



## **International Trade Council discusses commercial diplomacy and the ITA's Advocacy Center**

On May 24, the Partnership's International Trade Council welcomed Richard Ryan, Director, U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service, Houston Office, as the Council speaker. John Kajander, Strategic Consultant, Life Sciences with HoustonFirst introduced Ryan and welcomed the group to the Council meeting. Ryan presented on commercial diplomacy and the International Trade Administration's Advocacy Center.

"The Advocacy Center exists at the intersection between business and foreign policy," said Ryan. It aims to level the playing field for U.S. businesses as they compete against foreign firms for specific international public contracts. Because it is government-to-government, the Advocacy Center is particularly useful when negotiating with nations where the public and private sectors have close ties.

Ryan also discussed the advocacy process and strategies, how to develop an advocacy case, and several examples of advocacy wins for U.S. companies. He added, "At the end of the day, the goal is to create more jobs in the U.S."