



## Trade Agreements Help Small Businesses in Kansas and Missouri

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On the occasion of World Trade Week and National Small Business Week, Deputy Assistant USTR for Small Business and Market Access Christina Sevilla spoke to the International Trade Council of Greater Kansas City, Missouri about how the Obama Administration's trade agenda benefits small businesses. Of the nearly 4,400 companies which export from Missouri, 85 percent are small and medium size firms that employ fewer than 500 employees. The recent entry-into force of trade agreements with Korea and Colombia gives American small business greater access to robust economies in Asia and Latin America, and presents new opportunities for Missouri companies.

Bio-Microbics, a small business that manufactures water and wastewater treatment systems at two facilities in Shawnee, Kansas and Sunset Hills, Missouri, heavily relies on exports to drive business. Bio-Microbics President Robert Rebori remarked that "international sales are the reason we exist," with 80 percent of company revenue derived from exports, thus supporting well-paid jobs in Kansas and Missouri. Rebori stated that the company exports "Made in America" products to 60 countries around the world, including India, Russia, and China. Rebori finds that high tariffs are one of the key barriers that his small company faces, as they drive up costs and affect pricing vis-a-vis foreign competitors. Other trade agreements with partners like Peru and Chile have helped Bio-Microbics gain market access through tariff elimination. Now, with the recent addition of the Colombia trade agreement, which entered into force on May 15th, Rebori looks forward to competing for new customers in that market. Bio-Microbics has been recognized with the President's E Award for U.S. Exports, as well as the Kansas Exporter of the Year Award.



*Small business panel with Dan Ward, Western Forms; Bob Rebori, Bio-Microbics; DAUSTR Christina Sevilla; ITAC 11 Small and Minority Business Advisor Fred Baehner*

Economic development officials in Missouri also see expanded opportunities with the recently implemented U.S. - Korea trade agreement. Krista Hinrichs, International Business Manager for the Pacific Rim at Missouri's Department of Economic Development, notes that "Missouri exports to Korea have increased nearly 150 percent in the first quarter of 2012 over the same quarter last year." Additionally, the state's International Trade and Investment Office in Seoul has the state's small businesses poised to take advantage of new opportunities made available by the trade agreement.

Under the President's National Export Initiative, USTR is working to continue opening markets in Asia, Latin America and around the world for the benefit of U.S. small businesses and companies of all sizes.

Bio-Microbics manufactures innovative, advanced wastewater treatment systems, septic system alternative products, and storm water treatment that provide solutions for people around the world. For more information visit the website [www.biomicrobics.com](http://www.biomicrobics.com).