



Israeli firms visit P.R. vying for Prasa business

By : JOSÉ L. CARMONA

josec@caribbeanbusinesspr.com cbprdigital@gmail.com

Edition: November 12, 2015

Volume: 1 | No: 2

Companies are world leaders in water management technologies

A business delegation from Israel, led by the consul general of Israel to Florida and Puerto Rico, was on the island last week to meet with local business leaders and representatives from the Puerto Rico Aqueduct & Sewer Authority (Prasa).

Revital Malca, deputy consul general of Israel to Florida and Puerto Rico, said executives from Israeli companies, leaders in water management technologies, were invited to the island as part of a business mission.

"Israel is very famous as a world leader in water management technologies. When we heard about the water shortage and drought that Puerto Rico recently experienced, we decided to bring a delegation of Israeli companies to meet with the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce and Prasa to offer our solutions," Malca commented to CARIBBEAN BUSINESS.



From left, Liliana Muñoz, with IDE Technologies; Ashley Dirou, with Star Controls Inc.; Honorary Consul General of Israel David Efron; José Vizarondo, with Ayyeka; Michal Niddam, with the Economic Mission; Alberto Lázaro, executive director of Prasa; Revital Malca, deputy consul general of Israel to Florida & Puerto Rico; and Dan Krausz, Tom Gwynn and Rafael Rodríguez, with Krausz Industries.

Malca said the Israeli delegation joined with the Somos el Futuro organization, which coincidentally held its annual convention on the island.

It is very important for the Israeli government, she said, to reach out to the Hispanic communities, in both Puerto Rico and Florida.

"We hope that by presenting these companies here [in Puerto Rico]—and there are a lot more of them, as this is just the tip of the iceberg—maybe we can have some cooperation take root," Malca said. "We are fully aware of the problems Puerto Rico faced with the drought and we saw an opportunity here."

Malca said the water shortage and drought isn't just a local problem, but an issue happening all over the world. Israel, for instance, only has four to five months of rain in the year, and out of necessity, Israeli companies have developed patented technologies to deal with their water issues.

"Right now, we have three water desalinization plants in several parts of Israel, and 75% of the water we use for agriculture is recycled wastewater. Israel is a world leader in water management," she said.

During their Puerto Rico visit, executives from three Israeli companies—Krausz Industries, Star Controls Inc. and IDE Technologies—met with representatives from Prasa, including Executive Director Alberto Lázaro and Infrastructure Director Lynnette Ramírez.

Fixing island's water breaks

During their Puerto Rico visit, executives from three Israeli companies—Krausz Industries, Star Controls Inc. and IDE Technologies—met with representatives from Prasa, including Executive Director Alberto Lázaro and Infrastructure Director Lynnette Ramírez.

Fixing island's water breaks

Since the 1920s, Israel-based Krausz Industries has been designing and manufacturing market-leading coupling and repair clamp solutions for water and wastewater applications worldwide.

The firm, with more than 150 patented technologies for repairing and connecting water pipes, established a U.S. office in Ocala, Fla., 12 years ago. Since then, it has made well over one million installations of its products in the mainland U.S. alone, Tom Gwynn, president of Krausz USA, pointed out.

"Prasa hasn't used our products, and that's largely our fault, because we've been busy marketing and selling our products in other places, because it works that well," Gwynn told CARIBBEAN BUSINESS. "As much as 70% of the water-pipe repair couplings used in Switzerland are Krausz products."

In the U.S., including Puerto Rico, Gwynn said there are about 250,000 water main breaks a year, which means 250,000 times a year a pipe has to be dug out, determine why it is leaking, and find a way to fix it.

"That is very expensive. Our mission is to offer products that make it possible to do that job as quickly and easily as possible, while creating a safer environment where fewer people get hurt in the process, and keeping the drinking water flowing as much as possible," Gwynn said.

With Prasa losing 60% of its water, Gwynn said there is "more of a chance" Krausz products could be used on the island. "It's absolutely applicable to Puerto Rico, if Puerto Rico wants to use it," he said, adding they haven't yet done a formal presentation to Prasa.

The way water pipes are repaired and connected here hasn't fundamentally changed in over 70, 80 or even 90 years, because we are creatures of habit, Gwynn said.

"Most water pipes break because of ground movement. When the ground moves, it places the pipe under stress, weakening it, and it ultimately breaks. Current repairs are rigid, static repairs, so the pipe will ultimately break again further down the line because the stresses that broke it in the first place are still present," Gwynn said.

Krausz products allow for repairs of the two ends of a pipe without forcing them back into alignment. This relieves the stress, and the physical effect that caused the break is no longer there, he added.

The company's Puerto Rico and Caribbean representative, Rafael Rodríguez, has already sold products to the Paradise Islands in the Bahamas, and is representing Tortola in the British Virgin Islands and Trinidad & Tobago, as well as meetings scheduled in the Dominican Republic.

"We hope to establish a real local presence in Puerto Rico with a warehouse to serve the Caribbean. However, that all depends on the volume of business and receptivity we get in Puerto Rico," noted Rodríguez, an independent contractor who works for Krausz.

Another Israeli firm that visited the island, Star Controls with offices in Coral Springs, Fla., is a leading provider of comprehensive Scada (supervisory control & data acquisition), remote monitoring and control, and communications system solutions for water and electric utilities, oil & gas, network fault management, public safety systems and other markets.

IDE Technologies, with offices in Carlsbad, Calif., is another Israeli world leader in water treatment solutions specialized in the development, engineering, construction and operation of enhanced desalination and industrial water treatment plants.