



**Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) Session
Wednesday, September 9, 2020**



Valarie M. Neuhart
(Welcome and Introductions)
Deputy Executive Director, Office of Trade Relations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Valarie M. Neuhart is the Deputy Executive Director for the Office of Trade Relations, in support of the Office of the Commissioner, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). She supports the coordination of outreach efforts to elevate trade and Partner Government Agency (PGA) integration and readiness. Mrs. Neuhart leads the management of the Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC) and User Fee Advisory Committee (UFAC). She accompanies the Acting Commissioner in Trade Roundtables and other trade engagement efforts in order to provide and receive updates to/from Key Stakeholders. She works proactively with PGAs via the Border Interagency Executive Council (BIEC) framework to achieve coordinated border management and to provide a holistic understanding of the state of the PGA stakeholder base. The office is an executive-led staff level team that provides integrated program management, a comprehensive, rounded picture of the collective CBP activities and initiatives, and outreach via Trade Symposiums, Trade Days, and Small Business events.

Within CBP's Office of Trade, Mrs. Neuhart served as the Director of the Interagency Collaboration Division. She was also instrumental in overseeing the development of the Single Window Initiative. Mrs. Neuhart has also served as a Director of the Trade Operations Division, in Cargo and Conveyance Security, Office of Field Operations. Her CBP field experience consists of Import Specialist and Import Specialist Team Leader in the Port of Port Huron and the LA/LB Seaport.



Peter C. Touhy
(Moderator)
Director, Miami CTPAT Field Office, Office of Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

As the Director of the Miami CTPAT Field Office, Mr. Touhy oversees the largest of the CTPAT offices and assumes responsibility for the daily activities and worldwide deployment of the 28 Supply Chain Security Specialists assigned to that office, whose primary goal is the security and facilitation of legitimate cargo into the United States. Mr. Touhy previously served as a Supply Chain Security Specialist from 2005 until 2018.

From 2002 to 2005, Mr. Touhy was stationed in Montreal, Canada, where he worked as a Customs and Border Protection Officer and member of the Passenger Analytical Unit (PAU), which specialized in the focused screening of passengers entering the United States from Canada.

From 1999 to 2002, Mr. Touhy worked as a member of the Contraband Enforcement Team (CET) at Port Everglades, Florida. This team was responsible for the detection and interdiction of narcotics, weapons, and various contraband concealed within containerized cargo and maritime vessels.

A graduate of Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, Mr. Touhy began his career with U.S. Customs in 1998 as an Inspector in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, working in both the air and sea environments, and performed duties relating to narcotics interdiction, manifest review, and vessel clearance.



Manuel A. Garza, Jr.
Director, CTPAT, Office of Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Manuel Garza is an alumni member of the University of Texas where he majored in Business Administration and minored in Criminal Justice. He began his federal career with U.S. Customs & Border Protection (U.S. Customs Service) in 2002 where his first assignment was working as a Customs Officer in Blaine, WA working on the Northern border. In 2006, he was transferred to Roma, TX as an Officer to work the Southern border.

In 2006, Manuel was selected to be the Team Lead for the new Container Security Initiative (CSI) port of Caucedo, Dominican Republic. While stationed in the DR, he was instrumental in assisting in the largest seizure of cocaine to date in both the CSI program and in the Dominican Republic. He was also responsible for the largest Intellectual Property Rights seizure in the DR – over 30 containers of fake Ralph Lauren Polo shirts. In 2007, Manuel accepted a position in Washington, DC to be a Supply Chain Security Specialist for the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) Office. He conducted 650 security site visits in over 60 counties.

Manuel was promoted in January 2011 to a Supervisory Supply Chain Security Specialist for the CTPAT Headquarters Office where he is was responsible for the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) with the European Union (EU), New Zealand, Jordan, Israel, and Mexico. Manuel also oversaw the progress on CBP's Joint Work Plans with Australia, and India.

In February 2015, Manuel became the Branch Chief of the CTPAT Plans and Operations Branch. He was instrumental in negotiating the exchange of near real time rail VACIS data images with Mexico Customs.

In April 2015, Manuel was asked to be Acting Director for the Manifest & Conveyance Security Division. He was responsible for the cargo enforcement policies, activities, and security efforts in all modes of transportation. He was responsible for compliance and policy oversight, ensuring the manifest and Trade Act requirements were met for all modes up to the point of arrival. Manuel also oversaw advanced data initiatives: Importer Security Filing (ISF), Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) and advance electronic data (AED) for the postal environment. He provided policy and operational guidance in the international mail and express consignment environments. Manuel became the permanent Director for the Manifest & Conveyance Security Division in November 2015. Manuel served as the CBP delegate on the Advisory Committee on International Postal and Deliver Services. He was also the CBP Office of Field Operations delegate on the Opioid Detection Challenge and a member of the judging panel. Working on this challenge was one of Manuel's highlights in his career. "Being able to lead the efforts of the nation to bring together a group of smart individuals to develop a system capable of detecting opioids while still in the package is truly an amazing feat". CBP has now partnered with the winner of the challenge and they will deliver several systems to locations throughout the U.S.

In December 2018, Manuel was asked to be the Acting Director for the CTPAT. In this role, Manuel directs a team of nearly 180 employees in six field offices to conduct supply chain security validations throughout the globe. He is responsible for the management of nearly 11,600 CTPAT participants including 309 Trade Compliance members and 366 Tier 3 members. He is also responsible for the policy of the program and the enforcement activities of CTPAT members to include suspension, removal, or conditional reinstatement.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Manuel has led his team to develop alternatives to the physical on-site validation process. In July 2020, CTPAT conducted its first virtual validation.

At the June 2019 CTPAT conference in San Antonio, Texas, Manuel was named the national Director for the CTPAT program. Manuel has been married to Joanne for 20 years and has two children, Seth 19yrs old and Kendall 16yrs old.



Mark Isaacson
Director, Buffalo CTPAT Field Office, Office of Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Mr. Isaacson has been employed with the U.S. Customs Service, now U.S. Customs, and Border Protection, for over 25 years. Mr. Isaacson has served in many roles during his tenure to include being an Inspector/Officer at the Port of JFK International Airport, primarily with the Passenger Enforcement Rover Team/Narcotics Interdiction unit from 1998-2003, where he was awarded a Unit Citation Award from the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs Service. Mr. Isaacson also volunteered his time to participate in the recovery efforts in the immediate aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center on 9/11 and was honored along with others who responded in a pre-opening event of the 9/11 memorial, hosted by then Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani and NY State Governor George Pataki. Mr. Isaacson also served as a Senior Officer at the Pre-Clearance Port of Montreal, Canada from 2003-2005 where he was then promoted to Supply Chain Specialist for the CTPAT program at JFK International Airport. In 2008, Mr. Isaacson was transferred to the newly established CTPAT Field Office in Buffalo, NY and was then promoted to Supervisor in 2009. Mr. Isaacson was named Acting Director of the Buffalo, NY CTPAT Field Office in 2015, and then Director in 2018, a position which he still holds today. Aside from his Director duties, Mr. Isaacson is also the CBP project lead on Mutual Recognition efforts with the countries of Canada and India, which includes continuous and ongoing negotiations and drafting of agreements acknowledging both countries' trusted trader program requirements and reciprocal partner benefits to further enhance supply chain security within a bi-lateral framework.

Mr. Isaacson is a three-time recipient of the Certificate of Merit from the Commissioner of CBP on behalf of the World Customs Organization in Brussels, Belgium for his accomplishments. Mr. Isaacson also hold a Bachelor's of Science degree in the field of Economics.



Carlos E. Ochoa
Branch Chief, Trade Engagement and Communications, OFO, CBP

Based in Washington D.C., Mr. Ochoa supports the CTPAT Program Director in CBP Headquarters in the management of the program at the National level. As a member of the CTPAT Headquarters management team, Mr. Ochoa served as the Branch Chief of the International Branch for a few years, leading the discussions that culminated in the Mutual Recognition Arrangements with the Customs Administrations of Korea, Japan, Singapore, the Dominican Republic, and the 28 Member States of the European Union. Mr. Ochoa also served as the Branch Chief of the CTPAT Plans and Operations Branch for over 4 years. In that capacity, he managed the enforcement processes that led to the removal of several Members from the program; wrote a series of CTPAT Alerts and Bulletins for the trade community on supply chain security matters; and responded to internal and external inquiries and reviews, including those from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Over the last 3 years, Mr. Ochoa led the Minimum Security Criteria Working Group, which was tasked with discussing CBP proposals designed to strengthen a Member's supply chain security posture. This was a major effort conducted in partnership with the private sector and under the umbrella of the Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC). This effort led to the updated minimum security criteria.

Mr. Ochoa has worked for the U.S. Government for over 25 years, starting his career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1995. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and History from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and a Master's degree in International Affairs from Georgetown University.



Carmen E. Perez
Branch Chief, Trade Compliance, Office of Field Operations
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Ms. Perez started her career with Customs and Border Protection in 2007. Currently she serves in the role of Branch Chief, Trade Compliance with the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) division in the Office of Field Operations (OFO). As Branch Chief, she is lead in the development and transition of the ISA program (Importer Self-Assessment) into CTPAT Trade Compliance as well as the development of standards and requirements for social compliance in regards to forced labor into the CTPAT program.

During her time at CBP she has held several positions in several offices such as the Office of the Commissioner where she served as a Special Advisor to the Commissioner as well as a trade consular. Prior to she served as the Program Manager for Outreach in the Office of Trade Relations where her primary focus was to serve as the liaison between industry and the Office of the Commissioner and other interagency offices. In 2014, Ms. Perez did an eleven-month detail to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as the Special Advisor to the Director where she assisted in the response to the unaccompanied minor (UAC) crisis and the developmental plans for women and children centers.