Trade Mission to China Delivers Results for Monterey County Economic Development

Dave Spaur, Monterey County Director of Economic Development and the past Chair of the Central Coast Marketing Team, joined a regional team of city and business representatives for an economic trade mission to China last month. The costs of the trip were entirely covered by the Central Coast Marketing Team (CCMT) which is made up of the economic development groups from Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties and southern Santa Clara County.

The trip was a ‘knock out’ in more ways than one - besides successfully discussing the potential for financing a key county construction project, the delegation had to do its work as a typhoon was hitting the area.

The goal of the mission was to meet with and qualify EB-5 investment partners, who have already established a regional center for immigration and investment in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. EB-5 is a visa program which allows foreign nationals to live in the United States for two years, but in order to qualify, the applicant has to agree to make...
investments in a targeted area, in this case, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, which will lead to sustained job creation. Typical investment projects range from $10-$40 million, with construction financing a half point below market rate.

Spaur made the trip to discuss financing for the County’s Interlake construction project, which needs millions of dollars for construction.

“The Interlake project was very well received by the investment company and they are very willing to provide low interest rate construction financing for this project and several other infrastructure projects in both Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties,” says Spaur. “I believe we can take advantage of the construction financing with a low interest rate. Construction financing is usually the risky part of project financing and this appears to be a solid source of funds.”

Spaur says another bonus of the trip was with agriculture representatives who were able to establish a nexus with Driscoll’s and other growers to provide plants to Chinese farmers. They also were able to tour the International Ag Center in Hanai.

All this was taking place while Typhoon Rammasun, the worst typhoon in the last 40 years, was ravaging the area. Spaur says the danger was real, but that delegation members had to stay calm and wait it out.

“All in Hiakou City, we learned we had to stay in our hotel even though windows had blown out on the south face, and that our windows could go too,” says Spaur. “We ended up stranded in the hotel for that night and then in the airport for another night and arrived finally back in Shanghai at 3:30 the next morning.”
There were several more flight delays due to the storm, but Spaur says despite that, all the goals of the trip were accomplished, which he outlined in a report about the mission to the organization and its members.

“The CCMT usually does trade shows and sales mission in the United States only, but every once in a while we will take a vote to do an international mission,” says Spaur.

WIC/Breastfeeding Awareness Event Brings Supporters

The 8th Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk, held August 5th at the Salinas WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Office on Alisal Street, was attended by over 250 participants from around the county.

Highlights of the day included the Wheelie Mobilee Interactive Kids Museum sponsored by First 5, a milk drive by the Mothers' Milk Bank of San Jose, a presentation by Supervisor Jane Parker of the Monterey County Board resolution proclaiming August as “Breastfeeding Awareness Month,” and of course, the Awareness Walk which featured hundreds of attendees walking around the WIC offices and nearby neighborhood. It was also a very colorful event, thanks to the donation of pink event t-shirts thanks to a local sponsor.

This year’s theme for World Breastfeeding Week, celebrated internationally during the first week of August, was “Breastfeeding: A Winning Goal for Life,” emphasizing the importance of increasing and sustaining the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

Other activities at the event included the Alisal Certified Farmers Market, celebration of WIC’s 40th anniversary and information booths from more than 20 local health and social service agencies, including lactation services from Natividad Medical Center and Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System.
Monterey County is one of only a handful of counties in California with a lactation in the workplace policy that provides employees with breastfeeding resources and support. For more information on the policy, please visit the County Lactation webpage or contact the County Breastfeeding Coordinator at vaughanjc@co.monterey.ca.us.

Information about WIC program can be found at the Health Department website.