



International Informant

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Informing you about Oklahoma State's international trade and development efforts

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 8 • 3:30 p.m. : Wes Watkins Lectureship
- Spring Break '12: South Africa, Ghana, Togo
- May '12: Moldova, Tajikistan

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 Wes Watkins Center for International Trade and Development

A Message from Dr. Mike Dicks

“I Hope You Will Change” was the News Years greeting in Sierra Leone. The thought is that when you're at the bottom, change can only be a good thing. To wish someone change is to wish them an improved and happier life. I haven't heard it put better anywhere in the world. This is a very impassioned greeting that personifies the need for change to improve one's life.

Every where you look, change is occurring in Sierra Leone. There are more foods in the market, beans and peas particularly, and this means better nutrition in a protein deficient diet. New wood industries, more plumbing wholesalers and retailers, and a new juice processor has been established just down the road from our research station.

And speaking of our research station, we now have real beds and mattresses for 21 people, running water for showers and toilets, and drip irrigation for the garden at the turn of a valve thanks to the recent OSU team. For the students who visited or stayed in this facility in the years past, the station is no longer typical of current living environments. Now the facility has become one of the nicer places to stay in the country.

The new juice factory offers a new and much needed market for pineapples and mangoes. During the peak season the supply exceeds the demand, price is low and many

of the fruits go to waste. Now the demand exceeds the supply and there is a new opportunity for farmers to expand acreage of high value crops. We plan to return in May to begin production of five irrigated acres of pineapples at a farm near the Njala and OSU universities research station. A new well was drilled by the OSU team with the help of three NGOs, Willamette, 4HIM and One-Seventeen. We will also begin the construction of a nursery and develop the demonstration plots of family gardens for complete nutrition.

We have one OSU student, Jesse Cruce, headed for a high school in Wellington, Sierra Leone to help poor students get access to and education with computers and calculators and assist them in preparing for their West African exams and transition to college (should they pass the



A Message from Dr. Dicks Con't.

exams with sufficiently high marks). We have another OSU student, Jesi Lay, headed for Njala University for research on rain water catchment and storage systems.

The research, service and business opportunities in Sierra Leone, like other countries with developing economies, are enormous. In addition to Sierra Leone, we have projects in Togo, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Moldova, Guatemala and Costa Rica awaiting people capable of providing leadership to the local communities. Some of these proj-

ects have funding and some do not. If you have students who want to get involved with a service project, send them our way. If you want to



help students who want to go, but are constrained by finances, please consider donating to the Mathew

25:40 scholarship fund. Currently this scholarship provides four \$1000 scholarships to students doing service projects in developing countries.

Finally, Paul Weisenfeld from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will be on campus February 8 and will deliver the Wes Watkins Lecture at 3:30 p.m. in the Wes Watkins Center. I would encourage you to attend this seminar if you have any interest in international development.

Paul Weisenfeld of USAID to Speak in Distinguished Lectureship Series

Mr. Paul Weisenfeld, head of the Bureau for Food Security at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will be the next presenter in the Wes Watkins Lectureship Series. Weisenfeld will present "The Future of Global Food Security," highlighting President Obama's Feed the Future global hunger and food security initiative, on Feb. 8, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. in the Wes Watkins Center. The event is free and open to the public, and is especially suitable for students and those interested in food security, international opportunities and non-governmental organizations.

Created through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, USAID is the United States' principal international development agency, devoted to easing suffering, spreading prosperity and increasing security in the developing world. Weisenfeld is responsible for overseeing USAID's agricultural development efforts geared toward improving global food security and reducing poverty and undernutrition, which are the primary goals of Feed the Future.

A minister counselor in the Senior Foreign Service, he previously served as senior deputy assistant administrator of the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, coordinator of the USAID Haiti Task Team following the January 2010 earthquake in that country, and mission director in Peru and Zimbabwe, among other assignments.

"Recognizing the link between the one billion people facing chronic food insecurity and global security, USAID has a major focus on agricultural and rural development. Paul Weisenfeld is one of the U.S. government's leaders in this effort and I hope that anyone interested in or involved in international development, agriculture or reducing global conflicts will attend the lecture," said Dr. Mike Dicks, Wes and Lou Watkins chair of international trade and development. "Participants can get a first-hand account of USAID's international programs and strategies from one of the U.S. government's most knowledgeable international development professionals."

"I look forward to speaking to the Oklahoma State University community about the status of global food security, its importance on the international agenda and what we in the U.S. government are doing to reduce the number of resource-poor and hungry around the world," said Weisenfeld.

The Wes Watkins Distinguished Lectureship Series is an endowed lectureship honoring former U.S. Representative Wes Watkins. The lectureship series is designed to assist and encourage Oklahoma business owners in developing and expanding their economic opportunities. Students and community members also stand to benefit from the knowledge and diversity provided by the lecturers. Congressman Watkins, an OSU graduate, is committed to outreach, international trade and the economic development of Oklahoma. For more information, contact Dr. Mike Dicks at 405-744-7127.

For more information about USAID, visit www.usaid.gov.

Is There a Duty to Export?

Obviously there are duties when exporting, but I'm not referring to "duty" within the context of tariffs. The question rephrased is; can Oklahoma businesses afford to ignore the opportunities of international trade? Should they view foreign sales as a requisite activity, a duty and not just a peripheral function?

Since the onset of the Great Recession, Oklahoma's economy has slowly recovered to its pre-recession standing and Oklahoma will continue to recover, but it must aggressively pursue new avenues to create a stronger economy for our state. One approach of accelerating the flywheel of Oklahoma production and job creation is to pursue new markets for its products and services. Surprisingly, 95 percent of the world's customers live outside of the United States borders and only 1 percent of small businesses are exporting. For a business to realize its full potential it must acknowledge the opportunities that are abundant in countries like Brazil, Chile, Vietnam, China, India - not to mention the advantages of trading with countries with which we have signed free trade agreements like Australia, Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Jordan and Columbia.

Economists agree that exporting is a pathway to improving our national economic resiliency. The National Export Initiative, established by President Obama in 2010, set the goal to double U.S. exports by 2014. Here in Oklahoma, we exported 5.4 billion dollars in 2010 and will need to expand that number by 19 percent annually in order to achieve this monumental task. I use the term "monumental" lightly, because the U.S. has already achieved a 15 percent increase in U.S. exports since 2010. Through the entrepreneurial efforts of Oklahoma businesses, I believe we have

an incredible chance of capturing market share in developed and developing economies around the globe.

Exporting does present a degree of liability, but the upside overshadows the challenges. By tapping in to foreign markets a business is able to extend product life cycles, diversify its customer base, stabilize market fluctuations, off-load excess production capacity, and improve its bottom line without assuming excessive capital liabilities. Whether exporting directly or indirectly, carefully choose the market entry strategy that complements your cash position, risk tolerance and tacit trade competence. Take advantage of the wide array of support services that are in place to assist you in your export efforts, whether you have successfully exported to a foreign market and are seeking out new markets or have yet to fulfill your first international order.

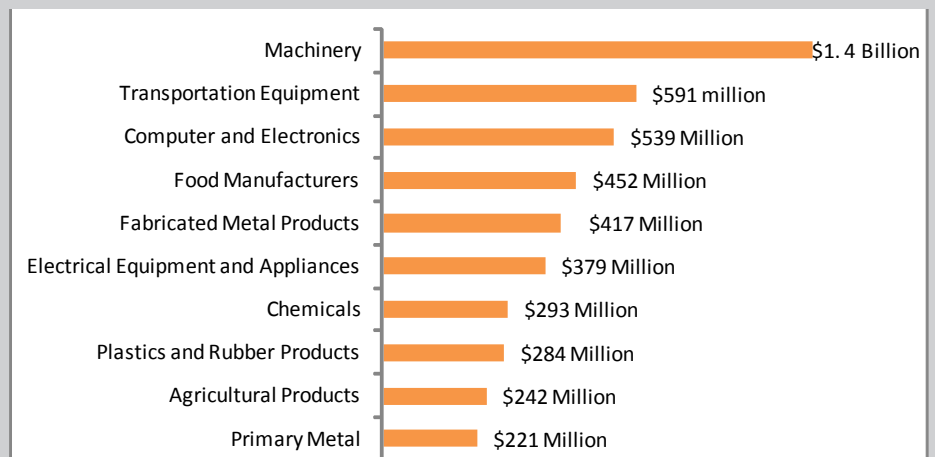
Here at the Wes Watkins Center for International Trade and Development we are focused on partnering with Oklahoma businesses to improve their position in foreign

markets by providing personalized export counseling, customized market research, access to federal and state export programs, strategy consulting, export compliance audits and trade leads. The staff members here are well experienced in international business development and export compliance and we welcome you to visit us at our office at the Wes Watkins Center on the OSU campus.



Justin Hazzard
International Trade Specialist

Top 10 Export Categories for Oklahoma in 2010*



*export data for 2011 was not released as of print.

Thinking Like an Engineer

No matter the situation, learning to work in a new environment and with a group of strangers is challenging. However, learning to work in Sierra Leone with the people there had its own special challenges. I am not new to working in third-world countries.

Last spring break, I spent a little over a week in Honduras implementing bio-sand filters in a community. Although I did the same type of work in Sierra Leone, the experience was completely different. In Sierra Leone, our goal was not to construct a large number of bio-sand filters, but to teach a group of students from the local university, Njala University, how to construct them.

This was the first time I had ever worked with people who did not think like I did. I am an engineering student. Most of the people I know and work with think in the same technical way about problems. We have been trained since the beginning of our education to approach problems logically and to think about what we are going to do before we do it. It has been drilled into our heads “measure twice, cut once”.

However, the people I worked with in Sierra Leone were different. They had a lot of energy but they did not think like engineers. Everyone we worked with, and especially the students, wanted to learn how to construct the bio-sand filters. They would not let us “Americans” do the work. They wanted to do it and they picked things up quickly. However, when there was a problem, it developed rapidly. Problems were hard to catch because the Njala students did not think about problems the same way as we are taught to think about them. They saw a problem, thought of a solution and immediately started trying to fix it. Unfortunately, their “solu-



Students from Njala University and OSU showing off their work

tion” caused the problem to become worse.

This made me realize the difference between engineers and non-engineers. Engineering students have been taught to follow a pattern when looking at a problem. You brainstorm, and then you take all the plausible ideas and weigh the pros and cons of each idea. After you do this, you pick the “best” solution. It was tedious in the classroom, but came in handy in the field. All the training I had in solving problems made it easier to implement the best solution in this situation. It was good I had some practice because the students from Njala University did not have this type of training. It meant I, as the engineer, had to keep a very close eye on the situation. Similar to the way my professors guided and oversaw my work when I was first learning to think as an engineer, I had to guide them. I had to learn how to instruct them about the theoretical part of our work as well as the practical part. I had to ask that they talk about everything they were going to do and I had to learn to yell “stop”

when I saw things start to go wrong.

Of course this doesn't even take into account the fact that we were working in a place where there was no electricity and getting the supplies we needed could take days. So when problems arose, we needed to be creative when finding solutions. Often, the best solution was to find the local expert. After the trips to Sierra Leone and Honduras, I have come to realize the difference between understanding how something works and actually being able to make it work. When we needed to patch cement, we didn't try to do it ourselves. We went to a local man who made cement pots for a living and he did a far better job than we could have. I am glad we did. Now, if they have a problem in the future, they know someone knowledgeable is nearby to help. To be honest, my goal in going to Sierra Leone was to ensure I never needed to come back to work on bio-sand filters again. I wanted to train people to replace me so they could carry on the work without me, and I think I was able to do that.