

ITC at SIUE invites businesses to participate in South America Trade Mission

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EDWARDSVILLE - The International Trade Center at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (ITC at SIUE) announces the 2019 Southwestern Illinois Trade Mission to Peru, Chile and Colombia from March 24-30, 2019.

The Southwest Illinois Trade and Investment Council (SWITIC) will lead the trade mission with the full support of the ITC at SIUE, the Office of Trade and Investment of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The trade mission is open to southern Illinois businesses from all industries and sectors with an interest in:

- Exploring export opportunities for their products and services
- Finding or expanding distribution channels
- Getting first-hand market information
- Experiencing the business environment in Peru, Chile and Colombia

“After a successful mission to South America in 2009, we are looking forward to continuing to strengthen southwest Illinois’ ties to these Latin American markets,” said ITC at SIUE Director Silvia Torres Bowman. “This is an important event for our region. I will be joining the delegation and assisting participants in making positive and long-term connections with these South American partners, generating more opportunities for southern Illinois goods and services, as well as foreign direct investment to our region.”

The ITC at SIUE will develop a full itinerary for each participating company with opportunities to conduct private, one-on-one meetings with key partners and buyers in one, two or all three countries. Services offered include matchmaking, export counseling, and travel and logistical support.

“This trade mission will provide participants all of the information and resources they need to advance their companies to a higher level through exporting,” Torres Bowman said. “Prospects will have been carefully targeted and pre-screened, based on their interest in participants’ specific products or services. Consequently, the quality of the meetings during the mission are incredibly productive in the long-term, as compared to trade show participation. Participants will save valuable time and cost, while maximizing their results.”

A limited number of companies will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Participation fees vary per country. Recruitment ends Friday, Jan. 4.

Torres Bowman urges interested businesses to indicate their interest now, so organizations have time to prepare and support them in mission planning. She also notes

that the mission could qualify for Illinois State Trade Export Promotion (ISTEP) financial funding offered to small and medium-sized exporters. Businesses can be awarded up to \$7,500 in travel cost reimbursements. Details on eligibility and the application process are available at siue.edu/business/ITC/ISTEP.

For information on how your company can participate, contact Torres Bowman at storre@siue.edu or call the ITC at SIUE at 618-650-2452.

The [Southwest Illinois Trade and Investment Council](#) (SWITIC) has been in existence since 2015. The nonprofit organization educates, equips and connects area businesses with the expertise and contacts to begin and expand exporting their products.

The [International Trade Center](#) at [SIUE](#) serves entrepreneurs and small businesses in southern 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 through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and [Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) as a service to the region's entrepreneurial and business community. 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 6 foreign trade offices located in Belgium, Japan, Mexico, Canada, China and Israel.

As a key member of the Illinois SBDC Network, the International Trade Center delivers these important services to its clients while supporting the goals and objectives of both the [SIUE School of Business](#) and the University at large.