



August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018

## **Annual 2017-2018 MITA Report**

Dear Members of the Madison International Trade Association:

The 2017-2018 MITA programming year has come to an end with last week's Summer Social at Vintage Brewing Company. What a great event, crowd and venue. I personally want to thank everyone that came to celebrate another successful year with the Board. Overall, it has been both a tremendous and trying year for those of us working on supporting international trade.

This past year my board colleagues and I have been focused on making sure you, our members, are getting access to the people, global insight, tools, and best practices that will add value to your international programs and ultimately increase your and your company's opportunities for success.

To that end, MITA held stellar programs last fall on corporate trade tax policy, developing international sales strategies, and global E-Commerce. Right after the new year, Michael Gregory and Dr. Antonio Mello provided a packed Fluno Center with both a 2018 global forecast and corporate finance/trade trend vision for the upcoming year. February's "Ask the Expert" program was also at capacity as some of our region's best professional service firms fielded trade questions across the board from state manufacturers. Spring was focused on cyber security best practices, emerging markets in Africa, the Wisconsin International Trade Conference in Milwaukee, and how to truly access some of the best state and federal grant and trade mission programs that have existed during my career-- congratulations to all that took advantage of the grants MITA offered for half price membership and for attending the trade conference in Milwaukee.

Organizationally and financially, MITA continues solid ground. By continuing to focus on partnerships and programs that add value to our membership, this trend will continue. I believe there is a direct correlation between the continual growth in excellent program speakers and the growth in our corporate partnerships. MITA's past and present sponsors are more than organizational support, they are mentors to our board and membership. I and the MITA Board cannot thank them enough.



Please check out [www.mitatrade.org](http://www.mitatrade.org) for our sponsor listings and consider using their services within your organization.

MITA invested some of our 2017-2018 income on strategic social media activities involving videos and LinkedIn. This was done to grow our network of manufacturers, to keep up to date on social media technology, and grow our presence and reputation in the state and region. Thank you to all that helped implement these important changes. While no one on the board is a social media expert, we realize we must continue to evolve and not fear modifying our traditional outreach channels to align with today's social media norms.

As with most boards, ours is ever evolving. MITA's 2018 Board Election will be held in early December rather than September as has been customary. If you are interested in serving MITA in a greater capacity, please contact me or another board member. Personally, I would like to see more Wisconsin manufacturers get involved in our board and committees in 2019 to keep our programming focused on the needs of this trade community.

Lastly, the 2018-2019 programming line-up is coming together nicely. We have Ron Feldman, COO of the Federal Reserve in Minneapolis and Dr. Walter Kemmsies, Managing Director, Economist and Chief Strategist of JLL confirmed for our 2019 Global Economic Forecast in January. September's program next month will be extremely timely as it is focused on the ever-evolving US Trade and Policy, related Supply Chain Risk Management, and the current USTR Chinese tariff exclusions and public hearings. Please do not miss this opportunity to learn first-hand what others are doing within their organizations and the current dynamic trade negotiation environment.

As the guy on the 100-dollar bill once said, "no nation has ever been ruined by trade". Keep an eye on the prize and stay engaged with MITA as this nation renegotiates its global priorities. It has been my pleasure to serve MITA this past year.

Michael P. Gay, CEcD  
MITA President