



National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce
الغرفة التجارية العربية الأمريكية الوطنية

U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER ORGANIZES ROAD SHOW TO CHICAGO FOR U.S. SENIOR COMMERCIAL OFFICERS

Event in Midwest Highlights Breadth of Business Opportunities in the MENA Region

The National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has just completed a “Road Show” visit to Chicago for U.S. Senior Commercial Officers (SCOs) to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. SCOs representing U.S. interests in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates met with over 70 American companies in the “Windy City,” NUSACC’s second high-level event in Chicago in the past month. (Click [here](#) to read about NUSACC’s Chicago luncheon, co-organized with the U.S.-Qatar Business Council, coinciding with the launch of new non-stop flights from Doha on Qatar Airways.)

“The National U.S.-Arab Chamber is proud of our longstanding partnership with the U.S. Commercial Service, and this Road Show to the Heartland is the most recent of our cooperative ventures,” said David Hamod, President & CEO of NUSACC.

NUSACC Executive Vice President Curt Silvers added, “U.S. trade with the MENA region continues to grow strongly. NUSACC’s research shows U.S. exports of goods and services to the region reaching \$167 billion by 2015, up from \$84 billion last year. Despite political uncertainties, total market demand is expected to exceed \$1.3 trillion dollars by 2015.”



Ann Bacher, Jane Kitson, Curt Silvers, John Simmons, and Sanford Owens address Chicago businesses.

“We welcome our American friends from North Africa and the Middle East to Illinois – a state with a long history of international trade and economic opportunities,” said Doug Whitley, President and CEO of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce. “This visit is an important reminder of the growing possibilities that can end up creating greater economic connections between our two regions.”



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The visit began with a breakfast briefing focused on opportunities throughout the MENA region for Chicago companies. The breakfast was sponsored by Etihad Airways, based in Abu Dhabi (UAE), and was organized by NUSACC in partnership with the U.S. Commercial Service, the Arab American Business & Professional Association, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, and the Illinois District Export Council.



SCO Delegates' site visit to Navistar Inc.

"A forum of this type, covering so many important countries in the Middle East, is of immense interest to Mid-West companies, particularly Chicago businesses," said Talat Othman, President of the Arab American Business & Professional Association. "Chicago houses the headquarters of major companies, including those in manufacturing, infrastructure, architecture, finance, professional services, and agriculture, to name just a few. The markets in the Middle East are open for business with minimum restrictions on foreign investments."

The SCO's identified opportunities throughout the countries they represent. Jane Kitson highlighted the openness of Moroccan society as a benefit to American businesses. Waste management was specifically mentioned as a sector with many opportunities for American businesses. John Simmons pointed to infrastructure as a large market in the UAE, citing the Emirates' intention to invest \$90 billion in infrastructure, including \$7 billion towards a port and a \$5 billion airport extension. Aircraft are the UAE's largest import sector, with event host Etihad the country's fastest growing airline. Sanford Owens emphasized Jordan's ICT sector, identifying it as Jordan's 3rd largest sector that accounts for 14% of the country's GDP. Ann Bacher identified Egypt's best sectors to include safety and security equipment, infrastructure, IT, and conventional and renewable energy. Added Ann Bacher, Regional Senior Commercial Officer for North Africa, Lebanon and Jordan, "The NUSACC program in Chicago brought business opportunities for markets in North Africa and the Gulf to companies willing to take on the challenges of these markets for the obvious rewards."

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In the course of two days, in addition to hosting the Breakfast Briefing, NUSACC also organized site visits to select companies in the Chicago area looking to expand their operations in the MENA region. Among the companies visited were Navistar (transportation equipment), Now Foods (food and health products), Spectrum Technologies, Inc. (agribusiness monitoring), and Engis (industrial drilling and polishing). Sanford Owens, U.S. Senior Commercial Officer in Jordan, said, "The outreach to mid-western companies interested in the Jordan market set the stage for future trade opportunities and investment. The Chicago visit organized by NUSACC proved valuable for the SCO delegates and US companies looking to use Jordan as a hub to enter the Gulf and Iraq markets."

Jim Emme, President of Now Foods, commended the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service and NUSACC for joint efforts to promote American trade with the Middle East. "It's a partnership," said Emme, "and without your efforts and sacrifices, our efforts would be less successful."



Jim Emme (third from left) welcomes delegates to NOW Foods.

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A major hub for industry and infrastructure, the Chicago metropolitan area has the third largest science and engineering workforce of any metropolitan area in the nation and boasts the second largest central business district in the United States. The city is also home to major financial and futures exchanges, including the Chicago Stock Exchange, the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE), and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

The State of Illinois exported \$1.6 billion in goods to the Arab world in 2012, according to U.S. Government data, up from \$1.26 billion in 2011. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are the Arab world's largest trading partners with Illinois. Top exports from that state include chemicals, fabricated metal products, non-electrical machinery, and transportation equipment.

According to recent research conducted by the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, the seven nations represented on the Chicago Road Show are responsible for almost 50 percent of all U.S. trade in goods to the Arab world. The United Arab Emirates is the top importer in this group, purchasing \$22.5 billion in U.S. merchandise last year. Egypt comes next at \$5.4 billion, followed by Morocco at \$2.2 billion. (To access more information regarding U.S. goods exports to these nations, click [here](#).)



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NUSACC hosted its second business event this month in the city of Chicago, an international trade hub for the Midwest.

"NUSACC is privileged to organize this Road Show for Senior Commercial Officers based in the MENA region," concluded Curt Silvers, Executive Vice President of the U.S.-Arab Chamber. "This trip is part of our Chamber's mission to offer coast-to-coast service in support of U.S.-Arab commercial relations, and it would not have been possible without strong support from our local partners and the U.S. Commercial Service. The Road Show revolved around these Senior Commercial Officers, and we commend them for their enthusiasm and strong commitment to carry these commercial messages to the business community in Chicago."