



German American
Chambers of Commerce
Deutsch-Amerikanische
Handelskammern

TEXAS



ARKANSAS



TENNESSEE



NORTH CAROLINA



LOUISIANA



ALABAMA



OKLAHOMA



MISSISSIPPI



SOUTH CAROLINA



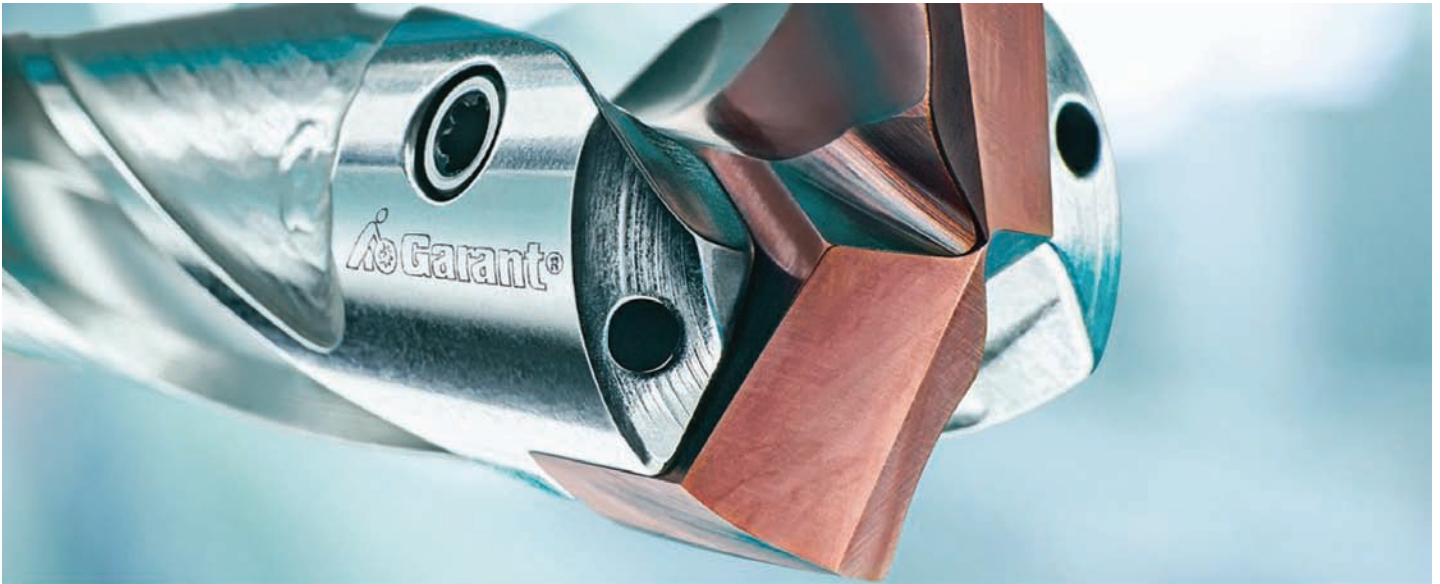
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ANNUAL REPORT 2015

German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern U.S., Inc.

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LETTER FROM THE AMBASSADOR

**Dear Members
and Friends of the
German American
Chambers of Commerce,**



The year 2015 has been an important year for the transatlantic relationship. As the economic recovery continues on both sides of the Atlantic, there still are many serious challenges that lie ahead. Whether on energy and climate change, job creation, market stability, or global security, it is clear that a strong transatlantic relationship is essential to addressing these issues effectively.

We know that cross-border trade not only links markets but also binds cultures and societies closer together. It is therefore of utmost importance that we continue to move forward on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. This agreement has enormous potential and the capacity to generate jobs and boost economic output on both sides of the Atlantic. Moreover, it will allow us to shape the future structure of the world trade system. TTIP is an opportunity to demonstrate that free trade is possible between the world's two largest trading blocs in a modern economic order without lowering standards to protect workers, consumers, or the environment. I am confident that together we will make some significant progress in the year ahead.

The digital economy is another area that offers huge potential for future economic growth. The digital revolution has already transformed our societies, with the Internet becoming an important platform for innovation, jobs, and growth. Digitization will continue to change the relationship between businesses and shape our manufacturing processes and factories. We must continue to hold open and vibrant discussions on this topic, as the transatlantic exchange of ideas is crucial for achieving the best outcomes. One example of an excellent platform for such exchange is the upcoming Hannover Messe 2016, the world's biggest trade fair for industrial technology. I am thrilled that for the first time ever the U.S. will be the featured partner country at the Hannover Messe, offering an opportunity to further deepen the transatlantic relationship.

We have also made some significant progress in the area of workforce development. In June 2015, the German and U.S. governments signed a Joint Declaration of Intent to reinforce their cooperation in this field. The declaration provides a framework in which we can continue to share best practices in sustainable workforce development and provide joint support for future initiatives and measures.

For all of these initiatives, I am extremely pleased that I can count on the help and support of the German American Chambers of Commerce. Your work is crucial in helping our businesses succeed in today's competitive economy. I look forward to working with the German American Chambers of Commerce and our business communities on both sides of the Atlantic.

All the best for a successful new year,

Dr. Peter Wittig

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In 2015, I was elected to be the Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce of the USA. I am honored to serve in this role in addition to serving as the Chairman of the GACC South.

The transatlantic economy is booming. The U.S. remains Germany's most important economic partner outside of Europe, and Germany is one of the largest foreign investors in the U.S. Furthermore, over 3,700 German companies benefit from production and distribution investments in the U.S. today.

In December, we released our annual German American Business Outlook (GABO) – one of our most important economic indicators of German business relations in the U.S. The survey's results continue to indicate confidence and optimism for business growth of German companies in the U.S. This year's GABO specifically addressed three of the GACC South's top strategic priorities – the transition toward Industry 4.0/the Smart Factory, Skilled Workforce, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

During last year's third German Mittelstand- Southern SME Forum held in North Carolina, over 200 attendees united in discussion over the relevance and importance of Advanced Manufacturing in today's rapidly expanding market during one of the conference's first panel discussions. The forum offered small and medium sized German businesses the opportunity to strengthen their presence within the U.S. market, to exchange ideas with each other and to build new business relationships.

The GACC South remains steadfast in our support of the passage of TTIP. The reduction of trade barriers and the development of cohesive standards are important developments of TTIP that will be essential to the continued strengthening of the transatlantic economic partnership, and we trust the ongoing negotiations between the U.S. and the European Union will result in a successfully negotiated trade agreement.

“This has been a remarkable year for the GACC South, and there is a lot to be proud of as we reflect on the accomplishments of 2015.”

We also continue to advocate for a skilled workforce throughout the U.S., and are proud to initiate and support multiple programs that will raise awareness and combat the current challenges faced by U.S. businesses searching for skilled workers.

This has been a remarkable year for the GACC South, and there is a lot to be proud of as we reflect on the accomplishments of 2015.



Throughout the year, the GACCs offered stellar events, networking opportunities and services for our members across the entire United States and even Germany. The GACC's stand on a solid network of outstanding companies, and as our chambers continue working together, we look forward to making German American business as strong as ever.

It has been a great privilege for me to serve as your Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce of the USA and Chairman of the GACC South. I would like to thank the GACC South members, Board and staff for all of your great work this year.

I look forward to continuing our growth and to working together in 2016.

Sincerely,

Martin Richenhagen

Chairman, President and CEO, AGCO Corporation

Chairman of the Board of Directors, GACC South

Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce of the U.S.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



I am pleased and honored to serve as your President and CEO of the GACC South. The GACC South continues to support, promote and assist in the expansion of bilateral trade and investment between Germany and the Southern U.S. In doing so, we have been able to expand our reach and create further opportunities to showcase the South as a "go-to" location to do business.

During this year, we have been able to provide our members with a record number of events and networking opportunities, giving them a chance to interact and exchange best practices with each other. In June, we united with our sister offices in Chicago and New York to reach German companies directly during the German American Business Forum held in Munich, Germany. With over 200 participants, the conference highlighted the benefits and best strategies for German companies interested in strengthening economic ties with the U.S.

The GACCs across the U.S. will also unite in Germany next year during the Hanover Fairs 2016, where we look forward to witnessing the future growth of transatlantic business with the United States as the official 2016 partner country.

In addition, on October 24 we held the 20th Annual Gala at the InterContinental in Buckhead Atlanta. This year, we welcomed keynote speaker Dr. Peter Wittig, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States. Our gala – attended by members, partners and regional business leaders – celebrates the strength and achievements of the German American business community in the South, and recognizes the dedication of our partnerships and sponsors. We are honored to continue this celebration 20 years later.

In 2015, we have witnessed economic cooperation strengthening across the entire global market. In response to popular demand from our members, we hosted a business delegation trip to Mexico in November to support companies interested in utilizing their presence in the Southern U.S. to expand relations across additional markets. During the trip, the ten delegates established valuable partnerships with key market players, and enhanced their understanding of Mexico's automotive industry.

I am excited about the upcoming year and look forward to witnessing German businesses continuing to thrive and prosper with further expansions and investments across our region.

I thank you for supporting me as President and CEO of the GACC South, and I look forward to working with the GACC South Board, members, partners and staff as we move into 2016.

Sincerely,

Martina Stellmaszek
President & CEO, GACC South

LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT



As affirmed by the German American Business Outlook (GABO) of 2015, where 69% of respondents reported having difficulties finding candidates with the right skill set, the U.S. is facing challenges in finding skilled workers to fill their open positions.

The GACC South continues to advocate for a skilled workforce throughout the United States. This year, we initiated and supported multiple programs that will help bridge the U.S. skills gap by providing workers with the skills needed to fill the open positions that exist.

Furthermore, the development of an educated workforce is key for the U.S. to remain competitive on a global stage. The German dual vocational system has proven the success and significance of such programs, and we are proud to advocate the development of similar training programs in the U.S. These programs will serve as a starting point for a successful career path for the graduates.

As I have traveled the U.S. speaking about the importance of vocational training programs – most notably at a conference that was keynoteed by U.S. Deputy Secretary of Labor, Christopher Lu, in Washington, D.C. - we continue to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from many politicians, executives and businesses.

This year, we have had some great progress as Volkswagen Group of America, Chattanooga Operations, LLC added a car mechatronics graduation class to their automation mechatronics program, which is running in its 5th year.

Also, we have added a cluster of companies starting an industrial mechanics program in 2016 in Coweta County, GA with high school students who will be trained by the German standards and curriculum.

We are excited to see the progress of our Skills Initiatives, but there is much work that still needs to be done. We are delighted to add more resources to our Skills team in 2016 while technical education remains a top priority for the GACC South.

Sincerely,

[Stefanie Jehlitschka](#)

Vice President, GACC South

OUR MISSION, OUR REACH, OUR WORK

Our Mission

Welcome to the global network of the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs). Our Chambers are located in markets of particular interest to German industry and commerce - with more than 130 locations in 90 countries around the globe.

1,700 employees work to support German businesses in their international endeavors, through consulting services provided under the joint AHK service brand DEInternational, and by connecting them to the local business communities through membership services

and events. Around the world, the AHKs have 50,000 member companies. The Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) in Berlin coordinates the global network of German Chambers Abroad.

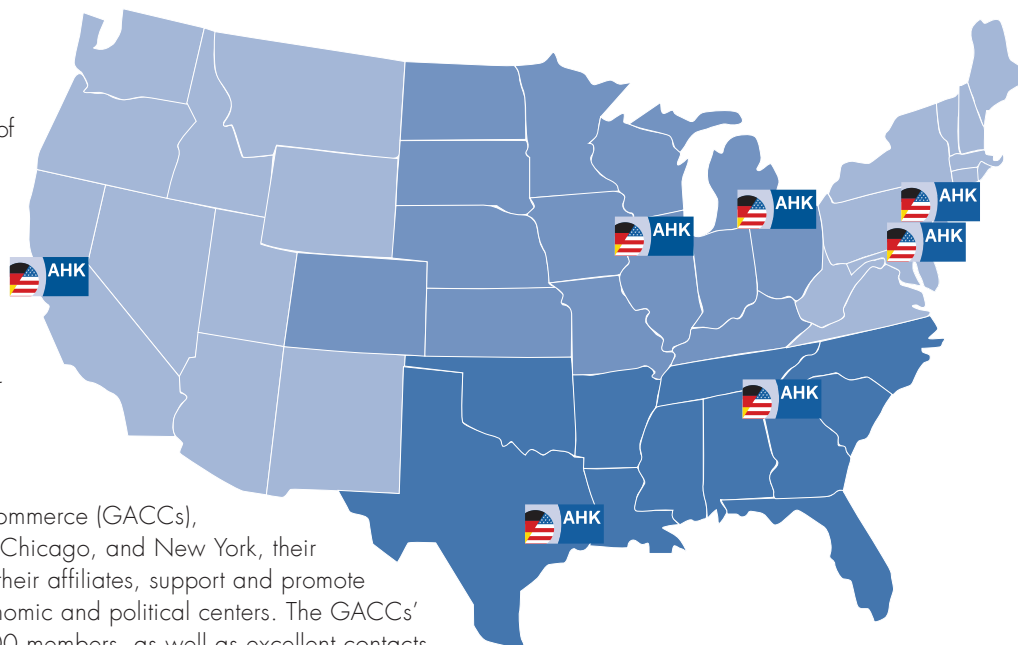
Our Reach

Connection to Germany

Close cooperation with the 80 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs) throughout Germany allows the AHKs to know what companies are concerned about in their involvement in foreign markets. The communication between the 3.6 million entrepreneurs in Germany and the additional millions throughout our global network enables us to coordinate one clear unified message for German business.

U.S. Structure

The German American Chambers of Commerce (GACCs), with their three main offices in Atlanta, Chicago, and New York, their four branch offices, their chapters and their affiliates, support and promote German American business in key economic and political centers. The GACCs' network consists of approximately 2,500 members, as well as excellent contacts to associations, governmental institutions and corporations.



Our Key Partners

Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT)

The Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT) is the Washington, D.C., liaison office of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). RGIT's mission is to foster free trade and a welcoming business environment on both sides of the Atlantic to achieve sustainable growth, jobs and innovation for the German American economic relations. Founded in 1988, RGIT is supported by Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy and serves as the voice of German industry and trade toward U.S. politics, American business organizations and the general public. RGIT is part of the AHK USA network and cooperates closely with GTAI.

Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI)

GTAI is the economic development agency of the Federal Republic of Germany, headquartered in Berlin. The organization promotes Germany as a business and technology location, supports companies seeking to expand abroad and provides companies looking to enter Germany with expert advice. There is a particularly close cooperation between the AHKs and GTAI. The Chambers and GTAI share offices in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. and work together on various projects.



GERMANY
TRADE & INVEST



REPRESENTATIVE
of German Industry + Trade



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
Washington



Consulate General of the
Federal Republic of Germany



Federal Ministry
for Economic Affairs
and Energy



Deutscher
Industrie- und Handelskammertag



Deutsche
Industrie- und Handelskammern

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.



From the left: Dr. Jochen Köckler (Dt. Messe), Olaf Lies (Minister for Economics, Labor and Transport of Lower Saxony), Kenneth E. Hyatt (DOC), Reiner Hoffmann (DGB), Dr. Thomas Zielke (RGIT)

Important steps in trade policy

After a successful vote in congress, U.S. President Barack Obama signed the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), which gives the president the power to submit trade deals to Congress for an up-or-down vote with limited debate and no amendments. This cleared the way for the conclusion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in fall 2015, a trade agreement among twelve Pacific Rim countries. The Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT) asked congress members for their support to vote on the fast-track authority to assist the ongoing negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Signing Ceremony

Representatives from the Department of Commerce and Hannover Messe signed the agreement that confirmed the United States as the official partner country at the Hannover Messe in 2016. The signing ceremony with the board member of Deutsche Messe, Dr. Jochen Köckler, and Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Murray from the U.S. Department of Commerce was held on March 24 in Washington, D.C., and also featured US-Ambassador to Germany John Emerson and RGIT's President Dr. Thomas Zielke.

Oktoberfest in D.C.

Congressman Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN) from Tennessee's 3rd District opened this year's RGIT Oktoberfest and addressed 300 guests in his opening remarks at the Decatur House. Fleischmann praised the engagement of German industries in the U.S. and reiterated his commitment to work with German businesses to create jobs in his home district. Underscoring the significance of the German dual education system, he particularly reinforced his willingness for closer cooperation on vocational training and the expansion of current workforce development programs.



Congresswoman Virginia Foxx

Successful apprenticeship programs

A conference on November 17 about German American apprenticeship programs was hosted by the Representative of German Industry and Trade. Guest speaker was Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, Representative of the Fifth Congressional District of North Carolina and Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training. The German American Chambers of Commerce (GACC) presented the successful apprenticeship programs throughout the US. The discussion about scaling and expanding these successful models featured Deputy Secretary of Labor Chris Lu.

German Business Film Prize

For the first time on May 18, RGIT together with the Goethe-Institute in Washington, presented a selection of award-winning short films (with English subtitles) that received the 2013 and 2014 German Business Film Prizes awarded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy.

GACC NATIONAL EVENTS

10th Annual Economic Forum, Rosemont, IL, February 2015

ECONOMIC FORUM 2015

Annual Economic Forum

This January, the German American Chambers of Commerce and RGIT hosted their much anticipated Annual Economic Forum, a favorite of the GACC's C-level audience. Participants were privileged this year to hear the Ambassador of Germany to the United States, Dr. Peter Wittig, share his transatlantic vision. The audience also received an excellent overview of current economic trends and first hand insight into the challenges and opportunities for businesses of different sizes and from various industries from the panelists.

Investment, Skills, and TTIP as Keys to Prosperity

In his keynote address, Ambassador Dr. Wittig highlighted important current issues, such as skills and investment as the motor for future growth, and emphasized the potential of TTIP to set true global standards for a better and safer world.



Martin Richenhagen (AGCO Corp.)



From the left: **Caroll H. Neubauer** (B. Braun of America & B. Braun Medical Inc.), **Theo Freye** (CLAAS, ret.), **Mark Tomkins** (GACC Midwest), **Martin Richenhagen** (AGCO Corp.), **W. David Braun** (Quarles & Brady), **Dr. Peter Wittig** (German Ambassador to the United States), **Herbert Quelle** (Consul General), **Adolfo Laurenti** (Mesirow Financial), **John Lample** (Kalle USA), **Markus Glueck** (Rational North America), **Jayne Riemer-Chishty** (GACC Midwest), **Michael Backfisch** (moderator)

New GACC Chairman

At the Forum, GACC Midwest Chairman W. David Braun (Partner at Quarles & Brady LLP) announced Martin Richenhagen, Chairman of the GACC South, and Chairman, President, and CEO of AGCO Corporation, as the new Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce of the U.S. The development of a skilled workforce and TTIP remain key issues for the German American business community.

Optimism Despite Obstacles

Adolfo Laurenti, Managing Director and Chief International Economist at Mesirow Financial, presented his much-anticipated Economic Outlook for the year ahead: he told the audience to brace for a "wild ride" in 2015, referencing the need for structural reform, while still maintaining an overall positive outlook as the U.S. economy steams ahead.

The Importance of Skills & Standards

The industry perspective was brought to the table by an expert panel, comprising of Theo Freye, CEO of CLAAS (ret.), Markus Glueck, Area Vice President of Rational North America, John Lample, President of Kalle USA, and Caroll H. Neubauer, Chairman and CEO of B. Braun of America and B. Braun Medical Inc. Several industries were represented by our panelists, with CLAAS as a provider of agricultural machinery and solutions, Rational North America as manufacturer of Combi steamer ovens, Kalle USA Inc., a company focused on being the Quality and Innovation leader in supplying sausage casings to the processed meat industry, and B. Braun of America with a focus on medical and pharmaceutical devices. Providing a generally positive view on the year ahead, the panelists discussed opportunities and prospects of future growth and innovation. Overall, the Forum provided the audience with a wide array of takeaways from decision makers in transatlantic business and ideas on how to prepare their businesses for success in 2015.

GACC NATIONAL EVENTS

GACC Top 50 Ranking

The Annual Top 50 Ranking of German Firms proved that 2014 was an outstanding year for German subsidiaries in the U.S., who achieved record earnings of close to \$400 billion altogether. The report, which was compiled by the German American Chambers of Commerce, indicated that the overall sales performance increased to \$392 billion, compared to \$364 billion in the previous year. In addition, employee numbers are on the rise as well, with the Top 50 German companies employing over 700,000 people in the U.S. and North America. As in previous years, Daimler AG spearheads the Top 50 Ranking with a comfortable \$8 billion lead over second runner up

Volkswagen. Both car manufacturers were able to increase their U.S. and North American sales. Daimler, however, showed the strongest sales increase with a significant \$6.5 billion increase in revenue compared to 2013.

Top 50 German Firms in the US



Forum attendees listen to a presentation on business opportunities in the U.S. market.

U.S. Global Markets, Hanover Fair, April 2015

HANNOVER MESSE is the largest industrial trade show in the world and a proven platform for initiating tangible global business opportunities. In 2015, the fair featured 6,500 exhibitors from 70+ countries; it attracted 220,000 attendees from 95+ countries. 2,300 journalists from 42 countries visited the fair to report about it. The GACCs were involved in the Forum on German machinery and equipment supporting German manufacturers to expand their business in the U.S. Virginia Rounds, Director of Consulting Services at the GACC Midwest and Michaela Schobert, Director of Consulting Services at the GACC South, joined a panel discussion along with Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, CMO Dr. Helmut Ludwig of Siemens PLM Software, and many more.

2nd German American Business Forum (DAWT), Munich, Germany, June 2015



From the left: **Dr. Thomas Zielke** (Representative of German Industry and Trade), **W. David Braun** (Partner, Quarles & Brady LLP), **Martin Richenhagen** (Chairman, President & CEO, AGCO Corporation / Chairman of the Board, GACC South), **Michael Gotschlich** (Division for Foreign Trade Policy and Europe, North America, Refratechnik Holding GmbH), **Caroll H. Neubauer** (Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of B. Braun of America and B. Braun Medical Inc.)

On June 24, 2015, the GACCs, in cooperation with the Munich Chamber of Commerce (IHK München), presented the second German American Business Forum in Munich, Germany. The sold-out conference welcomed more than 260 participants representing a variety of industries, such as automotive, aerospace, energy, and new media. The conference underlined the successful cooperation between the IHKs in Germany and the GACCs in the U.S., and highlighted the successfully growing German-American partnership. Furthermore, by eliminating service providers from the array of speakers during various workshops and panel discussions, the conference successfully informed German companies about the U.S. market from sharing firsthand experiences. As stated by Martin Richenhagen, Chairman of the GACCs, "The U.S. is still very important for German companies. More than 3,700 German companies already have production facilities and sales subsidiaries in the 50 states and get great value out of the dynamic, transatlantic economic environment."

GACC NATIONAL EVENTS

20th Annual GACC South Gala, Atlanta, GA, October 2015



From the left: **Detlev Rünger** (German Consul General), **Martin Richenhagen** (Chairman, President & CEO, AGCO Corporation / Chairman of the Board, GACC South), **Martina Stellmaszek** (President & CEO GACC South), **Dr. Peter Wittig** (German Ambassador to the United States)

The GACC South celebrated a monumental milestone as we hosted the 20th Annual Gala on October 24, 2015.

Uniting 530 elite guests at the InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta, the 20th Annual Gala paid tribute to the achievements of the German American business community of the Southern U.S. Established in 1995, it is an honor to continue this celebration 20 years later, and to witness the strong transatlantic partnership continuing to grow today.

The GACC South was honored to welcome Dr. Peter Wittig, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States, who delivered inspiring words honoring the transatlantic relationship and the continued success it has brought to our community. President & CEO of the GACC South, Martina Stellmaszek and Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce, Martin Richenhagen, also acknowledged the dedicated support of our community.

The elegant evening was filled with dancing, starting with a special salsa dance performance and a live band, followed by the DJ at the evening's "After-Party". Throughout the night, guests also showed off their sophisticated gowns and tuxedos while posing in front of the Red Carpet Backdrop and inside the "After-Party" photo booth.

It was certainly a night to remember. The 21st Annual Gala will take place on November 12, 2016 at the InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta.

1st Annual GACC Awards Gala, Chicago, IL, October 2015



From the Left: GACC Midwest Board of Directors 2015-2016 with **Nicola Michels** (Vice President GACC NY), **Martina Stellmaszek** (President & CEO GACC South) and **Dr. Benno Bunse** (Germany Trade & Invest)

For the first time, the GACCs hosted a nationwide GACC Awards Gala. During a festive evening, the ceremony honored companies that have excelled in German-American business. GACC Midwest Chairman W. David Braun and GACC Midwest's new President & CEO Mark Tomkins led through the evening's program. They were joined by former U.S. Ambassador J.D. Bindenagel in honor of the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of German Reunification. The GACC Awards, one of the highest accolades in German-American business, were awarded to 5 outstanding companies: DOW Chemical won the Outstanding Investment in Eastern Germany Award, and DACHSER was awarded for Excellence in Services. The Excellence in Innovation Award was awarded to one winner from each of GACC's three regions: Rittal for the Midwest, Schmidt for New York, and Bosch Rexroth for the South. GACC Midwest also honored Jack Richter with a special MERLIN Award for Outstanding Contribution to the German-American business community in the Midwest.

GACC New York – White Asparagus Dinner, United Nations, NY, May 2015

Once again, 300+ guests - GACC members, high-level representatives of German and U.S. companies and their guests – came together to enjoy prime networking opportunities, new economic insights and a unique taste of German cuisine at the Delegates' Dining Room of the United Nations this past May. The iconic United Nations Headquarters in New York City offers a breathtaking panoramic view of the East River and city skyline and provides a perfect international ambience.

GACC SOUTH EVENTS

3rd German Mittelstand Southern SME Forum, Charlotte, NC, April 2015



From the left: **Martin Richenhagen** (Chairman, President & CEO, AGCO Corporation / Chairman of the Board, GACC South), **Martina Stellmaszek** (President & CEO, GACC South), **Pat McCrory** (Governor of North Carolina), **Christoph Sander** (German Consul General)

The GACC South hosted its third German Mittelstand - Southern SME Forum in Charlotte, NC on April 13, 2015.

The all-day business-centric conference offered a platform to small and medium sized German businesses located in the Southern U.S. to network and fortify relationships. Attendees also had the opportunity to exchange innovative ideas on how to strengthen their presence within the U.S. market.

The forum featured engaging keynote speakers from diverse backgrounds, including North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory. Throughout the day, informative workshops on Effective Online Marketing in the U.S., Risk Management & Compliance, Intercultural

Competence and two panel discussions focused on The Future of Manufacturing and The Southern U.S. - Gateway to Latin America, provided key insights and information for attendees.

The success of the GACC South's Southern SME Forum has reverberated across the U.S., as the GACC NY hosted their own East Coast Industry Forum last October, and the GACC Midwest looks to host a SME Forum for their region in 2016.

The GACC South looks forward to hosting its fourth Southern SME Forum in Savannah, GA on April 18, 2016.



From the left: **Dr. Sebastian Pokutta** (Coca Cola Assistant Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology), **Rolf Wrona** (Vice President, Mercedes Benz U.S. International), **Carsten Salewski** (President & CEO, Viscom, Inc.), **Ulrich Köhler** (Senior Vice President, Heidelberg USA, Inc.)

1st Business Delegation to Mexico organized by the GACC South

By popular demand from its members, the GACC South hosted a business delegation trip to Mexico from November 9-13, 2015. Amongst others, Mexico's automotive industry has become a particular interest for German companies looking to expand relations from the U.S. market.

During the delegation trip, eleven delegates, comprised of business representatives and economic developers, established partnerships with key market players and increased their understanding of Mexico's automotive market.

In cooperation with the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Mexico, the trip featured tours of the Volkswagen, Audi and Seglo Logistics facilities, among others, visits to industrial parks in the states of Tlaxcala, Queretaro and San Luis Potosi, and expert roundtables with industry leaders, as well as the Mexican Secretariat of Economy and the Mexican Association for the Automotive Industry.

As the U.S. continues to play a key role in connecting businesses to Latin America, the German American Chambers of Commerce of the United States look forward to establishing an international trade mission in 2016 as well, targeting another Central or South American country.



GACC South Delegation visits Volkswagen at their plant in Puebla

EVENTS: SOUTHEAST

AFTER HOURS

4/28/2015 Hoenigsberg & Duevel Corporation
Chattanooga, TN

5/14/2015 Cherry Bekaert LLP
Atlanta, GA

6/2/2015 Atlanta Marriott Marquis
Atlanta, GA

8/18/2015 Hall Booth Smith, P.C.
Atlanta, GA

8/27/2015 Audi of America, Inc.
Atlanta, GA

9/24/2015 Kühne + Nagel, Inc.
East Point, GA

10/1/2015 Lufthansa Group
Atlanta, GA

12/3/2015 Montblanc
Atlanta, GA

BREAKFASTS & LUNCHEONS

3/19/2015 Family Business
Atlanta, GA

3/26/2015 Putin's Russia, US-Russian Relations
and the Ukraine Crisis
Atlanta, GA

5/18/2015 German Unification 25 Years After:
How Did it Happen and What Will Happen Next?
Atlanta, GA

9/30/2015 Germany's Response to the Current
Migration Crisis
Atlanta, GA

10/15/2015 The Path to German Unity
Atlanta, GA

10/22/2015 TTIP - Deal Maker or Deal Breaker?
Atlanta, GA

11/17/2015 Germany's Energy & Climate Policies
Atlanta, GA

BUSINESS SEMINARS

1/22/2015 German American Business Outlook
for the South
Atlanta, GA

2/10/2015 The Present and Future of
Immigration and Employment
Atlanta, GA

2/19/2015 Complexity Manager - How to
Translate Customer Needs into Product Features
Atlanta, GA

11/3/2015 German Engineering and Made in
Japan Meet in the Southeastern U.S.
Atlanta, GA

11/19/2015 Cross Border Transactions
Atlanta, GA

CONFERENCES

6/24/2015 German American Business Forum
Munich, GER

9/22/2015 German American Bioenergy Conference
Atlanta, GA

DELEGATIONS

4/19/2015 - 4/25/2015 Niedersachsen
Business Delegation to the U.S.
Chattanooga, TN and Atlanta, GA

5/18/2015 - 5/19/2015 Hochschule Dual
Delegation
Greenville, SC and Atlanta, GA

11/9/2015 - 11/13/2015 Mexico Delegation
Various destinations, Mexico

FACTORY TOURS

4/7/2015 Wacker Institute
Chattanooga, TN

5/21/2015 Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
Atlanta, GA

6/11/2015 Hansgrohe, Inc.
Alpharetta, GA



Factory Tour at Hansgrohe, Inc.

8/6/2015 ALPLA Packaging
McDonough, GA

8/13/2015 ATL Hartsfield International Airport
Atlanta, GA



New Member Reception 2015 GACC South Atlanta:
Detlev Rüniger (German Consul General), **Michaela Schobert** (Director, Consulting Services GACC South)

11/10/2015 Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Oak Ridge, TN

RECEPTIONS

1/20/2015 New Year's Reception
Chattanooga, TN

1/27/2015 New Year's Reception
Atlanta, GA

7/23/2015 New Member Reception
Atlanta, GA

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

5/12/2015 European Social Mixer
Atlanta, GA

11/11/2015 From Goethe to Grass:
Responsibilities of the Writer in the PostWar Period
Atlanta, GA

12/10/2015 Holiday Networking Party
Chattanooga, TN

Quarterly HR Roundtables
Atlanta, GA

Quarterly Mixer w/ FACC
Chattanooga, TN

Quarterly Women's Series
Atlanta, GA

Multiple dates: Asparagus Dinners
Multiple locations

Multiple dates: German American Business Stammtisch
Multiple locations

Multiple dates: Webinars
Multiple topics

EVENTS: SOUTHWEST

AFTER HOURS

9/3/2015 Audi of America, Inc.

BREAKFASTS & LUNCHEONS

Multiple Dates Bundesliga Breakfast

BUSINESS SEMINARS

2/13/2015 Tax Liability for U.S. Residencies

DELEGATIONS

5/3/2015 - 5/9/2015 Business Trip of the Federal State of Rhineland Palatinate Canada and USA

FACTORY TOURS

6/18/2015 Port of Houston Boat Tour

6/24/2015 R. STAHL

9/16/2015 Centerpoint Energy

10/21/2015 Centerpoint Energy

RECEPTIONS

1/20/2015 New Year's Reception

4/29/2015 Evening Reception - Oil & Gas



Facility Tour at R. Stahl

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

1/22/2015 Teri Simmons with Arnall Golden Gregory, LLP

2/10/2015 Houston - FORCAM

2/11/2015 San Antonio - FORCAM

3/10/2015 Stefanie Jehlitschka on Vocational Education & Training

4/16/2015 Patrick Hayes with Tracerco

5/12/2015 Hans Juergen Zachrau with Airbus DS Space Systems, Inc.

6/9/2015 Amir Mansouri of Shell

9/8/2015 Ted Hashcke with TUV Rheinland

10/13/2015 Joy Partain with Kroger

11/10/2015 Daniel Reck and Bruce White with JKJ &H International

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

9/25/2015 Oktoberfest Houston

3/12/2015 Grünkohlessen Dallas

5/13/2015 Houston Asparagus Dinner

5/20/2015 Dallas Asparagus Dinner

5/28/2015 Dutch & Deutsch Networking Mixer

Multiple Dates: German American Business Stammtisch

German Oil & Gas Supplier Delegation to Houston, TX

The German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern U.S., Inc. organized a business delegation, from April 28 to May 2, 2015, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy market development program. It was geared towards German businesses interested in exploring the Oil & Gas supplier industry in Texas with a focus on offshore.



German Oil & Gas Supplier Delegation group visits Solar Turbines

Several business leaders and official representatives from the German Engineering Association and Maritime Cluster Northern Germany joined this delegation to Houston. The participants were CEOs with a high level of technical expertise and came from various industries, including fastening and anchoring, drilling equipment, and security solutions. Within this week they discovered the oil and gas offshore industry in the Greater Houston Area through company visits, a workshop, and an info session with industry experts.

A briefing and workshop with local experts in a small-scale setting gave the German companies the opportunity to learn more about the industry and market trends in Texas. Participants could ask questions during an extended discussion session followed by the evening reception with U.S. businesses and industry experts. The following days the group explored the field with facility visits and met representatives of renowned companies in the offshore business (Port of Houston, Bosch Rexroth Marine & Offshore, Caterpillar Inc. etc.).

CAROLINAS UPDATE

Get to know our Leadership Committees of North and South Carolina



North Carolina:

Dr. Christian Kissinger (Chapter Director)

Christian Kissinger currently serves as the North Carolina Chapter Leadership Committee Director, a position he has held since 2011. With over 19 years of manufacturing experience, he oversaw the buildup of the American operations of a German-based textile company from 3 to 300 employees over the last 14 years. Dr. Kissinger is a native of Germany and has lived in Charlotte since 2001.

Sarah E. Allen

German-English translator, owner of Wunderbar Translations LLC

Mike Birkle

President at Pfaff Molds LP, a manufacturer of rubber and TPE injection molds for automotive sealing systems

Steven L. Cooper

CPA and Managing Partner of the Carolinas Practice of Rödl & Partner International

Sven Gerzer

Vice President of Economic Development for Europe & India at the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce with a focus on German speaking companies

Al Guarnieri

Partner at the law firm of Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP and a leader of their International Practice Group

Stephanie S. Hinrichs

Sales Director for Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, one of the largest business law firms in the mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions of the U.S.

Horst Jakob

Senior National Account Manager at Kuehne + Nagel, Inc.



South Carolina:

Vincenc Pearson, Esq. (Chapter Director)

Vince Pearson currently serves as the South Carolina Chapter Leadership Committee Director, a position he has held since 2014. He is Corporate Counsel for Draexlmaier Automotive of America in the North American region. Mr. Pearson has been involved in the private & governmental legal sectors throughout the U.S. and Germany over the past 20 years. He has also taught on the collegiate level as a German Instructor at two institutions in the Carolinas. He is a native of Berlin, Germany and has lived in Greenville since 2011.

Steven L. Cooper

CPA and Managing Partner of the Carolinas Practice of Rödl & Partner International

David W. Lewis

President of Context Design Group, PLLC

Sam Moses

Attorney at the law firm of Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP with a focus on site selection and corporate transactions for businesses entering the U.S.



Seminar at CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP

North and South Carolina Events

AFTER HOURS

9/15/2015 Hendrick Luxury Group
Charlotte, SC

10/7/2015 Audi of America, Inc.
Charlotte, SC

BREAKFASTS & LUNCHEONS

3/31/2015 South Carolina Secretary
of Commerce Bobby Hitt
Columbia, SC

5/6/2015 11th Gateway
Award Luncheon
Charlotte, NC

BUSINESS SEMINARS

3/30/2015 Christmann Legal
Immigration Law
Charlotte, NC

10/20/2015 CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP
Charlotte, NC

FACTORY TOURS

1/9/2015 Kuehne + Nagel's Port
of Charleston Tour
Mt. Pleasant, SC

3/24/2015 STEAG Energy
Services, LLC
King's Mountain, NC

4/14/2015 Stueken, LLC
Fountain Inn, SC



New Member Reception South Carolina

5/7/2015 Continental Tire of the
Americas, LLC
Sumter, SC

7/22/2015 Groninger USA, LLC
Charlotte, NC

8/19/2015 Chiron America, Inc.
Charlotte, NC

8/20/2015 Daimler Vans
Manufacturing, LLC
Ladson, SC

12/9/2015 Max Daetwyler
Corporation
Huntersville, NC

RECEPTIONS

1/09/2015 New Year's Reception
Charlotte, NC

7/16/2015 New Member Reception
Charlotte, NC

7/30/2015 New Member Reception
Greer, SC

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

5/27/2015 9th Annual White
Asparagus Feast
Charlotte, NC

10/14/2015 9th Annual Rödl
Grand Prix
Charlotte, NC

10/21/2015 Rödl German
Stammtisch
Greenville, SC

11/18/2015 Christmas Market with
MostlyChocolate.com
Charlotte, NC

MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES 2015

35 YEARS

KanAm

MAHLE

Driven by performance

30 YEARS

Efka

25 YEARS

Georgia Ports Authority

TEXTILMASCHINEN

Thies

20 YEARS

bvt

Hera®

SUNTRUST

Trendelkamp

15 YEARS



KUEHNE+NAGEL

BPS **BAUKNIGHT PIETRAS & STORMER, P.A.**
Tax | Assurance | Consulting

10 YEARS

BLG **LOGISTICS**

HARTMANN

LITZE **SYSTEMATIC TECHNOLOGY**

USP **UNITED SOFT PLASTICS**

WITE **PUMPS & TECHNOLOGY**

Thank You to Our National Partners

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Commerzbank AG
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EMO Trans, Inc.
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Festo Corporation

Hannover Fairs USA, Inc.
Hoffmann Group-Tool Crib, Inc.
HSBC Bank USA
JKJ & H International
JP Morgan Chase Bank N.A.
McGladrey LLP
Munich Reinsurance America, Inc.
Porsche Consulting, Inc.
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

RATIONAL USA
Retarus, Inc.
Rödl & Partner / Rödl Langford de Kock
SOS Children's Village - USA, Inc.
T-Mobile US
Truphone
Western Union Business Solutions

Staff Highlight: Stephan Scheibe, Membership Manager



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Lüneburg, Germany.

When did you join us?

I joined the GACC South in January 2015.

What are your responsibilities at the Chamber?

I am responsible for fostering our existing partnerships and expanding our membership network across the Southeast.

What project inspired you the most in the last year?

The National Partner Program, which enables companies to have a simultaneous membership with all three chambers. It was great to collaborate with our colleagues in Chicago and New York to launch this exciting new program.

What are/is your most important upcoming project(s) for 2016?

Restructuring the membership benefits to make the membership even more attractive and encourage current members to utilize our member services and resources.

What do you like about the South?

Spring and fall, hiking, the food scene and the international crowd in Atlanta.

What do you enjoy the most about working with the GACC South?

I enjoy working with my colleagues in our two offices and of course the collaboration with our large variety of members and their companies. Also the opportunity that comes with working for a non-profit organization.

NEW CONSULTING SERVICE

Key to success: Your strategic market entry with a customized U.S. Business Plan



A well thought-out business plan is a crucial part of a successful market entry. Especially in the diverse U.S. market, a comprehensive strategy tailored to reflect a company's unique qualities and goals is virtually a prerequisite for success.

Our experience supporting small- and medium-sized German companies with their U.S. expansion has taught us that many firms do not have the internal resources and experience necessary to write their own business plan for the U.S. Foreign companies may not be aware of the various aspects inherent to the market that must be considered while preparing a business plan. Taking into account the formalities and structure

expected by external U.S. stakeholders, who represent a potential target audience for the business plan, is also important.

For this reason, the GACC South's Consulting department, DEInternational, is now offering German companies support in writing a comprehensive, customized U.S. business plan that covers all essential factors of their expansion strategy. The business plan can be used, among other things, as part of the work visa application process (e.g. E- and L-visa), for loan applications with banks, when seeking investors and negotiating incentives with economic developers.

Our bilingual employees are familiar with the challenges a market entry and/or expansion presents. Utilizing this knowledge and expertise, we provide well-qualified support to our clients to prepare a viable business plan for the U.S. market and develop a U.S. market entry and/or expansion strategy. Our clients benefit from our proximity to the target market, access to a worldwide German Chamber Network (AHKs) and connections to trusted industry experts.

Lack of strategic planning and the initiative to establish a solid basis for good decision-making are typical reasons for failure for many companies. With the new U.S. Business Plan Service, we are here to help our clients avoid the common pitfalls and secure the right path for their professional U.S. market entry!

Staff Highlight: Anne Sophie Suhr, Team Leader U.S. Business Representation Services



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Hildesheim, south of Hanover in Lower Saxony, Germany. Before moving to Atlanta, I have lived in the UK and in Chattanooga, TN, for several years.

When did you join us?

I joined the GACC South in September 2014.

What are your responsibilities at the Chamber?

I manage the Business Representation Services team in our DEInternational Consulting department. We support German small- to medium-sized businesses to establish and expand their operations in the U.S. market.

What project inspired you the most in the last year?

We always try to create new services to meet our customers' demands. This year we developed and rolled out the Business Plan Service to help companies establish a strategic direction for their market entry.

What are/is your most important upcoming project(s) for 2016?

We are truly excited that the U.S. will be the partner country of the Hannover Fair for the first time in 2016. The GACCs are highly involved in promoting the U.S. investment pavilion.

What do you like about the South?

I am very fond of the famous Southern hospitality, as well as the unique charm of Southern cities like New Orleans, Charleston or Savannah.

What do you enjoy the most about working with the GACC South?

There are always new exciting projects to manage and we support customers from many different industries and backgrounds. Each client's market entry is different and we have the flexibility to individualize our support.

GACC GOES GREEN WITH BIOENERGY

German American Bioenergy Conference

On September 22, 2015 the GACC South in cooperation with the German Consulate General Atlanta held the German American Bioenergy Conference at the Marriott Marquis in Downtown Atlanta, GA. The conference was organized with the German Consulate General in Atlanta and made possible by the Klimafonds; a fund administered by the Auswärtiges Amt (German Federal Foreign Office) that is designed to support climate protection by organizing community events in the host countries of German embassies and consulates worldwide.

Consul General Detlev Runger and Martina Stellmaszek, President and CEO of the GACC South welcomed the group and acknowledged the strong partnership opportunities in the Bioenergy markets of two nations. The conference provided a platform to foster the exchange of ideas between the U.S. and Germany and to discuss challenges and possible solutions.

Presentations were contributed by Professor Dr. Peter Heck from Trier, Germany; Risher Willard from the Georgia Forestry Commission in Claxton, GA; Stephen E. O'Day, Partner at Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP in Atlanta and executive member of the GACC South; and Professor Jacek Siry from the University of Georgia in Athens.



Prof. Dr. Peter Heck, Institute for Applied Material Flow Management (IfaS) Trier, Germany

Bioenergy Delegation & Conference – Organized by GACC South Houston Office

Nearly 80 attendees from the bioenergy sector learned at this year's German American Bioenergy Business Conference on June 23 in Raleigh, NC about innovative organic waste management solutions, and recent and future market developments in the U.S. & Germany. During the presentations and networking breaks, participants from Duke Energy, North Carolina Pork Council, North Carolina Utilities Commission, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as several farm owners, universities, and companies discovered new business opportunities, connected with each other for potential projects and added their voice to the discussion which made for a stimulating and informative exchange between theory and application.

The conference, which was supported by the "Export Initiative – Renewable Energies" of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy and part of a GACC event series (delegation

to North Carolina & California as well as a study trip to Germany), explored the utilization of organic waste streams from farms, food processing facilities, municipalities, landfill, and waste water treatment plants, among others. American and German industry and policy experts were on-hand to answer questions from the audience.

Bioenergy Study Trip to Germany – Organized by GACC Midwest



Bioenergy Study Trip at Biomasse HKW Henningsdorf

From July 6-11, 2015, a group of 10 American bioenergy professionals travelled to Germany to meet with industry, political, and academic leaders who produce and promote both proven and cutting-edge practices in the realm of biogas & bioenergy. Participants gained immediate access to the technologies that have helped German businesses and organizations reduce their energy costs and fossil fuel use, while improving environmental performance.

They could learn firsthand about the policies that have helped bioenergy sources produce over 8% of Germany's power, expand their network of international bioenergy contacts, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Leading from Berlin across former Eastern Germany to Munich, participants also enjoyed German culture, hospitality, and traditional cuisine.

The program was supported by the Energy Efficiency Export Initiative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.



Bioenergy Study Trip at Klrwerk Berlin-Schnerlinde

PR/COMMUNICATIONS



From the left: **Martin Richenhagen**, Chairman, President, and CEO of AGCO Corporation, and Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce of the U.S.; **Carroll H. Neubauer**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of B. Braun of America and B. Braun Medical Inc., and Chairman of GACC New York; and **W. David Braun**, Partner, Quarles & Brady LLP, and Chairman of GACC Midwest

Our Print & Online Media

In cooperation with our offices throughout the U.S., we offer a variety of different print and online media. Our readership includes members, public institutions, consulates, embassies, and private individuals.

German American Trade Magazine (quarterly)

2,000 print copies | 40,000 online readers

Subsidiaries of German Firms in the U.S. (annually)

Lists 3,700 subsidiaries and branch offices of German companies in the U.S.

1,000 print copies.

National Membership Directory (annually)

Lists 2,500 GACC members throughout the U.S. and Germany.
3,000 print copies.

Subsidiaries of German Firms in the U.S. Online (www.germancompanies.us)

Interactive online database with detailed search and download options.

GACC in the Press

In 2015, the GACC South was increasingly present in the media. With our press work we advocate for the interests of our members, aiming to increase the awareness of our activities and establishing a positive image of German business in the U.S. To support our members in the development of their business in the U.S., the GACCs have also been conducting an annual survey for the past six years. More information about the German American Business Outlook (GABO) can be found on page 24.

GACC South Press Highlights 2015

- Germany Inc. comes to Georgia
- Mercedes-Benz joins other prominent international headquarters in Atlanta
- Heiko Stephan Juerges new Tennessee chapter director for the GACC
- Interview with Martina Stellmaszek by Al Jazeera
- Interview with Martina Stellmaszek in various IHK magazines
- Martin Richenhagen Named New Chairman of German American Chambers of Commerce of the U.S.
- GACC South organized German American Bioenergy Conference
- GACC South appoints Sven Langenau as Managing Director of its Houston branch office



Our Social Media Platforms



CAREER SERVICES

Take full advantage of the GACC South's vast network and resources in order to find the best staffing solutions for your company.

Since its release in 2013, the GACC South's Career Services department has supported 120+ companies with their staffing needs. The main goal of the Career Services team is to provide professional and successful recruiting and consulting services for German-American companies located in the U.S., who are in need of qualified, and mostly bilingual employees. We also support expat-families that come to the U.S. with their individual needs through our Partner Support Program. Please visit our website for more information regarding our Career Services and to find out how you can benefit from our new **GACC Talent Network!**

Full-Cycle Recruitment

- Collaboration in creating an effective job description
- Job postings on diverse job specific platforms including our GACC Talent Network
- Pre-selection of candidates and completion of initial interviews
- Coordination of logistics for additional interviews
- Consultation services on issues involving salaries, commissions, benefits, etc.

Basic Job Posting

- Post your job description with your contact information on our GACC Talent Network
- Company can remain anonymous
- Interested candidates will contact you directly, bypassing the pre-screening process offered by our recruitment service
- Social Media Package in order to reach out to a wider range of candidates

Partner Support Program

- Job Search Assistance
 - Job search strategy
 - Resume and cover letter optimization
 - Individual interview training
- Education & University
 - Information on possibilities
 - Assistance with applications and enrollment processes
- Volunteering & Community Engagement
 - Volunteering possibilities
 - Social activities
 - Access to social networks

Staff Highlight: Alexia Falkenberg, Coordinator, Career Services



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in San Salvador, El Salvador, Central America. However, coming from a German family and growing up with German traditions, I consider myself a German/Salvadoran mutt living in Atlanta, GA.

When did you join us?

I joined the GACC South in October 2014 as a Market Entry trainee.

What are your responsibilities at the Chamber?

Since June 2015, I am the coordinator for our Career Services. I support our client companies with different aspects of their HR needs in the U.S. such as recruiting for bilingual candidates, supporting expat spouses and posting job advertisements.

What project inspired you the most in the last year?

I think that our Full-Cycle Recruitment projects have inspired me the most. The feeling of supporting small-to medium-sized companies to find the most qualified and motivated employees is priceless. I love getting to play a part in helping the companies grow by finding the right candidates to join their teams!

What are/is your most important upcoming project(s) for 2016?

I am very excited about 2016. We are planning to support more German-American companies with our Job Posting and Full-Cycle Recruitment Services. Also, we plan to support more expat spouses with our Partner Support Program in the Southeast. I also look forward to continue utilizing, growing, and promoting the new GACC Talent Network, a great tool which allows us to inform bilingual professionals of available opportunities, and successfully connect them with our German-American client companies.

What do you like about the South?

I lived in Louisiana for 4 years while I was in college and am mesmerized by the incomparable Cajun-style food. Some of my favorite dishes are boiled crawfish, jambalaya, chargrilled oysters, and of course blackened alligator.

What do you enjoy the most about working with the GACC South?

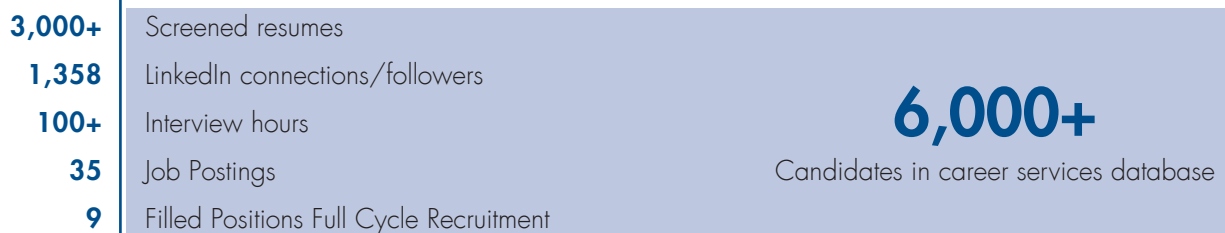
One of the things I enjoy the most about working with the GACC South is that I get to speak German every day! After I finished high school and moved to the U.S., I spent 4 years during which I only got to practice it every now and then over the phone with my family or during my summer travels in Germany.

2015 IN NUMBERS

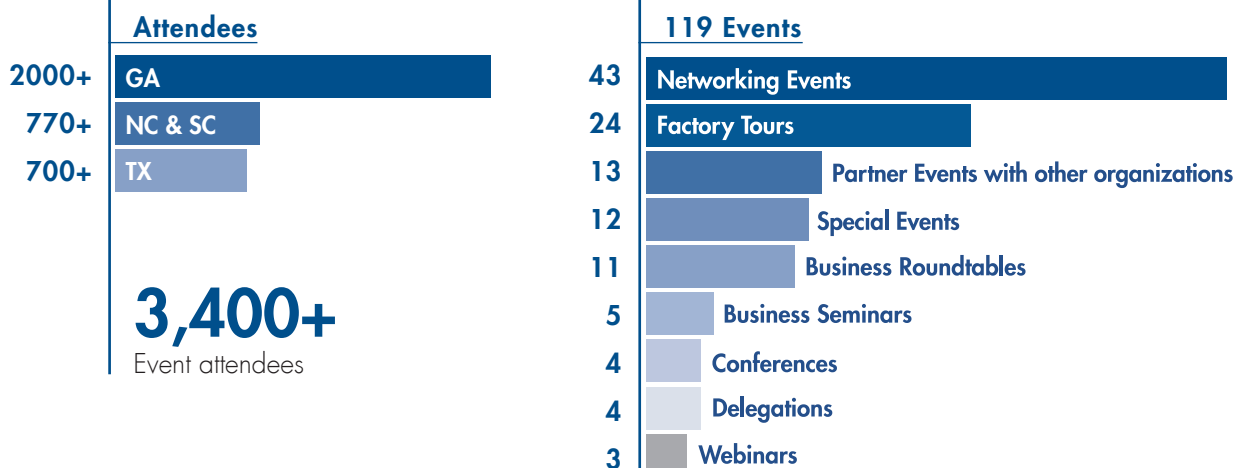
CONSULTING:



CAREER SERVICES:



EVENTS

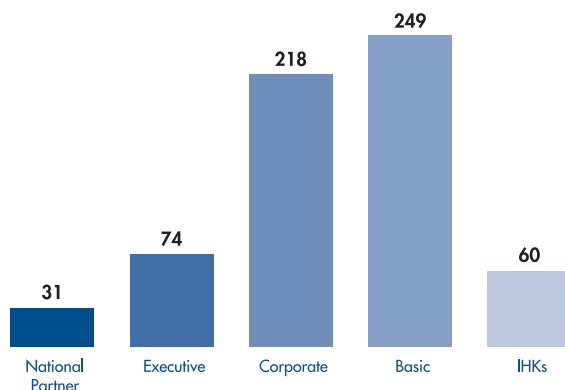


2015 IN NUMBERS

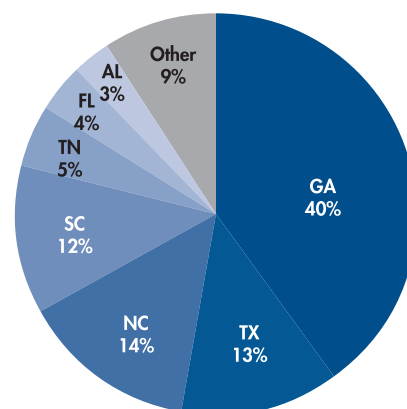
MEMBERSHIP:

734	Current members
105	New members
31	National Partnerships

Members Split by Level



Members Split by State



PR & COMMUNICATION:

GACC South Blog

9	Blog posts	5,400+
8030	Blog views	2,800+
		2,700+

Twitter



921	Twitter followers	
30%	Increase since December 2014	260,000+
7,300	Tweet impressions per month	80,000+
		50,000+

LinkedIn



3,913	GACC (AHK USA) LinkedIn group members	
7%	Increase since December 2014	96,300+
		29,000+

Newsletter Outreach



GACC South Website



AHK USA Website



GermanCompanies.us



GERMAN AMERICAN BUSINESS OUTLOOK (GABO)

GERMAN COMPANIES CONTINUE TO GROW

- 97%** of German companies expect positive revenue growth for their own business in 2016. New product lines and investment in R&D are the most popular initiatives.
- 87%** of German companies reported the same or much better sales volumes in 2015, continuing their economic recovery from the economic slowdown.
- 41%** more German companies plan to expand manufacturing capabilities over the prior year, indicating German companies' confidence in long-term growth in the U.S.

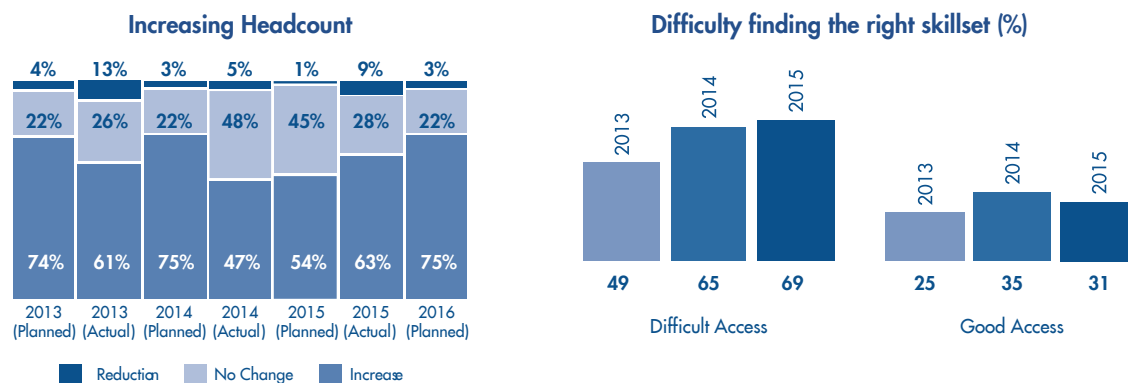
SKILLS GAP

Skilled labor remains the key need for companies looking for growth in the U.S. market. The GACCs are driving forward several initiatives to combat the skills gap and implement training programs in cooperation with companies, partner organizations, and educational institutions.

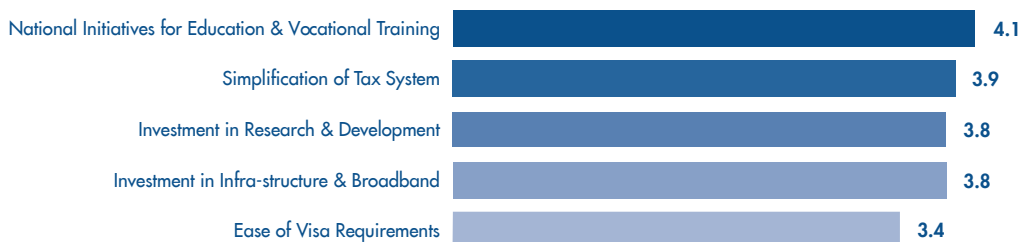
- 75%** of German companies plan to increase their workforce in 2016, up from 63% last year. Especially large companies hired more than expected in 2015.
- 69%** of German companies report difficulties identifying employees with adequate skills. To combat this challenge, majority of respondents have in-house training programs.

SKILLED WORKFORCE

While 75% of companies plan to hire in 2016, almost 70% of companies report difficulties finding candidates with the right skill set, up from 65% last year. As a result, investment in education and dual training grants top the reform agenda.



Relative importance of regulatory reforms on a scale of 1-5



2015 GACC FOCUS: SKILLS INITIATIVE

2015 Vocational Training Programs Across the US

All GACCs celebrated significant Skills programs throughout 2015.

GACC South

The Volkswagen Group of America's Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program in Chattanooga, TN serves as a prime example of how the German vocational training system can be successfully implemented in the U.S. Together with the Chattanooga State Community College, the car manufacturer offers a 3 year dual training program in the fields of motor vehicle mechatronics and automation technology. Furthermore, students will receive the DIHK/AHK-training certificate presented by the GACC South. With this certificate, they will have the possibility of applying for the same job in Germany. In 2015, 25 car and automation mechatronics students graduated from the VW program.

Additionally the GACC South has graduated four skilled metal worker trainees from MTU America Inc. in Aiken County, South Carolina, one of whom was Nigeria Williams who was awarded the Trainee of the Year Award in 2014.

The GACC South supports several other programs such as the Logistics Training program of BLG in Vance, AL as well as the Automation Technician program and industrial mechatronics of MBUSI in AL. Some of the many other projects in the South include forming industry clusters in certain professions such as the Georgia Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (GCATT) for industrial mechanics and supporting mechatronics labs opening at Technical Colleges.

GACC Midwest

GACC Midwest launched the Dual Vocational Training Program ICATT with 8 participating SME companies from the manufacturing sector. In Michigan, the GACC Midwest performed the first part of the final examination according to the German standard within the MAT2 program. They also supported the development and start of CICESS in Illinois and formed (together with IMA and Harper College) the IAAC (Illinois Advanced Apprenticeship Consortium), which received a \$3.9 Million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor. GACC Midwest and the KY FAME program started the preparations for the examination according to the German standard in 2016.

GACC NY

For GACC NY, MechaForce is an innovative, state-wide program whose goal is to change the image of manufacturing and to provide training in advanced manufacturing, specifically in mechatronics and metal technology. The aim is to produce quality professionals who will help manufacturers be competitive, to open up career pathways for young people and adults as well as to provide career stability and security.

Joint Declaration of Intent on Vocational Training, Washington, D.C.

On June 5 2015, a Joint Declaration of Intent on vocational training cooperation was signed by the German Federal Ministries of Education and Research, Economic Affairs and Energy, and Labor and Social Affairs, and the Departments of Commerce, Education, and Labor of the United States of America in Washington DC. The Joint Declaration addresses the growing demand for skilled workers in the U.S., despite the lack of apprenticeship-style courses. The well-respected German model of dual vocational training can support the U.S. in its effort to train highly skilled workers. German companies in the U.S. have successfully implemented this model, and seek to expand it. According to Dr. Thomas Zielke, Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT) "German companies will continue to invest in the U.S. market, which in turn leads to an increased demand for skilled labor. Both German and U.S. companies are undertaking huge efforts in order to maintain a strong and skilled workforce that is able to produce high quality products that are able to compete worldwide. The U.S. and Europe are only able to stay competitive when we work together and put more emphasis on training our future workforce."

GACC Award – Trainee of the Year



From the left: W. David Braun (Quarles & Brady), A.J. Scherman (STIHL Inc.)

For the third time, the German American Chambers of Commerce are presenting the GACC Trainee of the Year Award, recognizing outstanding German subsidiaries that demonstrate excellence in workforce training by fostering advanced skills and competence development, especially in young people.

Sponsored by FESTO, the Trainee of the Year receives the GACC Award on Dec. 14, 2015, in New York as part of the presentation of the German American Business Outlook.

This year's winner, A. J. Scherman, is currently enrolled in the four year Mechatronics Technician apprenticeship program at STIHL Inc. in Virginia Beach, VA. Only the highest caliber, most qualified candidates make it through the tough selection process at STIHL – just 4-5 applicants out of every 300 plus that apply every year are offered a spot.

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Chairman, President & CEO
AGCO Corporation



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Mr. Thomas J. Harrold, Jr.
Partner
Miller & Martin PLLC



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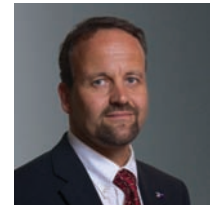
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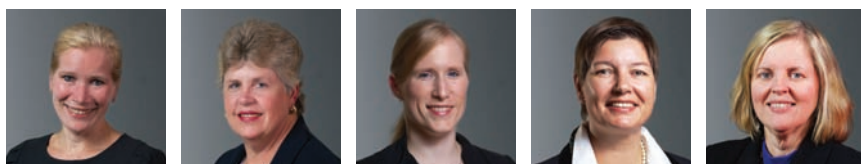
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