

BY DAVID BASMAJIAN

It's Official



The month of July was an extremely productive month for the USA Pavilion team. On July 1, Jose H. Villarreal was appointed U.S. Commissioner General to the World Expo 2010 by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. On July 10, Commissioner General Villarreal ended months of speculation that the U.S. might not participate when he signed the official World Expo Shanghai 2010 Participation Agreement at the Shanghai Expo Bureau.

On July 17, the USA Pavilion team held a formal groundbreaking ceremony at the Pavilion site in Pudong. Joining Commissioner General Villarreal and other members of the USA Pavilion team at the ceremony were U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Ma Xiuhong, Shanghai Vice Mayor Yang Xiong, U.S. Consul General Beatrice Camp, and Deputy Chief of Shanghai World Expo Coordination Bureau Huang Jianzhi.

As Commissioner General, Villarreal is responsible for oversight of the USA Pavilion at

Expo 2010 and he will also serve as the official U.S. government representative to the Chinese government on issues relating to the World Expo. As a senior advisor to the law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, Villarreal has a distinguished background in law, business and non-governmental sectors.

Insight recently sat down with the Commissioner General to get his thoughts on the USA Pavilion and the World Expo.

First, the most important question: Will we have a completed USA Pavilion in time for the opening of the Expo on May 1, 2010?

Jose Villarreal: It is going to take a lot of work by a lot of different people, but I am completely confident that we will have a USA Pavilion in time for the May 1 opening.

Tell us about the vision and mission of the USA Pavilion. What is the most significant message the USA Pavilion wants to convey to its visitors, in particular the Chinese?

U.S. Commissioner General to the World Expo 2010 Jose Villarreal shares his view on the progress of the USA Pavilion and the U.S. role at the Expo.



The Shanghai Expo is an opportunity to foster stronger friendships between the American and Chinese peoples.”

We really see this as an opportunity to introduce a large Chinese audience to some of the best things about America. This includes America’s technological know-how, its creativity and openness. The Pavilion will also highlight the role that immigrants have played in contributing to American society – in particular the role of Chinese Americans. We think we will have a pavilion that will be an enormous draw for the audiences that come to the Expo and will be particularly popular with Chinese visitors.

How does the USA Pavilion fit into the theme of “Better City, Better Life”?

JV: The four core themes of the Pavilion are sustainable development, health, teamwork, and the Chinese community in America. I think each of those pillars contributes to the goal of positive urban development. Clearly, protecting the natural environment in which our cities are located is paramount. The U.S. has a great deal to offer in this area, and frankly much of it has been discovered through trial and error.

Our air and water had tremendous problems in the second half of the 20th century, but the environmental movement succeeded in making environmental protection a top priority that everyone now buys into, including the corporate sector, the government, the media, and the education system so that American kids start becoming environmentally aware very early. Our Pavilion will communicate the value that Americans place on the environment, and it will share our world-class, cutting-edge technology related to energy efficiency and pollution reduction.

Our diverse culture exemplified by the Chinese-American community is also an important element to a vibrant city life, and that’s also an area where we’ll have something attractive to offer. With any luck, we’ll feature a bit of the large Latino community in America also!

No matter whether you call us the “melting pot” or the “salad bowl,” America remains one of the most diverse countries on earth, and it is only becoming more so. Our global mix within our own urban populations has naturally created outstanding contributions to world culture that we

plan to feature at the Pavilion – from blues to jazz to hip-hop and much more.

Why is having a U.S. presence at the Shanghai Expo 2010 so critical? What does having a U.S. presence mean for U.S.-China relations and for U.S. businesses in China?

JV: As Secretary Clinton has said, the Shanghai Expo is an opportunity to foster stronger friendships between the American and Chinese peoples and demonstrates our commitment to a forward-looking, positive relationship with China.

In particular, I see it as a great opportunity to build on people-to-people ties, and to tell the story of today’s America through our own words, visuals, performances, and exhibits. Having the chance to speak directly to the estimated 60 million Chinese visitors and to the millions coming from elsewhere around the world is a tremendous opportunity and a chance to introduce the U.S. to them in a way that they might not otherwise have.

In terms of business, I’m also a firm believer that what is good for ties between our two countries is good for business as well. The USA Pavilion will be an outstanding platform for six months next year – that’s 10 times longer than the Beijing Olympics – to promote U.S. exports and brands to visitors from all over this massive country.

Why should U.S. companies sponsor the USA Pavilion at a time when many companies are facing serious economic challenges at home and abroad?

JV: I think many U.S. companies recognize the importance of having a strong and attractive USA Pavilion – so that by itself has been a motivating factor for many companies. Additionally, I think many companies have realized that we are going to have a pavilion, it’s going to be a very successful one, and it’s the kind of endeavor that people want to be associated with. And, obviously, there are some benefits to having your name as a sponsor on something that will have 70 million visitors.

How are fundraising efforts currently going? What challenges have you had?

JV: Fundraising has been going very well

USA Pavilion Official Partners and Sponsors

Pepsico, Inc.
General Electric
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Golden Eagle International Group
Yum! Brands, Inc.
Dell (China) Co., Ltd.
Microsoft Corp.
The Boeing Co.
Committee of 100
Intel Semiconductor, Ltd.
Panasonic Corp. of North America
3M China Co., Ltd.
Cargill
Corning, Inc.
NYSE Euronext
The Executive Centre Hong Kong, Ltd.
USA-China Education Science & Culture Association

lately, but we're not done yet. We are now a little over halfway to our US\$61 million target, but that leaves us with some more room for new corporate sponsors to join this winning team that we are forming. I attribute our recent successes to Secretary Clinton's leadership, the persistent efforts of our determined USA Pavilion team led by Nick Winslow and Ellen Eliasoph, and a growing awareness among major U.S. corporations that the USA Pavilion is indeed a fantastic platform for their World Expo participation.

No doubt about it, fundraising was rocky at times in the past, but we really have seen a sea change recently. We are now in the middle of very serious discussions with a significant number of additional sponsors. We've had a series of announcements of new sponsors recently, and I have every reason to expect that to continue.

The USA Pavilion broke ground on July 17. There were some that thought it wouldn't happen. How did you do it and what comes next?

JV: I was appointed Commissioner General on July 1, so while I am aware of some of the natural anxiety about whether we would have a Pavilion, I have been fortunate enough to join the effort just as the train finally picked up speed. This is a big project and whenever you take on a big project, you have people who say it can't be done or it could be done better in a different way.

I recognize that there were many people who generally had the best of intentions in their hearts and, as Americans, were worried about whether America would have a presence. That doubt is now gone. Going forward, I want to look at ways of recruiting the efforts and positive energies of all these people to make our Pavilion a success.

When Secretary Clinton asked me to serve as Commissioner General, I could see that she was very serious about participating. I never had any doubt that we would take part. At the time that she asked me to take this on, our fundraising was also really taking off, and we had reached a point where the time was right to sign the participation agreement and proceed with the groundbreaking.

We held our groundbreaking 288 days before the Expo was due to start. We didn't plan that to

happen, but I don't mind at all if this does indeed turn out to be a lucky omen. The next steps are to continue with the fundraising and to roll up our sleeves and put together a really outstanding USA Pavilion that will make the American people proud.

What are your primary responsibilities as Commissioner General to the 2010 Expo and what is the most important part of your job?

JV: I will head the United States' participation in the Expo and I am responsible for government oversight of the USA Pavilion. In addition, I am the U.S. Government representative to the Government of China on issues relating to World Expo Shanghai 2010.

I realize that the USA Pavilion at the largest World Expo in history has many stakeholders. Acting on behalf of Secretary Clinton, I will try my best to be responsive to all at the same time that I provide guidance and support, as necessary, to the entire USA Pavilion team. My mission is clear: lead the team down the stretch to mount an excellent USA National Pavilion.

Why did you decide to accept the position as Commissioner General?


JV: I accepted because the Secretary of State thinks the American national presence at the Expo is very important and because she asked me to do it. I see it as a real honor and as an opportunity to

Secretary Clinton and Commissioner General Villarreal pose with Haibao in Washington, D.C.



What role has Secretary Clinton played in establishing a U.S. presence at the 2010 Expo? What kind of role will she continue to play?

JV: Well, first of all, Secretary Clinton is personally committed to the project – she understands the significance of our participation in the Expo, which is very important. I'd say that her involvement has brought the effort a lot of attention. Just one small point to illustrate this is the photo of her holding "Haibao" in her State Department office. She keeps it in her office suite, and she wrote me a letter saying that she and Haibao "are awaiting regular reports of my progress."

She sees the USA Pavilion as a major project that we should all have some fun with at the same time that we work toward achieving our goal to represent America well for 184 days to 70 million people next year. In terms of her future role, I think that still remains to be seen, but I can tell you that she'll remain active in our effort. 

work on something that is interesting, fun and is also good for my country and good for our bilateral relationship with China. The fact that Secretary Clinton is an old friend of mine also made it an easy call for me. On a personal note, my daughter has been living and working in China for a year and a half. She is thriving in Shanghai, a city that she has quickly come to love, and I am delighted to be able to share the Shanghai experience with her.

Discover a heritage of trust.



Oakwood Residence Hangzhou, in the lakeside city of Hangzhou, this 166 serviced apartments hearth, houses a kaleidoscope of amenities, facilities and activities to luxuriously inspire any leisure or business traveler and family.

One bedroom spacious fully furnished and equipped apartment suite from only 980RMB* short stay or 587RMB per night for long stay. Do not compromise with just a typical hotel room.

Short stay added value

- ✓ Buffet breakfast (maximum for 2 persons)
- ✓ Late check out at 16:00Hrs at no extra cost
- ✓ Free use of internet
- ✓ 10% discount off on Food and Beverage consumptions

Long stay extra added value (1 month and above)

- ✓ 1 free weekend at an Oakwood property in China (conditions apply)
- ✓ One way airport transfer
- ✓ Hamper on arrival

For reservations or enquiries, please visit our website Oakwood.com, Call (86-571) 8899 3131 or email reserve.reshangzhou@oakwoodasia.com

OPENNING SOON - OAKWOOD RESIDENCE INTERNATIONAL PLAZA SHANGHAI

*Terms and conditions apply. Valid from October 1 to December 31, 2009.



The Most Trusted Name in Serviced Apartments Worldwide.™

BANGALORE BANGKOK BEIJING CHICAGO GUANGZHOU HANGZHOU JAKARTA LONDON LOS ANGELES MANILA MUMBAI PUNE NEW YORK SAN FRANCISCO SEOUL TOKYO AND MORE

oakwood.com



Oakwood.
RESIDENCE
Hangzhou