

# HKETO San Francisco rings in Year of Snake with Cathay Pacific (with photos)

With support from Cathay Pacific, a carrier of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco (HKETO San Francisco) hosted a series of spring receptions in San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; Los Angeles, California; and Dallas, Texas, between February 19 and 26 (local time), ringing in the Year of the Snake with festivities including lion dances and Guzheng performances. Nearly 700 local officials, dignitaries, academics, business representatives and community leaders attended the events.

The Acting Director of HKETO San Francisco, Ms Iris Wong, delivered remarks on Hong Kong's latest developments. "Hong Kong's economy grew at an accelerated pace in the fourth quarter of 2024, and we anticipate further progress in 2025 – a trend we are excited to build on. This growth is made possible not only by local resilience but also by the strong international partnerships that sustain the city's economy," she said.

Reflecting on the decades-long partnership between the US and Hong Kong, she pointed out that Hong Kong and the US enjoy a mutually beneficial trade relationship. "US goods exports to Hong Kong last year totalled nearly US\$26 billion, with the US enjoying one of its highest trade surpluses at over US\$21 billion," she said.

An overview of Hong Kong business innovation was also introduced. "With supportive government policies, the number of start-ups has reached a record high of over 4 700. Over 50 strategic enterprises are set to establish their foothold or expand their operations in Hong Kong. In the coming years, they will invest a total of US\$5.38 billion in total, creating over 17 000 jobs," she noted.

She also introduced a number of highly anticipated events in Hong Kong that cement its status as a must-visit global city, including Art Basel, the Coldplay concert, the French May Arts Festival, and Rugby Sevens. With world-class arts, culture and sports competitions and shows scheduled to take place throughout the year, Hong Kong provides unforgettable experiences for visitors, she concluded.

Also highlighted was Hong Kong's position as an international aviation hub. She said, "With its strategic location and world-class infrastructure, Hong Kong is connected to nearly 200 destinations worldwide. The completion of the Three-Runway System is expected to further boost the city's interconnectivity with the world, including the US."

Representatives from Cathay Pacific also spoke at the receptions,

sharing news of the upcoming airline's first nonstop service between Hong Kong and Dallas-Fort Worth set to launch on April 24. In line with the anticipation that the Year of the Snake will be a year of evolution and new beginnings, the route will be Cathay Pacific's entrance to the southern region of the United States and the only nonstop route to Hong Kong available in Texas. At the reception in Dallas on February 26 (local time), Cathay Pacific Head of Corporate Sales, Americas, Mr Sebastien Granier, conducted a lucky draw to award a pair of round-trip business-class tickets between Hong Kong and the new destination.

The receptions concluded on a high note following a Guzheng performance by celebrated musician Melody Ho from Hong Kong. Featuring a Chinese New Year medley and her interpretation of classic melodies, the lively performance received enthusiastic applause from the audience.



