



Spotlight Latvia Blog

The Evolution of Spotlight Latvia

by Peteris Blumbergs, President, American Latvian Association

Welcome to the Spotlight Blog! We are just days away from the big event. But maybe it's also worth taking a quick look back.

Spotlight got started because of the close working relationship between the American Latvian Association and the Latvian Foreign Ministry. When the Ministry announced that one of its major priorities for 2017 was to focus on Latvian economic development and trade, my organization, ALA, realized we can be a major contributor to this effort. Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics was emphasizing the need to reorient Latvia's trade to the West, and this was a goal ALA could certainly help with since we have always considered our organization to be one of Latvia's "ambassadors" to the West.

ALA's best move was to propose Chicago, a trade and industry hub in the U.S., as the destination for Spotlight. And we were very fortunate to persuade Latvia's Honorary Consul in Chicago, Robert Blumberg, to lead the organizing committee. Robert has participated in similar World Economic Forums in Riga where he also served as a key backroom recruiter of attendees. His experience at these Forums taught him the importance of putting together an interesting program and recruiting influential participants. Robert also took a no-nonsense approach to running the ship.

The goals of the conference were clear from the outset - we want business owners and corporations to walk away from Spotlight with contracts, agreements, deals. And we wanted this conference to be held in a comfortable environment conducive to deal making, hence the selection of the Waldorf Astoria as the conference center. Of course it also helped that Robert is a fundraising maven, and he has been able to collect donations to more than offset the program costs. ALA and the Foreign Ministry have also made major financial contributions and have provided administrative support. We are looking forward to a great conference!

Please note: A comprehensive agenda, [registration information](#) and additional details can be found on the www.spotlightlatvia.com website. Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SpotlightLatvia>