

# Florida Foreign Trade Review



A monthly publication of the Florida Foreign Trade Association

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## A NEW U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SUCCESS STORY — EXPORT ASSISTANCE CENTER

As more and more exporters learn about the many tools available to them from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Export Assistance Center, many companies are already reaping the benefits of these services. Our upcoming series of success stories will feature businesses that have experienced remarkable development thanks, in part, to the guidance, support and tools provided by the team of Trade Specialists from the U.S. Commercial Service, Export Assistance Center.

By Jorge A. Ramirez, Editor

**S**IGN\*A\*RAMA was founded by Ray Titus, and father Roy Titus in 1986 in Farmingdale, New York. A second store was later opened in Palm Beach Florida to test a different marketplace. Their business knowledge from over ten years of franchising, yielded impressive results in both stores. In late 1987, they began franchising SIGN\*A\*RAMA Full Service Sign Centers. To date, the company has over 600 franchises in 24 countries; among the markets experiencing the most dynamic growth they list Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and South Africa, and this year the company has their focus on expansion into France, Morocco, Japan and Nigeria, to name a few.

Tony Foley, International Director for SIGN\*A\*RAMA, learned about the unique services the U.S. Government provides through the U.S. Commercial Service Export Assistance Center. "I have made the U.S. Commercial Service a large part of our company's growth plan and budget and it has paid very nice dividends" says Mr. Foley.

With the assistance of the U.S. Commercial Services, SIGN\*A\*RAMA has successfully found "master licensee" partners in Guatemala, Netherlands, Turkey and Italy thus far. According to Mr. Foley, "many companies are not aware that our government provides very unique services to help companies export their products, and at a very low costs. SIGN\*A\*RAMA will continue to include the Commercial Services in their expansion plans and views their help as invaluable."

For more information about SIGN\*A\*RAMA, contact Chris Simmick (US market) or Tony Foley (International markets), at 800-776-8105, or via e-mail at [signinfo@signarama.com](mailto:signinfo@signarama.com).

## GOV. BUSH PRAISES DECISION TO HOST FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS NEGOTIATIONS IN MIAMI

Florida Continues Its Leadership to Become the Permanent Location of the FTAA

**G**ov. Jeb Bush has hailed the decision of United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert Zoellick to hold the 2003 round of ministerial negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Florida. The annual meeting, which will be the eighth ministerial gathering of the FTAA, will be held in Miami in October 2003 and will include the Americas Business Forum and Civil Society Forum. The 2002 ministerial meeting is being held late next week in Quito, Ecuador.

"The selection of Miami for this prestigious gathering of leaders from throughout the Western Hemisphere is a major triumph for Florida," said Gov. Bush. "I thank Ambassador Zoellick for his good foresight in choosing Miami for the eighth ministerial round of the FTAA."

The FTAA is an integration effort that will encompass an area comprised of 800 million customers and a combined GDP of \$14 trillion, making it the largest trading bloc in the world (spanning from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska). With origins from the mid-1990s, the FTAA aims to eliminate tariff barriers as a way to stimulate investment, free trade, market access, and foster democracy and regional stability. By 2005, the FTAA membership body, comprised of 34 democratically elected heads of state of the Western Hemisphere, will select a location for its Permanent Secretariat. With unparalleled economic, cultural, historical and political linkages to Latin America and the Caribbean, and with wide recognition as the Gateway to the Americas, Miami represents the strongest chance of any U.S. city to win the

Secretariat.

"Florida has been intimately engaged in the FTAA process since the beginning, and we have long pursued the dream of being the FTAA Permanent Secretariat," said Gov. Bush. "Clearly, Miami is the ideal location to host hemispheric trade integration, and the 2003 negotiations will allow us to showcase how South Florida is best suited to serve as the business, cultural and political center of the Americas."

Long involved in the FTAA movement, community leaders, including the Mayors of Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, and the City of Coral Gables, as well as the Beacon Council, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, World Trade Center of Miami, Enterprise Florida, and Florida FTAA, Inc., join the Governor's Office to offer resounding consensus of community support to host the event.

International trade is a significant part of Florida's economy. Imports and exports moving through Florida's gateways amount to over \$71 billion—a total expected to increase as emerging markets gain importance, and as Florida strengthens its position as the natural gateway for U.S. exporters seeking access in those markets. As part of his international trade focus, Governor Bush has led Team Florida trade missions to the United Kingdom, Brazil, Mexico, Israel, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay since 1999. These missions are expected to generate more than \$450 million in new business as a direct result of the trips.



Gov. Jeb Bush

## FLORIDA PLAYS KEY ROLE IN GLOBAL ECONOMY

**F**lorida has been at the forefront of economic globalization for a long time. Being a key gateway to the U.S. market and a launching pad for accessing markets throughout the Western Hemisphere, Florida is playing an ever more prominent role in the increasingly integrated global economy, which recognizes barriers neither political nor cultural.

Quite simply, Florida is the Americas' commercial crossroads. In international business, cross-border trade and investment, banking and finance, transportation, and telecommunications, Florida is the place to be. No other site in the Western Hemisphere can match Florida's unique combination of a strategic geographic location, state-of-the-art infra-



John Macho  
Enterprise  
Florida Inc.

structure, multilingual workforce, and concentration of corporate and financial resources, all in a world-class pro-business environment and an attractive geographical setting. From Florida, companies can do business globally, with ease. Whether a firm's needs are the ability to instantaneously transmit vast amounts of data to the other side of the globe, to hop on a direct flight to most anywhere in the Americas, or even to quickly find employees that fluently speak your clients' languages—Florida offers this, and much, much more.

Enterprise Florida Inc. is a partnership between government and business leaders and is the state's principal economic development organization. Enterprise Florida's mission is to increase economic opportunities for all Floridians, by supporting the creation of quality jobs, a well-trained workforce, and globally competitive businesses. It pursues this mission in cooperation with its statewide network of economic development partners.



## OPIC SUPPORTING GROWTH THROUGH INVESTMENT

### WHAT IS OPIC?

Established by Congress as an independent agency in 1971, the Overseas Private Investment Corp. strengthens American economic growth by supporting global investment, helps American business compete in emerging markets, supports U.S. foreign policy and development initiatives and operates on a self-sustaining basis at no net cost to taxpayers.

### WHAT DOES OPIC DO?

When private financing and insurance cannot provide 100 percent of what is needed to make smart investments happen in 140 emerging markets and developing countries, OPIC sells up to \$200 million in political risk insurance and/or financing to U.S. investors of all sizes in support of their investments. Backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government, OPIC advocates for U.S. investment, offers experience in risk management and draws on a record of success.

### WHY IS OPIC IMPORTANT?

OPIC mobilizes America's private sector to advance U.S. foreign policy and development initiatives. OPIC supported projects create American jobs and exports — 250,000 new U.S. jobs and \$64 billion in exports since 1971. OPIC helps America compete — all of America's major economic competitors have OPIC-like agencies to help their industries compete for



**Peter Watson**  
OPIC

major projects in emerging markets. OPIC promotes U.S. best practices by requiring projects to adhere to international standards on the environment, worker rights and human rights. OPIC projects generate the stability in developing countries and emerging economies by providing an economic boost to the efforts of reform-minded governments. OPIC does all of this at zero cost to taxpayers — 100 percent of OPIC's costs are paid by client fees.

### WHAT DOES OPIC POLITICAL RISK INSURANCE COVER?

OPIC insures against the inability to convert local currencies into dollars, expropriation of assets by foreign governments and political violence. OPIC does not insure against currency devaluation or provide any guarantees that investors will earn a profit.

### WHAT DOES OPIC FINANCE?

OPIC finances long-term private investment. OPIC loan guaranties work in partnership with commercial lenders; direct loans are reserved for smaller U.S. businesses; and OPIC-guaranteed private equity funds act as a catalyst for private sector activity in developing countries by investing in new, expanding or privatizing companies.

OPIC Highlights is published by Overseas Private Investment Corp., 1100 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20527. For general information, call the OPIC InfoLine at 202-336-8799, or log on to [www.opic.gov](http://www.opic.gov). For the Investment Development Office, call 202-336-8600.

## EXPORTERS' NEEDS ADDRESSED ON WEB

BuyUSA.com, the U.S. Department of Commerce e-marketplace, offers U.S. small and medium-sized exporters a free company and product profile and the ability to search for international business partners and market research. BuyUSA.com also offers a subscription for its premium services beginning at \$400 per year.

BuyUSA.com connects U.S. exporters with qualified international business partners online and allows them to benefit from the U.S. Commercial Service's one-on-one export assistance.

To use BuyUSA.com, U.S. companies first register and enter their company profile on the BuyUSA.com Web site.

Their company and product information is then available to more than 18,000 qualified international buyers, distributors and representatives who are looking for U.S. products and services. Registration also includes contact information for the local U.S. Export Assistance Center where companies receive one-on-one trade counseling and other customized services.

Other features on BuyUSA.com are:

- A new home page design with easier navigation to fit a company's needs
- A streamlined search section, including a powerful advanced search feature that allows companies to target results better than ever before
- A "Personal Trade Assistant" that will provide all the resources needed for every step of the trade process
- A contact list that allows users to save and manage the leads found on BuyUSA. Once a U.S. exporter registers, their My BuyUSA pages provide:
  - Links to BuyUSA.com's new Personal Trade Assistant feature, market research and trade events for each company's industry
  - A link to the user's saved contact lists from previous sessions
  - Frequently asked questions about using the MyBuyUSA page
  - Premium features available for BuyUSA subscribers.

The \$400 per year premium service includes a company profile, a brochure listing up to 20 products/services with images, BuyUSA company brochure URL, top listing in international search results, and the ability to email international partners directly from BuyUSA.



**John McCartney**  
U.S. Commercial Service

## NEWS FROM PROCHILE

ProChile, The Chilean Trade Commission, is an agency within the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The organization's role is to support and advance Chilean business interests in the global marketplace by assisting in the development of the export process. ProChile is active in establishing international business relationships, fostering the exchange of goods and services, attracting foreign investment and forging strategic alliances. The organization serves as a source of market research, international trade data and leads for the export industry for both foreign and Chilean firms alike. Though ProChile seeks to stimulate and diversify the country's export base in general, special emphasis is given to promoting non-traditional products.

Foreign investors and importers often have questions that require local expertise and a familiarity with the country's economy and legal framework. Through seminars and the constant circulation of news updates, guides, articles, and brochures, ProChile is able to provide such specialized information. Also important is the participation in Trade Shows and Commercial Missions. Here, ProChile works to create links to Chilean industry representatives and to offer specific company information to distributors who are adding Chilean goods to their range of imported products.

Due to its global presence, ProChile remains a crucial source of information for Chilean exporters.



**Gerardo Garcia-Huidobro**  
ProChile

Chilean companies make use of ProChile's knowledge of foreign markets to identifying opportunities and potential business partners. All our offices monitor the development of legislative decisions and customs regulations to ensure that exporters are in full compliance with international trade laws. ProChile also advises Chilean exporters on market trends and speculations concerning future developments

within the economy of interest. Being aware of new market opportunities for Chilean goods is one of the most important functions of this organization. One way this is done is by monitoring annual changes in Chilean exporters' global market share and changes in the number of participants involved.

ProChile assumes no commercial liability or financial involvement in the relationships it forms. The organization promotes business relationships between Chile and the world. For more information, contact Gerardo Garcia-Huidobro, ProChile — The Chilean Trade Bureau, 1101 Brickell Ave., suite M-103 Miami 33131, or e-mail [chilefl@bell-south.net](mailto:chilefl@bell-south.net). Call 305-374-0697, fax 305-374-4270, or log on to [www.chileinfo.com](http://www.chileinfo.com).