



COMMERCE NEWS

U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

Office of the Secretary
www.commerce.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

News Media Contact:
Office of Public Affairs, 202-482-4883

U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE PENNY PRITZKER TO VISIT HOUSTON "COMMUNITIES THAT WORK PARTNERSHIP" SITE

WASHINGTON – On Thursday, April 7, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker will travel to Houston, Texas to visit her first Communities that Work Partnership site. The Communities that Work Partnership was launched in 2015 with the Aspen Institute, and is a signature initiative of the Commerce Department's Skills for Business Agenda. Seven metro regions were chosen to take part in this national program, which aims to strengthen regional economies by equipping American workers with the skills needed for 21st century jobs and accelerating industry-led workforce development and training efforts.

The Houston economy has been a focus of global attention because of the effects of low energy prices on the region's energy industry. A key bright spot, however, is Houston's petrochemical sector. With more than \$30 billion in major petrochemical facilities due for completion in the next three-to-four years along the Gulf Coast, there is intense demand for qualified workers for the construction and operation of new plants.

During her visit, Secretary Pritzker will meet the Houston Communities that Work Partnership stakeholders to learn how the petrochemical manufacturing industry in coordination with the Greater Houston Partnership, local community colleges, workforce boards, and economic development organizations have developed a comprehensive workforce partnership to create career paths for workers, fill employers' job openings, and grow the local economy.

Secretary Pritzker will tour the training center at LyondellBasell, one of the world's largest chemical companies. LyondellBasell has developed and implemented a model workforce development program in conjunction with *UpSkill Houston*. She will also meet with new employees who successfully completed local two-year education programs to prepare them for careers in the petrochemical industry.

The Greater Houston Partnership, Houston's leading business organization, launched the *UpSkill Houston* initiative in 2013 to bridge the region's skills gap in a number of sectors including petrochemicals. This initiative aims to bring together industry leaders, local community college partners, and area high schools to ensure that local workers have the skills needed to succeed in Houston's thriving petrochemical sector.

Your coverage is invited.

WHO: U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker
Gina Luna, Chair of *UpSkill Houston*
Bob Harvey, President and CEO of Greater Houston Partnership
Dr. Brenda Hellyer, Chancellor of San Jacinto College
Dr. Dennis Brown, President of Lee College
Dr. Beth Lewis, President of College of the Mainland
Mike Temple, Executive Director of Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions
Jackie Wolf, Senior Vice President for Human Resources, LyondellBasell
Todd Monette, Site Manager, Channelview Chemical Complex, LyondellBasell

WHAT: Tour of LyondellBasell Houston Training Facility

WHEN: Thursday, April 7, 2016
Event begins at 11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Media should arrive at 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: LyondellBasell Industries
202 North Castlegory Road
Houston, TX 77049

RSVP: Members of the press wishing to attend must RSVP to publicaffairs@doc.gov.

###