

CONSULAR FORUM 2006

55th CONSULAR BALL

HONORING ISRAEL & HOUSTON'S CONSULAR CORPS

*Benefiting International Education through the
Houston Junior Chamber of Commerce Foundation* a 501(c)(3) Non-profit Organization*

BACKGROUND

Since 1952, members of the Houston Junior Chamber (the "Jaycees") have organized **Houston's official celebration of its distinguished consular corps** and the diplomatic and trade ties they provide between Houston and the rest of the world. The celebration takes the form of a series of business, cultural, educational, and diplomatic events, known collectively as the Consular Forum, which culminates in an annual white tie and diplomatic honors banquet hosted by Houston's Mayor and First Lady and attended by members of the city's eighty-four country consular corps and by political and business leaders from across the state of Texas and around the world.

OBJECTIVES

The Consular Forum has three distinct objectives: first, it offers an opportunity for the entire city of Houston to **celebrate its truly distinguished consular corps** (the 3rd largest diplomatic corps of any American city); second, the Consular Forum is designed to help **promote opportunities for international trade** with the featured country; and finally, because understanding of and respect for international differences are essential prerequisites for successful international commerce, the Consular Forum's concluding banquet is a **fund-raiser for the Houston Junior Chamber of Commerce Foundation***, which uses the proceeds to support international education programs, scholarships, and internships at the Institute of International Education, Rice University and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, the University of Houston, the University of St. Thomas, and other institutions and organizations in the Houston area.

THE FEATURED COUNTRY

Although the Consular Forum celebrates *all* of Houston's consular representatives, each year, one country is chosen for special recognition; the Consular Forum events then are themed around this featured country, offering unprecedented opportunities to showcase its economy and culture to the business and political leaders of Houston, Texas, the fourth-largest city in the United States of America. The featured country in 2006 is Israel.

* The Houston Junior Chamber of Commerce Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.
Consular Forum donations are therefore tax-deductible to the extent allowed by United States law.

EVENTS

The Consular Ball – October 28, 2006

Held in the InterContinental Houston Hotel, this "white tie and honors" gala serves as the concluding ceremony for the ten-month Consular Forum season. Hosted by Houston's Mayor and First Lady, the Consular Ball features all of the protocol courtesies appropriate to the rank and station of its distinguished diplomatic honorees. Government representatives from the featured country, their U.S. counterparts, and the Houston consular corps honorees and their hosts (representing many of Houston's largest corporations) participate in a formal "grand march" to begin the evening of dining and themed entertainment, which also serves as a fund-raiser for international education programs, scholarships, and internships at the Houston International Protocol Alliance, the Institute of International Education, Rice University and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, the University of Houston, the University of St. Thomas, and other institutions and organizations in the Houston area.

The Consular Forum Business Seminar – October 27, 2006

Held the day before the Consular Forum's concluding gala and organized by a local chamber organization, the Business Conference showcases the economy of the featured country and promotes opportunities for trade between the featured country and industries throughout Houston and the State of Texas. The conference concludes with a luncheon at which a senior governmental representative of the honored country is invited to give a keynote address. After the luncheon, the afternoon is available for one-on-one business meetings between participants from Houston and the honored country.

The Houston International Service Award Reception – September/October 2006

Designed to introduce members of the Consular Corps of Houston to the corporate leaders who serve as their hosts at the concluding gala, this event is a black tie reception at which the annual Houston International Service Award is presented to a deserving Houstonian who has made outstanding volunteer contributions to the Houston community in the fields of international business, education, diplomacy, culture, or the arts. Past winners include Mr. Chase Untemeyer, Mr. Ned Holmes, Mr. Frank Michel, Mayor Bill White and Mr. George Donnelly. The 2005 International Service Award recipient was Mr. George Wong.

The Ladies Tea – September 2006

An occasion designed to introduce the ladies of the Houston consular corps to their respective hostess counterparts; this elegant event is historically hosted by the University of Houston in the home of the Chancellor of the University of Houston System. Co-hostesses of the 2005 Ladies Tea include Mrs. Susie Gogue, First Lady of University of Houston and Mrs. Andrea White, First Lady of Houston.

The Consular Forum Trade Delegation – August 2006

To assure that top-level government and corporate leaders participate in the annual business conference, a traveling delegation comprised of Houston business leaders, government officials, and representatives of the Consular Forum travels to the featured country well in advance of the conference date to promote the business conference, issue personal invitations for senior government officials and business leaders to attend, and to engage in substantive meetings to pursue opportunities for trade with government and business contacts in the honored country. The 2005 delegation met with several members of the Russian government and City of Moscow Government.

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EVENTS (continued)

The Consular Forum Announcement Reception – May 3, 2006

This reception formally inaugurates the series of Consular Forum events, which will showcase the honored country. Guests include members of the Consular Corps of Houston representing eighty sovereign nations, officials of Houston city government, and senior executives from the major corporations based in Houston who serve as hosts for the Consular Forum's concluding gala. The 2005 Announcement Reception was held at Artista Restaurant in the Houston Hobby Center (Michael Cordúa, founder/executive chef) featured Russian food, vodka, and entertainment to give all attendees a taste of the events to come during the 2005 Consular Forum season.

Consular Forum Educational and Cultural Events

An important outgrowth of the Consular Forum traveling delegation is a series of educational and cultural events, which are produced in Houston with the assistance of the culture and tourism ministries of the honored country in the months leading up to the trade conference and the Consular Forum's concluding gala. Examples of typical events include university lectures, film festivals, art and photography exhibits, and musical and dance performances.

LEADERSHIP

Sponsors

International corporations and prominent individuals from the Houston area sponsor Consular Forum events through their purchase of tables at the Consular Forum's concluding gala. Leading the corporate sector in supporting international education, culture, and commerce is a Presenting Sponsor and Title Underwriter.

Honorary Chairs

Each year, prominent government officials or other distinguished community leaders are chosen to serve as Honorary Chairs of the Consular Forum. Some of the distinguished individuals who have served as honorary chairs in the past include: *President George Bush, Barbara Bush, the Honorable James A. Baker III, and His Excellency Hamdi El-Banbi*. Honorary Chairman for the 2005 Consular Form was the Honorable Yury M. Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow.

Patrons Committee

The Consular Forum Patrons Committee is comprised of Houstonians whose prominence in business, social, and civic affairs lends prestige to and encourages support for Consular Forum events. The 2005 Chairman of the Patrons Committee was The Honorable Geoffrey S. Connor, former Secretary of State for Texas.

Consular Forum Committee

This volunteer committee, comprised of Houston Junior Chamber members, coordinates all aspects of the Consular Forum through a series of subcommittees and Jaycee liaisons to other contributing organizations such as the Greater Houston Partnership, the Houston World Affairs Council and the Houston International Protocol Alliance. The chairperson for the 2006 Consular Forum is Mr. Craig Klein.