



So You Want To Do Business In Cuba?

By Patty Vila, SouthFloridaReporter.com, Cuba Expert, Oct. 7, 2015 - A few weeks ago the U.S. Chamber of Commerce announced that it has launched a council aimed at removing trade barriers and improving business ties between the United States and Cuba.

The U.S. - Cuba Business Council said they will work to create jobs and advocate for reforms in both countries. They will also work with Congress. When I think about all these changes what comes to mind is my friend's nephew that works at a "Paladar" 14 hours a day and makes the equivalent of \$10.00 a day.

American firms are now allowed to send supplies to private Cuban businesses, export Internet technology, as well as telephones. December 17th which is a date that every Cuban and Cuban American will remember (whether you agree or not) is the historic day of renewal of relations. There is still a long way to go on the road to normalization of relations.

President Obama eased some economic restrictions. However, let's remember that a trade embargo still exists. As my friend and Cuba expert Tony Martinez says "Let's be real about the challenges of doing business with Cuba. You need to build relationships, establish presence, and negotiate mutually good deals. That takes time and commitment."

Here is one of the challenges. Do you know that plastic thing we all use to travel? Oh yes, the credit card. Credit card companies still cannot transfer payments to Cuba. We are only 90 miles away. I remember my years working for CNN being based in Havana I would have to come to Miami pick up \$50,000 or \$100,000.00 in CASH and hand carry back to the island.

With all of these laws changing and people wanting to know the latest. I will be participating on a panel and giving a presentation this coming Friday, Oct. 9, at the Sofitel Hotel. Nexco in partnership with Datamyne is presenting the forum. **Click here to register for the forum**

8:00 A.M. Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:45 A.M. Welcome and Introductions by Gerri Cristantiello, Executive Director of Nexco and Brendan R. McCahill, CEO of Datamyne

9:00 A.M. Opening Remark's Stephen Wagner, Senior Attorney with Fuerst Ittleman David & Joseph. PL and Conference Moderator

9:15 A.M. Moving Capital In and Out of Cuba: Financial transactions, banking, money transfers and tax laws applicable to doing business in Cuba. Jennifer Correra Piera - Attorney, Fuerst Ittleman David and Joseph, PL

9:30 A.M. An analysis of the commercial and political landscape for U.S. businesses that have an interest in what is Market Cuba. John Kavulich, President U.S. Cuba Trade and Economic Council

10:00 A.M. Understanding the U.S. regulations by federal law enforcement agencies, allowing for more trade and travel between the U.S. and Cuba. Peter Quinter, Chair of the Customs and International Trade Law Group, Gray Robinson P.A.

10:40 A.M. Networking Break

11:00 A.M. Is Cuba ready for American Investment? An up-close look at workforce availability, infrastructure development, political climate stability, taxation and growth incentives for business seeking opportunities in Cuba. Judy Kruger Senior Vice President of International Sales, PRA Global

11:30 A.M. How CNN worked to get the office opened in Cuba. The first American company to operate in Cuba in thirty years. What an American company can expect. How to get your product placed in a country that will be one of the leading consumers. What can happen in the world of communications in Cuba be it marketing, public relations and advertising? **YOURS TRULY IS SPEAKING ABOUT THIS ONE!**

12:00 P.M. Roundtable Discussion with Speakers and Q&A - Moderated by Stephen Wagner

12:30 P.M. Luncheon Speaker: Enterprising Cuba: Citizens Empowerment, state abandonment, or U.S. opportunity. Ted Henken, Author and Professor, Baruch College, City University of New York

2:00 P.M. Keynote Speaker: Re-launching an iconic brand to service trade and tourism in the new Cuban market. Ed Wegel, Founder and CEO of Eastern Airlines

A Networking Cocktail Reception will be held following the keynote speaker.