and Coca-Cola executive, is committed to fostering stronger business ties between the United States and Mexico, with high technology as a key priority. Members of the Fox administration serve as MIB board members.

The seminar *High Technology Business Opportunities in Mexico under President Fox* began with host Drusiano Solari, Director of LATGO West Coast operations, introducing a series of distinguished guests including Dr. Benjamin P. Gochman, Chief Operating Officer, LATGO; Josiah O. Hatch, Greenberg Traurig, LLC; and Meredith McDonald, Director-Latin America for the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade who welcomed attendees to the seminar.

The keynote speaker, José Treviño highlighted Mexico's positive economic outlook for growth and stability under the administration of President Fox. He stressed how the opportunities for U.S. businesses in Mexico are unparalleled due to its dynamic export sector, free trade agreements/bilateral investment treaties, natural destination for foreign direct investment, and the large number of active Mexican co-venturers with 54% of the population under age 25. Treviño also cited the growth in Mexican purchasing power, abundant and productive labor force, the

country's privileged location, and five main clusters of cities for manufacturing. He stressed how the Mexican Investment Board was founded to help foreign investors and U.S. companies explore and pursue business opportunities in Mexico.

The next speaker, ALETI President Fernando Lezama, highlighted Mexico's global position/world rankings in the information technology (IT) arena and discussed the vulnerabilities in the country's IT infrastructure. Lezama recommended that President Fox adopt the following proactive IT action list including awareness and education campaigns, information sharing, government grants, regional and international cooperation, and the need for skilled IT security professionals.

The final speaker, AMITI Director Rafael Bernal, described his goal of developing Mexico as a software country similar to India. He stressed that the Mexican Department of Education needs to modify its academic programs to include software engineering and that Bancomext needs to approve a financing program for software services exporters. Mexico should seek the help of foreign investors to invest in IT services (i.e., transactions, help desks, tropicalization, and localization) as well as software parks/factories in order to become a player in the IT world.

The seminar is the first in a series of LATGO seminars that will be taking place in the Rocky Mountain region featuring top executives and highlighting business opportunities for individuals and companies currently doing business or planning business ventures in Mexico and Latin America. *BT*

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