



National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

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U.S. – ARAB CHAMBER SUPPORTS 'DISCOVER AMERICA FESTIVAL' IN KUWAIT

*First-of-its-Kind Event Showcases Over 100 U.S. Institutions
and Draws Thousands Looking to “Discover America”*

*Inauguration Ceremony is Led by U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait
and Kuwait’s Ambassador to the United States*

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) this week partnered with the U.S. Commercial Service in support of the “Discover America Festival,” which wrapped up yesterday in the State of Kuwait. The five-day event showcased over 100 American entities in such sectors as education, franchising, health, security, tourism, and a wide range of consumer products. NUSACC served as a Gold Sponsor of the Festival, which was organized by the U.S. Embassy, Mabane, the American Business Council of Kuwait, LOYAC youth association, and The Avenues (Kuwait’s largest mall).



The Discover America Festival, the first of its kind in Kuwait, opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony carried out by (left to right): Gregg Stevens, Chairman, American Business Council of Kuwait; David Hamod, President & CEO, National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce; Hon. Matthew Tueller, U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait; H.E. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States; Fatouh Al Dalali, Board Member, LOYAC; Saud Alzabin, Leasing Director, Mabane Company; and Dao Le, Senior Commercial Officer, U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.



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The Festival coincided with a visit by Hon. John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State, who was making his first visit to the State of Kuwait since assuming his position as America's top diplomat. While much of Secretary Kerry's visit was dedicated to discussions about the situation in Syria, Iran's recent elections, and his "shuttle diplomacy" in support of the peace process, America's commercial interests were also near the top of his agenda.

"The 'Discover America Festival,' the first of its kind here in Kuwait, represents yet another milestone in the special relationship shared by Kuwait and the United States," noted David Hamod, President & CEO of the U.S. – Arab Chamber. "The Festival provided Kuwaitis of all ages with an opportunity to enjoy a slice of American life. This was a fun and innovative way to bring our two peoples closer together and, at the same time, open the door for U.S. firms looking to enter the Kuwait market."



The Festival coincided with a visit to Kuwait by US Secretary of State John Kerry (AFP/Getty Images).

Hamod joined other VIPs – including the U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States – in cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the Festival.

Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, noted, "The Festival offered a great opportunity for Kuwaitis to get a feel for what the United States has to offer. These commercial bonds represent an integral part of the strategic relationship between our two nations, and I would like nothing

more than to see these bonds strengthened even further in the months and years ahead through events like these. I was very honored to be part of this important initiative."

The U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait, Hon. Matthew Tueller, said, "The United States has a unique and enduring relationship with Kuwait. While we have done much to expand education, health, and tourism exchanges between our two countries, the 'Discover America Festival' is a chance for Kuwaitis to see the increasing interest that America's companies, educational, and medical institutions have in contributing to Kuwait's future. It is this deep commitment that drives the commercial relationship between our two nations."

He added, "I take great pleasure in welcoming the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's work has proven invaluable to the promotion of stronger economic ties



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between the United States and the Arab world, and I trust that the Chamber will continue its great work.”

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The United States is the top supplier of goods to Kuwait, shipping \$2.68 billion worth of products in 2012 – led by transportation equipment, machinery, and computer equipment. Kuwait is America’s fifth largest export destination in the Arab world, and Kuwait is expected to maintain this position in coming years. According to projections by the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, U.S. exports of goods and services to Kuwait are expected to rise to \$9.25 billion by the end of 2015.

Kuwait sold over \$13 billion to the United States last year, the vast majority of which revolved around petroleum-based products. Bilateral trade volumes grew by half from 2011 to 2012, expanding from \$10.5 billion to \$15.7 billion. On the services side, U.S. service exports to Kuwait are expected to total \$1.29 billion for the year 2012, according to NUSACC. In the field of education, the United States is the top destination for Kuwaiti students, and U.S. companies are the largest private sector employers of Kuwaiti nationals.

The commercial relationship has historically depended heavily on oil imports and exports, but Kuwait is working to diversify its economy away from hydrocarbons. Kuwait is laying groundwork for a number of mega-projects in the coming decade and, with this in mind, NUSACC held meetings with ministerial leaders on the sidelines of the Discover America Festival.

In discussions with the Minister of Communications and the Minister for Housing Affairs, the focus was on new residential developments that will create nearly 75,000 housing units outside of central Kuwait. This will relieve some of the congestion in the Central Business District and will, at the same time, create new economic development, employment, and lifestyle opportunities.



David Hamod, President and CEO, NUSACC accepts a gift from the Kuwait Minister of Communications and Housing Affairs, H.E. Eng. Salim Alozainah.



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These satellite cities will include commercial complexes, ministerial facilities, branches of universities, schools, mosques, hospitals, sports and entertainment areas, and related amenities. Making these cities functional, smart, safe, and secure is a very high priority for Kuwait's government. The projects are divided into three contracts: the first covers development and maintenance; the second covers roads and telecommunications services; the third deals with infrastructure works in public facilities. (For more information about these projects, please contact the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait or NUSACC.)



Kuwaiti Minister of Communications and Housing Affairs, H.E. Eng. Salim Alozainah (center left) and senior leaders from multiple ministries and State-Owned Enterprises met with David Hamod, President and CEO, NUSACC (center right). Also in attendance (far right, in dark suit) was Dao Le, Senior Commercial Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait.

Kuwait will also see major upgrades in its infrastructure, beginning with expansion of Kuwait International Airport, which will grow to serve 20 million passengers. Expansion will include construction of a new terminal, a new runway, and extension of the existing runways. Infrastructure development is also expected to include expansion of highways and road networks, implementation of a mass transport system, and investment in a "smart" parking system.

An underground network and a railway system is being planned to link Kuwait to the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Central Asia, Europe, and India. The National Railway System will be 324 miles long and is planned to link a proposed 1,250-mile-long Gulf railway line to Iraq, Iran, and beyond. It is projected to link the Saudi border in the south with the Iraqi border in the north, as well as east and west points in the country. In addition, Kuwait Metropolitan Rapid Transit is calling for construction of a 106-mile Kuwait Metro system. The Metro will include four lines, and almost half of the system will be built underground.

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The "Discover America Festival" showcased 36 educational institutions, 40 hospitals and health care providers, and 40 iconic American consumer brands, many of which offered special



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“Discover America” discounts and promotions during the Festival. (For a complete list of the exhibitors, go to <http://www.daf2013.com/exhibitors.html>.)

For Kuwaiti students interested in studying in the United States, U.S. Embassy personnel were on hand to answer questions about study in the USA, including the visa process. Visitors were also invited to take a virtual guided tour of America’s top 10 cities and to post their experiences on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. In the evenings, visitors were serenaded by the Kuwait Jazz Trio, which highlighted the musical culture and heritage of jazz, which was itself “Made in the USA.”

According to Mr. Dao Le, Senior Commercial Officer at the U.S. Embassy and the driving force behind the Discover America Festival, “The approach of the Festival is to take one of the United States’ best relationships in the Arab world and lay the foundation to make it even stronger for another generation to come. Business travelers, students, and tourists are coming and going every day in ever greater numbers. Kuwait's openness to America and strong economic growth will further contribute to this key trend.”

He concluded, “The Festival is a prime example of how public-private partnerships can have a positive impact in strengthening our bilateral economic relationship in so many ways. We look forward to a staging an even larger Discover America Festival in 2014.”



The Honorable Matthew Tueller, U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait, welcomed guests to a U.S. Embassy reception in support of the Discover America Festival.

The U.S. Commercial Service will lead a Cyber Security mission to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from September 28 to October 1, 2013. The mission will focus on cyber security, critical infrastructure protection, and emergency management, as well as ports of entry, aviation, and border security sectors. For more information about joining this delegation, please contact NUSACC at info@nusacc.org.

The National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Arab world, is in touch with business communities across the United States and serves as the U.S. point of contact for the national chambers of commerce in the 22 Arab nations. On a daily basis, NUSACC works closely with leaders throughout the Arab world, as well as high-level decision makers in the U.S. business community, public policy research centers, multilateral institutions, nongovernmental organizations, media, and the U.S. Government.