

2019 SPRING BREAKFAST AND MEMBERS MEETING

RECAP



Political journalist R.G. Ratcliffe moderated a special breakfast panel honoring the legacy of George H.W. Bush which featured Union Pacific's Scott Moore, Bush's grandson Texas Land Comm. George P. Bush, and The Bush School's Mark Welsh.



TBLC Member Becky Klein fondly recalled her time working with George H.W. Bush during Q&A.



Spring Meeting sponsor Union Pacific's No. 4141 Locomotive was included in the breakfast panel discussion, giving the audience a glimpse inside the planning of the "Last Train Ride" of the celebrated former President.



Gerry Schwebel of IBC Bank discussed border patrol reassignments and the negative impact it is having on trade and commerce.



Maj. Zach Walker of DIU spoke on how the U.S. government plans to keep up with rival-peer countries in tech.



Joni Carswell of Texan by Nature engaged the audience in her presentation on how businesses can better implement conservation efforts that would help not only the planet, but their bottom line.



TBLC Chairman Gay Gaddis chatting with Comm. George P. Bush during the post breakfast intermission.



Thank you to all of the TBLC members, public officials, legislative staff, business leaders and stakeholders who came out for the TBLC's Spring Breakfast, Members Meeting, and Keynote Luncheon.



TBLC members Elaine Mendoza and Jodie Jiles during a break at the Spring Members Meeting.



Keynote Luncheon speaker TEA Comm. Mike Morath briefed the audience on how far the Texas education system still needs to go in order to better prepare students for post-secondary success.

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On Tuesday, April 30th the TBLC hosted its 2019 Spring Breakfast and Members Meeting in Austin at the InterContinental Stephen F. Austin Hotel. The event began with a breakfast panel featuring Texas General Land Commissioner George P. Bush discussing the life and legacy of his grandfather and 41st President of the United States, George H.W. Bush. The Commissioner was joined by Scott Moore, Senior Vice President-Corporate Relations and Chief Administrative Officer for Union Pacific Railroad; Mark Welsh, Dean of The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University; and was moderated by storied Texas political journalist, RG Ratcliffe of *Texas Monthly*.

The discussion, titled “The Last Train Ride: The Life and Legacy of George H.W. Bush” aimed to discuss the former President’s passion for history, zeal for service, and the complexity of such an important event by all of the actors who helped not only a nation grieve the loss of an American president, but also a family celebrate the life of their patriarch. Commissioner Bush helped the audience realize just how demanding the realities were for the Bush family as he fielded phone calls and requests for interviews from the media. The only Bush still in public office, Commissioner Bush felt it was his duty to discuss his grandfather’s legacy in the face of distasteful questions about politics – and politicians – then and now. Gen. Welsh discussed how the life and legacy of the former President and First Lady, Barbara Bush, will be preserved in the values taught by the Bush School, while Mr. Moore gave the audience a peek behind the curtain to the technical planning and logistics Union Pacific prepared for over a decade.

After lunch our TBLC Members moved to the Assembly Room for three timely briefings on the state of the Texas/Mexico border, the role Texas businesses can plan in national security, and an introduction to Texan by Nature.

Gerry Schwebel, Executive Vice President for IBC Bank’s Corporate International Division, had grave warnings that the situation at the southern border is negatively affecting commerce and trade with trucks seeing wait times of up to 24 hours due to Customs and Border Patrol Agents being reassigned to deal with immigration. On USMCA, the clock is ticking and Mr. Schwebel believes that if Congress doesn’t ratify the new agreement by August recess, it might not happen until after the 2020 presidential election. On national security, Maj. Zach Walker of the Defense Innovation Unit discussed the public astronomical investments America’s rival-peers in China and Russia are making in their respective tech communities and how the United States government is working to keep up. Finally, Joni Carswell shared the mission of Texan by Nature and how businesses can better adopt and implement conservation values which may help their bottom line.

After a short break we returned to the Ballroom for lunch featuring a keynote by Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath. The TEA recently released an annual report which the Commissioner is working to promote. In his briefing, Commissioner Morath began by discussing how much further the Texas education system still needs to go so that every child, all across the state, benefits from a rigorous and first-class curriculum that prepares students for post-secondary success. The Commissioner discussed his data driven approach – outlined in the annual report – the TEA used to identify high performing schools and better understand their success metrics to see if there were policies and procedures that could be adopted statewide or at least deployed regionally. As a result, the agency is beginning to right the ship based on measurable results.

The meeting was a tremendous success and could not have happened without the support of the Spring Meeting sponsor, Union Pacific Railroad, and our luncheon co-hosts Texas Aspires and the Texas Public Policy Foundation.