



## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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



German American  
Chambers of Commerce  
Deutsch-Amerikanische  
Handelskammern



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

It is a great pleasure for me to contribute to the Annual Report of the German American Chambers of Commerce. The year 2017 has brought about many changes and uncertainties. Many citizens are worried about their economic future and the impact globalization has on their lives. The benefits of keeping markets open for trade and investment and the rules-based multilateral system have been called into question. It therefore now seems more important than ever to underscore the deep interconnectedness of the transatlantic relationship and the value of international trade and investment.

The German-U.S. economic relationship is a perfect example of how free trade and an open

investment climate can create jobs and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic. With trade in goods amounting to approx. \$164 billion in 2016, Germany is the fifth largest trade partner of the U.S. and its third most important partner outside of NAFTA. Imports from Germany – largely capital goods and industrial equipment – serve as direct inputs into the production process at American factories and businesses, thus creating jobs for millions of American workers. The U.S. likewise exports myriad products to Germany, with similar positive effects on the German economy.

Many of the best and highest-paying manufacturing jobs in the U.S. have been created as a result of German investments. In fact, 10 percent of all foreign direct investment in the U.S. comes from Germany. More than 3,000 German companies operate in the U.S., with investments totaling \$292 billion as of the end of 2016. German companies employ nearly 700,000 Americans, of which over 300,000 work in the manufacturing sector. German companies have also heavily invested in high-tech and advanced training for their workforces– making yet another impressive and lasting contribution to the U.S. economy.

The U.S. and Germany are continuing to work closely together on workforce development. Germany's dual system of vocational training and education is a winning export which is growing in popularity here in the U.S., as evidenced by this year's roundtable at the White House with President Trump and Chancellor Angela Merkel as well as American and German business leaders.

The U.S. and the European Union share one of the most intensive economic relations worldwide, accounting for about half of global GDP and together nearly a third of world trade flows. For this reason, it is crucial that we all continue to work together and engage in a transatlantic dialogue on how rules-based trade and an open investment environment can further benefit our economies. A dialogue we are both benefiting from! Neither Europe nor the U.S. will be able to tackle today's economic challenges alone. We need to act jointly, resolutely, and in a spirit of mutual trust and friendship. It is in this spirit that I encourage you to make your voices heard on behalf of the transatlantic relationship.

This means: Much work but also a lot of opportunities lie ahead of us. I am pleased that we can rely on partners such as the German American Chambers of Commerce to help our businesses succeed in the global economy. And I look forward to continuing our close cooperation in the year ahead.

Best,

**Peter Wittig**

*Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United States*



At least 450 German facilities operate in Georgia employing more than 22,500 people across the state.

Visit [Georgia.org/Germany](http://Georgia.org/Germany) to learn more.

We **SPEAK** Business



Georgia Department of Economic Development





We begin 2018 with the promise of new growth ahead and the continuing challenge of defending free and fair trade. At this point last year, we were starting with a new administration and looming changes to U.S. foreign policy and the economic agenda. Despite all that, the strength and influence of German American business relationships remained steadfast – in large part due to this organization's efforts.

As I enter my second year as Chairman of the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern U.S., I want to be sure to thank our growing list of members for their engagement, as well as our staff and many volunteers for delivering another year of successful events, networking opportunities, and member services.

Two great economic issues stand out as critical for the continued health and growth of our businesses: Free trade and a skilled work force. This year as last, we as the GACC and our individual members can have an important impact in both areas. The promotion of bilateral trade between Germany and the U.S. is more important than ever. Both countries benefit from open markets and a free flow of goods and services. We can all reinforce this message in conversations with legislators and the business community.

We also know that a highly skilled workforce remains critical to the 21st century economy. As U.S. employment remains high, ever more companies are having difficulties finding the workers they need to expand. German companies in the U.S. are doing their part to help solve this problem. More than half are already training employees or are interested in joining an apprenticeship program.

You will find in this annual report the latest results of the German American Business Outlook (GABO), published in December. The survey of more than 130 German companies doing business in the U.S. found one key result: They ALL expect growth this year. This is evidence of the positive impact the GACC South and its members are having and the tremendous opportunities still ahead.

Let me close with a reminder of two key events ahead. The Deutsch Amerikanischer Wirtschaftstag will hold its fifth annual meeting on June 21 in Stuttgart. And 2018 also marks the 40th anniversary of the GACC South, a time to celebrate and to reflect on accomplishments and the tasks ahead.

I encourage all of us to keep the momentum going, keep promoting German-American trade, and keep supporting the GACC South in 2018. We have a great year ahead of us.

Sincerely,

**Klaus Zellmer**, *Chairman of the Board of Directors, German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern United States, Inc., President and CEO, Porsche Cars North America, Inc.*

2017 has been an exciting year, for the German American Chambers of Commerce, and for me personally.

In March, I became President & CEO of the GACC South and in April, Klaus Zellmer, President of Porsche Cars North America joined me as the new Chairman of the Board of Directors. Together we have embarked on a journey to shape the Chamber of the future.

2017 also brought new leadership to Washington, D.C. Despite the current differences of perspective on handling diplomacy, The United States is still an indispensable business partner for Germany and so is Germany for the United States.

- 4,700 German subsidiaries
- 672,000 jobs created by German entities
- \$291 billion of FDI from Germany in the United States

Despite the strong headwinds that confront us – – let's focus on the future. The GACC South, its board of directors and management will continue working across the aisle in a non-partisan manner as it relates to German American business issues.

Today, our greatest challenge is the relationship between unity and diversity. If we have an understanding of what unites us, our differences will not divide us. Let us strengthen the ties that make us stronger and focus on the future. This is the spirit in which I lead this organization and it has truly been my pleasure.

We look forward to celebrating many more transatlantic success stories in 2018 with you as we observe our 40th anniversary in our Atlanta and 10th anniversary in our Houston office.

Sincerely,

**Stefanie Ziska (née Jehlitschka)**, *President and CEO German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern United States, Inc.*

©2017 Porsche Cars North America, Inc. Porsche recommends seat belt usage and observance of traffic laws at all times.



Porsche recommends **Mobil 1**

## Dinner and a show. The Porsche version.

Restaurant 356 brings innovative cuisine to a refined, contemporary environment, with views to match. Seasonal menus composed of entrées using local, organic ingredients pair perfectly with a stunning overlook of the driver development track—a thrilling complement to any meal. To book a reservation, visit **restaurant356.com**.

## Restaurant 356 at the Porsche Experience Center Atlanta.



**PORSCHE**



# What We Do

“We Make Business Happen” For over 40 years, the German American Chamber of the Southern U.S. (GACC South) is assisting German companies in evaluating, starting or expanding their businesses in the Southern U.S. As the official representative of German industry and trade, we play a significant role in the success of the companies we work with and support. As the South becomes the economic powerhouse in the U.S., we are making sure that German companies are not missing out on the opportunity.

## We Are Here to Help You

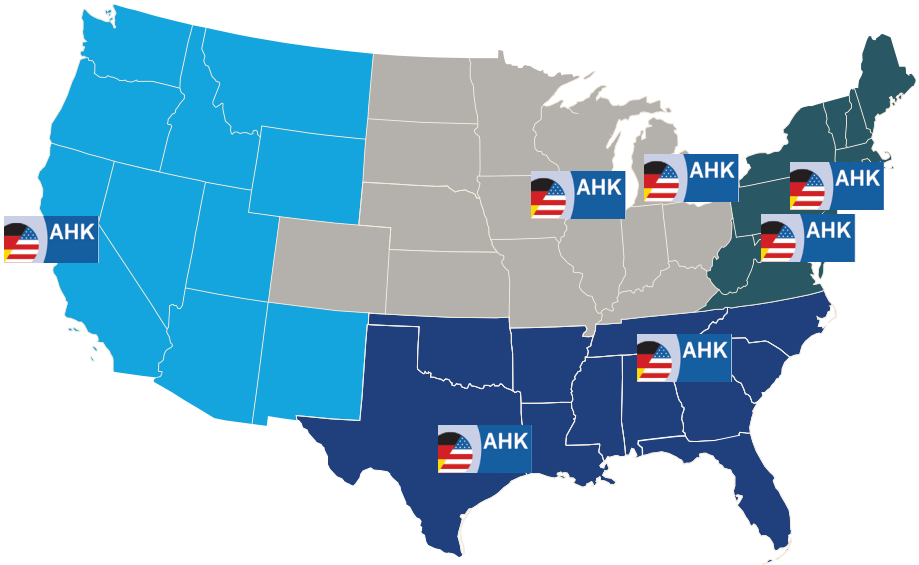
The GACC offers a wide range of services, tailored to the individual needs of companies of any size. We partner with local, state and government representatives and specialists where needed.

CONSULTING SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business Plan</li><li>• Business Representation</li><li>• Office-in-Office Representation</li><li>• Site Selection</li><li>• Market Expansion</li></ul>
CAREER SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment</li><li>• Training</li><li>• Development</li><li>• Placement</li></ul>
MARKETING SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marketing Communication Strategy</li><li>• Digital and Classical Advertising</li><li>• Event and Tradeshow Management</li><li>• Layout &amp; Design</li><li>• Translation Service</li><li>• Press Releases</li><li>• CRM</li></ul>

## Where to Find Us

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

The German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern U.S. was founded in 1978 to promote and support bilateral trade between Germany and the U.S. The GACC South is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, with a branch office in Houston, Texas. In addition, four local chapters located in Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee support the region, as well as our two affiliates; the German American Business Chamber of South Florida (GABC) in Miami, Florida and the Alabama Germany Partnership (AGP) in Birmingham, Alabama.



## Our Partners & Network

Close cooperation with the 79 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs) throughout Germany allows the AHKs to know what companies are concerned about in their interactions with foreign markets. The communication between the 3.6 million entrepreneurs in Germany and the additional millions throughout our global network of 130 AHKs in 90 countries enables us to coordinate one clear unified message for German business. We are supported in that effort in the U.S. through our affiliations with:

### REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMAN INDUSTRY AND TRADE (RGIT)

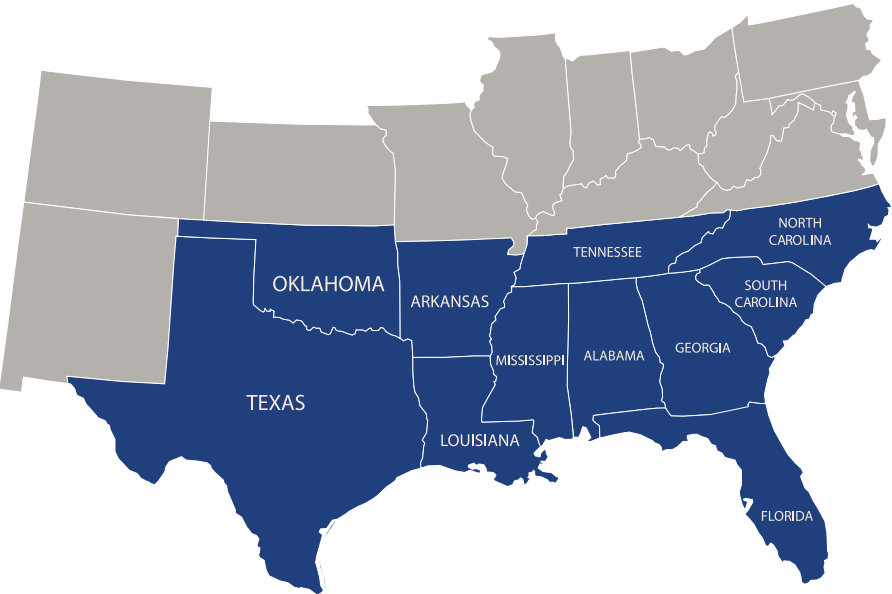
The Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT) is the Washington, D.C., liaison office of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). RGIT's mission is to foster free trade and a welcoming business environment on both sides of the Atlantic to achieve sustainable growth, jobs, and innovation for the German American economic relations.

### 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.

### EMBASSY & CONSULATES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

We work closely with our Embassy and Consulates to ensure coordinated efforts for our German companies. During the devastating hurricanes in 2017, we were in constant contact to coordinate relief measures but also assisted German companies that wanted to help in areas destroyed by natural disaster.





Without the support of our sponsors and national partners, we would not be able to provide the high level of service to German companies. We would like to thank

## National Partners



## VIP Sponsors



## Economic Development Partner



## Carolinas Sponsor



Every smart business knows that uninformed decisions often have costly results. When it comes to expanding your business, well-grounded research and focused industry and cultural knowledge are the key to success in America's ever-changing business environment. Take advantage of our multi-cultural and bilingual professionals that help you every step of the way. Whether you start out small with an office-in-office representation or go right to a site selection, we can help and support with everything in-between.

## Market Expansion

Every good business plan starts with a solid understanding of the industry's future business environment. The GACC South's Market Expansion program has the talent and the tools to give you a well-defined picture of your business potential. Intensively analyzing the market, uncovering potential barriers, researching the competitive landscape and identifying untapped areas for growth are all components of our service, and are all crucial to your success. Market Expansion is comprised of two progressive stages, which we also offer as separate services:

- Market Analysis/Research
- Address Research
- Business Partner Search
- Follow-up Services

## Business Plan

A business plan plays a critical role in establishing your presence in the US market. One that has been expertly tailored to reflect the unique qualities of your business can mean the difference between difficulty and success. As part of the GACC South's business plan service, we offer well-qualified support for you and your employees in planning and implementing your US market expansion. Our consulting team will assist you in developing a comprehensive business plan that encompasses all important factors for your US expansion and can also be used as part of the visa application process for certain visa types.

- Support in developing a US market entry and/or expansion strategy
- "On-site" / Local know-how and access to a worldwide AHK network
- Bilingual employees to advise and assist
- Reliable working partnerships with attorneys and other industry experts from our network

## Business Representation

Our Business Representation service enables you to open a subsidiary in the U.S. without the need for investment in costly infrastructure. Using your

own company name, you will receive a business address and a telephone number. A member of the GACC South's full-time consulting staff will be assigned as the

**“The cooperation with the GACC South brought us an essential step closer to entering the market in the Southeastern USA. To summarize, we can affirm that with the GACC South, companies will receive competent guidance from a reliable partner. Absolutely recommended for anyone considering the USA for business.”**

Bernhard Sievering, Executive Director and Owner, BvL Oberflächen-technik GmbH

primary point of contact for you and your customers. Depending on your business's industry focus and your existing network, you can choose an address in Atlanta, Houston or Miami.





# BE MORE. DO MORE.

How you handle legal complexities today will shape your company's future. Our lawyers know your industry, invest to understand your objectives, and work as hard as you to grow and protect your company.

Lawyers for Aspiring Companies.

## Arnall Golden Gregory

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CONSULTING SERVICE | [www.gaccsouth.com/services](http://www.gaccsouth.com/services)

“Krombacher USA got a customer-focused and powerful partner with the GACC Business Representation team in Houston. Our business interests are very well represented and recommend this service to other companies.”

Gaby Kloefkorn, Operations Manager  
Krombacher USA



### Office-in-Office Representation

We offer economical office-in-office representation solutions to facilitate efficient U.S. market entry without having to face substantial upfront investments into production sites, office suites, or other infrastructure. Moreover, office-in-office representation clients take advantage of immediate local access to the substantial GACC South network and the affiliated German business community. Incubator clients also benefit



from reduced rates on other consulting services. You have invested heavily into building a strong brand, product, and service portfolio. Starting your strategic U.S. market expansion with an office-in-office incubator at the GACC is the next

critical step to driving market positioning and reach across North America.

### Site Selection

The complex nature of site selection requires a capable consultant familiar with the U.S. environment. Together with colleagues from our nationwide network, we provide customized client support on all aspects of a U.S. site selection. Independent and neutral, we will help you find the ideal business location best suited for the needs of your company.

Staffing and Recruiting Services  
**HOFMANN USA, Inc.**  
Global Experience. Local Talent.

Hofmann Services, a staffing and recruiting company moved into their own offices after three years in the GACC Houston incubator



After one year in our Houston office, AZ Armaturen decided to buy a stand-alone facility for their valve business.





THE HALLE FOUNDATION  
www.hallefoundation.org

### German businesses in the US play an important role in the US market –

as a growth motor for industries from automotive to wind energy, as an employer of almost 700,000 people, and as an investor of roughly 291 billion USD in the US. Each year, the German American Business Outlook (GABO) offers powerful insights into the

current state and future expectations of German companies in the US. What are the key challenges and opportunities for German companies based in this country? Despite all the uncertainty, for the first time since the inception of the survey, 100% of the surveyed German companies are expecting growth for their businesses, while only 2% expect the US economy to contract. Harnessing the power of digitalization, and driving innovation in R&D through cooperation with universities and startups are key

trends for German subsidiaries in the US. However, as German companies are expanding through M&A or new manufacturing capabilities in the US, they struggle with an ever-increasing shortage of skilled labor. The skills gap is motivating companies to take the initiative and grow their own workforce. An impressive 25% of German companies are leading the charge by establishing apprenticeship programs as a solution to keep their productivity at maximal capacity.



For the first time since the German American Business Outlook was launched, 100% of the companies surveyed expect **GROWTH** for their business next year. Nearly one out of two expects more than 3% growth. This optimism is based on a solid US economy, with only 2% of the participants expecting contraction in 2018.



Almost all companies rate attracting a **SKILLED WORKFORCE** as an important factor which needs to be addressed by the US administration, followed by openness of markets and digital infrastructure.



Companies increasingly focus their business expansion on **MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS (M&A)**. 11% of the participating companies plan to expand their businesses in 2018 through M&A, up from a steady 7–8% from 2015 to 2017.



59% of participants face **CHALLENGES IN DATA ANALYSIS**. Among the most challenging issues are data security, lack of in-house know-how and data protection. However, the number of companies reporting data analysis challenges is much lower in the US than in Germany.



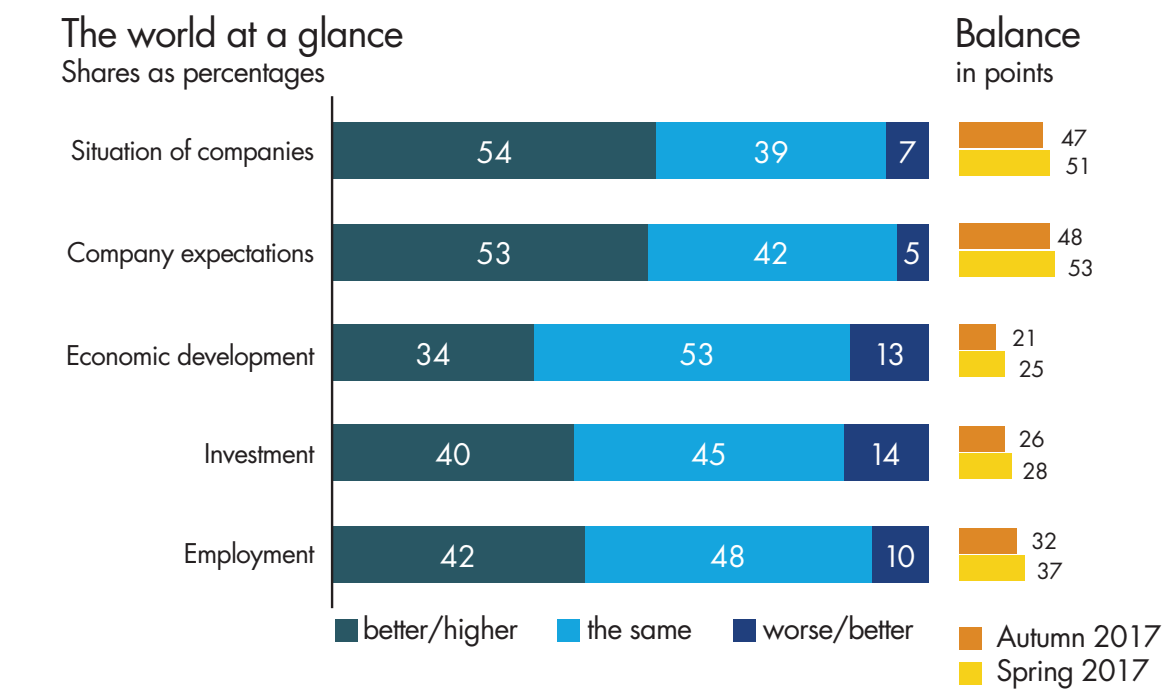
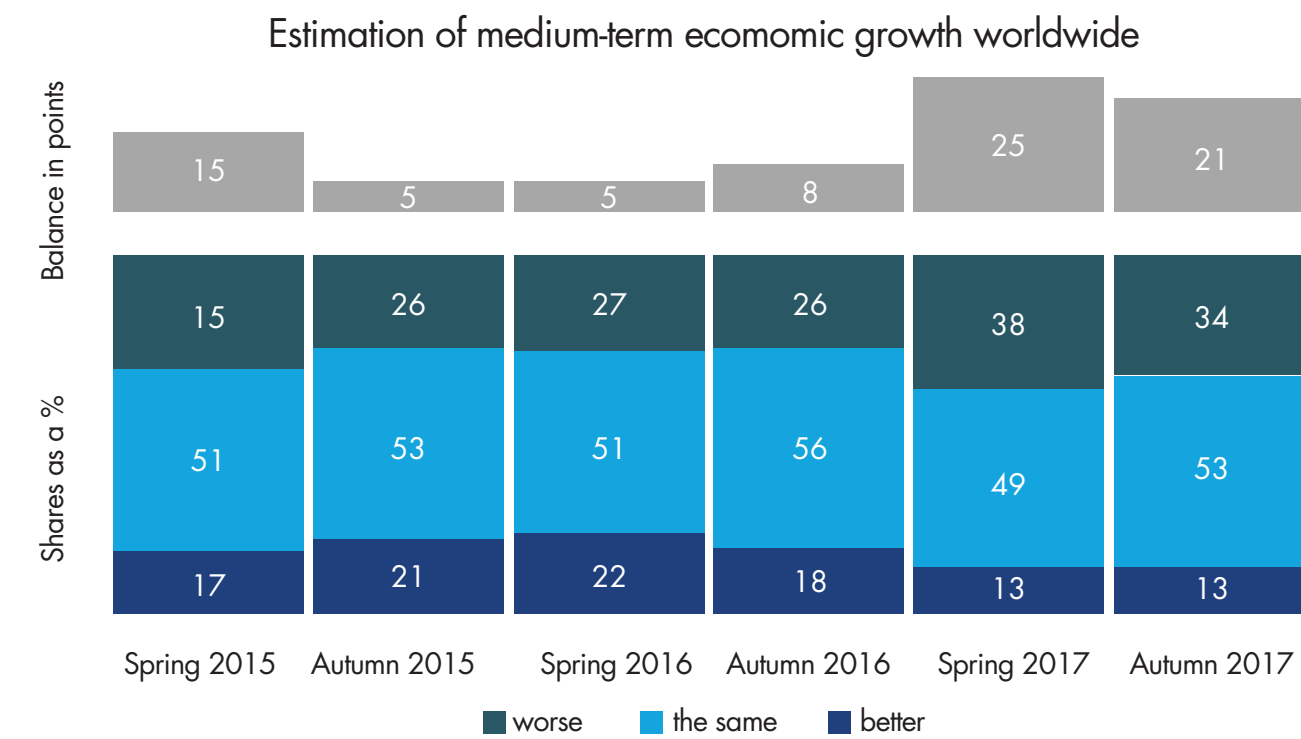
More than half of the companies either participate in an **APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM** or are interested in joining a consortium-style apprenticeship program to train their staff.



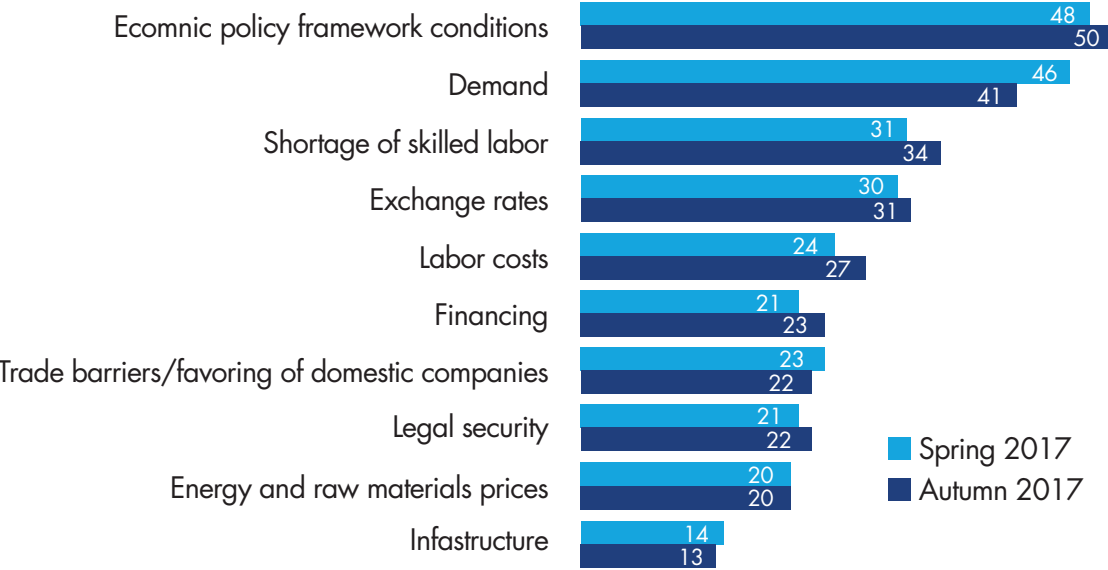
Four out of five companies conducting **RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (R&D)** in the US are collaborating with partners to achieve their R&D goals. The most important partners are universities and community colleges, followed by startups and large tech companies.

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The AHK World Business Outlook is based on a regular DIHK survey among member companies of the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad, Delegations and Representative Offices (AHKs). It encompasses the feedback from around 3,000 German companies, branches and subsidiaries worldwide as well as companies with close links to Germany.



(as %)



CONCLUSION

The rising growth of the global economy is ensuring good business for German companies abroad. The current business climate and the expectations of German companies and member companies of the Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHK) remain at a high level. The upturn worldwide is based on many factors. But stability is fraught with risk. The economy in many countries is developing only slowly. Political crises and uncertainties about economic policy framework conditions are jeopardizing or preventing better overall development. For companies that depend on functioning trade relations, Brexit, trade barriers and sanctions, as well as statements and actions of the US government critical of trade are a source of headaches.

GACC Top 50 Ranking

2016 proved to be another banner year for German businesses in the US, due in great part to profits from a strong dollar that led to healthy earnings in euros. The Top50 Ranking of German Firms, a survey conducted by the German American Chambers of Commerce, shows that German companies in the US continue to profit from strong domestic demand and the equally strong currency. In total, the Top50 German companies generated more than \$350 billion in revenue and employed more than 700,000 people in 2016. Top ranked Daimler Group boasted a robust €44,960 million in revenue (\$52,117) compared to €47,653 million (\$55,236) in 2015. Even with the

challenges faced last year, Volkswagen Group of America took 2nd place with €40,997 million (\$47,510), compared to €33,911 million (\$39,298) in 2015. Rounding out 3rd place is T-Mobile USA, which increased revenue to €32,129 million (\$37,242) from €27,655 million (\$32,053) the previous year.

**Top 50**  
German  
Firms in the US



The GACC South organizes delegation trips to the U.S. (inbound) and to Germany (outbound). Delegation trips offer German and American companies the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the respective target market and to make initial business contacts. Locally, the GACC South conducts briefings, informational events and network events. Political appointments are organized in close cooperation with the embassies and consulates. During plant visits participants will learn about production conditions and work processes up close.

Delegations to the US in 2017

- **Export Initiative “Energy”:**  
Automation of Ports (Houston, TX & New Orleans, LA)
- **Market Entry Program:**  
German Aerospace Delegation to the Southeastern USA  
(Focus Civil Aviation)
- **Market Entry Program:**  
Water Treatment (Baton Rouge, LA & Houston, TX)

- **Market Entry Program:**  
Automotive & Supply Industry with a focus on Lightweighting  
(Detroit, MI & Greenville, SC)
- **LEG Thuringia:** Business and Science Delegation of the Minister President of the Free State of Thuringia to Charlotte, NC

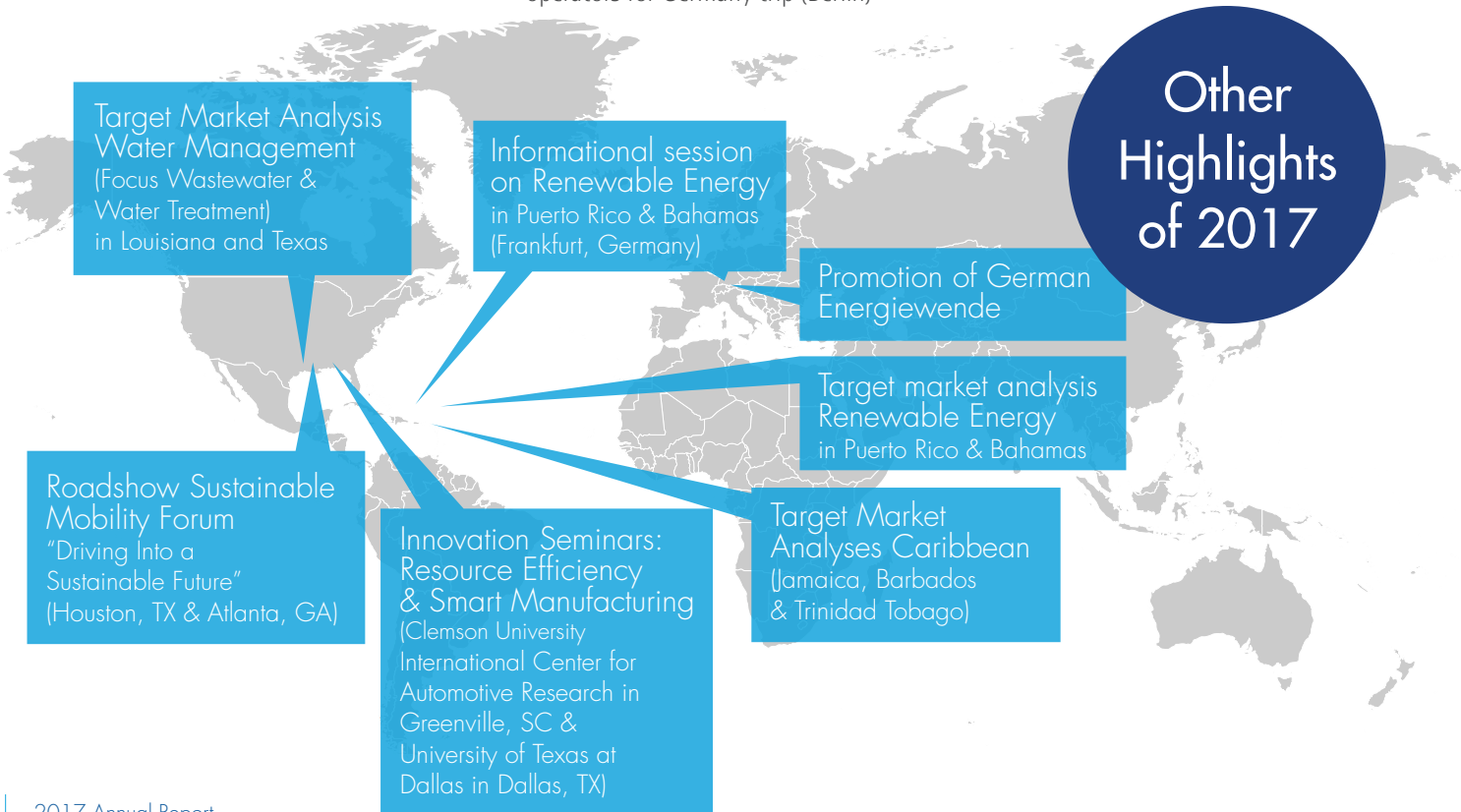
- **IMG Saxony-Anhalt:**  
U Lightweighting Technologies companies trip to Germany Trip (Eastern Germany)

Transatlantic Dialogue on Sustainable Mobility

- **“Driving Into a Sustainable Future”**  
Study trip to Germany

Delegations to Germany in 2017

- **“Energy Dialogue”:** Promotion of Energiewende, Acquisition US Grid operators for Germany trip (Berlin)



Transatlantic Dialogue

A two part program organized by the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern US (GACC South) and financially supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy through the European Recovery Program (ERP; also known as the Marshall Plan).

Part one happened on Friday, July 14 where the Georgia Institute of Technology hosted a forum on sustainable mobility and smart cities, the first in a series of events planned as part of a three-year strategic partnership with the German American Chambers of Commerce (GACC). “This is not just a one off workshop; this is a long term engagement,” said Debra Lam, Managing Director of Smart Cities and Inclusive Innovation at Georgia Tech. “We set this up by leading with a foundation

of [questions like] what are the major issues on the ground right here locally in Atlanta? Who are the players who are actively working in this space? What are they doing about it?” The purpose of this partnership is to connect German and American organizations, companies and institutions that do work on sustainable mobility through targeted roadshow series in the U.S. (in Atlanta and Houston) and delegation trips to Germany. The event was meant to spur future collaborations through an exchange of best practices, knowledge transfer, technology development, case studies and more. The forum convened over 50 individuals from 30 different organizations and departments including Siemens, the City of Atlanta’s Office of Resilience, and the Georgia Public Service Commission.

Part two consisted of a study trip to Germany from November, 6-10,

2017, 15 were select U.S. American delegation participants ranging from city planners and sustainability experts to academia & researchers to further discuss ideas and solutions, and to see how various leading German cities put theory into practice. Among the cities and institution that were part of the agenda: House of Logistics & Mobility (HOLM) GmbH and Frankfurt Economic Development GmbH at the Frankfurt Airport, Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO in Stuttgart, Smart City Initiative at the EUREF Campus in Berlin and finally in Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Institute for Automation and Communication, and the Investment & Marketing Cooperation of the state of Sachsen-Anhalt (IMG Sachsen-Anhalt).

Transatlantic Dialogue Part 2







The Georgia Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (GA CATT) is an innovative and industry-led approach to education. Benchmarked on the German Dual Education System, this program is an educational model developed together with technology leaders. GA CATT combines practice, theory and work to train a globally competitive workforce. It addresses the problem of lack of skilled labor that many companies in the manufacturing industry face today. The GACC certifies and establishes a common standard in dual apprenticeships.

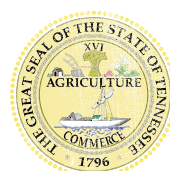
## Participating Colleges



*Giving Direction to the Future*



## Participating States



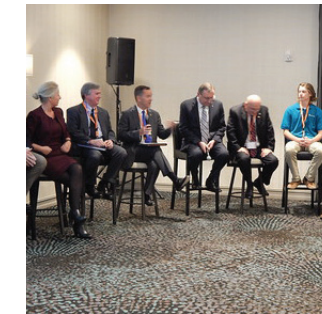
## Participating Counties



On October 31, 2017 we hosted an all-day International Skills Conference. It aimed to bring together business champions in dual apprenticeship programs modeled after the German system with business, regional and state leaders who are interested in solutions for large as well as small and middle-sized employers in order to grow a globally competitive, highly skilled workforce. Additionally, field trips to the Volkswagen Plant Training Academy in Chattanooga, TN, the West Georgia Tech College and Grenzebach Corporation were offered to see the program in action.



Steve Markham, Musent LLC delivers the keynote



The panel is discussing the impact of skilled labor



Skilled Labor leaders: Mario Kratsch, Nicole Heimann, Stefanie Ziska (all GACC), Freya Lemcke (RGIT), Rainer Valier (DIHK)



Apprentices show and tell at Grenzebach Corp.



## Apprenticeship Awards

All GACCs celebrated the growth of their Skills programs throughout the country. In order to honor the outstanding achievements of companies investing in apprenticeships, the GACCs launched the GACC Apprenticeship Award in 2017. On the occasion of National Apprenticeship Week, RGIT hosted a ceremony attended by German Ambassador to the US, Peter Wittig, as well as 80 select guests. Brose North America from Michigan was chosen as the winner of the GACC Apprenticeship Award. We congratulate Brose and thank the company for their investment in the workforce of tomorrow.



German Ambassador to the US, Peter Wittig



# Putting the German Dual Apprenticeship Program to Work in Georgia

The Georgia Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (GA CATT) is an innovative, work-based, dual apprenticeship educational program. Benchmarked on the German Dual Education System, it is the gold standard for practical education models and was developed by the GACC in conjunction with industrial leaders in Georgia.

“This is the best way to keep our business thriving and it’s also great for kids because they get a career in manufacturing without the expense of paying for college. So, everyone wins. There really is no better way to get trained employees for any manufacturing business.”

Martin Pleyer, COO, Grenzebach Corporation

Martin Pleyer, Chief Operating Officer of Grenzebach Corporation in Newnan, GA, was instrumental in getting this skilled labor initiative off the ground. In 2015, Pleyer met with Stefanie Jehlitschka, President and CEO of GACC South, to help create the Georgia curriculum for Industrial Mechanics.

Grenzebach Corporation is headquartered in Germany and opened a U.S. location in Newnan in 1988. The company designs, manufactures, and delivers complete fabrication lines and individual components for the production and processing of flat glass, building panels, gypsum, and other goods.

Pleyer noticed that in his company's main shop the average worker was 48-years old and close to retirement. “Our workers run very specialized machinery that is critical to our business. We needed a way to educate and train future employees so that they could keep building our machinery. The Germans have proven for the past 100-year's that work-based learning works well, and with the help of GACC we have put that same program to work here in Georgia,” Pleyer explains. “It took about a year to figure out how to mix the German curriculum program with high schools here in Newnan, but once we got the State on board and the school system agreed to give students credit for working while in high school, interest began to build quickly.”

This three-year work-based learning curriculum starts when high school students are in the ninth grade. Every apprentice is paid an hourly wage, and once a student finishes the program they receive the equivalency of a college diploma and can go straight into the workforce making anywhere from \$14-\$20 an hour.

“It’s a win-win for our company. Our senior employees have taken well to this idea and appreciate what these younger kids are trying to do. Our apprentices turn into great employees

who we hire on a full-time basis as soon as they complete their training. It’s inspiring to see these young kids come in shy and unsure of themselves, and after just a year, we see them become more and more confident as they learn the technical skills they need to become certified Industrial Mechanics,” Pleyer explains.



Martin Pleyer, COO, Grenzebach Corporation

Students profit from guaranteed employment based on their training, the opportunity to earn an Associate’s Degree with no debt to pay off afterwards, and a German DIHK certification. This certification demonstrates to companies that the apprentice was trained to internationally recognized standards and is prepared to perform the skilled work needed in most manufacturing settings. Companies also benefit from the program as they are offering apprenticeships that help to grow their own skilled workforce.

“In partnership with the German American Chamber of Commerce, we have developed and implemented the Georgia Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (GA CATT) program, an innovative and industry-focused approach to education and workforce development that is the first of its kind in our nation. We are experiencing great economic successes in our communities where industries cluster together to model apprenticeships after Germany’s dual education system – redefining the role of public education and creating a highly-skilled and robust workforce that is second to none.”

Lt. Governor of Georgia, Casey Cagle

There are currently eight companies taking part in the GA CATT apprenticeship program in Newnan:

- E.G.O. North America
- Grenzebach Corporation
- Groov-Pin Corporation of Georgia
- IMS Gear Georgia, Inc.
- Kason Industries
- Kawasaki Corporation
- Winpak Films, Inc.
- Yamaha Motor Manufacturing Corporation
- Yokogawa Corporation of America

GA CATT is currently turning out successful graduates from these companies throughout the Newnan area and the initiative continues to gain momentum. As for the future, Pleyer says he will continue to work with GACC to help expand the program throughout Georgia. “This is the best way to keep our business thriving and it’s also great for kids because they get a career in manufacturing without the expense of paying for college. So, everyone wins. There really is no better way to get trained employees for any manufacturing business,” he concludes.



Lt. Governor of Georgia, Casey Cagle

The GA CATT dual vocational training program was signed into effect in Newnan, GA May 16, 2016 by Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle of Georgia and Stefanie Ziska (née Jehlitschka), President and CEO of the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern U.S., Inc (GACC South). Coweta County’s Central Educational Center, West Georgia Technical College, the Technical College System of Georgia, and eight Coweta County manufacturers became the first regional group within GA CATT, launching the nation’s first apprenticeship program under the umbrella of the GACC.



“Once again your website has helped to find us new employees within the German community. Within one week after posting our job opening we were able to fill this position. The website helps us to target a special group without having to go through media which is approaching a much broader target group.”

Dennis Wagner, President & CEO of BESTAR, LLC

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National Partner Program

This program is designed for companies that have operations in more than one German American Chamber's area (GACC Midwest, GACC New York, GACC South). The National Partner Program provides our members with more benefits by offering nationwide coverage at a discounted rate. By receiving the highest membership level each individual chamber has to offer, your company is guaranteed to enjoy the maximum membership benefits from North to South and from East to West.

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- Conference sponsor
- Merchandise sponsor
- Mediapartner

We also offer one- or multi-year sponsorships as well as state and regional partnerships. And since every company has a different goal they like to achieve with a sponsorship, we individualize the package to your needs.

Benefits	Basic* (\$400)	Corporate (\$900)	Executive (\$2000)
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Online access to 700+ other member companies	✓	✓	✓
Company listing in our national print directory + complimentary copy	✗	✓	✓
Discounted GACC South consulting services (Prorated)	✗	\$150	\$300
Extend your membership and include branch offices for a 50% discount**	✗	✗	✓
Company logo marketed on banner and website ( <a href="http://www.gaccsouth.com">www.gaccsouth.com</a> )	✗	✗	✓
Host a Business Seminar or "Off the Clock" networking event	✗	✗	✓

\*Only for companies <50 employees. \*\*Applies only in conjunction with an existing Executive membership.



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### March 2017: AHK USA at World Economy Day, Berlin, Germany

The CEOs and Consulting Department heads of the AHK USA network got together with their peers from around the globe at the AHK World Economy Day in Berlin to strategize on our role and services for German exports. The conference featured keynote speaker Brigitte Zypries, Germany's Minister for Economics and Energy, who highlighted the service of the global AHK network for German companies. On the occasion of GACC NY's 70th anniversary, March 17 featured a dedicated USA Conference highlighting the role of the AHK USA in fostering German business growth in the US.



AHK USA at World Economy Day, Berlin, Germany

### March 2017: Siemens Energy Plant Tour, Charlotte, NC



### April 2017: Southern Small and Medium Enterprise Forum (SSMEF), Chattanooga, TN

The one day conference featured engaging keynote speakers Bob Rolfe from the Tennessee Department of Economic Development, and Daniel Andrich from the Representative of German Industry and Trade in Washington. Three informative workshops offered attendees the possibility to learn about emerging topics for SMEs: Ralph Pasquariello from Snelling Walters Insurance Brokers talked about cybersecurity for small businesses. Dr. Sebastian Pokutta from the Georgia Institute of Technology shared his knowledge on innovation through collaboration between companies and universities. And Tim Milde from kloeckner.i GmbH demonstrated how established companies can learn from startups and incorporate their innovative concepts.

In the afternoon, the four experts Hannes Barske from DLR Project Management Agency, Nicole Koesling from Volkswagen Group of America, Chattanooga, Ramona Neuse from DIHK Service GmbH and Martin Pleyer from Grenzbach Corporation exchanged their ideas and experiences during a panel discussion on trends and challenges for a 21st century workforce. Stefanie Ziska, President & CEO of the GACC South, moderated the discussion as expert on the topic.

Concluding the conference, the attendees joined our Evening Reception at Chattanooga's Coker Tire museum, where they could admire an impressive car collection featuring unique models.



SSMEF 2017

### April 2017: Renewable Energy Roundtable, Tampa, FL



### May 2017: Asparagus Dinner, Dallas, TX



### May 2017: Industry 4.0 Forum, Gray Court, SC



### May 2017: Gateway Award, Charlotte, NC

The Gateway Award has been initiated by the present Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany, Klaus Becker and was issued for the first time in 2005. Since 2005, the Gateway Award has been presented each year to a company or organization that has excelled in promoting German-American Business and Relations.



Gateway Award

### June 2017: Future Mobility in Smart cities, Dallas, TX



Future Mobility in Smart Cities



June 2017: *German American Water Symposium, Baton Rouge, LA*



Water Symposium

June 2017: *4<sup>th</sup> German American Business Forum (DAWT), Düsseldorf, Germany*



The GACCs in cooperation with the Industrie- und Handelskammer Düsseldorf, kicked off the 4th German-American Business Forum, at the Industrie-Club Düsseldorf with a robust program on current US-German economic and business relations. More than 250 business leaders and



4th German American Business Forum

other representatives of the German-American business community attended vigorous discussions on transatlantic economic relations, high-profile topics such as digitization

and energy management. A series of workshops provided insights on US market penetration, offering practical advice on developing effective sales strategies in the US, legal frameworks, training, and prospects for start-ups. The 5th German American Business Forum will take place in Stuttgart on June 21, 2018.

July 2017: *Chicago Hosts AHK Americas Regional Conference, Chicago, IL*

The CEOs of all AHKs in the Americas came together in Chicago in July. Key partner organizations such as Germany Trade and Invest, along with the DIHK and German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy joined the AHKs in discussing strategies for supporting German business in the coming years. Topics included the digitalization of industry and the AHKs, expanding opportunities for membership, and continued growth of the AHK network around the world.



August 2017 *New Member Reception, Greer, SC*



NYR SC

September 2017: *Oktoberfest, Houston, TX*



Oktoberfest

October 2017: *Logistics Roundtable Blockchain Technology, Houston, TX*



Logistics Roundtable Blockchain Technology

October 2017: *National GACC Awards Gala, Chicago, IL*

The national GACC Awards Gala saw over 200 executives from the German-American business community celebrate excellence in innovation, services and digitalization in Chicago. The awards ceremony was embedded in a festive gala event, with a multi-course menu paired with European wines, as well as an exclusive musical and magical entertainment program.



National GACC Awards Gala

October 2017: *Harald Schmidt, Atlanta, GA*



October 2017: *Port Tour, Charleston, SC*



December 2017: *Mary Kay Company Visit, Dallas, TX*





We hosted our 22nd Annual Gala on November 11, 2017

The gala, which had more than 450 in attendance, is considered the social highlight of the year for the German-American business community in the

South. The gala paid tribute to the incredible efforts of the expansion and growth of Germany's economic presence within the Southern region, and recognized the dedication of the GACC South's community, partnerships and sponsors. The GACC South has hit some high marks over the past years including their continuous support and promotion of German vocational training.

Brazil was picked as the destination for this year's gala – as it is an economic power house in Latin America and is a promising market for local and foreign companies in the South. The gala also supported an important cause, the SOS Children's Villages in Brazil—the world's largest organization dedicated to orphaned and abandoned children.



IMPORTANT DATES

February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018: Mercedes-Benz Stadium Tour, Atlanta, GA



February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018: Wind Energy – How to Power the Future, Galveston, TX

Event Details: <http://www.gaccsouth.com/en/events/singleview/events/wind-energy-how-to-power-the-future/>

April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018: Southern Small and Medium Enterprise Forum (SSMEF), Birmingham, AL



Southern SME Forum

Our sixth annual "German Mittelstand - Southern SME Forum" will be held on April 9, 2018, at The Westin Hotel in Birmingham, AL. This business-specific event offers a platform to exchange ideas while building relationships with new business and offers the opportunity to gain insights on innovative business practices, in order to successfully strengthen your presence within the U.S. market.

The all-day business conference will feature engaging keynote speakers followed by informative workshops, panel discussions, and plentiful networking opportunities. Alongside the German Mittelstand - Southern SME Forum, the 2018 GACC South Board of Directors will be elected as part of our Annual General Meeting.

Event Details: <http://www.gaccsouth.com/en/events/special-events/southern-sme-forum/>

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018: 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Gateway Award, Carolinas Aviation Museum, Charlotte, NC

Our annual signature event in North Carolina just got bigger. Instead of the usual luncheon, this will be a black tie evening event that honors outstanding accomplishments in German American business relations.

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018: German American Business Forum, Stuttgart, Germany

The event targets German companies that are seeking to establish business relationships within the U.S., and focuses on consulting, discussions, as well as workshops addressing practical questions about doing business in the USA. More than 250 German company representatives with interest in expanding in the US market are expected to attend and have the opportunity to also visit the Global Connect exhibition.

Event Details: [www.da-wt.com](http://www.da-wt.com) & [www.messe-stuttgart.de/global-connect/en/](http://www.messe-stuttgart.de/global-connect/en/)



German-American Business Forum

October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018: 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gala

This gala is the social highlight of the year. And as we celebrate the 40th Anniversary this year, this event will be bigger, brighter and better than ever.

April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018: Annual General Meeting

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018: Kick-off to Year of Germany in the US

In addition to the above mentioned, we plan over 100 seminars, events, round-tables, exhibitions, factory tours and off-the-clocks a year.



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