

Luncheon Briefing with U.S. Ambassador to Qatar

“Expanding the Louisiana – Qatar Relationship Through Trade”

A luncheon briefing with Hon. Joseph LeBaron, United States Ambassador to Qatar

Monday, October 25

The Plimsoll Club, 11th floor, Westin Canal Place Hotel

11:30 a.m. Networking Reception

12:00 noon Presentation and Q&A

Qatar’s economy is growing at an unprecedented rate, based on oil exports of more than 700,000 barrels per day and sharing the largest natural gas field in the world. Qatar may look small, but in commercial terms it is a rising giant. This Persian Gulf Emirate is just larger than Connecticut and its population is less than 1 million. But its reform-minded government has ambitious plans to transform this peninsula into an international hub for tourism, finance, and education. U.S. companies interested in international opportunities should consider current trends and future projects in Qatar.

Best prospects for U.S. exporters include:

Agricultural Sector

- Fresh/ Chilled/Frozen beef
- Poultry Meat (FOD)

Commercial Sectors

- Architectural/Construction/Engineering Services
- Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Equipment
- Construction Equipment and Tools
- Oil & Gas Field Machinery and Equipment
- Telecommunications Equipment, Computers and Peripherals
- Education Services and Equipment
- Medical Equipment and Services
- Security and Safety Equipment

The Emir of Qatar, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, donated a monetary gift totaling 100 million dollars to New Orleans and U.S. Gulf Coast institutions following Hurricane Katrina. The oil-rich country’s aid covered three broad categories: education, health care, and housing. Recipients of this generous donation included Children’s Hospital, Habitat for Humanity, Tulane University, Xavier University, and Loyola University. With this gift, these organizations were able to build homes, repair clinics, provide care for uninsured children, and provide scholarships for students whose lives were turned upside down by Hurricane Katrina as well as assisting Xavier in completing a new building for its College of Pharmacy.

About Joseph LeBaron

Joseph Evan LeBaron was sworn in as Ambassador to the State of Qatar on July 18, 2008. A career member of the United States diplomatic corps, he has previously served as Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Ambassador LeBaron joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1980 after earning his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. His first assignment was as vice-consul at the U.S. Embassy in Doha. Later postings included Amman, Ankara, and Istanbul. He then returned to Washington to become Lebanon desk officer at the Department of State.

In 1989, the State Department detailed Ambassador LeBaron to the U.S. Senate to serve on the national security and foreign affairs staff of Majority Leader George J. Mitchell. To prepare for an assignment as Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Ambassador LeBaron then studied Persian. He was also detailed briefly to northern Iraq at the end of Gulf War to work with Operation Provide Comfort.

Other assignments included Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Manama, Bahrain and Deputy Director of the Office of Iran and Iraq in the State Department's Near East Bureau. His last Washington assignment was as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Sponsoring Organizations:

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Business Council for International Understanding
Louisiana Economic Development
The Lugano Group, Inc.
New Orleans U.S. Export Assistance Center
Port of New Orleans
World Trade Center of New Orleans