

Energy Efficiency: A Key Component of U.S. Competitiveness

With the rising cost and variability of energy, many U.S. companies are looking for ways to cut their energy costs and improve their long-term competitiveness. Responding to this challenge, the International Trade Administration (ITA) recently organized a Forum on Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing to underscore the available resources both state and federal governments provide to help companies be more efficient.

BY RYAN MULHOLLAND



A visit to the University of Toledo's Clean and Alternative Energy Incubator was part of the recent Forum on Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing, a one-day event organized by the Department of Commerce. The event was part of the department's effort to promote the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers. (photo courtesy University of Toledo)

Energy efficiency, long considered the low-hanging fruit of the global energy challenge, represents not only the largest opportunity to increase energy security and limit carbon dioxide emissions, but also the lowest-cost option to improve sustainability. According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, more than \$300 billion is invested in energy efficiency every year in the United States—a number that could grow to \$700 billion by 2030. Billions more will

be invested around the world, particularly in China and other developing countries.

Many small and medium-sized companies struggle with the often onerous upfront cost of efficiency upgrades, and even large companies continue to disassociate energy decisions from corporate governance. By strategically incorporating energy-efficiency improvements into production and business planning, U.S. manufacturers can increase cost savings, raise productivity, and improve their competitiveness throughout the global marketplace.

Outreach to the Private Sector

Taking this message directly to industry, ITA recently organized a Forum on Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing to help manufacturers learn about the resources available from state and federal governments to promote efficiency. The forum was part of an ITA Energy Efficiency Initiative focused on promoting the use and commercial deployment of energy efficient technologies. The one-day event was held September 21 in Toledo, Ohio, and attracted 86 participants. Toledo was chosen because of the

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“ An upfront investment in [energy] efficiency is often much cheaper than investments in new supply. And it is immune to the troubling vagaries of the energy market. ”

Mary Saunders, acting assistant secretary of commerce for manufacturing and services

city's efforts to reinvigorate its manufacturing industry by taking a leadership role in developing the clean and efficient industries of tomorrow.

The forum was hosted by Owens Corning at its world headquarters and included presentations by the ITA's Office of Energy and Environmental Industries, the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the Department of Energy's Industrial Technologies Program, and the Environmental Protection Administration's Industrial Energy Star Program. Additional speakers came from the State of Ohio Energy Office, Ford Motor Company, Eaton Technologies, Rockwell Automation, North Star BlueScope Steel, and Energy Industries of Ohio.

Energy Efficiency and Job Growth

Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Manufacturing and Services Mary Saunders introduced the event and moderated two panel discussions. Saunders told the audience that energy efficiency "represents a key component of the Obama administration's national strategy to support job growth," adding that "With efficiency, you don't have to depend on scientific breakthroughs or engineering miracles. You don't need to wait for economies of scale so efficiency can compete with other energy alternatives. In fact, an upfront investment in efficiency is often much cheaper than investments in new supply. And it is immune to the troubling vagaries of the energy market. Efficiency is merely a way of maximizing the amount of energy you get from existing sources."

Rep. Marcy Kaptur also participated in the event, telling participants that energy efficiency and clean energy are the keys to Toledo's future. She also congratulated Owens Corning on winning the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Partner Award.

A "Checklist for Corporate Energy Efficiency" prepared by ITA industry specialists was made available to forum participants. It outlines 10 steps to greater energy efficiency, with links to help with each step.

Incubator Visit

Following the morning discussion and a keynote address from Owens Corning's chief sustainability officer, forum participants visited the Clean and Alternative Energy Incubator at the University of Toledo. The incubator gives alternative energy companies the ability to develop into growing enterprises through consulting, technology development, and financial planning from the university's staff.

Currently, the incubator has 11 clients and 6 graduates. It hosts eight centers—most notably the Wright Center for Photovoltaic Innovation and Commercialization, an \$18.6 million state grant-based program to help commercialization and supply chain development of the solar industry in Ohio.

Ongoing Commitment

The Forum on Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing continued an ongoing commitment by the Department of Commerce to promote energy efficiency as a competitiveness tool for U.S. industry. As part of this effort, the department's Sustainable Manufacturing Initiative has led four so-called "SMART Tours" (Sustainable Manufacturing American Regional Tours) in cities around the country, focusing on different aspects of sustainability. In addition, ITA will host a roundtable on energy and manufacturing on October 20 in Washington, D.C., to discuss ways to reduce energy consumption and improve the long-term competitiveness of U.S. industry.

Ryan Mulholland is an international trade specialist in the Manufacturing and Services unit of the International Trade Administration.

For More Information

To access the presentations from the Toledo Forum on Energy Efficiency in Manufacturing or to download a copy of the "Checklist on Corporate Energy Efficiency," visit www.trade.gov/energy. More information on the Department of Commerce's Sustainable Manufacturing Initiative can be found at www.trade.gov/competitiveness/sustainablemanufacturing/.

Getting Down to Business in Nigeria

Nigeria is about more than e-mail scams, explains Larry Farris, the Department of Commerce's senior commercial officer in Lagos, Nigeria. But there are challenges in doing business in Africa's most populous nation, with its 140 million people and more than 200 ethnic groups.

Larry Farris is the senior commercial officer in the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service's post in Lagos, Nigeria, a position he has held since 2007. His responsibilities include looking after U.S. business interests in this populous West African nation, which recently underwent a return to democracy and civilian rule.

Farris has been with the Commercial Service since 1993 and has been posted to a number of countries, including Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and South Africa. He recently spoke with Doug Barry of the Commerce Department's Trade Information Center about Nigeria and about how U.S. companies can best prepare themselves for doing business there.

Barry: What's it like in Lagos today?

Farris: There's a lot of business here and a lot of opportunities for U.S. companies.

Barry: Here in the United States, the early—and sometimes only—impression of Nigeria is formed after getting an e-mail, purportedly from a retired general or minister of finance, saying they've come into an unexpected \$25 million and that if we would only give them our bank account number, they'd be happy to share the money with us.

Farris: I get those e-mails even here, and they're probably coming from an Internet café right around the corner. Fortunately, those are only a small fraction of the number of the business inquiries that come out of here. Most are legitimate, but it is an unfortunate fact of doing business in Nigeria.

Barry: So what are the legitimate opportunities for U.S. businesses in Nigeria?

Farris: The oil industry dominates Nigeria's exports and foreign exchange earnings. But the rest of the economy is also growing and offers significant



Larry Farris, the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service's senior commercial officer in Lagos, Nigeria. (U.S. Department of Commerce photo)

opportunities for U.S. companies. One area is transportation infrastructure. The current government has been starting projects to address decades of neglect. This creates a lot of opportunity for U.S. companies in road building, port modernization, airport building, revitalizing railway lines, and all of the equipment and technology. Other areas include telecommunications. Wireless, for example, is developing very rapidly and offers a lot of opportunity. Another sector is electrical energy. Nigeria had not invested sufficiently in this sector over the last several decades. We believe there's going to be some really good opportunities for U.S. companies.

Barry: If you were a small or medium-sized U.S. enterprise, what are some of the first things you would do to assess the opportunities and risks in entering the market in Nigeria?

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“ The current government [of Nigeria] has been starting projects to address decades of neglect. This creates a lot of opportunity for U.S. companies. ”

Larry Farris,
senior commercial
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Travel and Tourism Board Outlines Steps to Aid Industry Recovery

Detailed policy recommendations designed to stem the recent downturn in the travel and tourism industry were outlined in a letter of recommendation sent on September 16 to Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke by the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.

“The economic health of the travel and tourism industry is vital to the economic health of our nation,” said the board in its letter, “[but] the outlook for our industry remains cloudy.”

The board outlined a series of steps that the administration should be prepared to take in three broad areas: airport congestion and infrastructure, economic sustainability, and travel facilitation. The specific policies it recommended include accelerated implementation of the Federal Aviation Administration’s NextGen system for airports, support for the industry’s “Meetings Mean Business” campaign, incentives in support of industry initiatives that reduce carbon dioxide emissions (such as equipping more vehicles with flexible fuel converters and creating incentives in proposed cap-and-trade legislation for the airline industry), continued efforts to facilitate air travel (such as expansion of the Visa Waiver Program), and improved education and prevention plans for handling outbreaks of the H1N1 virus.

The U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board serves as the advisory body to the secretary of commerce on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States. It consists of up to 15 members from companies and organizations in the travel and tourism industry, representing a broad range of products and services, company sizes, and geographic locations. The board was originally chartered in 2003, and the current board’s charter expired at the end of September. Applicants for the new board are currently being considered, and it is expected that a new Travel and Tourism Advisory Board will be named shortly.

For more information on the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, or to read the full text of the September 16 letter, visit its Web site at http://tinet.ita.doc.gov/ttab/TTAB_Home.html.

Afghan Products Highlighted at Industry Shows

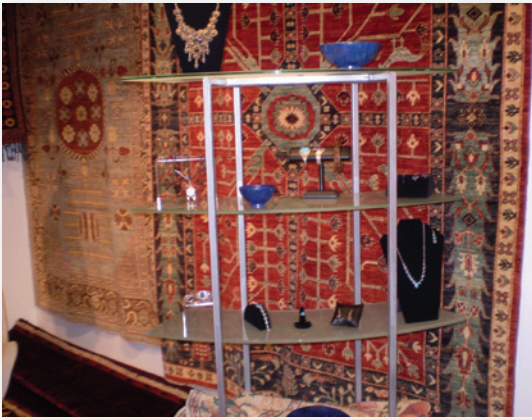
Afghan rugs and crafts were on display at the New York International Carpet Show on September 20–22 thanks to the assistance of the Department of Commerce’s Afghanistan Investment and Reconstruction Task Force, the government of Afghanistan, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Two Commerce Department employees, Noor Alam of the Afghanistan Investment and Reconstruction Task Force and Mary-Lynn Landgraf of the Office of Textiles and Apparel, hosted a special exhibit, “Afghan Allure,” at the New York International Carpet Show. The exhibit was designed to promote business opportunities in the Afghan rug sector and included samples of Afghan rugs, jewelry, lapis bowls, tapestry, and fashion design.

The production of Afghan rugs provides income to millions of Afghan women and men and supports the agricultural sector of Afghanistan. But after decades of war and destruction of infrastructure, the presence of the “Made in Afghanistan” label in the world market has significantly diminished. The industry is in need of revitalization and reinvestment in its production supply chain, especially in the finishing facilities, where most value-added components exist.

Since 2006, the Department of Commerce has worked with Afghan rug manufacturers to overcome the obstacles they face by involving multiple, complementing U.S. government agencies in efforts to enhance the rug production chain, particularly through the “Sheep to Shop” initiative led by the Department of Commerce.

The next stop for the “Afghan Allure” exhibit will be at Design Trends Seattle from October 14–15.



Afghan rugs and crafts were on display recently at a trade show in New York, with the help of the Department of Commerce's Afghanistan Investment and Reconstruction Task Force. The exhibit was part of an effort to help rebuild Afghanistan's economy. (U.S. Department of Commerce photo)

The show will feature a lecture by National Geographic archaeologist Fredrik Hiebert, who assembled the show "Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul."

For more information on Afghan rugs or the Afghan Allure exhibit, contact Noor Alam at (202) 482-1421 or visit the Web site of the Afghanistan Investment and Reconstruction Task Force, www.trade.gov/afghanistan.

Application Period Open for International Buyer Program

The U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (USFCS) is accepting applications from companies wishing to participate in its International Buyer Program for domestic trade events taking place between January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2011. The deadline for applying is October 27.

The International Buyer Program was established to bring together international buyers and U.S. firms by promoting leading U.S. trade shows in industries with high export potential. The program emphasizes cooperation between the Department of Commerce and trade show organizers to benefit

U.S. firms exhibiting at selected events. It provides practical, hands-on assistance, such as export counseling and market analysis to U.S. companies interested in exporting. It also benefits trade show organizers by providing worldwide promotion of their shows to potential international buyers, end-users, representatives, and distributors through more than 70 overseas USFCS posts, as well as through U.S. embassies in countries where the USFCS does not maintain an office.

"We expect to select approximately 35 events," notes Blanche Ziv, the director of the International Buyer Program. "The Commercial Service will be selecting events that are determined to most meet its statutory mandate to promote U.S. exports, particularly those of small and medium-sized firms."

Trade shows that are first-time events or are not industry specific generally are not eligible to participate. There is a sliding scale of participation fees for selected events, from \$8,000 to \$19,500, depending on the length and size of the event.

Full details on how to apply for the International Buyer Program are contained in a *Federal Register* notice on the Web at www.export.gov/IBP. For additional information, contact Blanche Ziv, tel.: (202) 482-4207; e-mail: blanche.ziv@mail.doc.gov.

Contributors to this section include Blanche Ziv of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, Noor Alam of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Task Force, Marc Chittum of the International Trade Administration's Manufacturing and Services unit, and Mary-Lynn Landgraf of the Import Administration's Office of Textiles and Apparel.

October 2009

International Trade Calendar

October 5–9

ITU Telecom World 2009

Geneva, Switzerland

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=28394

The show will feature the latest innovations in information and communications technology (ICT), including mobile and satellite, broadband, and next-generation networks. It will also feature "Thematic Days" that highlight the reach and role of ICT in such areas as the digital divide, cybersecurity, climate change, and disaster relief. For more information, contact Joseph English of the USFCS, tel.: (202) 482-3334; e-mail: joseph.english@mail.gov.

October 6– November 24

Export University 201

Charlotte, North Carolina

www.buyusa.gov/northcarolina/exportuni201.html

Every Tuesday morning for eight weeks, this export workshop will provide an overview of the tools needed to succeed in the global marketplace. It will feature speakers who are experts in their fields. There is a \$100 fee for the series. Registration includes morning refreshments and a copy of the new edition of *A Basic Guide to Exporting*. For more information, contact Dan Holt of the USFCS, tel.: (704) 333-4886; e-mail: dan.holt@mail.doc.gov.

October 7

Export Basics: Cashing In with Free Trade Agreements

Washington, D.C.

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=29650

Free trade agreements (FTAs) can encourage new buyers and reduce exporting costs. The United States currently has 11 different regional and bilateral trade agreements in effect and 3 pending agreements. This Webinar will discuss FTA terms and definitions as well as the documentation required to take advantage of FTA benefits. For more information, contact Anthony Hill of the USFCS, tel.: (202) 482-0681; e-mail: anthony.hill@mail.doc.gov.

October 10–18

ExpoAuto 2009

Batalha, Portugal

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=28064

This show covers all aspects of the auto industry, including service areas, bodywork paints, repairs, maintenance, vehicle equipment and accessories, aftersales, engineering, and tuning equipment. For more information, contact Pedro Ferreira of the USFCS, tel.: +351 (21) 770-2572; e-mail: pedro.ferreira@mail.doc.gov.

October 17–20

Ukrainian Business Delegation to High Point Market

High Point, North Carolina

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=29642

This event is one of the largest furnishings industry trade shows in the world, attracting more than 85,000 attendees every six months. More than 2,000 exhibiting companies will display and demonstrate all aspects of home furnishings, covering all price points in the industry. For more information, contact Myroslava Myrtsalo of the USFCS, tel.: +380 (44) 490-4064; e-mail: myroslava.myrtsalo@mail.doc.gov.

October 20–21

U.S.-Iraq Business Investment Summit

Washington, D.C.

www.trade.gov/iraq/IraqInvest/

About 500 attendees are expected at the summit, including representatives of top U.S. and international businesses and senior U.S. and Iraqi government officials. General sessions will provide keynote presentations on Iraq's current trade and promotion activities, while a matchmaking event will offer the opportunity to facilitate partnerships. There is a registration fee of \$200. For more information, go to the Web site or contact the Iraq Investment and Reconstruction Task Force at tel. (866) 352-4727; e-mail: iraqinfo@mail.doc.gov.

October 22

Fourth Annual International Trade Conference: Selling to the Middle East and North Africa

Cincinnati, Ohio

www.buyusa.gov/cincinnati/cincyconference.html

This all-day conference will feature a wide array of experts from business and the government who will speak on opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa. The Department of Commerce, the U.S.–Saudi Arabia Business Council, the Export–Import Bank of the United States, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Procter & Gamble, FedEx, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and others will be represented. The conference will be preceded by an evening networking reception on October 21. Registration is \$75. For more information, contact Marcia Brandstadt of the USFCS, tel.: (513) 684-2944; e-mail: marcia.brandstadt@mail.doc.gov.

October 27

Leveraging Your Website to Increase International Sales

White Plains, New York

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=29841

This seminar will examine tools and best practices for companies to more effectively market their products both locally and internationally, including search engine optimization strategies, localization versus internationalization of Web site content, international online payment options, and Internet fraud. For more information, contact Joan Kanlian of the USFCS, tel.: (914) 682-6712; e-mail: joan.kanlian@mail.doc.gov.

October 29

The New European Regulation on Cosmetic Products

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=29836

This Webinar is designed to inform U.S. exporters in the cosmetics industry of changes in the revised European Union Cosmetics Regulation and how to comply with the new rules. Darren Abrahams, an attorney with the Brussels office of Steptoe & Johnson LLP, will be the guest speaker. For more information, contact Deborah Doherty of the USFCS, tel.: (717) 872-4386; e-mail: deborah.doherty@mail.doc.gov.

Here is a selected list of international trade events of interest, including ITA-sponsored events and a selection of upcoming international trade fairs. The U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (USFCS) maintains a comprehensive listing of industry shows at www.export.gov.

On The Horizon

November 1–30

U.S. Virtual Green Trade Mission to Italy

Rome, Italy

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=29629

This mission will offer U.S. firms a cost-effective way to test the Italian market and identify potential agents and distributors. Targeted sectors include green building, renewable energy, energy efficiency, water conservation, and recycling. Participants can receive market exposure by including their online promotional “brochure” on the mission’s Web site. They will also receive a vetted report on the Italian companies that indicate interest in representing the participants’ products or services. For more information, contact Bill Cline of the USFCS, tel.: (775) 784-5203; e-mail: bill.cline@mail.doc.gov.

November 4

Webinar: Finding International Partners

Washington, D.C.

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=29624

Finding qualified buyers is one of the most important tasks required to expand any business. How do you find them? How do you know you can trust them? This Webinar will show exporters how to make sound decisions and gain access to affordable government services. It will be ideal for international sales managers, business development managers, finance and credit managers, and other senior managers. For more information, contact Doug Barry of the USFCS, tel.: (202) 482-4422; e-mail: doug.barry@mail.doc.gov.

November 5–8

AmbiUrbe 2009

Lisbon, Portugal

www.export.gov/eac/show_detail_trade_events.asp?EventID=28061

All the main Portuguese companies and institutions related to the environment, water, energy, and urban planning sectors will have a presence at this show. Preshow promotion will include outreach campaigns to potential Portuguese buyers and partners alerting them to the presence of U.S. exhibitors at the show. A special business information booth will be available to assist U.S. exhibitors. For more information, contact Pedro Ferreira of the USFCS, tel.: +351 (21) 770-2572; e-mail: pedro.ferreira@mail.doc.gov.



City of Mumbai, India, at dusk. (iStock)

Market of the Month India

India, with a population of more than 1 billion, presents lucrative and diverse opportunities for U.S. exporters with the products and services that can meet the country’s needs. The highly diversified Indian economy has shown rapid growth and remarkable resilience since 1991, when economic reforms were initiated and the domestic market progressively opened to international trade and investment. The result has been average annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP) of more than 6.5 percent over the past decade, with an annual growth rate of 8 percent predicted for the coming years.

India’s sustained and forecasted GDP growth makes it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world and the second fastest growing in Asia. Although its size and growth make it attractive as a market, the most compelling reason to consider investing in India is the possibility of a high return on investment.

Opportunities for U.S. firms exist in many sectors, including civil nuclear energy, renewable energy, aerospace and defense, safety and security, and health care. Although Indian companies are increasingly manufacturing finished products, they are sourcing sophisticated, efficient products and equipment from the United States. There is also a growing trend to use U.S. expertise in numerous service industries, such as education, engineering, management consulting, and telecommunications.

The Commercial Service produces market research reports to help U.S. companies determine market potential, market size, and potential competitors. Recent reports have looked at such sectors as mining, coal beneficiation, and auto components. These and other market research tools are available on the Web at www.buyusa.gov/india, or from the Department of Commerce’s India Business Information Center, www.export.gov/india.

This text has been adapted from “Market of the Month,” a regular feature of the U.S. government’s export portal, Export.gov. To read a longer version with detailed information on India and links to other sources of information on this market, go to www.export.gov/articles/marketofmonth/eg_main_020622.asp.



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For more information and news, visit ITA’s Web site at www.trade.gov or contact the Office of Public Affairs, International Trade Administration, 1401 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20230; tel.: (202) 482-3809.

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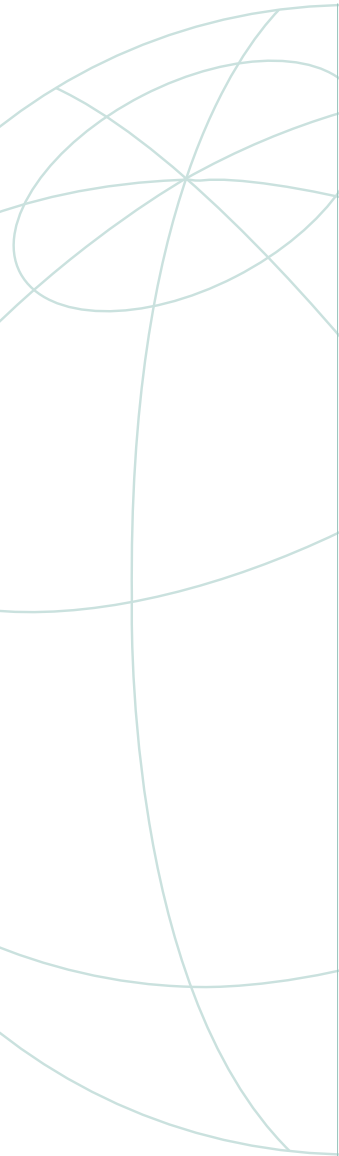
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Nigeria

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Farris: I would counsel people to look at our Web site (www.buyusa.gov/nigeria) and to look at Export.gov. Read through the resources posted there, such as the *Country Commercial Guide* for Nigeria. Beyond that, we counsel everyone to really do their homework. Take a careful look at who you're going to be doing business with. To help U.S. companies, we maintain a database of between 3,000 and 4,000 Nigerian companies that we have vetted. We go back and look at them again about every 18 months or so.

Barry: What is the transaction cycle in Nigeria? Is there a certain timeframe that U.S. companies should plan for or does it vary?

Farris: I'm not sure that there is a consistent pattern. Things in Nigeria generally move very fast. Nigerians like to do things tomorrow. We counsel U.S. companies to be aware of that and to do their due diligence. And one thing that we especially counsel them to do is not to ship anything until they've been paid.

Barry: Where do you think the Nigerian economy is headed in the near term? What are the long-term prospects?

Farris: In general, they are good. Nigeria has, besides the oil and gas sector, good reserves of other minerals. It has the capability to develop a good agricultural sector. So all of those things add up to look at a fairly favorable environment for continuing growth. Having said that, it all depends on politics. And in that regard, the message is mostly positive. In 2008, there were national elections and the first peaceful transfer of power at the presidential level from one elected civilian president to another in Nigeria since independence in 1958.

Barry: There are more than 200 different ethnic or tribal groups in Nigeria. What would a U.S. business need to know in order to make a good impression on their potential business partners?

Farris: The ethnic groups here break up into two very large groups. In the north, it's mostly Muslim, so you would be a little bit more conservative in the way you dress and in the way you present yourself there. The south is much more diverse. It's not quite so conservative. You can be a little bit more American in the way you deal with people there.

Barry: It's important to note that U.S. companies contemplating doing business in Nigeria don't need to feel alone, because you and your colleagues are there.

Farris: That's right. We encourage people to use our services here, perhaps more than in some of the developed markets, because they really offer a tremendous amount of value. Participating in the Commercial Service's Gold Key program, for instance, and having your agenda set up and having your logistics worked out for you are of tremendous value.

Barry: Can your office also help plan the itinerary for U.S. businesses who are contemplating jumping on an airplane and flying over?

Farris: No, we're not travel agents making arrangements, so we're not going to book tickets for them, but we can certainly help them, once they've arrived, to get transportation, especially if they're going to parts of the country where they need additional security. And we can certainly recommend reliable, quality hotels and help them in ways like that.

For More Information

A longer version of this interview is posted on the Web at www.export.gov/articles/marketofmonth/eg_main_017076.asp. To learn more about commercial opportunities in Nigeria, contact the Trade Information Center at www.export.gov; tel.: 800-872-8723.

International Trade UPDATE

available on the Web at www.trade.gov