



OUR SHARED BORDER:

SUCCESS STORIES IN U.S.-MEXICO COLLABORATION

AWARDS FOR U.S.-MEXICO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND INNOVATION • A PUBLICATION OF THE BORDER RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our Shared Border compiles twelve extraordinary “success stories” in cross-border collaboration between the United States and Mexico. We would like first to thank these twelve innovative experiences for enabling this publication, as well as for making the Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Collaboration and Innovation such a success in this the initiative’s inaugural year.

We would also like to single out for special appreciation the following four experiences that are winners of the Awards:

- “A Cultural Crossroads for the United States and Mexico”
Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez and El Paso Museum of Art (New Mexico, Texas, and Chihuahua)
- “Baja California-California Border Master Plan”
California Department of Transportation, District 11 and Secretaría de Infraestructura y Desarrollo Urbano de Baja California (California and Baja California)
- “Environmental Education without Borders”
Proyecto bio-regional de educación ambiental and Proyecto fronterizo de educación ambiental (California and Baja California)
- “Regional Cooperation through Global Education”
Arizona Model United Nations Club (Sonora and Arizona)

Gratitude is also due the Awards’ eight other finalists, whose excellent entries helped to diversify the issue areas addressed in this publication and improved it. Thank you to these finalists whose entries represented models of bi-national collaboration from the states of Arizona, California, Baja California, Nuevo León, and Texas. Additionally, we would like to thank the 33 other applicants whose interest contributed in large part to the suc-

cessful dissemination of the initiative throughout the border region. We hope that you are able to participate in next year’s call for entries.

Our bi-national selection committee, chaired by the Honorable José Guadalupe Osuna Millán, the Governor of the State of Baja California, and former state Sen. Denise Moreno Ducheny of California, was indispensable in narrowing the 41 total entries we received to a manageable number, and then in choosing the final four awardees. Thank you to the two chairs and 19 committee members for gladly giving of your time, energy, expertise, and prestige to the Awards. We hope that we can count on your membership on the committee going forward. For a full list of selection committee members, please see Appendix A.

The Council of State Governments-West has been an invaluable partner of the Border Research Partnership, and special gratitude is due Edgar Ruiz, the council’s executive director. His support has been essential to the success of the Award and of this publication. Thank you, Edgar.

We would also like to thank the XXIX Border Governors Conference (BGC) and, especially, the conference’s 2011 chair, Governor Osuna Millán, and its vice-chair, the Honorable Susana Martínez of New Mexico. The support of the BGC and of the governors’ representatives was instrumental in enabling the Awards ceremony to be held in conjunction with this year’s conference in Ensenada. We would especially like to thank Lic. Juan Tintos Funcke, Governor Osuna Millán’s representative to the conference.

Finally, we would like to thank our fellow Border Research Partnership members for their hard work throughout this year-long process.

Congratulations! ¡Enhorabuena!
The Border Research Partnership

INTRODUCTION / The Importance of Collaboration and Innovation

Bi-national collaboration occurs in virtually all areas of the U.S.-Mexico relationship, yet it is especially felt at the two countries' shared border. The border is where the bulk of bi-national trade takes place—80 percent of two-way merchandise trade crosses overland—and this necessitates coordination on transportation flows, risk-segmentation, and infrastructure planning. The border is also home to shared watersheds and ecosystems, which demand intense levels of bi-national collaboration given the serious threats posed by pollution, drought, and other environmental dangers. The nearly 2,000-mile expanse of the border is also where unprecedented advances in U.S.-Mexico security cooperation are happening—efforts that recognize that the shared challenge of cartel violence cannot be resolved by either country alone.

Local governments, institutions, and organizations drive collaboration between the United States and Mexico. In both countries, local entities working toward common goals bridge the border in ways that national capitals cannot. And their efforts build trust that resonates throughout the bi-national relationship, advancing policy consensus among state and federal actors. At the same time, collaboration inspires solutions that are frequently creative and innovative, since they are designed with unique insights into regional capacities by stakeholders invested in their long-term success. For both countries, local-to-local collaboration yields benefits that would be unobtainable from purely “top down” or unilateral approaches.

Our Shared Border celebrates success stories in cross-border collaboration at the local and state levels. The goal of this publication is to honor and en-

courage these efforts, as well as to further the programming, public exposure, and sense of pride of the people and organizations that stand behind them. Additionally, we hope to provide examples of collaboration that may be replicable elsewhere along the border. By highlighting these vibrant, creative, and innovative experiences, we also seek to tell a counter-narrative to frequent media portrayals that paint the border as a region awash in drug trafficking, cartel violence, and environmental despoliation. Though these are very real concerns, we consider the successes spotlighted here to be equally important news stories, and we hope that this publication and the awards initiative it springs from represent appropriate tributes to these good efforts.

To be sure, federal-level policymaking to address border challenges has been remarkable and unprecedented during the administrations of President Felipe Calderón and President Barack Obama. In May 2010, both governments issued a Declaration of the 21st Century Border, officially agreeing for the first time on the need for joint efforts to improve the management of the U.S.-Mexico border. The declaration calls for the modernization of port infrastructure, the intelligent risk-segmentation of travelers and goods, and the disruption of contraband trafficking, with the goal of making the border more economically competitive and safer for legitimate commerce and travelers.

The 21st Century Border is just one example of increased bi-national coordination to meet border challenges. Other prominent examples exist in the area of security cooperation, such as a joint initiative that strengthens border cities against organized crime through community development. And in trade, another recent federal-to-federal advance is this year's trucking breakthrough, which will enable cross-border deliveries by Mexican motor carriers.

Yet it is at the local and state levels where the most innovative solutions to cross-border challenges are originating. This innovation is happening because border-region residents are highly invested in the improvement of the border, and, conversely, because they are the citizens most directly impacted by the consequences of bad border policies.

Local innovations benefit the border, since they inspire fresh approaches at the federal level, improve existing policies, and offer solutions to unanticipated challenges. The California-Baja California Border Master Plan, for example, shows how an innovative model for state-level infrastructure coordination can inform a new federal approach to sub-regional port-of-entry planning. Similarly, two other infrastructure-related success stories in *Our Shared Border* demonstrate how local ingenuity has led to improved operations at the Lukeville and Nogales West ports of entry, both of which are on the Arizona-Sonora frontier. Unanticipated challenges also prompt innovative solutions. For example, sister-city institutions have reacted to stricter U.S. entry requirements by collaborating more closely with one another, as shown in the joint exhibitions hosted by the El Paso and Ciudad Juárez art museums, as well as in the cross-border philanthropy of Tijuana's Castro Limón Foundation.

These and many other experiences demonstrate tangible benefits from innovative cross-border collaboration, yet the process of arriving at innovative solutions can also bring benefits. Creative problem-solving among local stakeholders strengthens civil society on both sides of the physical boundary, as shown in the example of the joint Tijuana-San Diego project, Environmental Education without Borders, and in the cross-border outreach efforts of the Arizona Model United Nations. This process of innovation also helps establish issue coalitions that rally different constituencies around a common cause, gathering collective strength from otherwise unlikely allies. An example of this coalition-building is the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corp., which has merged security and environmen-

tal goals to restore a tract of the Colorado River, and whose profile in *Our Shared Border* may be instructive for other challenges at other points along the border.

By bringing stakeholders together to debate issues of mutual concern, define priorities and goals, and determine strategies for action, innovative processes of bi-national collaboration also provide an important outlet for the private sector, channeling frustrations over the effectiveness of federal border policy into actionable plans and recommendations. These processes provide durable platforms for business interests to work out the logistical, transportation, and other challenges that affect commerce, and they also help to align bi-national agendas related to joint economic prosperity. *Our Shared Border* features several cases of the private sector's role in developing innovative solutions to cross-border challenges. However, one example that merits special mention is the Comisión Sonora Arizona/Arizona-Mexico Commission, which for more than half a century has enhanced interstate economic competitiveness, by bringing together private-sector stakeholders and government officials.

The following are summaries of the twelve experiences that make up *Our Shared Border*.

Profiles in Innovative Cross-Border Collaboration

Not surprisingly, given the importance of people and trade flows at the border, three of the experiences profiled in *Our Shared Border* involve efforts to increase capacities at ports of entry and coordinate infrastructure planning. One of these, **the California-Baja California Border Master Plan** brings together Mexican and U.S. officials to evaluate and prioritize transportation and port-of-entry projects, applying a standardized and open process that signals a departure from the political wheeling-and-dealing of the past. Tangibly, the plan is credited with helping to advance the authorization of the Otay Mesa II port of entry in San

Diego County and has inspired several federally directed regional master planning processes along the length of the border—at El Paso-Ciudad Juárez-Las Cruces, between Arizona and Sonora, and among Texas and its Mexican neighbors.

At the Arizona-Sonora border, **the expansion of the Lukeville/Sonoyta port of entry** represents another unique success story, given that Mexican investors provided initial investment for the project, a first-of-its-kind private-public partnership also entailing state and federal funding. Further east along the Arizona-Sonora frontier, **the bi-national Nogales Corridor Working Group** has successfully advocated for increased processing capacities at the key Nogales West/Mariposa commercial crossing, the conduit for US\$20 billion in annual U.S.-Mexico *maquila* trade and the entry point for half of the winter vegetables consumed yearly in the United States.

Environmental challenges also demand intense bi-national collaboration, since they overlap both sides of the border, and because they pose especially grave threats to regional ecologies, in forms such as industrial pollution, deforestation, and drought. *Our Shared Border* includes four success stories that address these and other challenges, ranging from a Texas-Nuevo León agreement to fight pollution to a wetlands restoration project in the Lower Colorado River Valley. Though the four cases address distinct issues along different points of the border, a common appeal among them is that governments, institutions, and citizens recognize the trans-border region's ecological symbiosis and that sustainable environmental policies be implemented that reflect this.

One of the four cases is **Environmental Education without Borders**, which uses innovative methods to raise ecological awareness among regional schoolchildren, teachers, and community members. Coordinated by the San Diego-based Bio-Regional Environmental Education Project and Tijuana's Border Environmental Education Project, the program has since 1991 taught *bajacalifornianos* and San Diegans how their actions directly

impact the environment. *Our Shared Border* also profiles the **Los Laureles/Goat Canyon Transborder Trash Tracking Study**, first-of-its-kind research that monitors waste flows through the bi-national Tijuana River Valley, in order to generate the scientific data needed for tougher enforcement against illicit dumpsites.

A third success story is symbolized in the work of the **Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corp.**, which since 2007 has worked to reclaim wetlands around the Lower Colorado River near Yuma, AZ. The reclamation effort is unique given its twin goals of making the area safe against the criminal gangs that prey on border-crossers, while at the same time restoring the area by clearing invasive vegetation and reintroducing native trees. A fourth case is the **Texas-Nuevo León State-to-State Environmental Cooperation Agreement**, which since 1997 has enabled sustained agency-to-agency exchanges in technology, technical expertise, and training, in an effort to combat shared environmental threats, such as air and water pollution.

Our Shared Border also spotlights the humanitarian efforts of Tijuana's **Castro Limón Foundation** and San Diego's **Border Angels**. Since 2004, the Foundation has funded Baja California's only pediatric cancer treatment center, serving children from around Mexico, as well as some patients from the United States, while establishing partnerships with U.S.-based philanthropies and hospitals. Border Angels is a non-profit that since the 1980s has provided shelter and relief services for homeless migrants in San Diego County, one of the border region's most marginalized populations.

Two other success stories involve innovative educational and cultural exchange programs between the United States and Mexico. **The Arizona Model United Nations Club** is a unique example of cross-border collaboration between young people in Arizona and Sonora. Based at the University of Arizona, the club is unique among Model United Nations in that it holds its mock diplomacy proceedings in both Spanish and English, and students from the two states share committee assignments. Also profiled in *Our*

Shared Border are the collaborative efforts of **The El Paso Museum of Art** and **the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez**. Since 2008, the two museums have held simultaneous exhibitions showing border-region artists, widening the exposure of these artists and increasing the viewing public's accessibility to art and culture in both cities.

A final profile spotlights the long-running success of the **Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Comisión Sonora Arizona**, which since the late 1950s have worked together to advance the mutual interests of the two states. More recently, the commissions have authored their first long-term strategic plan, *A Shared Vision for Arizona-Sonora, 2011-2015*, a roadmap for growth oriented around four key areas: economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, public security, and quality of life. This kind of in-depth strategic planning is the gold standard for what may be possible elsewhere along the border.

We invite you to read the twelve profiles, which were compiled as part of the Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation, a new initiative that documents extraordinary cases of bi-national collaboration by border-state non-profits and government agencies. The Awards and this publication are coordinated by the Border Research Partnership, comprising the North American Center for Transborder Studies at Arizona State University, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, and the Woodrow Wilson Center Mexico Institute, and are made possible by funding from the Council of State Governments-West and the United States Agency for International Development.

The U.S.-Mexico Border: A New Frontier

The border is where our two countries join but also where they divide. For generations, this latter description fit each country's dominant perception of the border—as a hard line marking territorial sovereignty. But now is the time, in an era of unprecedented cooperation yet also of ongoing shared

threats, for us to update our understanding of the border, and to conceive of it as a new frontier for both the United States and Mexico.

Physically, the border is a new frontier because it is the terrain upon which unprecedented bi-national collaborations are today taking place—to fight organized crime, to facilitate trade, and to manage the environment. Metaphorically, the border is a new frontier because it holds the promise to a better economic future for both countries, and because it suggests a potential, especially in terms of enhanced competitiveness, which lies far beyond what is currently realized.

The time is now to conceive of our shared border as an untapped economic opportunity. Our two countries are major reciprocal trading partners—Mexico is the second-leading destination for U.S. exports, and the United States is Mexico's first—with approximately US\$400 billion in bilateral merchandise trade per year. Yet even this figure does not adequately reflect the deep economic interdependence that exists between our two countries. Consider, instead, that 40 percent of the content of U.S. imports from Mexico is produced in the United States, sustaining jobs in the United States during a period of record unemployment.¹ Or take into account that a typical vehicle crosses North American borders seven times before finally rolling off an assembly line—a fact that underscores the reliance of North American manufacturing on properly functioning ports of entry. These examples reflect the high degree of integration between the U.S. and Mexican economies and demonstrate why it is in the best self-interest of each country to optimize the border's potential, by improving port infrastructure and intelligently risk-segmenting cargo. At the same time, the protracted global downturn suggests a further need to maximize the border's economic potential, in order to sharpen North America's competitive edge against other world blocs.

So how do policymakers, the public, and the private sector get from here—an antiquated definition of the border as a hard line that divides—to there—a modern idea that sees its potential for joining the two countries

and two economies? A first step may lie in redefining the border beyond the immediate U.S.-Mexico line and re-visualizing it “out.” This means extending the presence of the border and of its security function away from the physical border, where efforts have typically been concentrated and where infrastructure and staffing are chronically beyond capacity. Redefining the border in such a way enables a more efficient distribution of screening and inspection activities along a good’s route to market—at its point of origin, its ultimate destination, and in-between. This not only expedites commerce, but it also enhances security by “shrinking the haystack,” preemptively screening legitimate goods before their arrival at the physical line and allowing enforcement resources to be applied more effectively against threats.

Achieving this means intelligently risk-segmenting cargo, through such trusted-shipper programs as the Customs and Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT). It also means making concomitant improvements to border infrastructure to incentivize participation in such programs and to decrease economically costly wait-times. The work of the Nogales Corridor Working Group, which is profiled in *Our Shared Border*, is illuminating in this respect.

Extending the border “out” also means rethinking the region around the border and perceiving it as an area of frequent exchange and interaction. Communities and families on both sides of the border depend on each other. Natural resources are truly shared by both sides. Few decisions can be made on one side, which do not truly impact the other. Conceiving of how the whole region can work together is as important as knowing where the official dividing line is placed.

Challenges and Conclusions

To be sure, many challenges stand in the way of a modern redefinition of the border. In either country, isolationist politics can dampen enthusiasm for cross-border collaboration and breed protectionist sentiment, and these

concerns may grow as campaigns gear up for the 2012 presidential elections. Additionally, in the United States, the legislative caucuses that represent the U.S.-Mexico border states and border districts are small, with only eight senators and ten representatives, or just under 3 percent of the U.S. House of Representatives. For proponents of a modernized border, the caucus’ small size poses the challenge of attracting greater numbers of interior lawmakers to vote in favor of related legislation, when these lawmakers may not perceive a direct benefit for their constituencies or may have negative perceptions about the border.² Finally, bureaucratic inertia and the opposition of entrenched special interests can present obstacles to transforming mindsets about how the border should work.

Yet these barriers should not inhibit a rethinking of the border or impede the advances in U.S.-Mexico cooperation that are today taking place at the border. The border is the site for new collaborations in trade facilitation, security cooperation, and environmental management, as well as in educational exchange, arts and culture, and health and philanthropy. Moreover, as *Our Shared Border* shows in twelve diverse examples, the border is also a fertile terrain for productive collaborations among local and state non-profits, institutions, and governments, with these efforts resonating beneficially throughout the bilateral relationship.

At an event at the Woodrow Wilson Center in November 2009, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary for Mexico, Canada, and NAFTA Roberta S. Jacobson said, “There is very little useful distinction between bilateral foreign policy and border policy.” Jacobson’s statement underscores the significance of the border in the bi-national relationship and suggests that it is at the border where the benefits of the relationship are, in many ways, most visibly expressed. Going forward, policymakers, the public, and lawmakers may want to consider the border’s fundamental place in the bilateral relationship in a re-thinking of the region’s significance—as a new frontier for the economic future of both countries and as a catalyst for enhanced North American economic integration.

NOTES

- 1 For both statistics, see Christopher E. Wilson, *Working Together: Economic Ties Between the United States and Mexico*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, November, 2011.
- 2 In fact, many interior districts benefit greatly from trade with Mexico, and a recent publication from the Woodrow Wilson Center Mexico Institute discusses the economic benefits of U.S.-Mexico trade to non-border states and districts. See: Christopher E. Wilson, *Working Together: Economic Ties Between the United States and Mexico*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, November, 2011.

*A Cultural
Crossroads for the
United States
and Mexico*

CHAPTER 1 / A Cultural Crossroads for the United States and Mexico

The El Paso Museum of Art and the Ciudad Juárez Museo de Arte

In many ways, art expresses with greater force subjects that in the more neutral tones of policy analysis risk understatement. The violence afflicting parts of the U.S.-Mexico border this decade is one such subject, attracting the critical gaze of Mexican and U.S. artists and powerfully reshaping predominant understandings of the borderlands.

Along the U.S.-Mexico boundary, no other region has struggled more intensely with the threat of this violence than Ciudad Juárez-El Paso. Ciudad Juárez has been the site of more than one-fifth of the nearly 40,000 drug-related killings that have occurred in Mexico since 2006. Violence has not spilled over onto the U.S. side, as El Paso remains one of the safest cities of its size in the United States. But traditional sister-city commercial and family linkages have frayed. Many neighborhoods in Juárez have been depleted, and thousands have crossed the border to live and do business in El Paso, whose population has increased 31 percent since 2006.¹

For regional institutions, the violence-spawned demographic trends have created new challenges in serving bi-national publics, especially amid today's "thicker" post-9/11 borders, says Michael Tomor, the Director of the El Paso Museum of Art, a winner with the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez of this year's Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation. "Art museums face the challenge of designing programming amid changing demographics. We also face the challenge of hosting art-

ists who may not be able to travel to the United States. In fact, some of the artists whose work we show are unable to visit the Museum," Tomor says.

To meet these challenges, the two museums have collaborated to jointly host "simultaneous" bi-national art exhibitions, showcasing the work of borderlands artists on themes such as violence, trade, and cultural hybridity. The innovative collaboration began in 2008 with the juried exhibition, Art Binational/Binacional de Arte, which showed pieces by artists living within a 300-mile radius of the Ciudad Juárez-El Paso metropolitan area. Two years later, the exhibition Border Biennial/Bienial Fronterizo put on display contributions from artists from all 10 of the border states. Curators outside of the borderlands have taken notice of the exhibition series, too, and selections from the latter collection have been shown elsewhere in Mexico, under the sponsorship of the country's national arts institute INBA.

The biannual exhibition series provides a much-needed venue to show the work of borderlands artists, says Rosa Elva Vázquez, the Director of the Ciudad Juárez Museo de Arte. "Our objective in creating the Bienial Fronteriza de Arte was to show the work of artists from the border and also to gain their insights into the region, to know their outlooks and understandings of the border," she says. At the same time, the exhibitions are equally important for viewing publics on both sides of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo. "In the exhibition, (we) show those works that we feel are particularly relevant to the experiences of the residents of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso," Vázquez adds. "And we ask them to perceive the artist's reality, to see

things from the artist's point of view and, in so doing, to find something of themselves in the work."

The decision to show the concurrent exhibitions was an innovation born of the travel delays and tougher ID requirements of today's "thicker" post-9/11 border, Tomor says. "The best answer that we could come up with was to show works simultaneously in two different cities with artists in both places," he says. "(Ciudad Juárez-El Paso) is a unified metropolitan area; the challenge has been the international border."

To make his point, Tomor notes how border enforcement practices have changed over his lifetime. "When I was growing up in El Paso, Juárez was an extension of the city. People moved back and forth at the border ... But when I returned to the region [after working as a curator and director at museums on the East Coast], it was shocking to me how complicated it was to get across the border," he says.

To be sure, today's border is different from yesterday's. Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative requirements and time-consuming south-north wait-times for motorists have inhibited the cross-border flows needed for productive people-to-people cultural exchanges, Tomor notes. Yet, the "thicker" border has also constructively challenged institutions, driving the kind of innovative bi-national collaboration evident in the Border Biennial exhibition series and not yet dampening artistic inspiration. "Even with fences and fortifications built by Mexico City and Washington, D.C., a new healthy cultural environment is growing along the *frontera*," Tomor says.

Vázquez agrees and, logistical reasons aside, notes that the concurrent exhibitions serve as opportunities for artistic and cultural exchange between the two sister-cities. "At the border, the intersection of cultures is inevitable, and it is essential for institutions to foster dialogues that spark a cultural energy and dynamism and that can lead to new ideas, stimulating new opportunities for cross-border and cross-cultural art," she says.

Ciudad Juárez has Mexico's highest murder rate, registering at 133 per 100,000 people last year. The deaths have largely been the result of

fighting between two main organized crime groups, the hometown Juárez organization and the outside Sinaloa organization, which have been battling for control of lucrative contraband-trafficking routes into the United States. From 2007 through 2009, violence between the two groups led the Mexican government to deploy large numbers of soldiers to the city in a bid to restore order. However, the military operations did not bring about the reduction in violence that had been hoped for, and, starting in early 2010, authorities began to scale back the deployments and concentrate efforts on strengthening and reforming the local police forces. To tackle the underlying structural factors contributing to the organized crime violence, the Mexican federal government has also invested resources to address the city's chronic underemployment and rising drug consumption—under the framework of the joint U.S.-Mexico security cooperation strategy known as Beyond Mérida. And related campaigns are underway to reassert citizen control over the city's public spaces and institutions.

For El Pasoans, the violence fortunately has not spilled over into their neighborhoods, and Texas' westernmost city remains one of the safest of its size in the United States. Yet the city has not escaped the effects of the crisis afflicting Juárez. Economic and social bonds between the two traditional sister-cities have frayed, as shoppers fear to travel to Juárez and many Juárez businesses are shuttered. Large numbers of *juarenses* are also resettling in El Paso, possibly creating new challenges in service provision for the city. And El Pasoans with family in Juárez may face emotional stresses out of fear for relatives' safety. Still, the crisis has also accentuated the need for cross-border solidarity between the two cities—a solidarity manifested in collaborations such as the kind undertaken by the two museums. "Given the crime situation in Juárez, collaborative efforts between the two museums represent essential expressions of solidarity," Vázquez says.

NOTES

- 1 2006 population: 609,415 2011 population: 800,647

*The California-Baja
California Border
Master Plan*

CHAPTER 2 / The California-Baja California Border Master Plan

California Department of Transportation, District 11 and Secretaría de Infraestructura y Desarrollo Urbano (SIDUE)

The U.S.-Mexico border is the world's busiest land crossing.¹ In 2010, an average of 665,142 people crossed the border per day.² And about one third of this traffic happened at the California-Baja California border.³ The high volume of crossings has prompted enhanced long-term infrastructure coordination between the two states—not only to accommodate existing people and trade flows but also to anticipate future trends, such as regional population changes. To meet this need, the California-Baja California Border Master Plan (CA-BC BMP) was established in 2006 to coordinate the planning and delivery of port-of-entry (POE) and transportation infrastructure projects at the two states' border. The CA-BC BMP and its two chief coordinators in the United States and Mexico, the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) in San Diego, and Baja California's Secretaría de Infraestructura y Desarrollo Urbano (SIDUE), based in Mexicali, are winners of this year's Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation.

The CA-BC BMP sets standardized criteria for project evaluation and prioritization and conducts strategic forecasting and analysis of regional transportation needs and trends. Under the plan, all transportation and POE projects are evaluated according to set variables, such as how likely

a project will ease congestion, its cost effectiveness, and its viability and compatibility with existing highways and roads. The plan provides a consistent methodology for project prioritization and helps “to level the playing field,” giving all projects the chance to be merit-judged in a transparent and equitable process that benefits public policy, says plan co-manager Sergio Pallares of Caltrans District 11 in San Diego.

Part of the reason the plan is innovative, Pallares says, is because it provides a clear planning framework not just for regional transportation projects but also for POEs, which historically have lacked a predictable planning process. “In the old days, there was the perception that POE projects would get advanced because of the sponsor,” Pallares says. “There was no known rationale for the advancement of a project beyond the clout of the sponsor. The CA-BC BMP, however, levels the playing field so that less well-funded projects have an equal voice. It seeks to bring a systematic approach to border transportation and POE projects on both sides of the border.”

At the same time, Pallares hastens to add that the plan is designed to help guide policymakers and is not meant to override established transportation planning processes in either country or at any level. The Master Plan brings together key federal, state, and municipal officials from both countries and was established with funding from the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee, a bi-national technical group advancing border infrastructure coordination. The CA-BC BMP's structure includes two bodies, a Policy Advisory Committee, whose membership includes agency principals,

as well as a Technical Working Group, made up of operations and infrastructure planning experts.

The CA-BC Border Master Plan has brought both direct and indirect benefits to the California-Baja California border region. It helped spur federal approval in 2010 of the new Otay Mesa East port of entry, which is intended to ease pressure on the now-saturated San Ysidro and Otay Mesa I ports farther west. The authorization of the new port by the State Department was notable considering it was granted only ten months after being formally requested, when such permitting typically takes years to obtain. Speed of permitting is of the essence for the San Diego-Tijuana region. According to a study by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), congestion and delays in San Diego County cost the U.S. and Mexican economies US\$7.2 billion in lost gross output in 2007, as well as more than 62,000 jobs.

In Baja California, the Border Master Plan is credited with helping to secure federal funds for infrastructure improvement projects, says plan co-manager Arq. Carlos Lopez of the state's Ministry for Infrastructure and Urban Development, known by its initials as SIDUE. "The plan has given us a serious and well-thought-out document that we have been able to present to federal authorities in Mexico City," he says. "It has helped us to tap funding from the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation (SCT), INDABBIN (Mexico's General Services Administration counterpart), and other agencies, whose participation was included in the drafting of the document." Additionally, the plan featured prominently in Baja California Governor José Guadalupe Osuna Millán's *State Development Plan*, the administration's centerpiece policy strategy outline, helping build consensus at the municipal and local levels.

The Border Master Plan process has brought about indirect benefits as well, says SANDAG's Cheryl Mason, one of the consultants who worked on the plan. It has strengthened existing relationships among regional stakeholders and has helped to sensibly align transportation planning objectives

between both states, she says. "I think that the structure really did help with the collaboration and cooperation among the different partners. It was very exciting to see all these partners work together to determine criteria for projects," she says.

The Border Master Plan has inspired similar regional transportation planning efforts along the length of the border. And bi-national planning processes are underway in other border sub-regions, such as at El Paso-Ciudad Juárez-Las Cruces, between Arizona and Sonora, and at Laredo-Coahuila/Nuevo León/Tamaulipas in the lower Rio Bravo/Rio Grande river valley. At the federal level, the CA-BC BMP has helped to inform federal border policy, as sub-regional master planning processes are supported within the framework of the Beyond Mérida U.S.-Mexico security cooperation agenda. That framework's Pillar III calls for the modernization of border, port, and transportation infrastructures and processes.

In spite of the success of the Border Master Plan, there are some real challenges going forward, Pallares says. A principal obstacle is converting the plan from a one- or two-time study (an update is being drafted now) into a longer-term and continuous process—something that requires a dedicated funding stream. Absent sufficient resources, the CA-BC BMP could risk obsolescence, he says. "The Master Plan came about from a need to prepare for the future. That could happen once again if we lack the funding needed to help us sustain it," he says.

NOTES

- 1 http://www.borderplanning.fhwa.dot.gov/current_article1.asp
- 2 http://www.bts.gov/programs/international/transborder/TBDR_BC/TBDR_BCQ.html
- 3 242,906 people cross the California-Baja California border per day

*Environmental
Education
without Borders*

CHAPTER 3 / Environmental Education without Borders

Proyecto Bio-Regional de Educación Ambiental (PROBEA)/Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental, A.C. (PFEA)/Desarrollo Urbano (SIDUE)

Changing societies means transforming individuals. And education, by teaching the tools, outlooks, and personal strategies that enable people to lead higher-quality lives, is a key catalyst in this process. At the U.S.-Mexico border, environmental education means not only instructing students and teachers on regional ecological threats—water scarcity, climate change, and industrial pollution—but also getting people to see themselves as integral parts of a transborder ecosystem that overlaps political boundaries. Through such consciousness-raising, individuals begin to see how they fit within local ecosystems and how their behavior directly affects the environment.

“Students learn that they live not only in a watershed but in a bi-national watershed, and that our two countries are environmentally inter-related and that this interdependence extends beyond the border line,” says Margarita Díaz, director of the Tijuana-based Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental, A.C., (PFEA). PFEA and its U.S. partner, Proyecto Bio-Regional de Educación Ambiental, A.C., (PROBEA), which is based at the San Diego Natural History Museum, are winners of this year’s Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation.

Since 1991, the two organizations have run environmental education programs in Baja California that teach local educators and youngsters about the impact their actions have on local ecosystems. The programs have

benefited thousands of teachers and schoolchildren, and make use of innovative curriculums that involve whole communities, PROBEA Director Doretta Winkelman says. “Our place-based and watershed-focused curriculum provides teachers with training and materials that empower students to become responsible stewards of their environment.”

Jointly developed lesson plans are tailored for local ecosystems. For example, one specialized curriculum teaches Tijuana youngsters about their local coast—important since many urban kids may never have gotten a chance to visit the beach, Díaz says. And another program, “Smart Schools” involves not just students and teachers, but school staff, parents, and community members to implement “greening” practices in their schools, Winkelman notes.

Getting young people to see themselves as cross-border environmental stewards is particularly important in the Tijuana River Watershed. Covering a space one-half larger than Rhode Island, it spreads from the foothills of the Sierra Juarez in Baja California to the river’s mouth at Imperial Beach in San Diego County. Its unique geography—the river flows from south to north crossing the international line near Tijuana—underscores the crucial importance of cross-border environmental collaboration. And it emphasizes the importance of teaching students their impact on the shared watershed. “They understand that there’s no border for the environment,” Winkelman says.

But PROBEA and PFEA don’t just limit their activities to the classroom. The organizations provide service learning opportunities through

trash cleanups and recycling drives that bring together neighbors, students, and educators throughout Baja California. To date, the cleanups have helped remove up to 95 metric tons of garbage, and the 2011 Annual Beach Cleanup Day mobilized more than 3,000 people. “We’ve focused on environmental education not so much as an academic concept but as a service to the community,” says Laura Silvan, PFEA’s first director. Going forward, the educators plan to carry their message of environmental stewardship even farther down the peninsula and hope to implement the “Smart

Schools” program at more and more schools in Baja California and Baja California Sur.

In spite of the typical challenges faced by all teachers, the environmental educators remain motivated, says Winkelman. “Like anybody, on some days we’ll get discouraged, and then on others we learn of someone who was influenced by our curriculum and that keeps us going!”, she says. Says educator Karen Levyszpiro, “We’re motivated because we build bridges across the border, we build bridges to connect people from different organizations, and we build bridges to connect teachers.”

*Regional
Cooperation
through Global
Education*

CHAPTER 4 / Regional Cooperation through Global Education

Arizona Model United Nations

The Arizona Model United Nations Club brings together Arizona and Sonora high school students to gain new perspectives on world affairs, learn about their systems of government, and make friendships that can last a lifetime. “The club transcends the divisions that you might expect between Arizona and Sonora, and students gain new perspectives from one another. It’s really inspiring to see a group of young people who are so motivated and who have such an impressive knowledge of international relations and politics,” says James Vancel, the club’s Secretary General.

Based at the University of Arizona, the bi-national club is a winner of this year’s Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation, and is unique among Model UNs. Proceedings are conducted bilingually, and students can participate in a language beside their native one. “The club gives Arizona students from Phoenix or Tucson an opportunity to practice their Spanish, and it gives Mexican students—some traveling up to nine hours to attend sessions—a chance to use their English in a structured setting,” Vancel says.

In the club’s sessions, Sonorans and Arizonans sit on the same committees, performing duties that simulate multilateral diplomacy, while enhancing critical thinking skills and knowledge of international affairs. “It’s not just an exercise in mock diplomacy but an exercise in real diplomacy at the

local level,” says Francisco Lara-García, who served as the club’s Director of Spanish Programs from 2008-2010.

Founded in 1961 at the University of Arizona’s Department of Political Science, the club had been limited to only U.S. students—mainly high schoolers from the Tucson area—for its first four decades. In 2000, however, that changed when the club invited Sonoran students to participate, and the first bi-national meetings were held that year, followed by simultaneously interpreted bilingual sessions starting in 2009. The bilingual program teaches students about the cultural diversity that exists at the border, says Ariel Sim, the club’s Secretary General in 2010. “The program helps its participants to see and experience the diverse community that exists along the Mexican-American border. They often find that they are more similar than different,” she says. “It’s an invaluable tool to create a positive feeling within the border community among youth,” she says.

At annual conferences, students participate in simulated sessions that deepen their understanding of diplomacy as they collaborate to find solutions to tricky world problems. The sessions also encourage diverse viewpoints, as Mexican and U.S. students—sometimes sharing opinions sometimes diverging—sit on the same committees.

While the annual conference is an intellectual simulation of the United Nations, it is also a social space where students and educators from both sides of the border gather to get to know one another and share perspectives. In fact, the club hosts a barbecue and dance at the annual conference so del-

legates can meet new friends in a collegial setting. In many cases, friendships have endured beyond high school, strengthening, in a small way, cross-border community relations, Lara-García says. AzMUN also advances exchanges between cross-border educators, and the club has provided international relations curricula for high school teachers in Hermosillo.

For the University of Arizona students who run it, the club also provides important professional development opportunities and last year AZMUN formalized a Young Professionals Program with the regional chapter of the United Nations Association. The affiliation gives outgoing university students an opportunity to make valuable contacts and to further their interest in diplomacy.

Going forward, Vancel acknowledges that the club, which is entirely administered by students from the University of Arizona, faces chal-

lenges. Because the college students cycle out so quickly, graduating in four or even three years, there is a continuous need to cultivate new leaders to carry forward the club's mission. "We lose our institutional memory every four years," he notes. And there is the high cost of simultaneous interpretation and document translation, as well. Nevertheless, the club is now enjoying perhaps its most successful year, and the 2011 conference hosted a record 420 delegates, about two-thirds U.S. and a third Mexican.

"The club is a real model of bi-national collaboration that fosters dialogue and the on-the-ground lessons in multilateral diplomacy and international relations that we are trying to reach in the classroom," says the club's faculty adviser, Professor William J. Dixon of the University of Arizona's Department of Political Science.

*A Shared Vision for
Arizona
and Sonora,
2011-2015*

CHAPTER 5 / A Shared Vision for Arizona and Sonora, 2011-2015

Arizona-Mexico Commission and Comisión Sonora Arizona

Almost any casual conversation about U.S.-Mexico relations is fraught with cliché. It's a bad marriage you can't get out of, a pair of Siamese twins joined at the hip, or a classic love-hate romance—sometimes all rolled into one. But two states—Arizona and Sonora—have in a way defied the stereotype of the two countries as reluctant neighbors. And in large part the secret to their success has been the sturdy bi-national framework forged by the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Comisión Sonora Arizona. For 52 years, the two commissions have collaborated “to advance the economic well-being and quality of life of the residents of Arizona and Sonora,” bringing state officials and private business together to promote cross-border trade and interstate relations. The commission's ethos is summed up in a quote from former Arizona Governor Paul J. Fannin, who said upon its founding in 1959, “God made us neighbors, let us be good neighbors.”

More recently, the commissions have drafted their first ever long-term strategic plan, *A Shared Vision for Arizona-Sonora, 2011-2015*. The plan provides a roadmap for growth oriented around four key issue areas: economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, public security, and quality of life. (These four broad themes for border-wide growth were endorsed at the 2009 Border Governors Conference, in Monterrey, Nuevo León.) The

purpose of *A Shared Vision* is to build consensus on a common agenda for border-region growth rather than advance specific policy objectives, says Margie Emmermann, Executive Director, Arizona-Mexico Commission. “*A Shared Vision* was developed as a means of building consensus, leveraging past successes, and guiding the efforts of Arizona and Sonora in the implementation of key initiatives,” she says.

Consequently, what policy objectives the plan sets are broad, aspirational, and flexible. In its “Vision for Competitiveness,” for example, it states the need for enhanced economic growth, through higher-quality jobs in the two states, enhanced cross-border communication infrastructure, and modernized border crossings. Additionally, it calls for enhanced quality of life for both states' citizens—through increased educational opportunities, better public health systems, and the promotion of artistic, sports, and cultural exchanges. With high levels of violence in northern Mexico coloring perceptions of the border and spurring “spillover” fears, the plan's “Vision for Security” calls for enhanced interstate cooperation to reduce crime. On the environment, *A Shared Vision* calls for the restoration of shared wildlife habitats, effective water-reuse and conservation programs, and the promotion of renewable energy sources, among other goals.

“*Plan Uno* (as *A Shared Vision* is known in Sonora) is unprecedented among two U.S. and Mexican border states. And it would not have been possible without the groundwork established by the two commissions

over the course of the past 50 years,” says Carlos Portillo Abril, Executive Director, Comisión Sonora Arizona. “*Plan Uno* will help sustain the strong relationship that our two states have historically enjoyed, and we are committed to making the plan a reality.”

A Shared Vision was drafted through the kind of consultative and inclusive process that characterizes the commissions’ overall approach to addressing shared interstate challenges. The plan was first born in December 2009 at that year’s second plenary session in Hermosillo, Sonora. There, the two commissions voted on the need for “a coordinated strategic vision to promote mutual prosperity and strengthen the border region,” to coincide with the administrations of Governor Janice Brewer and Governor Guillermo Padrés Elías. The State of Sonora and the Comisión Sonora Arizona then formed worktables oriented around the four key areas, bringing to the table relevant policymakers and the private sector to develop an initial outline. After this step, academic researchers from both states, as well as other public- and private-sector stakeholders, made further contributions to a first draft. Finally, the two commissions formalized the document, ensuring that it would be a flexible, non-binding, and “living document,” subject to future revision and change as needed. Independent of the policy goals stated in the document, the drafting process itself demonstrated the kind of collaborative and bi-national method the commissions have historically brought to their work.

The commissions’ day-to-day work is a model for bi-national collaboration. Two joint plenary sessions take place annually, with meeting locations alternating between each state, and 15 committees, made up of businesspeople, public officials, and non-governmental representatives, meet throughout the year, drilling down on specific policy issues. “This culminates in the grassroots efforts of our bi-national committees, implementing key initiatives that make our region mutually prosperous, and is essential for the continued growth of Arizona and Sonora,” states Emmermann.

Part of the two commissions’ success has been their structured organizational framework—something *A Shared Vision* makes more robust by helping to “formalize” the decisions made in the different committees, Emmermann notes. And even though the plan is legally non-binding since actual policy implementation obeys each state’s politics and processes, the plan importantly provides a roadmap for keeping the interstate relationship on long-term track, she adds.

The commissions’ work has not been without challenges of late. In 2010, both joint plenary sessions were canceled in the wake of SB1070, the law that would have made being undocumented a state felony in Arizona and that throughout Mexico was seen as discriminatory. In 2011, however, the commissions’ work is back on track, and this year’s regularly scheduled plenary took place as scheduled in Phoenix, AZ, over June 2-4, 2011. The commissions’ second plenary is to take place December 1-2 in Puerto Peñasco (Rocky Point), Sonora.

*Achieving
Cross-Border
Efficiency in the
21st Century*

CHAPTER 6 / Achieving Cross-Border Efficiency in the 21st Century

Nogales Corridor Working Group

Bilateral trade plays such an essential yet largely invisible role in the U.S.-Mexico relationship that we may rarely give thought to its day-to-day intricacies. Yet it is one of the single most densely interwoven elements of the relationship.

Trade between Mexico and the United States approaches US\$393 billion in bilateral merchandise trade each year plus another US\$35 billion in services trade and US\$109 billion in foreign investment—a growing amount by Mexican firms in the United States. But these measures can't accurately reflect the deep interdependence that exists between the two economies. Though a large share of U.S.-Mexico trade involves finished goods and services going from one country to the other, it also means deeply entwined supply chains and joint production processes, in which inputs produced in either country are used to produce goods in the other. In fact, a full 40 percent of the content of U.S. imports from Mexico is actually produced in the United States, and six million U.S. jobs are tied to trade with Mexico.¹

The depth of economic integration between our two countries is especially felt at the U.S.-Mexico border, since approximately 80 percent of U.S.-Mexico merchandise trade passes through one of the southwestern land ports of entry (POEs). The reliance on the ports underscores the perennial challenge of keeping them operating smoothly, and this challenge is particularly acute at ports that process large volumes of perishable goods. One such crossing is the Nogales/Mariposa port of entry in southern

Arizona where up to half of the vegetables consumed in the United States in the wintertime are imported. And it is here where an innovative bi-national business advocacy group, the Nogales Corridor Working Group, has successfully tackled persistent traffic congestion and bottlenecks—by bringing stakeholders together to discuss the issues, identify goals and challenges, and determine strategies for action.

A finalist of this year's Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation, the Working Group was formed in 2006 as a bi-national offshoot of the Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority, a business group comprising merchants and city officials lobbying for improvements at the Nogales/Mariposa port. As part of the port authority, the Working Group's principal accomplishment has been successfully reducing truck bottlenecks on the Mexican side of Nogales/Mariposa. This decongestion is crucial for streamlining commercial traffic flows not only on the U.S. side of the port but also, by extension, along the entire multi-billion-dollar Canamex trade corridor, running from Mexico's interior to the Canadian border.

"Trade generates jobs in Nogales, and keeping the port running smoothly is important not only for the local jobs directly tied to *maquila* but also for the 100,000 other indirect jobs that depend on this commerce," says Jesús Montoya, Executive Director of the Maquiladora Association of Sonora. Two-way trade just in *maquila* at Nogales is on the order of US\$20 billion a year, he says.

The Working Group was created to tackle protracted problems affecting the ports' smooth running, says Terry Shannon, a third-generation customs broker in Nogales and past chairman of the port authority. "The Working Group was formed within the port authority as we were working to get funding for the reconfiguration of the Mariposa port of entry," he says. "As we went about this process we found that it was very important that we keep our counterparts up to speed on what was going on. And so we brought in upper- and mid-level folks who were on the ground. We began making presentations in Mexico City to various government agencies as the POE was coming online, and we decided also to involve U.S. agencies. Soon, the Working Group took on a whole new life of its own, and it became the catch-all for all those issues that people had with the corridor."

In Mexico, the Working Group's first steps involved lobbying for the creation of a dedicated lane for pre-screened commercial traffic, to link with an existing Fast and Secure Trade Lane (FAST Lane) on the U.S. side. The dedicated lane was needed so that U.S.-bound motor carriers, many operating on tight just-in-time schedules, wouldn't be slowed down by commingling in general lanes with passenger traffic. "We saw the need to work together to get a dedicated lane in Mexico that could connect with the FAST lane at the U.S. port of entry," says Martha Rascon-Overpeck, who coordinates the Working Group.

The dedicated lane in Mexico was also needed so that U.S.-bound shippers wouldn't be discouraged from joining cargo pre-screening initiatives, such as the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism. That program is an important U.S. effort aimed at intelligently risk-segmenting commercial traffic. C-TPAT, as it is known, fits within the bi-national "21st Century Border" initiative, which seeks to expedite secure commercial and people flows and is part of the Beyond Mérida security cooperation strategy between both countries.

The lobbying effort began in earnest in December 2006 and involved the Group's reaching out to Mexican authorities and public sector representatives of both sides of the border. In 2007, the group successfully con-

vinced the Mexican toll road concessionaire responsible for an enclosed corridor connecting to the port to place a kilometer of concrete barriers to segregate passenger and commercial traffic. And over 2008 and 2009, a remaining four kilometers were added to finally create the dedicated lane, Rascon-Overpeck says. The Working Group has worked in other ways to decongest the port of entry and clear bottlenecks. Leveraging its power to sit down different parties, the Working Group has also successfully negotiated among truckers, port officials, and commercial interests to end blockades that had previously paralyzed traffic, hurting business.

"The blockades were costing business between US\$3 and US\$5 million a day," Montoya says. "So we decided to talk with the truckers. We could act as intermediaries to resolve the problem. We met with [U.S. Customs and Border Protection] and the truckers, and we talked and agreed that the conditions needed to improve. With that conversation, we helped end the blockades."

Yet there are plenty of continuing challenges. The Working Group would like to see the 13-kilometer enclosed corridor that leads to the port put under permanent surveillance by Mexican officials, and is also calling for new lighting, cameras, and better signage. "There is still plenty of room for improvement," she says.

Other structural challenges exist too, Shannon says. Local transportation infrastructures need to be up to the task of attracting renewed manufacturing and *maquila* activity to the region, he says. Otherwise, the region will lose out to rivals better able to hang onto that investment. "The feeling now is that the *maquila* industry will begin to pick up again ... so I think that that will be one of our challenges in the future: making sure that the infrastructure is sufficient for economic growth," he says.

NOTES

- 1 Christopher E. Wilson, *Working Together: Economic Ties Between the United States and Mexico*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, November, 2011.

*Expansion of
the Lukeville Port
of Entry*

CHAPTER 7 / Expansion of the Lukeville Port of Entry

Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Comisión Sonora Arizona

Time-consuming cross-border wait-times are more than an occasional annoyance. For border residents, they can be daily headaches that frustrate shoppers, merchants, and suppliers, stymieing local economies.

At the Arizona-Sonora border, long and unpredictable wait-times were threatening tourism and real estate development at the Sea of Cortez town of Puerto Peñasco, known to U.S. travelers as Rocky Point. South-north wait times were averaging three hours to get back from the picturesque coastal town, and Arizona beachgoers and prospective homeowners were looking elsewhere for vacation spots. The saturated queues and the glacial pace of the border crossing were also dampening Mexican shoppers' enthusiasm to make treks to Tucson or Phoenix. "We had to find a way to resolve this situation, and we thought that if we're interested in doing this, we have to take the first step," says Oscar Palacios, the head of the Rocky Point Convention and Visitors Bureau.

To address the problem, Palacios' group worked with the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Comisión Sonora-Arizona on an approximately US\$3-million plan to add two lanes, retrofit infrastructure, and widen access roads at the Lukeville/Sonoyta port of entry, the nearest crossing to Rocky Point. The group's solution was innovative and collaborative. It first involved the Convention and Visitors Bureau putting up an initial US\$1 million stake, followed by a matching investment from the Arizona Department of Transportation, and, ultimately, final funding from the U.S. federal government. Submitted by the

two commissions, the Lukeville expansion is a finalist for this year's Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation.

The plan was a model of a successful private-public partnership. It demonstrated strong local commitment, freed the project from the vagaries of the federal appropriations process, and got a typically slow-moving infrastructure project off the ground at record speed. The decision to make the initial investment was necessary, Palacios says, because other ports with heavier commercial volume would have been prioritized in the federal appropriations process. Plus, it lowered the federal government's funding commitment to a more manageable and easier-to-secure amount, he says. To Margie Emmermann, Executive Director of the Arizona-Mexico Commission, the benefits in reduced wait-times, improved flows, and more robust local economies on both sides of the border are obvious. "We don't have the congestion and backlog like we used to. This encourages the cross-border trade and tourism that is so important for the economic vitality of our region as people know there is an efficient crossing. Today, it's only a 10-minute wait," she says.

The Lukeville project was innovative in other ways too. The new lanes are reversible meaning that flows can be switched from north-south to south-north depending on traffic—an innovation that is in place at no other U.S. port of entry, Emmermann says. And the new lanes are also specially outfitted to accommodate the RVs and other oversize vehicles favored by the some 2,000 expat households who call Puerto Peñasco home.

The expansion happened in record time compared with most other much more time-consuming border infrastructure projects. But this “success story” in cross-border cooperation couldn’t have happened without the decades-long cultivation of the interstate relationship by the two commissions. “The reason why the Lukeville expansion was successful was because the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Comisión Sonora Arizona have been working together for decades on ways to improve business relationships between our two states,” Emmermann says. Since 1959, the two commissions have strived to meet regularly—in good times and bad—“to advance the economic well-being and quality of life of the residents of Arizona and Sonora,” managing 15 committees made up of representatives from both state governments and local business leaders. In 2009, the commissions drafted a first-ever strategic plan, *A Shared Vision for Arizona and Sonora*, laying out a long-term vision for regional development around four key areas: economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, quality of life, and public security. For more on *A Shared Vision*, see the related entry in this publication.

The successful Lukeville port-of-entry expansion is one of several innovative private-public and public-public border infrastructure projects that have won permitting approval in the Obama administration. Others in-

clude the Otay Mesa II port of entry, which won a presidential permit in a swift 10 months by leveraging local buy-in in San Diego County with a California state pledge to build a needed connector road from the new port. Another prominent example from California is the recent authorization in 2011 of a border-spanning bridge linking a passenger terminal on the San Diego side to Tijuana’s General Abelardo Rodríguez Airport—a project driven in large part by U.S. developers.

But the Lukeville expansion is distinct from these projects in a particularly unique way, Emmermann says. Rather than U.S. business interests, it was Mexican investors who propelled the project forward, taking the first step of contracting the financing to jumpstart it. “Never before has there been a case where you have business people from a foreign nation willing to finance additional lanes at a U.S. port of entry. The Rocky Point Convention and Visitors Bureau helped to fund an infrastructure investment in the United States. That to me is pretty innovative, collaborative, and unique,” she says. Adds Palacios, “One important thing to remember is that when a lot of people say things can’t be done, we should say yes, they can. A lot of things can be done when there are common interests and when there is a strong need.”

*Giving Hope to
Children Suffering
from Cancer*

CHAPTER 8 / Giving Hope to Children Suffering from Cancer

Castro Limón Foundation

When Juan Carlos Castro Munguía and Irineo Limón Vargas died in 2003 their families found themselves at a desperate loss. How could they have died? Why?

“These two young people had everything they needed to be successful in life. Unfortunately, their deaths were premature and their families lost two lights,” says Pedro Cruz Camarena, who heads the foundation established in their memory. “To this day, their families do not understand how they could have been taken from them.”

As short as they were, the lives of Juan Carlos, a native San Diegan who died from bone cancer at 28, and Irineo, a *tijuanense* who was 34 when she died of liver cancer, have carried forth an enduring legacy. The Castro Limón Foundation, established by their parents in 2004, funds the only pediatric cancer treatment center in Baja California, serving Mexican and, in some cases, U.S. children from throughout the border states. Since its inception, the center has assisted more than 1,000 families and annually provides cancer-treatment services to about 150 patients, Cruz Camarena says. And additional capacity should be online soon after the completion of a new floor to the center’s oncology unit, a project started this year. “The center is the only one of its kind in Mexico, and, with the new floor, it will be the leading pediatric cancer treatment center of its kind in Latin America,” Cruz Camarena says. The foundation is a finalist of this year’s Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation.

The center, whose official title is the Childhood Cancer Center of Baja California (Centro Oncológico Pediátrico de Baja California), provides patients and families with the highest medical technology available, but it also makes use of a uniquely holistic model of care, treating not only the body of each patient but also their psychological, social, and spiritual well-being, Cruz Camarena says. “The center has a single-minded commitment to treating the whole health of the pediatric cancer patient,” he says.

The center is a model of cross-border collaboration. It has a close-knit working relationship with its sister hospital on the other side of the border, Rady Children’s Hospital, located on the campus of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), with that hospital’s physicians traveling to Tijuana to treat patients and providing access to advanced medical resources; another agreement, with UCSD’s Radiation Center in Chula Vista, is also in the works, he adds. On the philanthropic side, the foundation’s California-based “sister foundation,” the International Cancer Children’s Foundation, collaborates with U.S. partners for fund-raising and network-building, cultivating relationships with Rotary International and the International Community Foundation, among other institutions, Cruz Camarena adds.

Despite close proximity to advanced medical facilities in southern California, the center serves an essential purpose for Mexican patients and families, who would otherwise forego services because of U.S. visa require-

ments, Cruz Camarena says. Additionally, the center serves an essential need for undocumented Mexican families in the United States whose immigration status could be red-flagged upon a child patient's admission to hospital, even if that child is U.S.-born. "We are currently treating two children from Los Angeles whose parents lacked visas and who could have faced deportation while their child was in treatment in the United States," Cruz Camarena says. He adds that before the center opened, juvenile patients in Tijuana were routinely treated in hospitals designed for adults, exposing them to diseases. "Having a dedicated treatment center for juvenile patients is essential for Baja California for a number of reasons," Cruz Camarena says.

Patients are considered on a first-come-first-served basis, and treatment is means-based, priced according to a family's ability to contribute. "Even if a child lacks (government medical insurance documentation), we treat them. But we also require every family to make some contribution, for the family's sense of pride. We do not want a *campesino* or a laborer worrying about making a payment, but we do ask them to invest a modest amount," Cruz Camarena says. The center is a model for pediatric medical facilities in Mexico and elsewhere, he says, adding that he has advised hospitals in Guadalajara, Chihuahua, Los Cabos, and Bogota, Colombia. "The Cruz Limón Foundation is a model for cross-border collaboration and it is a model that could, in many cases, be adopted not only in Mexico but elsewhere in Latin America," he says.

*Innovations in
Bi-National Restoration
Efforts: Seeking
'Common Ground' on
which to Restore the
Lower Colorado River*

CHAPTER 9 / Innovations in Bi-National Restoration Efforts: Seeking ‘Common Ground’ on which to Restore the Lower Colorado River

Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corp.

Borderland environmental degradation damages both countries' shared watersheds, atmospheres, and greater ecosystems, with challenges like deforestation, drought, and pollution straddling rather than stopping at the boundary line. These stresses emphasize the critical need for joint management of a region threatening to become even hotter and drier from climate change and whose perennially acute water needs risk upsetting regional population balances. At the same time, few other issues demand the same intensity of bi-national collaboration, and the border's shared challenges present unique opportunities for enhanced U.S.-Mexico collaboration, especially on issues of natural resource management, cross-border emergency response, and renewable energy development.

A recent “success story” in bi-national environmental cooperation has been the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corp.'s wetlands restoration efforts around the Lower Colorado River. Begun in 2007, the restoration seeks to reclaim sections of a 22-mile stretch where the Colorado runs at a virtual trickle downstream of the Los Morales Dam, the site where Mexico extracts a 1.5-million-acre-feet allotment of river water. In this so-called limitrophe section, unchecked non-native plant growth had created a veritable “no man's land,” turning it into a favored staging

ground for unauthorized crossings and for the criminal gangs that prey on migrants. Says Charles Flynn, the corporation's executive director, “In 2005 and 2006, there was a tremendous amount of illegal crossings and activities, and gangs were preying on people trying to cross the border. It wasn't primarily Americans being victimized, but rather Mexican migrants who were the victims.” The corporation's reclamation efforts are a finalist for the 2011 Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation.

The reclamation effort brought together two separate but ultimately linked goals: the need to selectively clear non-native species from the riverbed and U.S. authorities' desire to enhance public safety in the overrun area. It also brought together what on the surface would appear to be unlikely bedfellows: the U.S. Border Patrol and regional environmentalists, including Mexican NGO partner ProNatura. “We designed a restoration that would create an appropriate marsh habitat in the limitrophe while at the same time taking into consideration the border security issue, meaning creating a clear line of sight for the Border Patrol,” Flynn says. The unusual collaboration expressed itself in different ways, including through bi-national volunteer days that teamed up environmentalists and agents to clear brush and undergrowth.

Flynn notes that without the compromise solution, the area risked becoming a barren “moonscape,” given that the alternative plan called for a wholesale clear-cutting, which would have maximized security visibility

but destroyed virtually all vegetation, including native species. “We live here. This is a quality of life issue for us,” says Flynn who has been working on Colorado River environmental issues since moving to Yuma in 1999.

The restoration plan has two main stages. Initially, non-native species are weeded out, and native grasses are planted to out-compete them and build an understory. In a second stage, native trees like cottonwoods are re-introduced. Getting these native species to grow—sustainably over time—in a riverbed with high soil salinity and low water flows poses the project’s toughest challenge, Flynn notes. Additionally, recreating the historic flooding of the Colorado, to mimic the precise ecological conditions for sustainable native-species growth, has also required some creative thinking.

In fact, the tough environmental variables seemed to daunt the project, until a test case at a patch of the limitrophe called Hunter’s Hole proved successful, Flynn says. That success ultimately paved the way for the state and federal grants needed to make the larger-scale project a reality. And a key grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation

has committed to fund the maintenance and irrigation that will keep the restoration project sustainable over the next 50 years, Flynn says. “People use the term “restoration” but it is actually complete re-creation of an area because you’re going three feet under the ground and uprooting non-native species and then mimicking the historical flooding,” Flynn says.

Upon completion, the Yuma Crossing project will offer manifold benefits to different stakeholders. For authorities on both sides of the border, a clear line of sight will enhance security and thwart migrant-preying gangs; for environmentalists, it will reverse the area’s decades-long despoliation and uproot destructive non-native vegetation; and residents will see their quality of life improved from the beautification of the limitrophe, Flynn notes. But none of this would be possible, he adds, without meaningful and sustained buy-in from regional stakeholders on both sides of the border. “All of these long-range issues on the U.S.-Mexico border don’t mean anything unless you have a stake from non-governmental actors at the local level,” he says.

*San Diego-Tijuana
Border Region:
Los Laureles/Goat
Canyon Transborder
Trash-Tracking Study*

CHAPTER 10 / San Diego-Tijuana Border Region: Los Laureles/ Goat Canyon Transborder Trash-Tracking Study

Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve Watershed Program, National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

Tijuana is Mexico's most populous border city with a population approaching 2 million in 2010. In the past decade, its population has grown by more than 25 percent, far outpacing the national average, with most of this growth in the form of migration from within Mexico.¹

The demographic boom has led to new and unexpected environmental and infrastructure challenges for the city. One example of these challenges has been the environmental degradation of Tijuana's outer canyons, which, in turn, has led to serious pollution stresses on the entire bi-national Tijuana River Valley. Particularly damaging to the canyons have been their exploitation as clandestine dumpsites for industrial waste and their irregular settlement by new migrants, as the city expands up to the U.S. border.

During storms, trash and sediment run off the canyons and wash into the north-flowing Tijuana River, eventually reaching the river's mouth at Imperial Beach in San Diego County and entering the Pacific Ocean. "Solid wastes from the [canyons] drain into the Tijuana River and flow across the U.S. border toward the Pacific Ocean, polluting the environment and threatening neighborhoods," says Oscar Romo, director of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve Watershed Program. The program's entry, "The Los Laureles/Goat Canyon Transborder Trash-Tracking Study," is a finalist for the 2011 Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation.

On both sides of the border, the pollution represents a serious public health and ecological threat, affecting the shared Tijuana River Watershed, a cross-border expanse one-half larger than Rhode Island. According to a recent study prepared for the City of Imperial Beach, the Tijuana River has historically been associated with poor water quality and extremely elevated concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria, with high levels of viral pathogens, such as Hepatitis A and enterovirus, especially present at the mouth of the river at Imperial Beach.² Toward the south, Tijuana's beaches are also frequently impacted by the ocean pollution, forcing closures, while, upstream in the canyons, residents must take special precautions to decontaminate local water supplies.

The pollution has also caused habitat destruction and damaged sensitive ecosystems in south San Diego County. Fish whose habitats are near the river may accumulate lethally high concentrations of toxic chemicals in their tissue, posing a health risk for humans who handle the fish. And since 2006, dozens of acres of salt marsh have been destroyed by storm water-carried sediment.

Keeping trash and dirt from flowing into the ocean is no easy task. Canyon residents lack the wastewater and garbage-collection systems that urban dwellers have. And the canyons' unplanned development has led to soil erosion as land gets cleared for homes, increasing sediment runoff. At the same time, dotting the canyons are hundreds of illicit dumpsites that have become holding pens for all manner of trash, including toxic chemi-

cals, demolition materials, and even hospital waste. While canyon squatters typically get a lot of the blame for the trash runoff, businesses are the chief violators as they expediently seek to avoid city collection fees. These businesses also wind up dumping pollutants that are much more harmful than are found in typical household garbage, researchers say.

“Household waste is not the major category of waste,” says Jennifer Leonard, a researcher with the watershed program. “We found building materials, demolition materials, and commercial waste from restaurants. We’ve seen dump trucks coming up to the ridgeline and also dumping directly into the river.”

Reinforcing the illicit system is an entire network of mom-and-pop dumpsite owners and collection services. And while criminal penalties against dumpsite owners and businesses are feasible, stretched resources at the municipal level have traditionally made such enforcement ineffective.

Determining a sustainable way to prevent the trash flows has been the objective of the trash-tracking study. Partially funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the study seeks to track trash as it descends from canyon dumpsites into the Tijuana River Estuary, creating a body of scientific evidence that can lead to policy improvements and enhanced enforcement, says Romo, the study’s director.

The study involves researchers placing floatable tracking devices at each of the canyon’s 75 known illicit dumpsites. Resembling bright blue milk jugs, the devices are each fitted with radio-frequency identification tags that allow researchers to locate them even if they get buried under other layers of trash. By using GIS software to map the flow of trash from canyon to estuary, researchers hope to convince policymakers on both sides of the border to fund road infrastructure in the canyons, as a way to limit sediment runoff and enable regular garbage collection. Additionally, the study is designed to give Mexican federal authorities the data they need to enact bolder environmental regulations.

Yet with so many informal trash collectors and dumpsite owners dependent on the existing system, actually conducting the study has not been easy. Romo says clandestine dumpsite owners have tried to intimidate him, and other researchers have been chased by junkyard dogs through the canyons. “We found one guy who said he would dump anything—even toxic substances—for a set fee of 250 pesos per truckload,” Romo says.

The researchers hasten to add that canyon residents are not the principal sources of the illicit trash flows. Because of economic necessity, most squatters are unable to afford housing in middle-class neighborhoods and have little alternative but to make use of the illicit sites. In fact, many canyon residents have expressed support for the researchers since their water quality and livelihoods are negatively impacted by the illicit dumping, too.

“This waste rains down on the people in the canyon, and they are very put off by it because it’s their habitat too,” Leonard says.

Romo adds that sustainable measures are needed to prevent the trash flows. The region’s northwestward tilting topography means that rainwater will always drain away from Tijuana and toward San Diego, he says. So, one-off efforts such as using cranes to lift trash out of the estuary or increasing the number of specialized traps to capture downstream trash will not be effective in the long term, particularly in a heavy storm season. “Building sediment basins or trash basins to collect trash, that’s not a sustainable solution to the problem. We’re interested not just in cleaning up the source [of the trash] but in eliminating it. And this study aims to eliminate it,” he says. The study is funded by the NOAA, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the City of Imperial Beach.

NOTES

- 1 See “Migration fuels Tijuana’s growth,” Sandra Dibble, SignOn San Diego, May 5, 2011
- 2 See Tijuana River Watershed Bacterial Source Identification Study Literature Review, (San Diego, CA: Weston Solutions, 2008)

*Texas-Nuevo León
State-to-State
Environmental
Cooperation*

CHAPTER 11 / Texas-Nuevo León State-to-State Environmental Cooperation

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality/Secretaría de Desarrollo Sustentable, Estado de Nuevo León

Trust. Loyalty. Friendship. While these may not be the first words to spring to mind when talking about bureaucracies, the concepts these words embody are often alive in the relationships that define government-to-government collaboration between Mexico and the United States, especially at the state level. Official agreements, institutionalized processes and exchanges, and coordinated operations cannot begin without an underlying foundation of deep trust among colleagues.

One example of this dynamic is the state-to-state cooperation between the environmental agencies of Nuevo León and Texas. Over the past 14 years, the two neighbors have collaborated to improve air quality, waste treatment, and water supply, enhancing the quality of life for residents of both states. The formal mechanism for this cooperation is an agreement first signed in 1997, later updated in 2005 and again in 2010, authorizing agency-to-agency exchanges in technical expertise, research, and technologies. The two signatory agencies, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the Nuevo León Ministry of Sustainable Development (SDS), are finalists of the 2011 Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Collaboration and Innovation. “These improvements pave the way for a future with fewer respiratory illnesses, water-borne diseases, and vector-transmitted diseases (such as dengue fever),” the agencies note.

“Since the first agreement between our two agencies in 1997, the TCEQ and SDS have worked together to solve common problems while strengthening our vital relationship. As both Texas and Nuevo León see industrial and population growth, it is imperative we maintain a cooperative effort on the key issues in our two states,” says TCEQ Commissioner Buddy Garcia, who renewed the agreement in 2010 with his counterpart, Fernando Gutiérrez Moreno of SDS. “Environmental relationships between Nuevo León and Texas have been very successful in spite of the differences in legal framework,” says Gutiérrez Moreno. “And the intense level of interstate cooperation among agencies has enabled us to accomplish our mutual goals.”

The agreement commits SDS and TCEQ to collaborate on joint actions to improve the environment. Yet, as Steve Niemeyer, Border Affairs Manager at the TCEQ emphasizes, “The foundation for the agreement is definitely the age-old principles of trust and friendship between colleagues on both sides of the border.”

Mitigating cross-border air pollution and water pollution are the focus of the agreement, and the two agencies have conducted joint technical trainings and exchanges, as well as emissions inventory modeling, to address these shared challenges. “We’ve learned from them, and they’ve learned from us,” Niemeyer notes. The two state agencies, through annual implementation plans, decide which mutual priorities to focus on every year. At trainings at the University of Texas at Austin, among other locations, Nuevo León environmental code inspectors learn techniques to determine

industrial air pollution compliance, and some trainings have also involved authorities from Mexico's Federal Attorney General for the Protection of the Environment (known as PROFEPA).

While its focus is on controlling pollution, the agreement also provides a framework for interstate cooperation on related environmental issues, such as joint emergency management preparedness, Niemeyer says. "The agreement and our annual implementation plans provide the platforms necessary for emergency preparedness situations as needed," he says. "It allows us to build the trust necessary for future emergency situations." The agreement also encourages an entrepreneurial approach to shared environmental challenges. For example, colleagues from Nuevo León are researching commercial applications, such as

uses of crumb rubber from the recycling of scrap and waste tires. Scrap tires are littered throughout the region and are a serious environmental blight.

"As a border native myself, I look forward to our continued efforts with SDS and the education we'll both gain from lessons learned," states Garcia. "The accomplishments from this partnership prove their value."

Says Gutiérrez Moreno, "For Nuevo León, Texas is a friendly neighbor with which we maintain close commercial relationships. This is one reason why the expansion of this relationship to matters of technical cooperation and exchange is very valuable since it has enabled state- and municipal-level officials on the border to become better trained and to improve their performance in environmental policy and law enforcement."

*Words of
Encouragement
from a Kennedy*

CHAPTER 12 / Words of Encouragement from a Kennedy

Border Angels (Ángeles de la Frontera)

From 1994 through 2009, up to 5,607 migrants died while attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, an average of about one death per day, according to a recent report by the ACLU.¹ The number of deaths was a precipitous rise over previous periods and came about as more crossings began to be made in rural desert lands and fewer at urban corridors, in response to changes in U.S. enforcement policies. For example, over a comparable period, 1990-2003, the Border Patrol's remote Tucson sector accounted for more than 78 percent of the total increase in deaths among all sectors, according to U.S. GAO data.² Today, due to various factors, fewer unauthorized crossings are taking place, perhaps reducing the salience of migrant deaths as a hot-button political issue. But for migrant advocates on both sides of the border, any death is still a serious humanitarian concern.

With the increase in migrant deaths, relief agencies and non-profits along the border ramped up services in the 1990s, working to rescue border crossers, providing services for settling migrants, and helping repatriated persons in Mexico. A finalist for this year's Awards for U.S.-Mexico Cross-Border Cooperation and Innovation, the San Diego-based Border Angels were one such organization. Founded in 1986 by Enrique Morones, the group first became known for operating water stations in the deserts and

mountains east of San Diego, where border-crossers regularly risked death from environmental exposure. In later years, the non-profit shifted its service focus onto unauthorized persons residing in San Diego, concentrating efforts on the county's northern canyons where many homeless migrant workers eked out subsistence lives.

More recently, Border Angels has launched a series of migrant marches that have mobilized migrants and supporters for comprehensive immigration reform. "We've done Marchas Migrantes all over the country, in the 10-state border area, from San Diego to the Canadian border, and from Florida to Washington, DC," he says.

Border Angels has also reached out to groups not typically associated with migrant rights. In summer 2011, Morones and team were partnering with the Southern Poverty Law Center on a Deep South "Freedom Ride" to promote unity between African-Americans and Latinos. And Morones notes that he makes frequent appearances on college campuses to explain the need for comprehensive immigration reform to mainly white audiences. "The question I ask audiences is, 'Are you standing on the side of love?'" he says. But Morones' message isn't always so dovish, and he's not afraid to tangle with forces he considers harmful to immigrants.

Border Angels has been widely recognized for its efforts, and Morones was honored in 2009 with both the prestigious Ohtli Award, the Mexican government's highest recognition for a non-citizen, as well as the National Human Rights Awards, presented to him by President Felipe Calderón. By

aiding migrants, Border Angels helps some of the neediest and most dispossessed persons in the cross-border region. And by publicizing the need for urgent help for migrants, it raises the consciousness and understanding of the community as a whole, Morones says.

NOTES

- 1 Maria Jimenez, *Humanitarian Crisis: Migrant Deaths at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (American Civil Liberties Union and Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2009), 7-8.
- 2 United States Government Accountability Office, *Illegal Immigration: Border-Crossing Deaths Have Doubled Since 1995; Border Patrol's Efforts to Prevent Deaths Have Not Been Fully Evaluated* (August 2006), 17.

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