



Lighthizer to be named USTR, Renew Membership, TET Holidays

FEATURES



Jan 16 Ambassador Osius: Vietnam-U.S. Relations in 2017

Ambassador Osius will share highlights of the past year and the outlook for Vietnam-U.S. relations in 2017. Following the momentous events of 2016, including the Presidential Visit in May and the U.S. General Election in November, and looking forward to APEC 2017 in Vietnam, as well as the 50th anniversary of ASEAN, what can we expect about Vietnam-U.S. relations, especially trade and investment relations?



Lighthizer to be nominated as U.S. Trade Representative

Lighthizer has experience in government and in trade policy. In the 1980s, he served as chief of staff on the Senate Finance Committee and as the deputy US trade representative under Reagan. He has deep roots in the Republican establishment, having served as national treasurer for former Senate majority leader Robert J. Dole's 1996 presidential campaign. In 2011, as Trump was considering a potential run for president, Lighthizer wrote an op-ed defending Trump's criticism of free trade and China. He asked, "How does allowing China to constantly rig trade in its favor advance the goal of making markets more efficient?"



New Congress will focus on domestic issues, Cabinet confirmations

Congressional Republicans plan quick action on several of their top priorities - most notably a measure to clear a path for the Affordable Care Act's repeal. Perhaps the first thing that will happen in the new Congress is the push for deregulation. Also up early: filling a long-vacant Supreme Court seat, which is sure to set off a pitched showdown, and starting confirmation hearings for Mr. Trump's cabinet nominees.

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TET Lunar New Year, 2017 . Jan 26 - Feb 1 - Seven Days

Traditionally, there are several main days of celebration: Tết Lunar New Year's Eve (Jan 27), and The First (Jan 28), Second (Jan 29), and Third (Jan 30), Fourth (Jan 31), and Fifth (Feb 1) of Tết Nguyen Đán. Vietnamese traditionally celebrate Tết from the fifteenth day of the twelfth lunar month to the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. And, even today, business slows two weeks before and two weeks after TET. The official 2017 TET Holidays in Vietnam are from Thu, Jan 26 to Wed, Feb 1 inclusive.

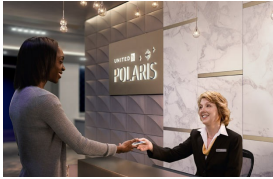


Renew membership. Update your 2017 Membership Directory profile - DEADLINE: January 25, 2017

Renew your membership NOW and have your company profile updated in 2017 Membership Directory **no later than January 25, 2017.**

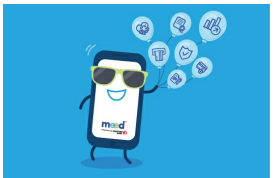
We still have some advertising slots available. Contact [Cindy Tran](#) for more details and booking.

Events, Meetings, Special Offers



Introducing United Polaris, the redesigned International Business Class, en route this December

United is proud to announce our exciting and revolutionary new business class experience, redesigned from Ahh to Zzz. Named after the North Star, the brilliant point in the nighttime sky, United Polaris is the shining star of business class that flyers look to and can depend on for true comfort and a sleep experience like no other. (On behalf of ANA & United Viet Nam)



Enjoy the Meed special offer with 1 million VND for each converted user

Dear Amcham Members,

Following on our previous email, we would like to provide more information about the Meed service. The Meed package includes an affordable, differentiating and comprehensive suite of financial services designed to meet the banking needs of digitally savvy consumers through a convenient mobile-first platform. Our package includes a Demand Deposit Account, Long Term Savings Account, Secured Credit Line, International Debit MasterCard, Real-Time P2P, complimentary Life Insurance and access to SocialBoost, our unique bank funded rewards program.



Jan 10 BEPS Decree: Addressing Transfer Pricing and Business Structuring

The year 2016 marks a major watershed in the state of affairs related to transfer pricing in Vietnam, with a visible upcoming tax reform announced by Ministry of Finance (MOF) to introduce regulatory changes to tackle Base Erosion Profit Shifting (BEPS) practices in connection with multinationals' transactions and their transfer pricing.



Jan 17 AmCham's Spring Blood Donor Day 2017

Tet Holiday is a time of giving and spreading happiness. Yet it is also a challenging time for organizing voluntary blood donation activities in Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh City. As the major groups of faithful blood donors, white-collar workers and students from universities, are leaving for Tet holidays, the supply of blood products has decreased considerably.



Feb 22 Walmart - VTFA Women Owned Business Supplier Development

The event will contribute to your understanding of the requirements for companies to join Walmart's global supply chains, and help to increase the number of Vietnam companies that integrate into the global economy. Followed the briefing will be face-to-face appointments with Walmart's representatives.

2017 AmCham Discount Program



The AmCham Discount Program is a mutually beneficial opportunity for both Discount Partners and AmCham Members who are representatives of companies doing business and living in Vietnam.

By offering AmCham Members special discounts on services or products, Discount Partners can enjoy marketing opportunities through listing freely and/or placing an advertisement on the [Discount Handbook](#) & [Online](#).

We are preparing for AmCham Discount Handbook 2017 which will be published and sent to Members in early January, please find out Advertising Rates at [AD Handbook](#) / [AD Online](#). Please contact [Ms. Sam Hoang](#) for full information.

JOIN US: Become a Member of AmCham Vietnam - HCMC

***NEW OFFER:** Application fee will be waived for companies having a D-U-N-S® number.

Expand your business by joining us! We currently have almost 500 organizations represented by 1,000 representatives. They are multinational firms, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs. **Benefits include:** Networking, Information-Sharing, Advocacy and Problem Solving, visibility and Corporate Exposure.

Contact [Ms. Sam Hoang](#) for joining or additional information on membership.



Marketing Opportunities with AmCham HCMC

AmCham HCMC offers many opportunities to market your company's products and services to AmCham members, the business community and the general public. Our services include:

- Event Sponsorship
- Event Management Support
- Network (Advertise) on www.amchamvietnam.com: 720K views/yr; 360K visitors/yr (avg. 60K / 30K views/visitors per month) and **11.0K twitter followers**, 9.5K facebook fans (and 60K+ views/month) 5.7k LinkedIn followers.
- Announcement in Weekly Email: 4.8k AmCham company representatives and subscribers.

AmCham Companies are offered 3 complimentary announcements a year.

- Print advertising in AmCham Membership Directory
- Print advertising in AmCham Membership Discount Handbook
- Advertising on AmCham Discount Online



AmCham Corporate Partnership Packages

The Corporate Partnership comes with a range of membership dues, event sponsorship, advertising, and exclusive benefits. One all-inclusive Corporate Partnership annual, semi-annual, or quarterly billing simplifies your businesses' sponsorship efforts. Benefits in each Partnership Package include:

- Logo on "Corporate Partners" banner on AmCham website homepage
- Logo on "Corporate Partners" banner in Weekly Update Email
- Company profile on the "Corporate Partnership" page on AmCham website
- Corporate profile on screen during cocktail reception at Members' Nights
- Special recognition/Thank You Page in Membership Directory
- Special recognition at all business events' backdrop/banner
- Special recognition in all email signatures

For full information on benefits of each package, please click [HERE](#) or contact [Cindy Tran](#).



News and Issues



"The U.S. is not changing China's status as a non-market economy"

a senior U.S. administration official said in an interview. "China's protocol of accession to the WTO doesn't require the U.S. or any other WTO member to automatically grant China market-economy status after December 11, 2016." China contends Washington and other members of the World Trade Organization should grant it market-economy status on Sunday, the 15th-anniversary of its WTO accession, under the terms of its joining the group.

Vietnam visitor visas for U.S. citizens - price confusion



What is the cost of a Vietnam visa? It varies. The Vietnam Embassy's website (www.vietnamembassy.us) doesn't list prices. It simply directs people to an email address and a phone number with multiple extensions. The Vietnamese government allows some businesses and travel agencies to arrange for preapproval for a "visa on arrival" at the airport, but the State Department warns that some U.S. citizens have reported being charged unexpectedly high fees upon landing in Vietnam. It recommends that travelers get a visa directly from an embassy or consulate of Vietnam prior to arrival.

Election Results, Annual General Meeting 2016



The 2017 Board of Governors of AmCham Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City) will have 18 Governors. Nine governors were elected in on-line secure voting between Nov 21 and the Annual General Meeting on Dec 13, 2016 to a two-year term January 2017 - December 2018.

FedEx CEO suggests revised TPP, with improvements



in a speech in Washington on Dec 9. There are two important takeaways from the speech. (1) it shows that the corporate establishment is going to take a hardline on issues like NAFTA. Smith made a vigorous defense of the TPP agreement. (2) Republican members of the House voted 190 to 50 in June 2016 to give the President "Trade Promotion Authority" for TPP, which shows that free trade deals are popular with Republicans. With Democrats out of power in Washington, and Trump's administration increasingly staffed by establishment figures, the President-elect could have a lonely fight on his hands if he attempts to dismantle the free-trade status quo.

World Bank: Structural reforms remain critical to Vietnam's growth



Thanks to robust domestic demand and export-oriented manufacturing, Vietnam's medium-term outlook remains favorable, with GDP expected to expand by 6% this year. Vietnam's growth was accompanied by low inflation and widening current account surplus. Risks that could adversely affect medium term prospects include perennial delays in implementation of structural and fiscal reforms.

TPP is not dead: Sen. Orrin Hatch, Rep. Kevin Brady, Rep. Dave Reichert



President-elect Trump said he would withdraw from TPP on his first day in office. Japan's PM Abe said the TPP would be meaningless without U.S. participation. House Ways & Means Chairman Kevin Brady, Trade Subcommittee Chairman Dave Reichert, and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch say TPP is still possible. Asked how he plans to persuade Trump to reconsider his stance on the Asia-Pacific deal, Hatch said, "well, I'm fairly persuasive sometimes."

Vietnam's 2017 Minimum Wage Decree



Vietnam's Minimum Wage Adjustment for 2017, the fourth since the establishment of the National Wage Council under the revised Labour Code of 2012, is an average increase of 7.3%, down from 12.5% in 2016. It was announced in Decree 153/2016/NĐ-CP, 14/11/2016, and will go into effect on Jan 1, 2017. One difficulty: enterprises' expenditures will increase sharply, because they not only must adjust monthly salary for their workers but also must increase their contribution to social insurance. At the present, total social insurance takes up 32% of monthly salary, of which employers must pay 22%.

After the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a perspective from Vietnam



President Obama has announced that he will no longer seek passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in Congress, leaving the fate of the treaty in the hands of President-elect Trump and the Congressional Republican leadership.

This matters for two reasons. First, within a decade, four of the five largest economies of the world will border the Pacific Ocean. The United States will be able to continue its global leadership role only if it retains an integral, active presence in the Pacific. Second, if the United States retreats from the region, as a defeat of TPP in Congress would surely signal, an emboldened China will ever more aggressively seek to displace America.

Vietnam to apply extensive area code changes in 2017



Area code changes in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Dong Nai, Binh Duong, and a number of other provinces will take place on June 17, 2017. The new area codes will be applied for 59 cities and provinces in three phases, from February 11 to June 17, with steps taken to ensure the change will not confuse the public, the Ministry of Information and Communications announced. But there are other concerns, such as the need to reprint packaging or business cards once numbers are changed, costing quite a sum.

Weekly Updates Archive 2006 - 2015



Launched in August 2006 to answer many questions about Vietnam's accession to the WTO, the Weekly Update Emails provide news updates, upcoming events, explanations of details of trade and investment agreements, developments in laws and regulations affecting the business environment in Vietnam. Click the link for to visit the archives and look back over the years. Links to more than 10,000 documents providing background on a wide variety of topics, from Vietnam's WTO Accession in 2006-2007, revision of the Labour Code in 2008-2012, to the TransPacific Partnership and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement from 2013 and ongoing.

Prime Minister's Certificates of Merit awarded to AmCham Vietnam - HCMC



At AmCham's 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner on September 18, 2014, Vice Chairman of HCMC People's Committee Le Thanh Liem handed the Prime Minister's Certificates of Merit to AmCham Vietnam - HCM City and to Mr. Herb Cochran, Executive Director for their excellent performance in supporting and promoting trade and investment in Ho Chi Minh City and Vietnam.

Diamond



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Sponsors

Gold



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