



For Immediate Release

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BROOKINGS DIRECTOR TO VISIT VALLEY, MEET WITH OH-PA STATELINE EXPORT INITIATIVE LEADERS

Marek Gootman, director of Strategic Partnerships and Global Initiatives at the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, will be in the Youngstown region October 21 and 22 to meet with members of the Steering Committee of the OH-PA Stateline Export Initiative, as well as leaders of the Regional Chamber and Youngstown State University.

Gootman will discuss the preliminary results and findings of an ongoing survey of manufacturers and business service providers in the region regarding their exporting experiences. He also will tour several companies that are either already exporting or looking to start, splitting his time between Ohio and Pennsylvania.

"We've communicated with Mr. Gootman for quite some time via phone and email, and we're excited to have the opportunity to meet Marek in person," said Sarah Boyarko, vice president of Economic Development at the Regional Chamber. "Brookings has been extremely supportive of our current efforts and continually recognizes the Valley's activity in exporting."

Since the Chamber and YSU's International Trade Assistance Center launched the OH-PA Stateline Export Initiative in January, manufacturers and business service providers have been taking a survey about their exporting experiences, including the number of countries and types of products and services that are exported, company capabilities, etc. Compiled aggregated data will be used to generate potential trade opportunities and match companies to potential customers. This year's results will be presented in the Chamber's first international report card in January.

"When we decided to establish the 10-county OH-PA Stateline Export Initiative, we utilized Brookings Institute research extensively, among other resources," said Mousa Kassis, international trade advisor in the Williamson College of Business Administration at YSU. "Marek Gootman and his team provided guidance, directions and invaluable resources to advance our efforts. We are extremely appreciative."

The Brookings Institution—ranked the most influential, quoted and trusted think tank in the country—praised the OH-PA Stateline Export Initiative. Gootman said the initiative shows a strong commitment to expanding global economic reach through the identification of regionally competitive strengths and an increase in exports and would ensure long-term economic success for businesses located in the 10-county area that are interested in expanding to global markets.

The initiative has continued to gain momentum since then, as *Global Trade Magazine* named Youngstown a "Best City for Export Assistance" in October in its fourth annual rankings of America's best cities for global trade.

At the Brookings Institution, Gootman works to bridge "think tank" perspective and "real world" action – focusing on the vitality of cities and metropolitan areas. Activities involve policy development, demonstration projects, peer learning networks, and external relations. He undertakes efforts to advance adoption of Brookings' ideas nationwide, engaging public and private partners in more than 30 metros and 20 states, as well as national interests. He also leads the Global Cities Initiative, a five-year, \$15 million project to help U.S. and international metro areas strengthen their global economic connections and competitiveness.

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