

Trade Mission extends Chamber's China connection

The Chamber's 2007 trade mission to China focused on business connections in the automotive and financial services industries. A nine-member delegation representing the Springfield area visited three Chinese cities between May 18 and 26. This year's trip, the Chamber's fourth in three years, included stays in Zhengzhou, Dalian and Beijing.

The Chamber has developed a "region-to-region" strategy for building relationships in China, with a focus on Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province in central China, and the northeastern coastal city of Dalian in Liaoning Province. After signing partnership agreements with Chambers of Commerce in Zhengzhou and Dalian in 2004, the successive trade missions have had three primary goals:

- Give participants a first-hand look at the economic development and modernization taking place in China;
- Generate business development contacts between Springfield business leaders and Chinese entrepreneurs; and
- Showcase Missouri State University's extensive presence in China, which includes successful partnerships with several Chinese universities.

In Zhengzhou, a group of 24

representatives of various local companies met with the Springfield delegation to discuss potential investment and trade opportunities. Many of the companies represented were automobile or auto parts manufacturers, on hand to meet with Bob Beine, president of Republic Ford, who was part of the Springfield delegation.

Two members of the Springfield delegation are financial advisors, Greg DeLong of Edward Jones and Eric Peterson of Peterson Wealth Advisors. A highlight of the trip for them was the opportunity to visit the China Zhengzhou Grain Wholesale Market, one of the world's leading futures markets for cotton and wheat. Li Jingmou, the chairman of the commodity exchange, hosted the Springfield group for an extensive tour of the exchange and a discussion about China's commodity market. A seminar at the Henan University of Finance and Economics also included presentations on various business and financial topics, including trends in the Chinese stock market.



Bob Beine (right) of Republic Ford and Yuki Yang (center) of Missouri State University meet with the sales manager of the Ford dealership in Dalian.

Participants in the 2007 trade mission also had an opportunity to observe the Missouri State University presence in China. The centerpiece of the university's China Program is its College of International Business, operated jointly with Liaoning Normal University in Dalian. Members of the delegation traveled to Dalian to tour the campus, meeting with MSU students, faculty and administrators there.

Business meetings in Dalian included sessions with auto parts retailers, auto dealers and the staff of the Dalian General Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, the delegation made a side trip to visit several auto dealerships, including the Dalian Ford dealership and a dealership selling Chinese-made Chery automobiles.



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