

# ANNUAL REPORT 2011

German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern US, Inc.





# WHO WE ARE

The German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern United States, Inc. was founded in 1978 to promote and support bilateral trade between Germany and the US. Our main office is located in Atlanta, Georgia and we opened a branch office in 2008 in Houston, Texas to better serve our region. In addition, we have four chapters that serve our region's members in North Texas, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina. We also have two affiliates, the Alabama Germany Partnership based out of Birmingham, Alabama and the German American Business Chamber based out of Miami, Florida. We are a private, non-profit organization and serve as the official representative of German industry and trade in the southern US.

Our organization is part of an international network composed of 120 German foreign chambers of commerce and government offices in 80 countries. These organizations are under the direction of the German Chamber of Industry and Trade in Berlin (DIHK).

## OUR MISSION...

To foster German-American trade relationships. To deliver the best possible service to our clients and members, to respect clients' and members' time, and be partners in their endeavors.

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# LETTER FROM THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR

This past year has been marked by many uncertainties and challenges for the global economy. Both sides of the Atlantic are still dealing with the far-reaching consequences of the economic and financial crisis. Signs of stabilization have slowly emerged, but persistent problems of debt and unemployment still remain. During these challenging times for our economies, it is crucial that we do not let pessimistic expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies. It is now just as important as ever that we continue to work together to advance common interests and foster our excellent transatlantic relationship.

Europe is in the process of creating a framework that promotes sustainable growth of the economy. We are addressing the root causes of the current problems and taking unprecedented steps towards governmental fiscal responsibility as well as towards structural reforms to improve competitiveness and correct imbalances. Now is a good time to be optimistic and look to the future with confidence.

The United States and Germany share values and interests like no two other partners in the world. Germany is one of America's largest investment, trade, and financial partners. Similarly, the United States has long been one of the largest foreign investors in Germany.

German companies employ around 570,000 people in the US. Since 1989, German direct investment in the United States has grown sevenfold and US investment in Germany has more than quadrupled in the same period. Our partners such as the GACC South and our businesses play a major role in achieving these remarkable numbers.



Let me therefore congratulate the GACC South on the excellent work it is doing on a daily basis, which supports and strengthens the growth of trade and investment relationships between the United States and Germany.

Many opportunities lie ahead in the coming year, and I look forward to our continued cooperation, which will undoubtedly further strengthen our vibrant transatlantic partnership.

Dr. Peter Ammon  
German Ambassador to the United States

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Ever since I moved to Atlanta with my family a few years ago, the GACC South has been an important element in our life. As expatriates, we value the Chamber as an organization that serves international exchange and also helps all those who just recently have arrived and look for a starting point in their new life in the US. I only joined the Board of Directors of the GACC South earlier this year, but in the past few months I have observed how incredibly motivated the chamber staff works on each and every project and how the members and their needs always come first.

The GACC South offers a unique network of business contacts and provides all key services needed for any German company that plans to expand its business to the US. Opening a new business or looking for ways

to grow an existing business can be quite a challenge, especially when you are in an unfamiliar business environment. The chamber helps to network, gets you in touch with professional advisors, finds skilled labor, provides visa support services and generally provides a great platform to exchange knowledge by organizing member events and specialized conferences.

The year 2011 was an incredibly productive year for the GACC South. We've held 33 networking events, 11 industry-specific conferences, 17 business seminars, and 39 partner events with other organizations. In total, more than 6,800 people attended these events! The GACC South staff worked tirelessly to make these events a success and to strengthen transatlantic business relations.

These tremendous efforts have not gone unnoticed: we have attracted new members from a number of different industries to join the chamber and many loyal members have renewed their membership for 2012. This reflects how much the German American business community values the services and the support of the GACC South.

To keep up that impressive pace, the team of the Chamber had to grow: in the past year, ten additional full-time staff members were hired. Overall, the staff grew from 32 employees and interns to 43. In addition, the Houston branch office, which opened in 2008, has grown from three original staff members to 12.

As 2011 comes to a close, I would like to take this time to thank all our members and the GACC South employees for all the hard work and dedication you've shown throughout the past year. Thanks for all your contributions to a successful year and for your continued efforts to drive German-American trade forward! I would also like to thank the Board of Directors of the GACC South for your commitment and the time you invest in numerous projects and events. It's been a great pleasure and an honor to work with all of you.

As Chairman of the Board, I am excited about the many opportunities that exist for German-American businesses and the work we have ahead of us. 2012 will bring new challenges and opportunities for international businesses - let's all work together to turn it into another successful year!

Martin Richenhagen  
Chairman, President & CEO of AGCO Corporation  
Chairman of the Board, GACC South



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

In my ten years with the GACC South, I have had the privilege of witnessing an impressive amount of growth and progression within our German-American business community, and I am honored to have been a part of it. Since assuming the role of President & CEO nearly six and a half years ago, there have been a countless number of office openings, ground breakings, transatlantic deals, and strong partnerships that have been fostered by our unique community. I've had the great opportunity to celebrate with many of you over annual galas, bierfests, and networking events. It is my sincere hope and my expectation that many of you have been able to take advantage of the progression of our region.

In the past year in particular, we have had the privilege of watching our German-American business community thrive. Our companies are investing, creating jobs and lending to the growth of our region. It is our commitment to each other and the relationships we have built that have made this possible, and that is not done without great diligence. These partnerships help our region become more competitive in an increasingly globalized economy.

It is with this spirit of enduring relationships that I will not say goodbye after ten years with the GACC South, but that I look forward to seeing each of you again in Australia. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support and commitment to the German-American business community. The GACC South would not have grown into the distinguished organization it is today without your dedication. I am confident that my successor will be welcomed by our extraordinary staff and active membership network, and together will continue to build on our tradition of excellence in the future.

Kristian Wolf  
Outgoing President & CEO  
GACC South





# FROM THE DESK OF THE VPs



Stefanie Jehlitschka  
Interim President & CEO  
Vice President, Atlanta Office  
& Marketing Services

We've each been at the chamber for about five and a half years now (since Spring 2006 for Jan, Summer 2006 for Stefanie) and it is mind-boggling to see how the time has flown. 2011 has gone particularly fast, as the GACC South has undergone a great amount of structural change in order to best serve our members and clients. The adjustment phase has been a welcome challenge, as the decisions to undergo these changes were made with clarity and we all anticipate that the outcome will be great.

We started the year with 32 employees and interns and we finish the year with 43. Stefanie was appointed as Vice President in August to aid in the direction of our Atlanta office and Marketing Services. Jan continues to oversee the Houston branch and serves as Vice President of Consulting Services with three Directors in our Consulting department, two in Atlanta and one in Houston. Two of our full-time staff, including one of our Directors, made the move to Atlanta from Houston to further bridge communication between our main and branch office. The aim has been to increase communication and service, and we believe our goal has been accomplished. As we continue working toward increased collaboration and quality, we're proud of maintaining a motivated and knowledgeable team.

In the past year, we have learned to be more resourceful and more innovative. We have been developing our consulting department to include much-needed services for our clients such as debt collection and career services and in the past year, we've traveled into our region more than ever. One of our goals for 2012 will be to further increase our reach in our region of eleven southeastern states, stretching from Texas to North Carolina and down to Florida. We will also continue to increase collaboration with our fellow AHK USA offices across the country.

While we are aware that the coming year will present challenges, we are also absolutely certain that our team has the ingenuity to work through them. Both of us were brought into the chamber under the leadership of Kristian and it will be a strange new chapter to work without him, but we know that it will provide the opportunity for continued growth. To all of our clients, members and friends, we wish you the best for the coming year. We look forward to continuing our work with you.



Jan Christoph Wiedemann  
Vice President, Consulting Services  
Managing Director, Houston Office

# STATE OF THE CHAMBER

2011 brought a great amount of change to the GACC South as our German-American business community continued to thrive. While the media never strayed from the economic downturn and its effect on business, our companies have used this time to innovate and find new solutions to challenges. We are privileged to be part of a community that continues to work forward with a great amount of gusto despite the hurdles put in their path.

## The role of the GACC South

All AHKs (German Chambers of Commerce across the world) fulfill three main tasks at their locations. First, we are the official representation of German companies in our operating country. Second, we act as member organizations for the companies already in our operating country to aid in bilateral business relations. Third, under the brand 'DEInternational,' we provide consulting services to companies both from Germany and in our operating country in order to support their foreign business activities.

## THE GACC SOUTH BY NUMBERS

**39** current business representation clients  
Gained **8** new clients  
**7** clients departed  
**3** established own US facility  
**4** withdrew from the US market  
**18** market entry projects  
**9** site selection projects  
**10 - 15** companies per year  
**\$20 - \$200** million average investment  
**100 - 300** jobs created on average

### Membership

**705** current members  
**10%** increase in members since December 2010  
**161** new members joined in 2011  
**23** new executive members and counting  
(membership level created in Summer 2011)  
**34** members upgraded in 2011  
**43%** of members are located within our chapters' states

## The GACC South is comprised of two departments, Consulting Services and Marketing.

The Consulting Services Department (under the worldwide brand name 'DEInternational') supports small and medium sized German companies in their efforts to enter and expand their business in the US market.

The Marketing Department's primary aim is to publicize the German-American business community and its importance to economic development and job creation in the region, while working to facilitate networking and sharing of resources amongst the German-American business community. The Marketing Department consists of three sections, membership, events and public relations.

## Corporate Responsibility

Because we call the southeastern US our home, it is important to us to support our community in times of need. On the evening of April 27, a particularly devastating tornado struck several cities in Alabama in the areas of Tuscaloosa and Birmingham. In the weeks and months following, the GACC South, in partnership with several German companies in the Tuscaloosa area, arranged monetary and item donations and volunteer groups to respond to the vast destruction and community need.

## Events

**33** networking events  
**11** industry-specific conferences  
**17** business seminars  
**39** partner events with other organizations  
With **61** non-partner events, more than **6,800** people have attended

## Public Relations

Total Website views: more than **107,000**  
Total Blog Posts: **65**, with more than **12,800** views & **97** subscribers  
Total AHK USA LinkedIn Group Members: **1,352**  
Total Twitter followers: **454**  
Total Facebook Fans: **818**

Website - GACC South, GACC Texas & German Bierfest  
Blog - GACC South & "How We Sink"  
Twitter - GACC South & German Bierfest  
Facebook - German Bierfest



# MEMBERSHIP EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS 2011

## **EURO-COCKTAIL | JANUARY 26, 2011 | DALLAS, TEXAS**

The North Texas Chapter continued its successful collaboration with the local Euro-Chambers and started the year with a wonderful Euro-Cocktail at the GACC South member company Poggenpohl. The event was co-sponsored by The British American Commerce Association of Dallas/Fort Worth, Finnish American Business Guild, French-American Chamber of Commerce Dallas/Fort Worth, Italy America Chamber of Commerce of Texas, Inc. and the Swedish American Chamber of Commerce. Founded over 110 years ago as the first German kitchen brand, Poggenpohl is now the best known kitchen brand in the world, present in more than 70 countries around the globe. Attendees were welcomed by Ted Chappell the President/CEO of Poggenpohl, US, Inc. who flew in to attend this event and Angel Calderon, who presented the history of this fascinating company.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING | APRIL 28 - 30, 2011 | ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**



The Board of Directors of the GACC South convenes at the Annual General Meeting

Every year, the GACC South hosts our Annual General Meeting in a new city in our region. This year, our host was the lovely, artsy city of Asheville, North Carolina. As part of the Annual General Meeting, Chairman Martin Richenhagen was elected to the Board of Directors. Chairman Richenhagen is the Chairman, President & CEO of the AGCO Corporation, based out of Duluth, Georgia. In addition to the election, the business program of the Annual General Meeting included a variety of interesting speakers who discussed how to further expand German business within the Southeast US and what challenges would face the community as it continued.

## **SPARGELFEST | MAY 18, 2011 | GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

The South Carolina Chapter's first Spargelfest was held at the Bavarian Pretzel Factory after teaming with the Atlanta office to get White Asparagus shipped specially from Germany. The evening started with a Spargel Latte Macchiato, Asparagus Arugula Salad, and Asparagus in Puff Pastry. The main courses were an Asparagus in a Savory Crepe and Asparagus with Salmon on Pasta. Dessert included Spargel Griessflammerie with Strawberry/Rhubarb Ragout and Caramelized Asparagus with Strawberries and Vanilla Ice Cream. Honorary Consul Wolf Stromberg said he could not believe he was getting to enjoy German white asparagus in Greenville, South Carolina!

## **MAIFEST | MAY 21, 2011 | CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE**

The Tennessee Chapter's second Chattanooga regional event was Maifest, a collaboration with local nonprofit organization Mosaic (Ocoee Region Multicultural Services). Maifest combined a visit at Montessori Kinder International School with a cultural celebration in Cleveland, TN. Montessori Kinder is a privately operated, German-American-owned school serving international students, ages 3 months through 9 years. Maifest drew several hundred visitors from the surrounding communities and highlighted food, drink & music from Bavaria. The event was able to raise \$3,000 to aid local relief efforts for the survivors of the April 27 tornados.





## GACC SOUTH 16<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GALA | NOVEMBER 5, 2011 | ATLANTA, GEORGIA

The GACC South celebrated their 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala in style at the St. Regis hotel in Buckhead, Atlanta. This year's official Gala partner was BLG Logistics, and the official Gala patron was the State of Bremen. The event welcomed almost 500 people from the German-American business community, as well as our dignitaries Senator Martin Günthner, Minister for Economics, Labour and Ports & Minister for Justice and Constitution of the German Federal State of Bremen and Ambassador Dr. Peter Ammon, German Ambassador to the United States. Following dinner, a live band, dancing and a Silent Auction filled out the program.



From left to right, Dr. Lutz Görgens - Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mission to Atlanta, Detthold Aden - President, CEO and Chairman of the Executive Board of BLG LOGISTICS GROUP AG & Co. KG, Senator Martin Günthner - Minister for Economic Affairs, Labour and Ports, Minister for Justice and Constitution, German Federal State of Bremen, Dr. Peter Ammon - Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the US, Steven Markham - President, BLG Logistics, Inc. and Vice Chairman of the GACC South Board of Directors, Kristian Wolf - President & CEO, GACC South

## CASE STUDY - INTELLIVERSE



"Sometimes companies forget to look in their own backyard for economical ways to expand their marketing efforts. That was the case with Intelliverse. While we knew our value propositions resonated strongly with both domestic and international companies, the GACC provided us with a unique approach to extend our reach into both the local community as well as the international marketplace - all in one place.

At the onset of our first GACC networking event, we were immediately impressed, not only by the consummate professionals in attendance, but also by the friendly, embracing and warm camaraderie

of all its members. Thus, we were immediately hooked. In the initial year of our membership we've enjoyed the numerous opportunities the GACC has provided us to network, share knowledge and make valuable connections with other members within the organization. And as a result, we decided to host our own business seminar on the best ways companies can communicate with their customers and optimize their business processes. Due to our networking efforts and the business seminar we hosted, we are in the process of implementing a new, sizable addition to our customer base. We can attribute that success and all the invaluable connections we've made thus far directly to GACC. The return has been well worth our investment. We are thrilled to be members and look forward with enthusiasm to many years of continued involvement with the GACC."

**Frank Paterno, VP of Marketing, Intelliverse**  
[www.intelliverse.com](http://www.intelliverse.com)

### STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**Pamela Jackson - Manager, Communications**

I started at the GACC South as an intern in November 2009. The chamber took a chance on me - I'm one of the few Americans here and the only one who does not speak German. However, my aim started with and has consistently been to increase the recognition of the chamber in the US and I think being the 'token American' has helped in my ability to navigate the market. Communications in the US and Germany are drastically different so it's been an interesting challenge to find the best solutions for the chamber.

Before coming to the GACC South I studied Communications at the University of Miami in Florida and before that, I graduated from high school in Honolulu, Hawaii. While multicultural environments have always been the norm for me, it has been fun learning how to operate in this one.



# FROM THE DESK OF THE CONSULTING DIRECTORS

What a difference a year can make - in January 2011, for the first time ever, we combined various leadership positions in the Consulting Team in our Atlanta and Houston offices to better use the expertise we have in different areas. These areas are the US Market Entry Services and Business Representation team headed by Silke, the Site Selection, Career Services, and GACC Services LLC team headed by Thomas, and the Federal Projects and Delegations team headed by Julia.

The US Market Entry Services and Business Representation teams have helped more than 40 companies and 18 market entry projects in the past year. Some of our clients only use our address as a virtual office – however more than 50% of our clients utilize 5 hours per month or more of support. What is the goal for most of our clients? To one day establish in the US with their own employees or to open their own production facility. This year, we also organized industry-specific conferences such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> e-Mobility Conference, the Kosher and Halal Food Forum and the US Medical Forum. In 2012, we are planning a Business Representation Roundtable that will offer all business representation clients a cross-industry platform to exchange

information and experiences. We will continue to post reports about our progress and events and hope, in doing so, to continue improving and growing our service offering!

Over the past year, the GACC Services LLC has accompanied six German companies in their efforts to find a suitable manufacturing site in the US, most of which represent the new US headquarters of these companies. Currently, we counsel three additional companies that are expanding their businesses to the US. In 2011, we carried out market surveys, especially in the renewable energy sector, but also in the automotive sector. We also helped several companies to find business partners in the US and assisted in establishing business representations. In an effort to broaden our service portfolio, we implemented human resources and debt collection services.

In January 2011, our projects teams in Atlanta and Houston combined in an effort to bring further focus to project management. The teams work primarily on projects in the renewable energy sector, on delegations and on industry-specific conferences. Overseeing two teams in two offices is always a challenge, but the past year has proven that the combined knowledge of our talented employees has brought a renewed energy to the team. Our projects in the past year have covered topics such as wind energy and bioenergy, and we had the opportunity to host a wide variety of delegations from Germany. We look forward to expanding our projects in 2012, especially to more renewable-energy related trade shows.



Julia Zimmermann  
Director, Federal Projects,  
Delegations & Conferences  
Deputy Managing Director,  
Houston Office



Thomas Schwegmann  
Director, Consulting Services,  
Site Selection & Career Services  
Managing Director,  
GACC South Services, LLC



Silke Miehke  
Director, Consulting Services,  
US Market Entry Services &  
US Business Representation  
Services



# OUR CONSULTING SERVICES

One of the primary roles of the GACC South is to support German companies with their activities in the US. We are an experienced, trustworthy partner, and we individually care for businesses in a professional manner. Our bilingual employees know the particularities of both countries and are always ready to help with any questions a company may have. The following is a selection of the consulting services offered by the GACC South:

**Market Expansion** - The GACC South's Market Expansion program encompasses an intensive analysis of the market in which we uncover potential barriers, explore the competitive landscape and identify untapped areas for growth. With an in-depth and systematic approach, we assist companies that want to increase market share in the US, as well as identify new markets for expansion through our extensive network of contacts. Market Expansion is comprised of two progressive stages, which we also offer as separate services: the market research phase and the business partner search.

**Business Representation** - This service establishes a gateway between a company in Germany who may not be ready to fully move to the US, but still needs a presence in the US market. Under the company name, we provide a business address, dedicated telephone number, and a member of the GACC South's consulting staff assigned as the point of contact.

**Site Selection USA** - The complexity of the site selection process requires a partner who is well-versed with the intricacies of the US market. With the utmost professionalism, the GACC South will guide you through this process and, as an official authorized representative of the German economic system/commercial interests, we remain both independent and neutral. We also make available to you an extensive, profitable contact and membership network.

**Career Services** - Trying to find knowledgeable, bilingual employees for a transatlantic company can be a challenge. That is why the GACC South has developed a new service to assist you with your search. As you go through the process of hiring, the GACC South supports you in the selection process to find the most suitable professional and executive candidates, with the help of our constantly updated pool of highly qualified job seekers. Our staff can also give expat-advice and answer questions about vocational training.

**Collection Services** - The US is one of the most important trade partners for German companies. Unfortunately, a client is sometimes delayed in paying an invoice or simply does not pay at all. The GACC South provides support to German companies in handling these matters by providing services such as risk-assessment and assistance in the collection of due notices from defaulting debtors in the US.

**Establishing a Company** - Incorporating a business in the US is less bureaucratic than in Germany. However, it is still best to consult help who is familiar with both the German and American legal systems. Here at the GACC South, we can provide contacts to an extensive network of German-speaking, internationally-affiliated lawyers and accountant.

**Trade Show Services** - A trade show is the perfect platform for you to present your products and services to an international audience and to come into contact with potential business partners. To meet all trade show regulations and fulfill the high expectations of buyers and visitors requires long-time market experience and a local contact person. The GACC South works with companies to select relevant trade shows, provide contacts for trade show booth designers, coordinate all needed details and staff the trade show booth with a bilingual employee familiar with the market.

## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Reinhard Breckner - *Director, HR & Administration*

I came to the GACC South after twelve years in legal administration. Prior to becoming involved in the world of law firm management, I used to study and teach philosophy and theology. I have often found that the care for context, discourse interpretation and the consideration of alternatives in general can go a long way toward improving the way people relate to each other and the way work is carried out in the workplace. After adding a business education to my search for "continuous incremental improvement," to use the parlance of said education, I considered joining the GACC South team a prime opportunity to learn more about firms with an international workforce and approach to business. I have found the GACC South to be a most welcoming challenge to embrace multicultural workplace dynamics, cooperate on the implementation of processes and best practices that draw from differing business systems and be part of the larger picture of trade enhancement between the US and Germany and the greater Eurozone.



# CONSULTING EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS 2011

## FOOD FORUM | FEBRUARY 3, 2011 | HANOVER, GERMANY

The global market for Kosher and Halal products is considered as one of the largest market for food products. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Food Forum in Hanover focused on this global market and highlighted some of the countries that have a strong demand for halal and kosher products. The experts in Hanover were able to highlight market opportunities for German manufacturers, who are new to the idea of offering their products kosher/halal.



Rabbi Tuvia Hod speaking at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Food Forum in Germany on Kosher and Halal food products

## 1<sup>st</sup> GERMAN AMERICAN BIOENERGY CONFERENCE | MARCH 7, 2011 | ATLANTA, GEORGIA



Kristian Wolf, CEO & President of the GACC South welcomes participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> German American Bioenergy Conference in Atlanta, GA on March 7th, 2011

With more than 14,000 megawatts installed capacity, the US is the largest producer of electricity from biomass worldwide. The goal of the 1<sup>st</sup> German American Bioenergy Conference was to identify present and future opportunities and challenges of the bioenergy market in the US and to promote a transatlantic exchange of knowledge, technology and experiences. This conference was sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi).

## DELEGATIONS FROM LOWER SAXONY & BREMEN | SEPTEMBER 26 - OCTOBER 6, 2011 ALABAMA, GEORGIA, LOUISIANA, TENNESSEE & TEXAS

Delegations visits are an important part of building and maintaining transatlantic relationships. In the fall, we had the opportunity to host delegations from Lower Saxony and Bremen. The Lower Saxony delegations of the Minister of the Environment Hans-Heinrich Sander, the Minister of Economics Jörg Bode, and the Chamber of Commerce Stade took part in several company visits and industry workshops in Houston, Chattanooga, New Orleans, and Atlanta. The delegations from Bremen, under the patronage of Senator Günthner, Minister of Economic Affairs, Labor and Ports, met with various political and economic decision makers in Georgia and Alabama. Having close ties with BLG Logistics, the delegation visited the facilities of Mercedes-Benz and BLG Logistics in Tuscaloosa.



President & CEO Kristian Wolf exchanges a few words with Senator Martin Günthner at the reception held at our Atlanta office for the Lower Saxony & Bremen delegations.

## e-MOBILITY CONFERENCE | SEPTEMBER 29, 2011 | ATLANTA, GEORGIA



Jules Toraya, Program Manager - City of Atlanta / Office of Sustainability & Don Francis, Executive Director - Clean Cities Atlanta speaking about the City of Atlanta's current and future EV Initiatives

With a current emphasis on sustainability, cars that consume less fuel and emit fewer pollutants are a way of the future. In order to foster the relationship between important players in e-mobility development, US and Germany, the GACC South hosted their 2<sup>nd</sup> e-Mobility Conference as part of the GACC e-Mobility series. The conference featured speakers such as Cecilia Bush - Electric Vehicles Operations Manager for the Southeast Region, Nissan North America, Inc., Joe Thomas, CEO & President - MAGE SOLAR USA, Don Francis - Executive Director of Clean Cities Atlanta, and Jules Toraya - City of Atlanta, Office of Sustainability among others.



## TEXAS OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY ROUNDTABLE & OFFSHORE WIND LAW CONFERENCE OCTOBER 3-4, 2011 | HOUSTON, TEXAS

From its history as an independent nation in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, to its role as a global energy leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Texas operates under unique laws and is positioned to be the pacesetter for offshore wind energy development in the Americas. This year's program addressed the state of the industry globally and locally as well as turbine showcases, installation, ports & infrastructure, law, environmental issues and finance & insurance topics.



The event included key decision makers from both sides of the Atlantic: (L to R) German Consul General Roland Herrmann, Hans-Heinrich Sander - Niedersachsen Minister of Environment and Climate Protection, Jörg Bode - Niedersachsen Minister of Economics, Labor, and Transport, Chris Hart - Department of Energy, Jan Christoph Wiedemann - Vice President, Consulting, GACC South, Greg Wortham - Mayor of Sweetwater, TX & Executive Director, Texas Wind Energy Clearinghouse

## MEDICAL FORUM USA | NOVEMBER 21, 2011 | HANOVER, GERMANY



Maik Friebe, Rödl & Partner, and Beate Rausch, IHK Hanover, at the Medical Forum in Hanover

The US market holds untapped potential for many German manufacturers of medical equipment and devices; however, importers must be aware of a variety of market complexities. Organized by the IHK Hanover and NGlobal GmbH, the Medical Forum USA provided a platform for experts to introduce these characteristics, which range from US Food and Drug Administration classifications and notifications to customs requirements. Following presentations, seventy attendees had the opportunity to meet with experts.

## CASE STUDY - HANSGROHE



Hansgrohe USA has been a proud partner of the GACC South since 2008. Over the last four years we have built a strong partnership, embracing many opportunities to support the organization. We continue to build and develop this alliance, strengthening our ties to the German - American community. Hansgrohe's involvement in GACC South public, corporate and civic events has allowed us to network and broaden our reach. We have hosted several joint events, attended roundtables and are proud to be a GACC South Annual Gala sponsor the last two years.

When our designer brand Axor recently launched its first North American design studio in Manhattan, Axor NYC, we looked no further than the GACC. Membership in the GACC - NY allows us to be active in the Northeast and helps support Axor NYC. Axor and Hansgrohe look forward to further building upon synergies and opportunities with the GACC - in both regions. Russ Wheeler, president of Hansgrohe USA, sums it up, "It's important to embrace other German companies, foster relationships and help highlight how the GACC can be a partner to businesses. In our case, they are invaluable to our company, in the Southeast and now the Northeast region."

**Russ Wheeler, President, Hansgrohe, Inc.**  
[www.hansgrohe-usa.com](http://www.hansgrohe-usa.com)

### STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Dominique Baryalei - *Consultant, Projects*

Ever since spending the 11<sup>th</sup> grade as an exchange student in Alexandria, Virginia, the idea of working abroad has seemed desirable to me. After I finished University, I was offered the opportunity to join the Market Entry Services Team of the GACC in June 2010. I took care of my visa, packed my bags, and booked the next flight to Atlanta. Currently, I am part of the projects team, which hosts large scale projects such as the Das Haus exhibition promoting German renewables and energy efficiency technologies. Working with interesting colleagues in this multicultural work environment and dealing with political figures as well as executive level professionals across various industries makes my daily work engaging and assures a steep learning curve.



# COLLABORATIONS 2011

## CULTURAL VISTAS INTERN PROGRAM SUMMER 2011

For the past two years, the GACC South has had the privilege to host the send-off and welcome back receptions for a group of Georgia college-based interns embarking on summer internships at various companies across Germany. The program, arranged by Cultural Vistas (formerly CDS International) and The Halle Foundation, equips Georgia college students with international work experience and increased German-language skills. A highlight of this past summer was a student's on-camera interview of Chancellor Angela Merkel.



Before heading off to their various internships in Germany, Cultural Vistas students from several colleges in Georgia gathered at the GACC South offices for their program introduction.

## AN EXCHANGE IN AUGSBURG | SUMMER 2011

Over the summer, staff member Catherine Tuten had the opportunity to work in Germany, strengthening the GACC South's strong ties to the network of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs) in Germany. Primarily fielding inquiries from local member companies about various aspects of doing business in North America, Catherine was fully integrated into the IHK Schwaben's International Department in Augsburg and obtained firsthand insight into the various functions of an IHK.

## GERMAN CONSULATE - AN HONOR BY THE ATLANTA BRAVES | JULY 1, 2011

They say the great American past time is baseball, and on July 1, our very own Consul General Dr. Lutz Görgens threw the first pitch at an Atlanta Braves baseball game versus the Baltimore Orioles. In conjunction with the German Consulate in Atlanta, the GACC South invited our members and friends to witness this honor. Dr. Görgens oversees the consular activities in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

## REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMAN INDUSTRY & TRADE - SKILLED LABOR: CONDITIONS FOR INVESTMENTS, MANUFACTURING, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE U.S. | OCTOBER 3, 2011



While on work exchange in Augsburg, Germany, Manager Catherine Tuten takes in the sights (and smells!) of the city.

One of the biggest challenges facing German companies in the US has been finding skilled labor to address labor needs. The Representative of German Industry & Trade, the more political arm to our business side, hosted a conference to provide perspective from the point of view of businesses of the need for a skilled work force in manufacturing as well as vocational and educational training (VET). Enterprises from both sides of the Atlantic discussed the important role policymakers play to set up respective frameworks on a regional, state and national level.

## GERMANY TRADE AND INVEST ROADSHOW | NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 9, 2011

Germany Trade and Invest (GTai) is a sister organization to the GACC South. While we primarily focus on bringing German investments to the southeast and aim to ensure their success, GTai's focus is to attract US investment to Germany. One of the GTai events that the GACC South had the pleasure of being involved with was the GTai Roadshow in early December in Tennessee, Texas and Florida. The goal of the Roadshow was to promote Germany as a business and technology location and to inform US companies about investment opportunities in Germany.



## DAS HAUS | NORTH AMERICAN TOUR COORDINATED BY THE NATIONAL GACC OFFICES OCTOBER 2011 - NOVEMBER 2012

Das Haus is a traveling pavilion, a North American tour and an ongoing international dialogue about advanced technologies for home construction and solar energy use. The purpose - to share German innovations that have achieved sustainable construction and operational energy savings. It's about the future of sustainable building and the resources and integration needed to reach that future. The Das Haus pavilion is constructed of fully functioning sustainability technologies. Visitors learn about them in an experiential, hands-on format which includes an enclosed room built to Passive House standards, solar energy collection systems and exhibit wall construction systems. After coming from a long tour of South America, Das Haus' first two North American stops of twelve cities in thirteen months were Atlanta and Houston, where Das Haus was from October 17 - November 17. Industry professionals, academics and GACC South members attended pavilion tours and industry conferences in each city to learn more about the future of home building including building materials, architecture, engineering, and renewable energy. Next stops for Das Haus are Phoenix, San Francisco, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Boston, New York City, Washington D.C., Chicago and Denver. For further information about Das Haus, please visit [dashaustour.com](http://dashaustour.com).



## CASE STUDY - KRONOZ US



KRONOZ

"Kronoz US is an international logistics company with more than 10 years of experience and 8 offices across North America. We joined the GACC looking to expand our

client base in Atlanta and we have been an active member since we opened our Atlanta office.

After attending the first few events, I quickly realized that the GACC has some extraordinary members and is one of the best run chambers in the Southeast. GACC's professionalism and tight knit community make it a great place to develop not only strong business relationships, but also great friendships.

In a relatively short period of time, we have had the opportunity to work with the GACC on multiple fronts - we were invited to speak to a German trade delegation

on importing into the US, had the pleasure of hosting visiting German companies in our office, assisted with the relief efforts in Tuscaloosa, broadened our relationships at the Annual General Meeting in Asheville and even enjoyed a few beers at Bierfest.

Through the chamber, Kronoz US has worked with many GACC constituents on an individual basis to help them build their businesses by leveraging our management consulting background and expertise in logistics. However, with the GACC it's always a two way street. For example, we helped Basmati import their goods into the US, while Transparent has helped us reduce our company's administrative costs.

It has been a pleasure to be part of such a vibrant and committed chamber and we look forward to continue developing our relationships in 2012."

**Enrique Alvarez, Managing Director, Kronoz US**  
[www.kronoz.us](http://www.kronoz.us)

### STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**Amy Merrill - Senior Consultant, US Business Representation Services**

My first experience with Germany was in a high school beginning language class. Since then, I have learned to appreciate the complexity of the language and expanded my understanding of an international culture and people. I joined the GACC South in 2005 after finishing a second Bachelor's in German at the University of Georgia, which included a study abroad session in the beautiful university town of Erlangen. As a Consultant with the Chamber I have had the opportunity to work with dozens of German companies as they seek their niche in the competitive US market. I have assisted with nearly every aspect of market entry and growth from trade shows to web conferences to sales support and marketing campaigns. Each day is different and brings new challenges. Not to mention all the talented, creative and highly motivated people with whom I have had the chance to work. The connections I have made at the GACC South, both personal and professional, will last for many years!



# ON THE RADAR FOR 2012

## JANUARY

January 12, Atlanta  
Breakfast w/... Bernie Burgener,  
Director Greenhouse Accelerator  
at Green Chamber of the South

January 24 & 25, Atlanta & Houston  
New Year's Receptions

## FEBRUARY

February 7, Atlanta  
Export Initiative "Baked Goods & Pastas"

## MARCH

March 19, Atlanta  
2<sup>nd</sup> German American Bioenergy Conference

## APRIL

April 17, Atlanta  
Business Seminar with Highroad Global Services

## JUNE

June 3-6, Atlanta  
Germany Reception during the  
AWEA Windpower 2012

## AUGUST

August 25, Atlanta  
9<sup>th</sup> Annual German Bierfest

## OCTOBER

October 8, Hanover, Germany  
Automotive Forum: "The Americas"

October 10-13, Orlando  
Germany Reception during the Solar Power  
International Trade Show

October 18 & 19, Agriculture Forum, IHK Hanover

## NOVEMBER

November 12-16, Houston  
4<sup>th</sup> German American Windenergy Conference

## CHECK BACK FOR THESE EXCITING EVENTS:

Annual General Meeting  
17<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala  
10<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Golf Tournament

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Texas Offshore Wind Energy  
Roundtable & Offshore Wind Law Conference  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual E-Mobility Conference

## SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

The GACC South recognizes that we are all contributing factors to the state of the planet we live on and in the next two years, we will be working to swap all that we consume and do with more sustainable products and practices. Plans include converting the office to energy saving electric fixtures, phasing in only 100 percent recycled paper with a minimum of 50 percent postconsumer fiber content, and working with our property management to increase safe recycling practices of both consumer goods and technological waste. In addition, we are working toward purchasing

from only regional suppliers to minimize transportation costs from the goods we consume and support our region economically. Employee wellness is also part of our initiative, as healthy employees increase our productivity and decrease turnover. One such project will be to support a smoking cessation project, as the consumption of cigarettes is not only a detriment to our employees' health, but the production of cigarettes consumes massive amounts of resources such as water and trees. We are looking forward to working toward a better environment for us and our community.



# GERMAN AMERICAN BUSINESS OUTLOOK

For the past three years, the German American Chambers of Commerce, the Representative of German Industry and Trade and Roland Berger Strategy Consultants have been surveying the German American Business Community to determine how our companies are responding to and feeling about the current business climate. This year, we've found:

German companies are confident despite political and economic uncertainties - 2011 was a very successful year for German companies in the United States, matching the optimistic projections made in last year's survey.

- ▶ **72%** of respondents reported "better" or "much better" sales volumes in 2011
- ▶ **86%** of companies expect moderate to strong growth for their own operations in 2012
- ▶ For the overall US economy, **96%** do not predict a renewed recession, **48%** in fact foresee moderate to strong growth
- ▶ As part of their optimistic outlook, **67%** of companies are planning to add staff in 2012, but **59%** currently experience difficulty finding employees with the right skill set

- ▶ **75%** think that training models similar to the German vocational training path would benefit US manufacturing
- ▶ For the majority of respondents, the US and EU debt crises discussions have neither impacted business decisions in 2011, nor plans for 2012. Moderate impacts for 2011 and for the year ahead were reported by one third of respondents
- ▶ Raw material costs were "worse" or "much worse" for **63%** of companies in 2011, a development that had been projected by the majority of respondents of last year's survey. Similar cost increases applied to finished and semi-finished goods
- ▶ To improve long-term economic competitiveness of the US, respondents' first priority is to address federal/state fiscal concerns. Reforming/simplifying the tax system for them has equal importance to strengthening the educational system in K-12 and post-secondary education



## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Julia Schulz - *Consultant, Projects*

Having worked for GIZ in New Delhi and for the Political Section at the US Embassy in Berlin before, I thought I already knew a little bit about working in an international context. When I first stepped off the plane in Houston in August 2010, I was very excited about my future with the GACC South. Having been with the Chamber in Texas for over a year now, I have learned a great deal in many aspects. I appreciate the network and the knowledge that I can build upon in my job. My team and I are mainly responsible for coordinating renewable energy projects, e.g. export initiatives. The tasks range from organizing conferences to finding the right business partners for our participating German companies as well as accompanying them on the business trips. I appreciate that through my job I get to meet many different people with different backgrounds as well as work in a dynamic and fun team. I fully enjoy my new Texan home, with its larger-than-life places with even larger personalities.



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*Left in November 2011*

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Vice President, Atlanta Office & Marketing Services

Jan Christoph Wiedemann  
Vice President, Consulting Services  
Managing Director, Houston Office

Martina Stegmeier  
Vice President & Director,  
Consulting Services  
*Left in May 2011*

## Consulting Department

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Houston Office  
Director, Federal Projects,  
Delegations and Conferences

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Representation Services

Thomas Schwegmann  
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Managing Director,  
GACC South Services, LLC

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Manager, Consulting Services

Sebastian Eich  
Manager, Consulting Services

Yvonne Harper  
Manager, US Business Incubator  
*Left in September 2011*

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Manager, Projects

Sybille Strunk  
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*Left in October 2011*

Catherine Tuten  
Manager, US Market Entry Services

Amy Merrill  
Senior Consultant, US Business  
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Jacob Claussen  
Consultant, Consulting Services

Patrick Kempf  
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Julia Schulz  
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Friederike Munzinger  
Manager, Membership & Events

Chris Rasmussen  
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Nina Möller  
Market Research Analyst

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Director, Human Resources & Administration

Betty Weller  
Director, Finance

Natascha Christoph  
Manager, Human Resources & Executive Assistant  
*Left in June 2011*

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Coordinator, Houston Office

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Accountant

Virginia Mendoza  
Administrative Assistant

Jolese Williams  
Accounting Assistant

## 2011 INTERNS

Thank you to all of the interns who have worked with the GACC South in some capacity over the past year. Your efforts are not overlooked.

Jennifer Altmann  
Jessica Barber  
Coco Bassey  
Anika Buchholz  
Nicholas Bunce  
Justin Bunch  
Klaus Burgmeier  
Jordan Edwards  
Helen Fleischer  
Franziska Grünberger  
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