

Texas Ahead



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2008 | Issue 10

“There’s a large opportunity for us in Texas”



Lorenzo Marquez
Director of Marketing
Cosentino USA

Spanish affiliate thrives in the Lone Star State

The small town of Stafford, Texas, is home to the North American operations of Spanish company Cosentino, the largest manufacturer of natural quartz surfaces in the world. Cosentino’s business covers the entire process of producing natural stone products, including quarrying, extracting, fabricating and installing surfaces such as kitchen and bathroom countertops and flooring.

Based in Almeria, Spain, Cosentino employs 2,000 workers worldwide, owns 16 marble and quartz quarries and 19 manufacturing workshops and runs warehouses in 15 cities throughout Spain.

Cosentino established Cosentino North America in 1998 to distribute and market its Silestone surfaces throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The company’s North American headquarters employs 80 at the corporate office in Stafford and 900 nationally. It also operates warehouses in 11 U.S. cities.

Before he helped found Cosentino USA in 1998, president Robert Contreras Jr.

Texas and Spain: Prime Trading Partners

Texas is a major and increasingly important trading partner with Spain.

- Texas has led the U.S. in exports for six years. According to the World Institute for Strategic Economic Research, Texas exported \$168.2 billion worth of goods in 2007; California was a distant second among states, with \$134.2 billion in exports.
- The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas reports that nearly 15 percent of Texas’ economic output is related to exports. That’s nearly twice as big a share as for the U.S. as a whole.
- In 2007, Texas ranked second in the U.S. for exports to Spain, behind California.
- Annual Texas exports to Spain have risen by 178.6 percent in the last five years, from \$347.8 million in 2002 to \$969.2 million in 2007. And exports to Spain have surged strongly in recent months, rising by nearly 51 percent in 2007 alone.
- In 2007, petroleum products were Texas’ most common export to Spain, followed closely by chemicals and various agricultural products.
- In Texas, international trade is not the sole province of large companies. According to the U.S. International Trade Administration, 92 percent of 21,983 Texas companies that exported goods in 2006 were small or medium-sized businesses (those with fewer than 500 employees). These companies accounted for 27 percent of the state’s exports in that year.
- Texas is also a major market for Spanish exports. The state imported more than \$1.2 billion in Spanish products in 2007.
- Texas is a major center for European investment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Texas led all other U.S. states for European Union (EU) investments in commercial property in 2005, at \$51.2 billion or about 8.2 percent of the U.S. total. California was a distant second at \$39.0 billion.

owned a marble and granite fabrication facility in Houston. He began fabricating quartz countertops with materials from Cosentino and, in 1998, helped form Cosentino USA to bring the company's product to the U.S.

Texas is a strategic location for the company's U.S. operations, says Lorenzo Marquez, director of marketing for Cosentino USA.

"Being close to the Port of Houston has certainly been an advantage to us," Marquez says. "There's a large residential market opportunity for us in Texas. From a fabrication standpoint, the concentration of market opportunity is huge. Housing costs are typically a little lower when compared to the rest of the U.S. and people have more disposable income to upgrade their homes."

Its home base in Spain gives Cosentino direct access to vast sources of natural stone and to European fashion trends, Marquez says.

"We're centered in the 'capital of marble' in Spain," he says. "We're very much connected to the natural stone environment from a sourcing standpoint. From a design point, we constantly strive on having products that are revolutionary. A lot of our designs trends come from the European market, and being in Spain gives us that ability."



Find more economic development resources for your Texas enterprise at www.TexasAhead.org or window.state.tx.us/texasedge for detailed economic data.

- Texas ranks third among states for employment with U.S. affiliates of EU companies, behind California and New York. EU-affiliated firms employed about 199,500 Texans in 2005.
- Major Spanish investors in Texas include Caixanova, Grifols, BBVA Group, Santander Group, Grupo SOS, Cintra, OHL and Cosentino.
- According to the Business Roundtable, an association of chief executives of leading U.S. companies, about 2.2 million Texas jobs were linked to international trade in 2004, a total second only to California's.

An Export Leader

Texas is the United States' second-largest exporter to Spain.

Exports to Spain from the 10 Largest U.S. markets, 2002-2007 (Amounts in Thousands of \$US)

State	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
U.S. Total	5,225,696	5,935,255	6,640,498	6,933,852	7,405,225	9,879,460
California	557,476	686,766	901,065	974,941	1,000,849	1,076,875
Texas	347,840	321,054	427,234	525,905	642,383	969,236
Puerto Rico	49,201	46,517	152,275	88,770	81,325	675,396
Illinois	220,273	238,094	248,128	279,768	418,022	579,962
New York	460,324	412,966	433,867	609,243	604,051	561,861
Louisiana	429,164	496,581	366,758	215,900	227,521	456,109
Georgia	105,250	135,532	204,335	250,713	299,094	389,613
New Jersey	123,451	129,329	284,439	217,248	316,629	354,308
Florida	304,775	546,317	433,405	274,060	326,847	346,820
Washington	230,816	176,107	431,804	453,381	178,961	316,113

Source: U.S. International Trade Administration.

Foreign Capital

Texas has attracted a significant amount of European foreign investment.

European Union Commercial Property Investments in the U.S., 2005: Ten Largest Destinations

State	Amount (Millions of \$US)
Texas	\$51,212
California	39,037
New York	34,050
Michigan	29,793
Indiana	21,909
Pennsylvania	21,872
Illinois	21,013
New Jersey	20,388
Ohio	18,550
North Carolina	15,530
South Carolina	14,526
U.S. Total	\$624,486