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PNWER Border Solutions Council Announces New Projects

(WHISTLER, B.C.) – The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region Border Solutions Council is proposing new pilot projects for the next round of the Canada – U.S. “Beyond the Border Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness Action Plan” which was launched by President Obama and Prime Minister Harper in December of 2011. The U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Bruce Heyman, and Canada’s Ambassador to the U.S., Gary Doer, were briefed on the proposals in connection with their attendance and keynote speeches at the 2014 PNWER Annual Summit.

These proposals include: a NEXUS Plus program for streamlining legitimate business travel at the border; a proposal to streamline trusted trader trucks at the truck crossings; a proposal to facilitate processing of US and Canadian visas for a ‘two nation vacation’; a pilot to address cross-border business clusters and how border processes can be expedited for low risk business travel; a trusted employer pilot; and a pilot to place RFID passport cards in the hands of frequent crossers.

PNWER has been at the forefront of providing input on Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Barack Obama’s Beyond the Border and RCC Action Plans since its inception in 2011. Prior to the action plans’ inception in December 2011, PNWER working groups had been instrumental in providing regional input for these action plans, which are the cornerstone of North America’s economic competitiveness and security strategy. The joint action plans are designed to simplify the process for each country’s citizens to travel and do business across the border.

“This Region is known for our collaborative and innovative ingenuity,” said Matt Morrison, PNWER Executive Director. “We must continue to improve border management to enhance the Region’s competitiveness in the global marketplace. Our economic watersheds flow north and south in the region, and we need a smart, 21st Century border management system, that recognizes the demands of our vibrant cross-border economy.”

“Our shared border is the economic bridge linking the largest 2-way trading relationship in the world,” said Don Alper, Director of the Border Policy Institute. “We’ve got to get the border right and PNWER has been leading this effort.”

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ABOUT THE PNWER SUMMIT

Over 500 state and provincial legislators, business and civic leaders, and local government organizations are meeting this week in Whistler, BC for the 24th Annual PNWER Summit. Working Sessions will focus on topics including: LNG Exports, Energy and Environment, Invasive Species, Agriculture, Innovation, Trade and Economic Development, Mining, Tourism, Water Policy, and Workforce Development. A special session will feature the U.S. Ambassador to Canada and the Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. on the Canada-U.S. Border. Another special session will bring together state, provincial, local, and federal jurisdictions from both nations to examine the Columbia River Treaty. For the detailed agenda, go to: <http://www.pnwer.org/2014summit.html>

ABOUT PNWER

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public/private non-profit created by statute in 1991. Member jurisdictions include Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington, and the Canadian provinces and territories of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon. PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region; identify and promote "models of success;" and serve as a conduit to exchange information.