

Chris Chung – Selling North Carolina, Internationally

I think we're always trying to figure out where else those gaps in the world exist that we don't have someone actively selling North Carolina.

And as I said, that can be selling North Carolina as an inbound investment destination. That can be selling North Carolina as a place where quality products are made and exported to customers around the world. It can even mean North Carolina as a destination for international travelers. This is really about marketing and promoting North Carolina as a product.

We have 5 locations right now around the world, 5 representatives in five different markets, in Asia, Europe and in India. On the international trade and export size side, we have a little bit more than that. I think we've got 9 or 10 representatives covering a good chunk of the world. On the international tourism side, that's mostly in Western Europe where we've got representation.

That leaves a great deal of the world that we don't have anyone physically based in really out there carrying the North Carolina message and the North Carolina banner. You take foreign direct investment, for example. We cover a good chunk of Europe, but there are places like the Scandinavian markets, there are places like Turkey, there are of course Spain and Portugal.

There are markets like that within Europe where we aren't able to spend as much time prospecting because we've only got a couple people covering Europe for us in terms of FDI and their time is limited, their resources are limited. We focus a lot on Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, the UK, but that still leaves a good chunk of the European continent uncovered. Asia, same situation. We don't have anyone in South America, anyone in Latin America for that matter, focused on foreign direct investment. That's just on FDI where we have those types of gaps.

You never know when the next opportunity could come along to attract the company from those parts of the world where we don't have any representation. I think when it comes to resources, how do we expand our coverage around the world to support our FDI attraction efforts, to support our export promotion efforts and even to support our international tourism promotion work?

That's going to be where additional resources would always be welcome because it helps us to sell North Carolina to an even broader audience than we're able to target today.