



International Trade Forum highlights October session

An International Trade Forum was center stage at the October TeCMEN, with representatives from the U.S. Commercial Service and Enterprise Florida filling the agenda. Mike Higgins, Director of the Tallahassee Export Assistance Center, and Andrea Moore, Regional Manager, International Trade and Business Development highlighted the numerous opportunities local businesses can have in the international marketplace.

The event began with Mike highlighting the USCS mission of promoting the export of goods and services from the United States, particularly by small and medium-sized businesses; to represent U.S. business interests internationally; and to help U.S. businesses find qualified international partners. USCS has trade specialists in 108 U.S. cities and more than 150 posts in 80 countries worldwide.

Their network can locate international buyers, distributors and agents; provide expert help at every stage of the export processes; and help businesses enter new markets faster and more profitably. Through their on-line portal www.export.gov, businesses can find country and industry specific research infor-

mation. Additionally, USCS provides trade counseling, their unique Gold Key matching service, and Business Information Centers.

Trade counseling comes in the form of trade specialists in the U.S. working directly with their team of experts overseas in getting all the information and advice that an aspiring business needs. The Gold Key matching service provides pre-screened appointment schedules arranged before overseas travel begins, customized market and industry briefings with local trade specialists, timely and relevant market research, post-meeting debriefings with those trade specialists with assistance in developing appropriate follow-up strategies, and help with travel, accommodations, interpreter services and clerical support.

USCS has two Business Information Centers that take the work out of getting international trade information. One focuses on China and the other on the Middle East and North Africa. Both of these are available on-line.

Andrea then provided an overview of her division within EFI. There objectives are to market Florida's international advantages worldwide, Assist

Florida companies to export products and services to global markets and identify Joint Ventures and Strategic Alliance Partners, create a statewide Trade Development Network to assist the State's small and medium size companies to access international markets, provide an International Representation Network to identify foreign direct investment prospects and to assist Florida companies to export, attract international investment to Florida, and advocate continuous improvement of Florida's critical factors for global competitiveness.

Through the division's seven statewide field offices, EFI can provide export counseling, assistance with and participation in overseas trade missions and exhibitions, participation in Team Florida missions, qualified international trade leads, help with export finance, and access to their international office network.

She then highlighted some advantages of exporting, not the least of which is that 95 percent of the world's population lives outside of the U.S. Additionally, exporting will expand sales potential worldwide, will reduce dependence on the U.S. market, will allow

the company to utilize any excess production capacity, may expand the life cycle of products, may eliminate seasonal fluctuations, will increase overall sales and profits and will enhance the prestige of the company. After a brief overview of two separate industry strengths, namely aviation/aerospace/defense and life sciences, Andrea concluded with an overview of coming events, the list provided below.

- Team Florida Mission Brazil, November 3-8
- Medica 2007, November 14-17
- Dubai Air Show, November 11-15
- Arab Health, January 28-31
- Singapore Air Show, February 19-24
- FIDAE 2008, March 31-April 6
- Farnborough Air Show, July 14-20
- Defendory 2008, October 7-11

For additional information on the opportunities available in the international market, contact Kay Rasmussen, the EDC's International Program liaison at kayr@florida-edc.org, or by calling the EDC office at 850-651-7374.

