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CBP Commissioner Delivers Remarks at 2011 Border Security Conference

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El Paso, Texas — Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Alan D. Bersin was in El Paso, Texas, Tuesday to serve as keynote speaker for the eighth annual Texas Border Security Conference held at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).

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Photo Credit: Photo by Greg Leyva

Hosted by UTEP, in conjunction with the Office of Congressman Silvestre Reyes, the 2011 Border Security Conference promoted the theme of Fostering a New Era of U.S. and Mexico Collaboration to meet 21st Century Challenges. According to the conference mission this convening of several hundred leaders from the public and private sectors in both countries provides a forum for the exploration of the best methods of safeguarding a common border while continuing to foster the human and economic development of our two nations.

Historically, El Paso has been selected to host this conference because of its geographic location, which places it in the center of current hot button issues of border security, drug trafficking and illegal immigration.

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CBP Commissioner Alan Bersin was in El Paso, Texas, Tuesday to serve as keynote speaker for the eighth annual Texas Border Security Conference held at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). As a part of his visit to El Paso, Commissioner Bersin also participated in a canine demonstration at the Canine Center El Paso.

Photo Credit: Photo by Greg Leyva

Addressing an audience of international delegates, Bersin discussed how joint efforts between the U.S. and the international community have resulted in the historic restoration of security at our nation's borders.

It is this coming together, during this annual conference, he said, "that gives us the opportunity to reflect year, by year, on this journey that we are embarked on with Mexico in terms of our shared border."

Commissioner Bersin outlined CBP's approach to border management through continuing to secure the legal flow of people and goods across the international border. He also discussed the way CBP is working with its international partners to further halt the illegal transport of human cargo and illegal contraband.

During his remarks, Bersin discussed the progression of border security throughout the years — making special note of the statistical information and historical data which shows that operational control of the border is more of a reality today than it was thirty years ago.

Bersin highlighted the more than 90 percent reduction in illegal activity in the Texas/New Mexico corridor, attributing this decrease to the joint effort by the U.S., with its international partners, to provide more resources to secure the border. He also took the opportunity to outline his continued vision for a more secure border, which includes further securing the Arizona corridor.

"Our efforts have pushed the entire illegal infrastructure into some of the most magnificent terrain, moving traffic out of the urban areas," he said. "The increase in activity in the Tucson

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Sector is indicative that we are closing in on illegal activity.”

Bersin also attributes the steady reduction in illegal activity to continued support by the Obama Administration to provide additional resources along the border. He described the benefits of resources made available through legislation such as the Southwest Border Security Bill, which was implemented by President Obama, and supported by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano, which provided 1000 additional agents last year to further support border operations.

Commissioner Bersin remarked on the expected increase in resources, including additional personnel, and an increase in aviation assets. This continued increase in resources will contribute to an even greater decrease in illegal activity along the border, he said.

In reviewing the issue of security, Bersin also emphasized the importance of dispelling the myth that the Border is out of control. “The border is more secure against illegal migration and contraband than it has ever been,” he said.

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CBP Public Affairs*