

Deseret News: Database to Boost Business Clout

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From the Deseret News:

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,695219569,00.html> Database to Boost Business Clout

By Jason Lee

The Beehive State may soon have a virtual portal for outside interests that want to purchase products or services from Utah businesses.

The Utah International Trade Commission Tuesday endorsed a draft measure that requires the Governor's Office of Economic Development to maintain a database of businesses that export or service internationally. The actual database is being developed by the Utah Department of Technology Services Automated Geographic Reference Center with assistance from the nonprofit World Trade Center of Utah.

"It's a way to contact and connect with people," said WTCU president and CEO Lew Cramer. "Our hope is to serve as a one-stop shop for international information and activities and under our umbrella have (the Utah Department of Economic Development) and have the U.S. Department of Commerce and the state chambers of commerce all sharing information together."

Cramer added those interested in doing business in Utah could just call one number or visit the online database to be pointed in the right direction. The governor has enlisted WTCU to help develop resources and act as a conduit to expansion of international business opportunities for Utah companies.

The database itself will have various functions, including a map feature that will show the actual location of the specific business.

"If a business in Utah or anywhere else in the world wanted to know 'Who could do this kind of work in Utah?' you could query the database," said Dennis Goreham, manager of the Automated Geographic Reference Center.

Among the issues still being worked out will be how much information about individual companies will be included in the data searches. Cramer said each firm will likely be allowed to determine how much is posted on the portal.

Also on the agenda was a briefing on the governor's upcoming trade mission to India. The trip will take place later this month, from Oct. 26 through Nov. 2. Accompanying Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. will be representatives from the banking, education, biotech and information technology industries. No Utah lawmakers will be on the mission.

The delegation will visit the Indian capital of Delhi and the nation's financial center of Mumbai for several scheduled networking meetings with Indian business leaders.

"Since India is such an emerging market, there really are some great opportunities (for Utah and India)," said Franz Kolb, regional director of the Utah International Trade & Diplomacy.

Kolb said there will also be a second trade trip to India next spring.