who speaks English or I could come over here and make a difference.”

Only the Beginning

Luken’s significant binational business experience includes working for the Otay Mesa Chamber of Commerce from 2000-05 with longtime Executive Director Alejandra Mier y Teran. At the chamber, he was involved in some the earliest stages of various border-related developments including the Cross Border Xpress airport terminal connecting San Diego with the Tijuana International Airport which opened in 2015, and California state Route 905 becoming a freeway connecting Interstates 5 and 805 in San Ysidro to the Mexico border around 2010.

He was part of focus groups for the growth and expansion of the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) pass, including when SENTRI moved from being under the direction of the Department of Justice’s Immigration and Naturalization Service to the Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection in 2003.

SENTRI allows pre-approved, low-risk travelers to re-enter the U.S. from Mexico as pedestrians or in vehicles by using special lanes at the border.

Luken also previously was a partner in Alternative Media Revista Tu Casa, a real estate and home improvement guide for Tijuana and the South Bay, and owned JL Venture Group, Inc., an e-commerce business.

Luken said board members and stakeholders are SBC’s biggest strengths and that his first order of business will be to meet with the SBC’s 25 board members and listen to what they have to say.

“We’re a proven concept, this group,” Luken said. “We’ve created great things. I think going to every board member and listening… we’ll have a new route being taken for the SBC. We just want to try to focus on a few things we can really, really accomplish, instead of being so dispersed and moving on so many things at the same time. We really want a few slam dunks made soon.”

One of those may include one of the spots where people cross over by foot.

He said while he was heartened by the recent re-opening of San Ysidro Port of Entry’s Pedestrian West after three years of closures related to the pandemic—an important connection for the thousands of travelers who use it, many have expressed disappointment with its current limited hours of 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., a far cry from its former 24-hour operation, and the fact that it is only open going northbound from Tijuana to San Diego.

Tijuana

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Major Milestone Hit at End of 2022

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