



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 26, 2015
15:030

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GOVERNOR OTTER, BUSINESSES TOUT SUCCESS OF LATIN AMERICAN TRADE MISSION

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter said preliminary feedback from the 18 Idaho companies and organizations that joined him on his recent trade mission to Lima, Peru and Mexico City, Mexico, shows a successful introduction to new markets and expansion of business relationships in Latin America.

Participants on the May 9-16 mission represented a variety of industries, including vegetable seeds, potatoes, onions, dairy products, natural and organic foods, wheat, oilseed, mining equipment, personal care products, timber, technology, medical equipment, mining raw materials and university research/international education.

"We had the best of the best of Idaho companies and organizations traveling with us, and the warm welcome and interest we received in Peru and Mexico reflected the innovative products and services we were promoting," Governor Otter said. "Relationships and friendships were established in both countries, and I am confident this will lead to continued opportunities for all of the trade mission participants."

It was the Governor's first trade mission to Peru. In 2014, Idaho's exports to Peru totaled \$17.05 million, up 16.4 percent from 2013. The trade mission established new customer relationships that will help accelerate export growth into that country.

Mexico, a more established market, already is Idaho's sixth-largest export market overall. Idaho exports to Mexico were valued at more than \$301 million in 2014, up over 10 percent from the year before. However, the Mexican market continues to grow and provide new sales opportunities for Idaho businesses.

International trade requires extensive financial and human resources to break into foreign markets, and closing sales generally takes longer. Governor-led trade missions are a proven tool for speeding up market access for Idaho companies, whose total exports are responsible for more than 26,000 jobs.

"The mission was a tremendous success. In both countries, we made excellent contacts that we are confident will lead to sales. We identified some new opportunities in Peru and are excited about the potential there for Idaho agriculture," said Celia Gould, director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. "Mexico is already an important agricultural market for Idaho but continues to grow. It was our number-two agriculture export market last year, and I anticipate that it could become number one in 2015."

Several of the trade mission participants highlighted their successes from the Latin America trade mission:

Brian Jeppsen from Hess Pumice in Malad, a mining and processing operation of the world's purest commercial deposit of white pumice: "We had a very productive trip and were able to make some solid contacts with potential customers. Most certainly, we were able to get audience with high-profile potential customers that we would not have otherwise been able to meet by trying to make the arrangements ourselves."

Jason Godfrey of Mountain States Oilseeds in American Falls, a production and marketing company for grains and oilseeds: "The trade missions have given us access to large, high-quality international customers and allowed us to expand our business. We felt this trade mission was a great success and have already had some good feedback and future business in Mexico and Peru, with a potential increase in business of several loads per month."

Dean Miller of Epical Solutions in Boise, the exclusive North American distributor of the FreeWheel adaptive wheelchair attachment: "The Governor is always a true professional and adds credibility in every meeting he attends." **Cindy Crieg, director of International Trade for the manufacturer of FreeWheel**, added, "We would participate in another mission in the right countries and would recommend the same to any Idaho business looking to expand internationally."

Joanna Madden with Axus International in Boise, an export company specializing in distribution of American-made organic and natural food products: "The State of Idaho trade mission to Mexico provided new opportunities that went beyond our expectations. Prospective partners ranged from long-established companies in search of a stronger supply chain to the most innovative companies who are expanding their reach into the Mexican marketplace."

Randy Robinson of High Desert Milk in Burley, a vertically integrated cooperative of six dairy farmers that produce nonfat dry milk, buttermilk powder and butter: "We had great meetings with quality new contacts in Peru, and got reacquainted with some of our current customers that are looking to expand their use of our products. The same was found in Mexico, and we look forward to significant expanded business in both markets due to the help from the trade mission." **Derik Robinson of High Desert Milk** added, "Governor-led trade missions serve as an asset for all of Idaho's businesses, allowing companies to meet with high level decision makers and facilitating expansion of business. For us personally, this will translate to hundreds of thousands of dollars in new sales."

As companies are following up with their new contacts in Peru and Mexico, **Rick Vollweiler from AMS, Inc., in American Falls, which sells soil, water and gas sampling equipment**, reported that, "Three companies, with whom we met with in Lima, have approached us for product quotes in a government tender. In addition, a private company has requested quotes for two PowerProbe systems."

Besides building new business relationships, the trade missions also are a great way for companies to improve existing relationships. As **Hector Dimas from Boise Cascade** points out, "One of the highlights of the trip was the Valued Partner Award. This was an unprecedented event for our recipients in Mexico and Peru and the fact that it is awarded by the Governor and U.S. Ambassadors of Mexico and Peru, respectively, solidify our bonds with our customers. At the same time, the presence of the Governor was vital in bridging Idaho companies to some household name companies in Mexico and Peru."

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