



For immediate release
Contact: Mark Maley, 608.210.6706
mark.maley@wedc.org

Wisconsin companies invited to take part in global trade venture to South Africa and Kenya in September

MADISON, WI. JULY 24, 2018 –The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is inviting Wisconsin companies seeking to establish or expand their exporting efforts to participate in a global trade venture to sub-Saharan Africa from Sept. 22 through Oct. 3. The registration deadline is Aug. 10.

The weeklong trade venture will include visits to Johannesburg and Durban, South Africa, and Nairobi, Kenya, which are markets of particular opportunity for Wisconsin companies. In each city, participating companies will be scheduled for customized business meetings with potential local partners hand-picked for their companies by Wisconsin's authorized trade representatives in the markets, based on the company's needs.

"Sub-Saharan Africa is at the beginning of a growth phase thanks to a growing entrepreneurial culture, rising per capita incomes, and diversifying economies," said Katy Sinnott, vice president of international business development for WEDC, the state's lead economic development organization. "With a growing demand for more efficient technology and an increase in infrastructure spending, there are numerous opportunities for Wisconsin businesses in countries like South Africa and Kenya."

Wisconsin businesses exported more than \$179 million in goods and services to sub-Saharan Africa in 2017, a 7.2 percent increase over 2016 and significantly higher than the U.S. increase of 4.5 percent.

South Africa ranked as the state's 23rd overall destination for exports and ranked first in sub-Saharan Africa. Top export product categories include industrial machinery, transportation parts and non-rail vehicles, and medical and scientific products.

Wisconsin's exports to Kenya were worth \$2.1 million in 2017, making Kenya the seventh-highest destination for exports in sub-Saharan Africa. Industrial machinery is the top export category for this market.

WEDC's trade ventures offer companies a way to make connections in markets that lead to new exports. The trips represent an excellent value since they are offered at a subsidized rate, and with logistics taken care of, participants can focus on business.

South Africa and Kenya act as regional distribution nodes and key entry points to their respective regions of Africa. With English as the language of business, access to global information, a strong entrepreneurial culture and strong rule of law, these two markets are poised for growth, and are ready and eager for Wisconsin exports.

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The trade venture begins Sept. 22 with departure from the U.S. The trip will begin with a segment in Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city and the capital of the Gauteng province.

The delegation will then travel to the coastal city of Durban, the largest city in the KwaZulu-Natal province and the most important manufacturing hub in South Africa after Johannesburg.

The trip will wrap up in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city and an internationally established hub for business and culture.

Each participant in the global trade venture will also receive a customized Africa market assessment specific to his or her company, detailing considerations to keep in mind when introducing the company's product or service into the market. WEDC also has an authorized trade representative in Africa who can make it easier for Wisconsin companies to find local partners and can take some of the guesswork out of launching in a new market.

The venture includes three nights in Johannesburg, three nights in Durban and four nights in Nairobi before returning to the U.S. on Oct. 3. The cost to attend for a Wisconsin exporter of goods or services is \$1,800 and includes the market assessment, hotel accommodations, interpreter services, scheduled ground transportation and airfare between the two program cities, but does not include international airfare or most meals. WEDC is able to offer this venture at a low price for Wisconsin exports thanks in part to a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The registration deadline is Aug. 10. To learn more or register, please visit wedc.org/africa18.

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About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit www.wedc.org or follow WEDC on Twitter @WEDCNews to learn more.

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