

# MID-AMERICA **TRADE SUMMIT**



## 2023 EVENT PROGRAM

October 25 & 26, 2023

# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT

(Brought to you Virtually via Zoom)

## AGENDA

### Wednesday, October 25, 2023 (1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.)

12:45 p.m.	Trade Summit Platform Opens – Open Networking Time
1:00 p.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks – Day 1
1:15-2:15 p.m.	<b>Featured Exporter Panel</b> <b>“Insights Into Export Success”</b>
2:15-3:15 p.m.	<b>Featured Exporter Panel</b> <b>“U.S.-Mid-America-China Trade Relations”</b>
3:15-4:00 p.m.	<b>Featured Exporter</b> <b>“Navigating International Regulations &amp; Leveraging Resources”</b>
4:00 p.m.	<b>Recognition of 2022 Outstanding Exporters</b>
4:30 p.m.	<b>Trade Resource Highlights</b>
4:45 p.m.	Closing Remarks for Day 1 Virtual Networking Opportunity with Exporters & Event Sponsors/Partners

### Thursday, October 26, 2023 (8:30 a.m.-Noon)

8:15 a.m.	Trade Summit Platform Opens – Coffee & Networking Time
8:30 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks – Day 2
8:45-9:30 a.m.	<b>Featured Exporter</b> <b>“Building &amp; Sustaining a Successful International Sales Presence”</b>
9:30-10:15 a.m.	<b>Featured Exporter Panel</b> <b>“Global Logistics: Keeping an Eye on the Horizon”</b>
10:15-10:30 a.m.	BREAK / NETWORKING TIME
10:30-10:45 a.m.	<b>Trade Resource Highlights</b>
10:45-11:45 a.m.	<b>Featured Exporter Panel</b> <b>“International Travel &amp; Tourism: A World of Opportunities”</b>
11:45 a.m.-Noon	Closing Remarks & Virtual Networking Opportunity with Exporters, Event Sponsors & Partners

# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT

**DAY 1: Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

**1:15 P.M. Featured Exporter Panel: *Insights into Export Success***



**Moderator: Drew Felling** – VP, International Trade, Commerce Bank & Chair, Mid-America District Export Council – [drew.felling@commercebank.com](mailto:drew.felling@commercebank.com); <https://www.commercebank.com/>; <https://midamericadec.com/>

**Panelists:** **Mike Strobe** – Executive Vice President – [strobe@msscllc.com](mailto:strobe@msscllc.com)  
**Marsh Shipping Supply Co. (MSSC) LLC** (Illinois) - <https://msscllc.com/>  
**Debra Dudley** – Co-founder & President – [debra.dudley@oscarwareinc.com](mailto:debra.dudley@oscarwareinc.com)  
**Oscarware, Inc.** (Kentucky) - <https://oscarwareinc.com/>  
**Thomas Peace** – International Sales Manager – [thomas@preferredpopcorn.com](mailto:thomas@preferredpopcorn.com)  
**Preferred Popcorn LLC** (Nebraska) - <https://www.preferredpopcorn.com/>

**Session Description:** Opportunities are more abundant today than ever before to sell goods and services across the globe, and businesses both big and small continue to boost their bottom line and build their competitiveness by selling to world markets. Join us for this session to hear from a panel of successful exporter as they share best practices and lessons learned from efforts to expand product sales internationally. Learn how their companies got started on their export journeys, resources that have supported their activities along the way, and insight share as they look both forward and backwards along the pathway travelled to date.

**About Drew Felling, Commerce Bank and the Mid-America District Export Council** - Drew is a Certified Global Business Professional (CGBP) with more than 30 years of international experience in export sales, logistics, trade payment and finance services. With proven success in assisting exporting and importing companies grow their international business, Drew works with Commerce Bank's commercial relationship officers in Western Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and Colorado. Service offerings include Letters of Credit, Documentary Collections, and Export Working Capital Loans. He also serves as Chair for the Mid-America District Export Council.

**About Mike Strobe & MSSC, LLC:** Michael is the Executive Vice President at Marsh Shipping and Supply Co. (MSSC), LLC. He started with MSSC, LLC in 2012 and works with distributors in over 60 countries worldwide selling marking, stenciling, sealing, and coding products. A native of Southern Illinois, Michael has a Professional Science Masters (M.S.) from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and a B.S. in Molecular and Cellular Biology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Michael is also the Vice President of the Southwest Illinois Trade and Investment Council, coaching local businesses to increase and introduce export sales.

MSSC, LLC is a manufacturer of stenciling equipment and supplies, water activated tape dispensers, and a distributor of markers and inkjet printers and inks. Started in December 2000, the company is headquartered in Collinsville, IL with a second manufacturing located in Owensville, MO. MSSC currently exports to over 60 countries worldwide and export sales make up between 25-30% of their total business. The company's products are represented by approximately 170 distributors in North America and another 90 worldwide.

**About Debra Dudley & Oscarware, Inc:** Formerly an aspiring singer and song writer, Debra Dudley was climbing the country music charts with a series of top 40s hits, dreaming about performing at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee. During one of her performances, Reg Dudley, her late husband, was in the audience. Instantly smitten, he became her partner in life and ultimately in business. Together they invented a collection of disposable and porcelain coated steel grilling accessories manufactured in Bonnierville, Kentucky, called Oscarware® grill toppers. As co-founder and president of Oscarware, Inc., Debra has now achieved stardom as an outdoor grilling guru.

Reg was a pioneer in the satellite dish industry until it imploded due to competition from cable. The first house they lived in did not have a kitchen stove. The outdoor gas grill was a great solution but made it difficult to grill certain foods so Reg placed a rectangle sheet of the expanded metal fashioned from the same material as their satellite dish on top of the grill grates. This made it possible to grill delicate fish, pizza, fresh vegetables. Little did they know this ingenious product would change outdoor grilling forever.

A close friend and member of the Grand Ole Opry, Oscar Sullivan, asked the couple to make these to sell at his Singing Hills campground located only two miles from Mammoth Cave National Park. The eponymous Oscarware ® grill toppers were born. Among the early enthusiasts were the famous backstage family Debra adopted at the Opry – singers Roy Acuff, Porter Wagoner and Jack Greene. Owing to their endorsement visibility exploded. Made in the USA Oscarware products are currently available across the US -- at Walmart, Kroger, HEB, Wegmans, Publix and Albertsons – and 14 other countries thru ASDA and AAFES. The products are also available on Amazon.com, and [www.oscarwareinc.com](http://www.oscarwareinc.com); global expansion is underway.

Debra has received national recognition from the U.S. Small Business Administration, was honored as Kentucky's Small Businessperson of the Year, and received numerous tributes including the Kentucky SBDC Pacesetter Award. As a successful woman-owned business, she was recognized as the WBENC Southeast Woman Owned Business of the Year. See a full list of her awards [here](#).

**About Thomas Peace & Preferred Popcorn LLC:** Thomas Peace joined Preferred Popcorn in 2015 as the Logistics Manager and hit the ground running with the design and implementation of a centralized logistics management program for their two locations. Prior to coming to Preferred Popcorn, Thomas worked in the LTL Logistics industry as well as in financial services. In 2017 Thomas stepped into the International Sales Management position covering Asia, Europe, and Africa. Since then, he has developed new markets in over a dozen countries such as Vietnam, Nigeria, and Lithuania. Thomas is responsible for developing sales and distribution strategies to increase Preferred Popcorn's global footprint and build long lasting client relationships.

Preferred Popcorn LLC strives to produce the highest quality popcorn in the world and provide the best customer service to go along with it. The company currently exports to over 70 countries across the globe. As a milestone event, Preferred Popcorn was involved in the first successful venture to grow popcorn in India for the Indian market.

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**2:15 P.M. Featured Exporter Panel: U.S.-Mid-America-China Trade Relations**



**Moderator: Al Li** – Chair, Missouri District Export Council (MO DEC) and Founder & CEO, ARTIS Commercial Capital & Artis Marketing Solutions.

**Panelists: Kyle Sullivan** – VP of Business Advisory Services – [ksullivan@uschina.org](mailto:ksullivan@uschina.org)  
**U.S.-China Business Council** (Washington DC) - <https://www.uschina.org/>

**Min Fan** – Executive Director – [mfan@Usheartlandchina.org](mailto:mfan@Usheartlandchina.org)  
**U.S. Heartland China Association** (Missouri) - <https://usheartlandchina.org/>

**Jennifer Schwesig** – Partner & Chair International Practice Group – [jschwesig@atllp.com](mailto:jschwesig@atllp.com)  
**Armstrong Teasdale** (Missouri) – <https://www.armstrongteasdale.com/>

**Gary Kellmann** – CEO – [kellmann.gary@gmail.com](mailto:kellmann.gary@gmail.com)  
**KDK Technology Ltd** (Missouri) - <http://www.kdkmfg.com>; <https://www.zpodsforsleep.com/>

**Session Description:** On-going tensions between the U.S. and China, and increased uncertainty in the trade policy environment have many U.S. companies holding back on exploring sales or investment opportunities in the Chinese market. Join us for this session as we explore what the trade relationship between the U.S. and China really looks like? What does the trade picture look like for states here in the heartland? How should U.S. SMEs respond to the market opportunities and market uncertainties that exist in China? Is the risk worth the benefits? Based on the insights and experiences of the panel members, great conversation is guaranteed to ensue.

**About Al Li, Artis Commercial Capital and Artis Marketing Solutions & the Missouri District Export Council:** Al Li is Founder and CEO of Artis Commercial Capital and Artis Marketing Solutions providing alternative financing and global digital marketing services to SME's across the country. Prior to this, he was Senior Vice President of Global Trade Finance at Regions Bank. He has served over 20 years in the corporate finance and banking space in both for-profit and not-for-profit companies including Monsanto Company (now Bayer), Bank of America, American Century and Covenant Theological Seminary.

Al is also Chair of the Missouri District Export Council, Executive Committee Member and Finance Chair of the University Health Sciences & Pharmacy, former President of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce, Advisory Council of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and serves as Commissioner on the Missouri Human Rights Commission. He is a lifelong St. Louisan

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**About Kyle Sullivan & the U.S. China Business Council:** Kyle Sullivan is vice president of business advisory services at the US-China Business Council based in Washington, DC, where he oversees USCBC's research and analysis for member companies. Founded in 1973, the US-China Business Council (USCBC) is a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit association of more than 270 American companies that do business with China. Our membership includes some of the largest and most iconic American brands, in addition to professional services firms and small- and medium-sized enterprises. We are headquartered in Washington, DC, and maintain offices in Beijing and Shanghai.

Prior to joining USCBC, Kyle served as a vice president in the Albright Stonebridge Group's China practice in Washington, where he advised corporates and portfolio investors on domestic policy and market trends in China and developments in the US-China relationship. Previously, he held roles at the Martin+Crompton Group and APCO Worldwide. Earlier in his career, Kyle worked as manager of business advisory services at USCBC's Shanghai office, where he led policy research projects for US companies in a wide range of sectors.

Kyle earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and an MBA from the University of Washington in Seattle. He is fluent in Mandarin and lived in China for over 12 years. He is a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**About Min Fan & the U.S. Heartland China Association:** Min Fan was born in China and studied at Peking University before immigrating to the United States. Continuing her education at the University of North Carolina she earned a B.A. in Art followed by an M.B.A. at the Kenan-Flagler Business School. Min went on to a successful career in the corporate world culminating in her role as the leader of the Ideation and Innovation Practice at Hewlett Packard (HP) Global Corporate Services. Upon leaving HP she joined the startup ecosystem as an entrepreneur and mentor at two Colorado incubators.

From 2018-2019, Min brought her entrepreneur experience and passion for US and China collaboration to the nonprofit sector as the Executive Director/COO of US China Innovation Alliance (UCIA). Over 100 US companies visited China on sponsored trips as a result of her team's efforts. Prior to joining the US Heartland China Association, Min launched US China Now, a not-for-profit endeavor, which partnered with a broad spectrum of organizations to build a bridge of understanding across the cultural divide between US and China.

The United States Heartland China Association (USHCA) is a 501(c)3 bipartisan organization committed to building bridges and promoting opportunities between the peoples of the Heartland Region (20 states located in the USA between the Great Lakes to the Gulf) and the People's Republic of China. The organizations focus is on trust building efforts connecting government officials; business leaders; educational and community interests with like-minded institutions between the Heartland Region and the People's Republic of China.

**About Jennifer Schwesig & Armstrong Teasdale:** [Jennifer Schwesig](#) serves as the leader of the firm's International practice area. She understands that to be truly competitive, companies must have a business orientation that is global in scope. Jennifer knows that organizations must often bridge the amalgam of local, national and foreign country laws as well as analyze the added risks that accompany any overseas transaction. Her practice centers on counseling both domestic and foreign clients on international corporate compliance issues and business transactions in order to facilitate global expansion and management of overseas operations. Jennifer's background also includes significant experience working with China. Because of her familiarity with the country, its culture and laws, she is in a strong position to help U.S. corporations with investments in China as well as providing compliance training to U.S. multinationals with operations in China.

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**About Gary Kellmann & KDK Technology Ltd:** Gary Kellmann founded KDK Technology Ltd in 2010 as a Hong Kong Limited company and has a current team of 14 people. KDK focuses on managing supply chains in Asia for World Wide SMEs to Fortune 1000 companies. His teams specialize in different categories of supply chain focused on high volume and specialty consumer products, medical, high tech, cut n sew and building materials. With KDK's supply chain services their clients have enjoyed success of over 110 million USD in sales to date.

Kellmann currently sits on the board of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce. He spends time speaking and mentoring at Regional Universities and Meet Ups on blockchain, artificial intelligence, Chinese culture/geopolitics and entrepreneurial startups.

## 3:15 P.M. **Featured Exporter: *Navigating International Regulations & Leveraging Resources***



**Presenter:** **Steve Peirce, President** – [steve@ribus.com](mailto:steve@ribus.com)  
**RIBUS, Inc.** (Missouri; NV Headquarters) – <https://www.ribus.com>

**Session Description:** Throughout their 30+ years in business, RIBUS has learned how to leverage available resources and networks to navigate hurdles and opportunities. From forming the Clean Label Alliance to utilizing local organizations like Food Export Midwest, Missouri Department of Agriculture and others, RIBUS shares their lessons learned and how to use relationships and resources to help grow your business.

**About Steve Peirce:** Steve is an entrepreneur with a deep respect for science, which fits extremely well into today's competitive food and supplement ingredient industry. A graduate in Agricultural Business from Louisiana State University, his background of formal education blended with corporate experiences provided a unique platform to launch RIBUS 31 years ago. Steve brings a global perspective of the demand for "clean label" ingredients and excipients. He loves people and his wealth of business experiences provide a unique insight to solving problems around the world.

**About RIBUS:** Founded in 1992 as a functional ingredient manufacturing company, RIBUS Inc. supplies natural and organic plant-based ingredients to companies in over 45 countries. As the Original Clean Label Ingredient Company™, RIBUS produces non-GMO, natural, organic, vegan, kosher and gluten-free ingredients for the food, beverage, pet and dietary supplement industries. Over the years, RIBUS has received several new ingredient recognitions from industry publications, as well as the below notable awards:

- Editor's Choice Ingredient: Nu-MAG | Engredea/ExpoWest – 2018
- Fastest Growing Small Business in the Dietary Supplement Industry | NBJ Summit – 2018
- Ingredient of the Show: Nu-FLOW | Expo West – 2016
- Missouri Agricultural Exporter of the Year | Missouri – 2011
- Entrepreneur Magazine | Innovator of the Year (Food) – 1994

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**DAY 2: Thursday, October 26, 2023**

**8:45 A.M. Featured Exporter: *Building & Sustaining a Successful International Sales Presence***



EST 1934  
**ROCKLIN**  
MANUFACTURING CO.

**Presenter:** Ross Rocklin, President – [rossr@rocklinmfg.com](mailto:rossr@rocklinmfg.com)  
Rocklin Manufacturing Co. (Iowa) – <https://rocklinmanufacturing.com/>

**Session Description:** Join Ross Rocklin, President of Rocklin Manufacturing Co, a third-generation family-owned business based in Sioux City Iowa, as he shares seven lessons learned and recommendations from Rocklin’s export journey to date. With a 90-year operating history and strong network of customers globally, see how creativity, relationships, and resiliency rank among a list of key success factors that have contributed to Rocklin’s longevity and success.

**About Ross Rocklin:** Ross Rocklin is President of Rocklin Manufacturing, a third-generation family business based in Sioux City, Iowa, that manufactures and distributes portable industrial electronic equipment. As the company enters its 90<sup>th</sup> year in business, Ross is focused on leading the company’s efforts to grow and innovate. Prior to joining Rocklin Manufacturing, Ross held roles in strategy and finance at United Airlines and received a BA from Duke University and an MBA from NYU-Stern.

**About Rocklin Manufacturing Co.:** Founded in 1934 in Sioux City, Iowa, Rocklin Manufacturing is a family-owned business that manufactures and distributes portable industrial electronics products to conquer inefficiency, including carbide application equipment to minimize wear and maximize grip, micro welders to repair molds and dies, and dot peen and laser marking equipment to optimize traceability. As a small company with niche products, Rocklin long ago recognized the need to expand its footprint beyond U.S. borders, and as such has forged 20 international sales partnerships and exported to over 50 countries to advance the company’s growth objectives.



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**9:30 A.M** Featured Exporter Panel: *Global Logistics: Keeping an Eye on the Horizon*



**Moderator:** Laurie Anne Pieper, Ph. D., CGBP - Assistant State Director - [pieper@ksbdc.net](mailto:pieper@ksbdc.net)  
Kansas Small Business Development Centers (Kansas) -

**Panelists:** Caitlin Murphy - CEO - [caitlin@shipglobalgateway.com](mailto:caitlin@shipglobalgateway.com)  
Global Gateway Logistics (Missouri) - <https://www.shipglobalgateway.com/>

Brian Ziha – President - [brian.ziha@customsexpress.com](mailto:brian.ziha@customsexpress.com)  
Customs Express, Inc. (Missouri) - [www.customsexpress.com](http://www.customsexpress.com)

Tom Dustman, CGBP - Director of International Sales – [tdustman@sunnen.com](mailto:tdustman@sunnen.com)  
Sunnen Products Company (Missouri) - <https://www.sunnen.com/>

**Session Description:** Companies engaged in global trade, along with supply chain professionals, have faced a rollercoaster of events and upheavals over the past couple of years. As has been well documented and discussed, a perfect storm of events to include the pandemic and increasing geopolitical tensions have caused significant, ongoing disruptions to supply chains and product flow across the globe. Looking towards the future, what lies ahead? As freight rates return to pre-pandemic levels, what can (and must) SMEs do to adapt to better position themselves not only to survive, but to thrive amidst continually shifting conditions? Join us for this session to gain insights and perspectives from a group of panel members who are monitoring trends to better provide guidance.

**About Laurie Pieper & the Kansas SBDC:** Dr. Laurie Pieper is the Assistant State Director of the Kansas SBDC and plays an active role in program development. Her previous experience includes having served as VP of Entrepreneurship & Small Business with GO Topeka, Director of the BRITE Center at the Kansas SBDC at Washburn University, and Tech Director of America's SBDC Iowa. She is a NASBITE CBPB and serves on NASBITE International's Board of Governors. She is a former member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Council. She earned her Ph. D. at UCLA and has taught at UCLA, University of Oregon, and Kansas State University. She enjoys working with small businesses to help them think globally and develop international business plans.

**About Caitlin Murphy & Global Gateway Logistics:** Caitlin Murphy is the founder and CEO of Global Gateway Logistics, a global freight forwarding and NVOCC firm based in St. Louis, Missouri. She received a BSBA in International Business from the University of Missouri and attended Peking University in Beijing. During her

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12-year career in domestic and global logistics, Ms. Murphy managed an extensive portfolio of large scale domestic and global logistics projects.

In 2017, Caitlin founded Global Gateway Logistics offering services in global maritime, air, and ground transportation for an array of commodities. Her extensive experience in the logistics industry and firsthand knowledge of global shipping markets and fundamentals have assisted many firms in strategizing their global supply chains. The firm's mission is to simplify global logistics through a hybrid approach of customer service and technology.

In 2022, Murphy was chosen by Governor Mike Parson for the Missouri Supply Chain Task Force. She was also awarded one of the Most Influential Business Women 2022 by the St. Louis Business Journal and chosen as one of the two women from St. Louis for the Business Journals Top 100 List.

Caitlin was added to the Board of Directors at Plymouth Industrial REIT, Inc. (NYSE: PLYM), a real estate investment trust focused on the acquisition, ownership and management of industrial real estate. She also serves on the board of Camp Circle Star, a nonprofit organization that provides that provides summer camp opportunities for children with disabilities throughout the region. She resides in Saint Louis with her family.

**About Brian Ziha & Customs Express, Inc.:** Brian Ziha is the president of Customs Express, Inc., founded in 2000 as a "hands-on" importing and customs brokerage solution for importers. He graduated with a BSBA in Marketing from Saint Louis University in 1997. He has helped serve many very large importers throughout the United States with their customs needs. Brian helps create a better understanding of the importing process for many Importers. He brings to clients a detailed understanding of the many other government agencies that come into play when importing, including Agriculture, FDA, EPA, and DOT. Food products and additives are one of his specialties.

Customs Express, Inc. has a wide variety of clientele, from large corporations clearing shipments daily, to Individuals simply trying to get their personal effects through Customs. The companywork with all entities through the supply chain to ensure the appropriate clearances are received from the various government agencies involved in the Importing process. Customs Express works with importers to ensure the proper declarations are made to US Customs to ensure accuracy of data, and make sure all requirements are met. We pride ourselves on our communication and ask probing questions to ensure maximum understanding of the importing process.

**About Tom Dustman & Sunnen Products Company:** Tom Dustman is the International Sales Director for Sunnen Products Company, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Sunnen is a family owned business celebrating 95 years as a leading supplier to the machine tool industry. Sunnen has exported for more than 80 years and has a global network of subsidiaries and independent distributors focused on precision bore finishing.

Tom has been involved with sales leadership at Sunnen for over 20 years and currently directs the sales efforts in the Americas while supporting the company's international sales channel. As part of Sunnen's global expansion program he coordinated the creation of joint ventures in China and Brazil and established direct sales in Canada on behalf of the company. Additionally, over the course of his career Mr. Dustman has shared his knowledge of bore finishing and international business via numerous speaking engagements in various countries around the world.

Tom is a past chair of the Missouri District Export Council and a current board member of the National Association of District Export Councils. He has served on the Department of Commerce Investment Advisory Council. Tom is a graduate of the University of Missouri–Rolla with a degree in Ceramic Engineering. He and his wife, Allyson, reside outside of St. Louis, Missouri.

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**10:45 A.M** Featured Exporter Panel: *International Travel & Tourism: A World of Opportunities*



**Panelists:** **Karen Ballard**, Global Team Leader for Travel & Tourism - [Karen.Ballard@trade.gov](mailto:Karen.Ballard@trade.gov)  
**U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service (Idaho)** - <https://www.trade.gov/>

**Catherine Neville**, VP of Communications - [CNeville@explorestlouis.com](mailto:CNeville@explorestlouis.com)  
**Explore St. Louis (Missouri)** - <https://explorestlouis.com/>

**Renee Eichelberger** – Director of Leisure Travel - [reichelberger@explorestlouis.com](mailto:reichelberger@explorestlouis.com)  
**Explore St. Louis (Missouri)** - <https://explorestlouis.com/>

**Jenny Wilson** – Managing Director, Lender Accounts - [jwilson@visitkc.com](mailto:jwilson@visitkc.com)  
**VISIT KC (Missouri)** - <https://www.visitkc.com/>

**Moderator: Warren Anderson** – VP of Partnerships & Events – [Warren.Anderson@trade.gov](mailto:Warren.Anderson@trade.gov)  
**U.S. Commercial Service – St. Louis (Missouri)** - <https://www.trade.gov/>

**Session Description:** The United States has long been a top destination for global travel and tourism. In 2022, the U.S. welcomed 50.9 million international visitors, up from 22.1 million in 2021. Spending by international visitors also grew, reaching USD 164.5 billion, a 98.3 percent increase compared to the previous year. The *2022 National Travel and Tourism Strategy* outlines an ambitious five-year goal of increasing American jobs by attracting and welcoming 90 million international visitors by 2027 with an estimated spending of USD 279 billion. Join us for this session as industry leaders discuss the world of opportunities that lies ahead for company's and communities looking to capitalize on international trade and tourism.

**About Karen Ballard & the U.S. Commercial Service:** Karen is the Global Team Leader for Travel & Tourism for the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service and an International Trade Specialist at the Boise U.S. Export Assistance Center where she helps Idaho businesses export goods and attract international visitors.

Prior to returning to Idaho in May 2021, Karen was the Commercial Attaché to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Before Buenos Aires, Karen was posted to Sydney, Australia where she looked after the Travel & Tourism portfolio. Karen joined the Commercial Service in May 2014 and was assigned to the Las Vegas Export Assistance Center where she also focused on travel and tourism.

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Before joining the Commercial Service, Karen worked for the Idaho Department of Commerce, first as an International Tourism Trade Specialist and then as the Administrator of the Idaho State Tourism office. Karen served as chair of the Western States Tourism Policy Council working closely with BrandUSA, U.S. Travel Association and many federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**About Catherine Neville & Explore St. Louis:** Catherine (Cat) Neville is an award-winning creator. She has launched a number of media platforms during her 20-year career and today is the Vice President of Communications for Explore St. Louis, the travel and tourism arm of the region's CVB. In this role, she acts as liaison between the organization and the media, working to bring recognition and publicity to the region's tourism sector.

She is also producer and host of Emmy-nominated and M.F.K. Fischer Prize-winning tasteMAKERS, a television series that debuted on PBS stations nationwide in October 2018. The show explores the local food movement and is distributed through American Public Television. Her hour-long documentary, Winemaking in Missouri, was released in 2022 and nominated for an Emmy award in 2023.

The St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission (DBA Explore St. Louis) is the official destination marketing organization responsible for selling St. Louis City and St. Louis County as a convention, meeting and leisure destination, and the operator of the America's Center Convention Complex. Explore St. Louis works to attract citywide conventions, one-hotel meetings, sporting events, group tours and individual leisure travelers to St. Louis in collaboration with more than 750 regional Partners including hotels, restaurants, attractions and service providers.

**About Renee Eichelberger:** Renee M. Eichelberger, CTP, CTIS, CSTP is the Director of Leisure Travel Sales at Explore St. Louis. She is responsible for conducting domestic and international leisure travel sales activities by targeting tour operators, third-party intermediaries, and general consumers. She takes point for all international marketing and sales efforts for Explore St. Louis. Since 2017 she has taken point for the St. Louis Film Office. She works with production companies and location scouts to assist in filming in the St. Louis area and is a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI).

Renee has served on the board of directors of the National Tour Association (NTA), Missouri Travel Council. She has also co-chaired and chaired Missouri Travel Alliance's Missouri Bank Travel Exchange & Missouri Group Travel Exchange. She has served on the Advisory Board for the Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA) and the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace Advisory Committee and is a current board member of the Missouri Motion Media Association (MOMMA) dba Film In MO.

Ms. Eichelberger has received the Missouri Division of Tourism's Ambassador Award, the St. Louis Area Attractions Association's Spirit of St. Louis Award, and the Missouri Travel Council's Gil Elmore Service Award. In 2017 she was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award from the National Tour Association during their Annual Travel Exchange. She was also instrumental in St. Louis hosting SYTA Summit 2010, ABA's Marketplace 2015, NTA's Travel Exchange 2017, and Travel South USA International Showcase 2019.

**About Jenny Wilson & VISIT KC:** Jenny Wilson has spent over 20 years in the hospitality industry. Her experience includes the Walt Disney Company, Marriott and Hyatt Hotels. Jenny has been with Visit KC for 17 years holding roles as the Director of Sales and Services, Director of International Leisure Sales and most recently Vice President of Partnerships & Events and International Leisure Sales. Jenny has a passion for all the things travel & tourism related and is a champion for Kansas City.

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## 2023 Outstanding Exporter Honorees



**AEROMOD (Kansas)** - <https://aeromod.com/>

**Company Representative:** Andrew Ryan, General Manager – [Andrew@AeroMod.com](mailto:Andrew@AeroMod.com), Ph. 785-537-4995

**Company Overview:** Aero-Mod specializes in providing custom-designed cutting edge municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities. The company's manufactured plants are well suited for export as they are scalable and custom built for each application. Modular scalability allows small to large capacity plants to be manufactured in the U.S. and exported worldwide in standard 40 foot containers.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** The company was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Kansas Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). They were the 2023 recipient of the Kansas Small Business Development Centers Exporting Business Award.



**Bison, Inc. (Nebraska)** - <https://bisoninc.com>

**Company Representative:** Jennifer Rawlinson, Corporate Director of Marketing & Communications – [jrawlinson@bisoninc.com](mailto:jrawlinson@bisoninc.com), Ph. 402-817-1295

**Company Overview:** Bison is a sporting goods manufacturer in Lincoln, Nebraska, and has been exporting since the early 1990s but recently prioritized growth in international markets thanks to the guidance of our new International Sales Manager who assists Bison and two of our associated companies. The company is exhibiting in its first international trade show this October, have translated brochures into Spanish and Arabic, and will be launching a new international-facing website with translation capabilities this Fall by utilizing STEP grants. Last year, we partnered with SBDC to investigate South Korea as a market and recently started working with the U.S. Commercial Service to find new partners in Colombia and Saudi Arabia.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** Bison, Inc. received recognition in 2023 from the Lincoln, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce as Manufacturer of the Year. The company was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Nebraska SBDC.

# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT



**DOT Training Solutions LLC (Kansas)** - <https://dottrainingsolutions.com/>

**Company Representative:** Matt Freeman, President & Founder – [matt@dottrainingsolutions.com](mailto:matt@dottrainingsolutions.com),  
Ph. 573-416-8203

**Company Overview:** DOT training solutions operates on both a national and global scale to provide consulting and training services. The company is staffed by a variety of industry and enforcement professionals whose expertise and prior experience gives clients insight into the complete compliance picture.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** DOT Training Solutions LLC was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Kansas Small Business Development Centers (SBDC).

*Heritage*  
**TRACTOR**



**Heritage Tractor (Kansas)** - <https://heritagetractor.com/>

**Company Representative:** Kurt Miller, Used Equipment Remarketing Manager –  
[jganoung@heritagetractor.com](mailto:jganoung@heritagetractor.com), Ph. 913-370-5010

**Company Overview:** Heritage Tractor started working on export in 2020, they expected Covid to impact their used sales in North America dramatically and wanted to grow their export business to fill some gaps. Manufacturing delays on the new side spun that in a direction they least expected and their Used Sales since Covid have been strong. Heritage Tractor continued on the path to grow their export business long-term, and it has continued to grow. The growth wouldn't have been possible without help from Pinki, Kelly and others who have guided them along the way. The company looks forward to continued growth in the future.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** Heritage Tractor was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the U.S. Commercial Service Kansas City Office.

# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT



**Preferred Popcorn LLC (Nebraska)** - <https://www.preferredpopcorn.com/>

**Company Representative:** Thomas Peace, International Sales Manager - [Thomas@preferredpopcorn.com](mailto:Thomas@preferredpopcorn.com), Ph: 402-604-5279

**Company Overview:** Preferred Popcorn LLC strives to produce the highest quality popcorn in the world and provide the best customer service to go along with it. The company currently exports to over 70 countries across the globe. As a milestone event, Preferred Popcorn was involved in the first successful venture to grow popcorn in India for the Indian market.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** In 2018, Preferred Popcorn LLC was recognized as the EXIM Bank Small Business of the Year. The company was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Nebraska SBDC.



**RIBUS, Inc. (Missouri)** - <https://www.ribus.com/>

**Company Representative:** Steve Peirce, President – [steve@ribus.com](mailto:steve@ribus.com), ph. 314-727-4287 ext. 105

**Company Overview:** Founded in 1992 as a functional ingredient manufacturing company, RIBUS Inc. supplies natural and organic plant-based ingredients to companies in over 45 countries. As the Original Clean Label Ingredient Company™, RIBUS produces non-GMO, natural, organic, vegan, kosher and gluten-free ingredients for the food, beverage, pet and dietary supplement industries.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** RIBUS, Inc. was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Food Export Association of the Midwest. Over the years, RIBUS has received several new ingredient recognitions from industry publications, as well as the below notable awards:

- Editor's Choice Ingredient: Nu-MAG | Engredea/ExpoWest – 2018
- Fastest Growing Small Business in the Dietary Supplement Industry | NBJ Summit – 2018
- Ingredient of the Show: Nu-FLOW | Expo West – 2016
- Missouri Agricultural Exporter of the Year | Missouri – 2011
- Entrepreneur Magazine | Innovator of the Year (Food) – 1994

# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT



**Rocklin Manufacturing Co. (Iowa)**- <https://rocklinmanufacturing.com/>

**Company Representative:** Ross Rocklin, President – [RossR@rocklinmanufacturingco.com](mailto:RossR@rocklinmanufacturingco.com),  
Ph: 712-255-6046

**Company Overview:** Founded in 1934 in Sioux City, Iowa, Rocklin Manufacturing is a family-owned business that manufactures and distributes portable industrial electronics products to conquer inefficiency, including carbide application equipment to minimize wear and maximize grip, micro welders to repair molds and dies, and dot peen and laser marking equipment to optimize traceability. As a small company with niche products, Rocklin long ago recognized the need to expand its footprint beyond U.S. borders, and as such has forged 20 international sales partnerships and exported to over 50 countries to advance the company's growth objectives.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** Rocklin Manufacturing Co. was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Iowa Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

## TheTeleDentists®

**The TeleDentists, LLC (Kansas)** - <https://www.theteledentists.com/>

**Company Representative:** Maria Kunstadter, CEO - [mariak@theteledentists.com](mailto:mariak@theteledentists.com), Ph: 888-641-5505 or 816-550-0388

**Company Overview:** The TeleDentists provides 24/7 online dental care to people when and where they need it. The company's unique platform allows users the opportunity to talk to a dentist online anytime by mobile app, phone or the web. TeleDentists is currently export their SaaS teledental program to Mexico and Latin America, with full program launch dates pending.

**Export Awards/Recognition:** The TeleDentists, LLC was nominated as a 2023 Mid-America Trade Summit Outstanding Exporter Honoree by the Kansas Small Business Development Centers (SBDC).



# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT

## 2022 Outstanding Exporter Honorees

- DataLocker - Kansas
- EWR Radar Systems – Missouri
- MSSC LLC - Illinois
- OTT Enterprises LLC - Missouri
- Save the Girls Touchscreen Purses - Illinois
- White River Hardwoods - Arkansas
- SMART Reproduction - Arkansas

## 2021 Outstanding Exporter Honorees

- Alliance Rubber Company – Arkansas
- Alpha Energy & Electric – Missouri
- Bhatt International – Missouri
- Bruckman Rubber Co. – Nebraska
- Earth Science Laboratories – Arkansas
- Franklin Strap - Tennessee
- HCI ENERGY – Kansas
- Holtec Gas Systems – Missouri
- ISS Inc. – Illinois
- Leather Brothers – Arkansas
- Lubrication Engineers – Kansas
- RADIOLOGY-Planning – Missouri
- SharkOFF – Kansas
- Steco Corp (Tap Magic) – Arkansas
- Superior Products International (SPI Coatings) – Kansas
- Ultra-Tech Aerospace – Kansas

## 2020 Outstanding Exporter Honorees

- Ag World International Corp - Illinois
- Allen Engineering Corporation - Arkansas
- Ameroc Export, Inc. - Illinois
- Champion Laboratories, Inc. - Illinois
- Dazor Lighting Technology, LLC - Missouri
- ECOJOHN - Arkansas
- Global Aviation Technologies, LLC – Kansas
- Grasshopper Company (Moridge Manufacturing Inc.) – Kansas
- InnovaPrep - Missouri
- IVS (International Veterinary Supplies), Inc. - Iowa
- MotorParts Nation - Missouri
- Oscarware, Inc. - Kentucky

# MID-AMERICA TRADE SUMMIT

## 2020 Outstanding Exporter Honorees cont'd

- Pacific Supply Co - Missouri
- PT Coupling - Oklahoma
- Pyramid Foods – Kansas
- Sawyer Manufacturing Company - Oklahoma
- SEVO Systems – Kansas
- Stauder Technologies - Missouri
- Two Rivers Fisheries, Inc. - Kentucky
- Vortex Surgical - Missouri
- WW Cedar - Missouri

## 2019 Outstanding Exporter Honorees

- 4B Components Ltd – Illinois
- Double D Mats – Kansas
- Elastec – Illinois
- Hayes Abrasives, Nc. – Illinois
- Kuder, Inc. - Iowa
- Link Electronics – Missouri
- Serola Biomechanical, Inc. – Illinois
- SEV-REND High Performance Packaging – Illinois
- Sunnen Products Company – Missouri
- U.S. International Foods – Missouri

## 2018 Outstanding Exporter Honorees

- Brewer Science – Missouri
- CCK Strategies – Oklahoma
- Clayton Agri-Marketing – Missouri
- Coneqtec Universal – Missouri
- Diamond V – Iowa
- Missouri Pacific Lumber – Missouri
- SCD Probiotic – Missouri
- SEV-REND High Performance Packaging – Illinois
- Smart Controls – Illinois
- Sunnen Products Company – Missouri
- TriCorps Technologies – Oklahoma
- Vacuworx – Oklahoma

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