



## Update February 08

### Business Opportunities

#### **Brazil**

**Industry:** Toys

The toy industry is changing its focus, based on the perception that children are becoming adults earlier. The Brazilian toy manufacturer Estrela is focusing on first childhood. Children have access to information and know what they want. The design and development of new toys to this niche market has been growing at Estrela. Sales on this segment grew 30% this year and it is expected that it will be the largest revenue of the company in 2007.

For more information, please click [here](#)

#### **Mexico**

**Industry:** Energy

Six companies, Electricidad del Valle de México, Eoliatic del Istmo, Bii Nee Stipa Energía Eólica, Fuerza Eólica del Istmo, Eurus, part of Cemex and Parques Ecológicos de México, part of Iberdrola, have subscribed agreements with Comision Federal de Electricidad (CFE) to pay for the required transmission infrastructure to interconnect to the national grid. This first stage will generate 163 mW and progressively allow for 1,492 mW that should be ready by 2010. The investment could exceed USD 4,200 Million, all for wind energy generation.

For more information, please click [here](#)

#### **Mexico**

**Industry:** Government Procurement

In Q/A format, this document briefly describes some characteristics regarding Mexican government procurement. In addition, it presents a summary of government procurement regulations and steps that

interested U.S. bidders need to follow in order to participate in government tenders.

This document also reviews the interface between Mexican government procurement regulations and NAFTA, including, advice for U.S. exporters.

For more information, please click [here](#)

#### **Venezuela**

**Industry:** Medical Equipment

Venezuela is an excellent market for imported medical equipment since there is no domestic production. This report covers medical/surgical equipment used for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes by individual physicians and hospitals or clinics but will not cover support equipment and utensils for hospitals, such as furniture, sterilizing equipment and autoclaves, and most disposable or consumable products.

For more information, please click [here](#)

#### **Venezuela**

**Industry:** Export Guide for U.S. Companies

This small guide was developed by the Foreign Commercial Service office at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, the capital of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and is based on the status and conditions existing at the time of its writing. This is mentioned because rules, laws, regulations and practices are subject to changes, often without prior notice, and should be confirmed by a customer when orders have been received. Final costs to the exporter rarely change but changes might result in delays in receiving payment or in the final costs to the importer. Some of the recommendations included in this guide therefore should be applied or included in planning.

For more information, please click [here](#)

## Trade Events

### **Brazil**

**Industry:** Electronics

The Electronic Americas Fair is an international fair for Components, Equipment for Component Manufacturing, Laser Technology and Optical-electronic Industry, is the most established Electronic Components event. The biannual fair is scheduled for April 2009. Parallel to this event, U.S. companies can take advantage of visiting FIEE Eletrica: the International Electrical, Energy and Automation Industry Trade Fair.

For more information, please click [here](#)

### **Guatemala**

**Industry:** Furniture

PROMUEBLE\* it is the largest furniture manufacturing, woodworking, and forestry show in Central America. It will be held in Guatemala on May 6-8, 2000. \* \*Mueble is the Spanish word for a piece of furniture.

For information on how the Commercial Service in Guatemala can showcase your products at this show, please click [here](#)

### **Mexico**

**Industry:** Building and Infrastructure

The U.S. Commercial Service in Mexico and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) are co-sponsoring the "**U.S. and Mexico: Building Partnerships in Infrastructure**" conference to be held in Mexico City, Mexico on February 26-28, 2008. The catalyst for this event is Mexican President Calderon's launch of the National Infrastructure Program (NIP), aimed to increase investment in infrastructure from 3% to 8% of GDP by 2012. The NIP highlights more than 300 infrastructure projects, primarily in the transportation, energy, and environmental sectors, and outlines goals and strategies to increase the coverage, quality and competitiveness of Mexico's infrastructure. USCS and USTDA are hosting the event to facilitate U.S. – Mexican business partnerships in infrastructure.

The agenda includes Mexican project delegate presentations on project opportunities as well as many networking and prescheduled one-on-one meeting opportunities between U.S. companies, Mexican project delegates, Mexican companies, and U.S. government officials. Senior U.S. and Mexican officials

will be participating, including the U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez.

This Conference represents the best opportunity in 2008 for U.S. companies who are seriously interested in pursuing the real business opportunities represented by projects under the NIP.

For more information on the conference, please click [here](#)

## News

### **Colombia: Colombia Central Bank Raises Rates to Stem Inflation**

(Bloomberg) Feb.22 - Colombia's central bank unexpectedly raised its benchmark lending rate by a quarter percentage point in a bid to tame accelerating inflation.

For more information, please click [here](#)

### **Cuba: Fidel Castro steps down**

(Reuters) Feb.22 - Cuba's National Assembly is widely expected to name Raul Castro as head of state on following Fidel Castro's announcement on Tuesday (Feb.19) that he is retiring. The following is an outline of Cuba's one-party communist system.

For more information, please click [here](#)

## Trade Leads

The Trade Americas Trade Leads Database contains pre-screened, time-sensitive leads and foreign government tenders gathered through U.S. Commercial Service offices around the region.

Make the most of these opportunities!

To search trade leads, please click [here](#)

## Useful Website

### [U.S. Passport Card](#)

As of February 1, 2008 U.S. citizens could apply for the new U.S. Passport Card. The passport card will facilitate entry and expedite document processing at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The card may not be used to travel by air. The card will be less expensive and more portable than the traditional passport book.