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Survey Results Could Help North State's Export Economy

BY TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE | JUNE 3, 2014

David Benda, McClatchy News Service

Global trade helps drive California's economy, and many products produced in California and shipped overseas come from the North State.

A group of business partners is conducting a survey that could help identify ways to expand exporting opportunities in far Northern California.

A list of 30 questions was sent out last month to more than 500 businesses in a 10-county area. Input from those companies will help determine what business, education and logistics challenges are getting in the way of growing the area's global economy.

Exports generate about \$250 billion in revenue for California businesses and about \$300 million of that comes from 10 counties: Shasta, Del Norte, Humboldt, Butte, Plumas, Tehama, Lassen, Modoc, Siskiyou and Trinity, said Leah Goold-Haws.

Goold-Haws is Northern California Deputy Service Navigator of Global Trade and Logistics for the California Community Colleges' Doing Water Matters initiative. The initiative in far Northern California is being funded by a \$300,000 grant in its first year.

It also will help Shasta College offer an Introduction to International Business online course for the first time, Goold-Haws said.

"They have had international business courses in the past but I believe it's been five or six years," Goold-Haws said.

There are financial resources available to help businesses grow their global market, but unfortunately most of that money goes south of the North State, Goold-Haws said.

"There is not a lot of (exporting) data for the region north of Sacramento," she said.

Goold-Haws hopes the information from the survey will change that and help send more money from federal programs such as the Rural Export Initiative to far Northern California. The State Trade and Export Program is another source of money available.

Helping Goold-Haws with the survey are the Economic Development Corp. of Shasta County, Innovate North State, Superior California Economic Development Corp., Port Humboldt, the city of Eureka, and Siskiyou County Economic Development Corp.

Goold-Haws declined to identify the companies that received the survey.

"I want to protect the anonymity of the businesses that don't feel comfortable in sharing their information, but the data itself, we will make public," she said.

Survey respondents have through this month to submit their answers.

Information from the survey also will help open a regional Center for International Trade Development in the North State. The center would be under Goold-Haws' direction.

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