

# Details on ASUTIL's first Brazilian border conference

The South American Association of Free Shops (ASUTIL) will host the first regional conference that will examine and discuss the new Brazilian law allowing land duty free stores to operate on the Brazilian side of the border.

The meeting will be co-hosted with Uruguay's Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Free Shops and will take place in Porto Alegre, Brazil from November 4-6.

The agenda includes sessions about the regional economy, existing legislation and logistics and presentations from the new operators who have already opened stores along the Brazilian border. It will also include mind-set's report on its study of the border duty free shops.

Ample networking time is also scheduled for both days of the conference with the meetings to be set up directly between operators and suppliers. As a special concession, ASUTIL said "for the first and only time" at this conference, the meetings will be open to businesses, which do not have ASUTIL membership.

The Dufry Group will host a welcoming dinner for those in attendance on Tuesday, November 5.

The opening of the land duty free stores on the Brazilian side of the border is changing the regional duty free dynamic. Although legislation allowing for the establishment of land duty free stores in Brazil was approved years ago, it was just this year that Brazilian customs officials said stores could open.

One of the first to take advantage of the new law was the Dufry Group, which opened a store in Uruguiana, Rio Grande do Sol, at the border of Argentina in August. Two other smaller stores opened in Barra do Quaraí and Jaguarão in July, both towns are located near the border of Uruguay.

In an exclusive interview with *Americas Duty Free* last month, ASUTIL Secretary-General, Jose Luis Donagaray, said the organization needed to step to the fore now to help its members and others understand and work within the new border reality created by the Brazilian land duty free stores.

"The idea of the meeting is to work on the border issues with technicians, suppliers, and others to answer a lot of questions and improve communications," he said.

"This will be a two-day meeting with speakers and networking time between new operators and suppliers to introduce themselves," he added. "We want to help develop the business in Brazil. We want to have a clean business and a safe business for everyone. "

Up until now, all the duty free action has been on the other side of the border primarily in Argentina and Uruguay, where the largest land duty free stores attracting Brazilian customers operated. However, the new law will allow land duty free stores to open in Brazil in any of 32 Brazilian cities bordering Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, French Guiana, Uruguay, Guyana, Venezuela and Surinam.

ASUTIL expects several hundred operators and suppliers to attend the conference and participate in the networking sessions. Registration is open online at <https://encuentrodefrontera.com/registration/>

Early registration with a discounted price of US\$250 for members and US\$300 for non-members is in effect until September 30. After that date, the price goes up to US\$350 for members and US\$400 for non-members. The conference will take place at the Sheraton Porto Alegre Hotel where special room rates will be available from October 31 through November 7.

Those interested in networking can begin signing up October 10. ASUTIL will provide meeting places at the hotel and assist in the exchange of names and email addresses for those wishing to take advantage of the networking opportunities. Participants can begin signing up for networking slots October 10.