



For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Kim Calvert
Vice President, Marketing
(330) 744-2131, ext. 1235
Kim@regionalchamber.com
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OH-PA EXPORT INITIATIVE RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS IEDC AWARD IN CLEVELAND

The OH-PA Stateline Export Initiative that is bringing exporting awareness, foreign direct investment and supply chain matching to a 10-county region in Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania received recognition from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) at its annual conference in Cleveland on Tuesday.

The IEDC, which serves economic developers and is the largest organization of its kind, with 4,500 members worldwide, honored the initiative created by the Regional Chamber and the Ohio SBDC Export Assistance Network at Youngstown State University with the Economic Development Silver Award in the category of Regionalism & Cross-Border Collaboration, Population greater than 500,000.

Sarah Boyarko, senior vice president of Economic Development at the Regional Chamber, said, "We are very pleased to have been recognized for our efforts as we continue to support growth in exporting throughout the region. It's an honor to have been part of such a prestigious event."

The initiative, which launched earlier this year, received praise from the Brookings Institution, was cited by *Global Trade Magazine* for Youngstown's ranking as a "Best City for Export Assistance" in October and was recognized by the Mid-America Economic Development Council at its annual conference in Chicago in December.

In addition, while Boyarko attended the IEDC Conference and accepted the award on the initiative's behalf, other members from the partnering groups traveled to Washington, D.C. to represent the OH-PA Stateline Export Initiative at the exclusive Global Cities Summit, being held Sept. 28-29. Moussa Kassis, director of the Ohio SBDC Export Assistance Network at Youngstown State University; Dorte Heffernan, international trade manager for the Northwest Commission in Pennsylvania; and Michelle Phillips, research analyst at the Regional Chamber, will join leaders from metro cities worldwide at the summit, which marks the five-year milestone of the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase.

Through the export initiative, local partners in the 10-county area have been encouraging manufacturers and business service providers to take 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.

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