



SWIL Trade Council asks exporters to respond to first needs survey

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southwestern Illinois Trade and Investment Council, in collaboration with the International Trade Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, is conducting its first Export Needs Assessment Survey for the region.

Tapping into the pulse of what southwestern Illinois-based manufacturers need to begin or enhance their exporting is the survey's essence. Silvia Torres Bowman, director of the Illinois International Trade Center, encourages businesses to take a few moments to answer the 28-question survey.

To access the survey, visit surveymonkey.com/r/ITCSWILCOUNCIL. All businesses that are involved in exporting goods or services are strongly encouraged to participate and voice their opinions. All responses collected will be strictly confidential and will only be shared in aggregate form. The survey closes March 27, 2017.

“Our Council’s unique role is promoting and increasing trade and investment activity in the region, and raising awareness of global exporting and foreign trade investment as a means of creating and maintaining economic stability and growth in southwestern Illinois,” said Bowman. “We are conducting this survey to hear from business owners and managers who are seeking entry into foreign markets.

“We also want to measure their interest in participating in a trade mission. Missions are about opening doors for local entrepreneurs and developing long-term trade and investment opportunities in foreign markets. Missions build status and notability for entrepreneurs and help exporters to position themselves in foreign markets.”

Connecting local companies that export directly with international customers poised for global growth is the heart of the Trade Council’s mission, according to Council President David Kniepkamp. “We’re seeking to recruit and support as many existing and future exporters in southwestern Illinois as possible. Our region is blessed with a tremendous international trade infrastructure that we don’t need to recreate. Our goal is to intelligently connect exporters directly with international customers, and we are doing just that. We are having success. It’s exciting.”

Small to medium-sized companies typically do not possess the full-time resources to define, identify and expand into international markets, according to Kniepkamp. The SWIL Trade Council’s role is to tap into its broad array of statewide, nationwide and international relationships to provide market industry research, existing trade resources, and ultimately a trade mission opportunity with follow-up support to make exporting and direct trade investment a reality for southwestern Illinois businesses.

Regional exporters are welcomed to join the Council at no charge.

For more information about how to do business globally and how to benefit from the Southwestern Illinois Trade & Investment Council, contact the International Trade Center at International-Trade-Center@siue.edu, [\(618\) 650-3851](tel:6186503851) or by visiting siue.edu/business/itc.

The International Trade Center at SIUE serves businesses in southwestern Illinois by providing individualized, no-cost export consultation, identification of foreign buyers, agents and/or distributors through trade leads, international market analysis, and more.

The ITC is funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and [Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#). It has a longtime partnership with the Illinois Office of Trade and Investment (OTI), which maintains a full-time staff of both foreign and domestic-based international trade and marketing experts. OTI also manages 10 foreign trade offices located in Belgium, Japan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, Mexico, Canada, Israel, India, Brazil and South Africa.