

Gov. Ricketts Announces International Trade Mission to Asia

Governor, Nebraskan businesses will travel to China in November

LINCOLN – Today, Governor Pete Ricketts announced he will lead a trade mission, November 9-15, 2016 to meet with investors and host events in Xi'an, Shanghai, and Hong Kong to strengthen Nebraska's relationships with the state's fourth largest trading partner. The Governor will be joined by Director of Economic Development (DED) Courtney Dentlinger and Nebraska Director of Agriculture (NDA) Greg Ibach among others on the trade mission.

"China's growing economy offers nearly boundless opportunities for Nebraska ag producers and manufacturers," said Governor Ricketts. "This trade mission will help Nebraska businesses build on our existing relationships and strengthen our relationship with our fourth largest trading partner. Nebraska businesses who do business in China or that are hoping to enter this market should contact DED or NDA to express their interest in joining the trade mission."

The Governor also mentioned that Nebraska business representatives who join the trade mission will get the opportunity to meet with business, ag business, chamber of commerce, government, and academic officials.

"Nebraska has had a close trade relationship with China for years," said DED Director Courtney Dentlinger. "The Governor's decision to lead this trade mission to China will offer the perfect opportunity to build on existing relationships. For companies interested in China, but who have not established themselves in the market, this is an opportunity to grow their business internationally in the world's second largest economy."

NDA Director Greg Ibach emphasized the importance of this trade mission not only to Nebraska's farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses, but to the entire state. Agriculture is Nebraska's largest industry.

"In the last few years Hong Kong has grown into one of the top export destinations for beef from Nebraska and we're working diligently to nurture continued growth," said Director Ibach. "As Asia continues to grow, so does their appetite for Nebraska proteins. China has been a major importer of Nebraska agricultural products. During this mission, we will also showcase Nebraska pork products in the Southeast Asia marketplace."

Ibach also pointed out that the Chinese market is an extremely important market for soybeans, with China purchasing over half of U.S. exports several years running."

DED and NDA worked with the Governor to build the itinerary for the fall trade mission. Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, is a key economic hub for Northwestern China, and strategically important to accessing markets in China's inner regions. Shaanxi Province shares many similarities with Nebraska in that it is an agriculturally rich area of China. It also serves as the gateway to the Silk Road.

During the trip, trade mission members will participate in the 23rd China Yangling Agricultural Hi-Tech Fair while in Yangling, which is located in Shaanxi Province just outside of Xi'an. The fair offers roughly 1.7 million square feet of exhibition space and is expected to draw 1.6 million visitors over five days, making it China's premier agriculture fair.

Shanghai, one of the world's largest metropolitan areas with a population of 24 million, is a leading business center, consumer market, and key entry port into China. Nebraska established a trade office in Shanghai in 2013 to help its businesses make key connections and work with Chinese companies seeking opportunities in the U.S. and globally.

Hong Kong is one of the largest importers of Nebraska beef and a key market for other Nebraska products. The city also is an important gateway for business throughout East Asia. In 2015, Hong Kong was Nebraska's sixth largest export market, accounting for \$234 million in goods purchased from here with approximately 80 percent being exported food products.

Because space is limited, company officials interested in participating in the trade mission should contact Cobus Block at 402-480-5806 or cobus.block@nebraska.gov or Stan Garbacz at 402-471-2341 or stan.garbacz@nebraska.gov to express their interest soon.