

**Ambassador James R. Jones-November 7, 2006**

**“A Defining Moment for Mexico”**

Sponsored by the Haskell Company, Ambassador James Jones made a swift, and effective, trip into Jacksonville on November 6 to address the Global Business Luncheon at the River Club. He was appointed to the Mexican Ambassadorship by President Clinton and served from 1993 to 1997.

He noted that a great deal has changed since his Ambassadorship, and overall he regards most of the changes as favorable. The recent resolution concerning the last Mexican Presidential election has been extremely important to the stability of the country, and he is guardedly optimistic that the major political issues will be resolved in spite of the post election disagreements between the candidates.

During his tenure in Mexico the illegal immigration problem was not yet a hot issue. Ambassador Jones made a strong point that this immigration dilemma has occurred because a significant percentage of the Mexican population has not been able achieve an adequate income level, and the Mexican government has done little to help. One option open to the general population has been to immigrate to the U.S., and the Mexican government has seemingly encouraged this effort. Ambassador Jones does not favor the 700 mile wall proposition. He believes a better solution would be a temporary work permit that could evolve into citizenship. He expressed that all immigrants in our country, legal or otherwise, should be required to learn and use the English language.

Ambassador Jones is very optimistic about the economic future of Mexico if the current trends continue. More and more foreign businesses are seeking access to Mexico, and more and more Americans are seeking retirement there. This continued economic development will help improve earning opportunities and living conditions for the working class.

-John Tait

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