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Show your business to the world - let Chicago's trade center help.

By Joe McCaul

I have learned that the "headliners" at WTCC functions are not the only reason to attend. The other attendees are also in the "must know" category.

A short while ago, the WTCC hosted a trade delegation from Monterrey, Mexico. My networking there led to the start of a significant new relationship with a European financial services giant, Coface.

Recently I set a follow-up meeting with the owner of a Saudi firm with a potential interest in expanding their U.S. footprint.

Let's now talk about lunch. Needless to say, the salmon was done to perfection by the Chicago Club's chef.

My real story is that after the ambassadors were introduced, they split up and joined the attendees. I was flanked by the Hon. Michele Sisone, U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, and her SCO, Christian Reed.

A surprise guest speaker was Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley.

The trade center's new president and chief operating officer, Thomas Panek, introduced all the SCOs and the keynote speaker.

Lunch was capped by Douglas Bell's stories of negotiating free trade agreements in the region as deputy assistant trade representative.

Although preaching to the choir, he made a convincing argument that free trade is good for the United States and good for our trading partners, economically, socially and politically.

I spent about 20 years of my corporate career focused on international business. It's in my blood.

I sought to join the World Trade Center of Chicago as a means of re-engaging with the global marketplace as a business owner.

The experiences I had on Oct. 13 and in the past few weeks have exceeded my wildest expectations.

I have also learned that no company is too big or too small for the WTCC. If you have any interest in doing business overseas, you must get to know the center.

For many of us who live in the outer suburbs, Chicago seems like a far-away place. To help bridge that gap, the WTCC's chairman and chief executive officer will be speaking in Naperville this month.

Neil F. Hartigan will be the featured speaker for the Chamber's Success Series luncheon Nov. 8 at Cress Creek Country Club in Naperville.

He will explain how the WTCC can help you move your business to a new level by tapping into the world's full range of opportunities. Do not miss this important event!

Joe McCaul is the president of Joseph Associates International Inc., a Naperville business brokerage firm.

A recent experience was one that Mike Skarr felt should be immediately shared with my fellow Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce members and the Illinois business community in general.

As the chamber president and CEO, Mike was quick to act on the World Trade Center of Chicago's recent offer of complimentary membership for all chamber members.

The World Trade Center, with its 350 offices worldwide, is in many ways a global equivalent to our domestic chambers of commerce.

Oct. 13 was the WTCC's "Meet the Mid-East Ambassadors" event at the Chicago Club on Michigan Avenue.

It featured a series of roundtable meetings with the U.S. ambassadors and the senior commercial officers (SCOs) to more than a dozen countries.

I was able to actively participate in discussions with these senior officials representing Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

For most of these sessions, the ambassador and SCO were both present to explain the local business climate, market opportunities and how they could help stimulate trade for U.S. businesses.

Joseph Associates International is a Chicago based business brokerage firm specializing in bringing owners of small to mid-sized companies together with foreign and domestic buyers.

