

Lieutenant Governor Murray Announces Business Development Trade Mission to Ireland and Northern Ireland

In collaboration with the Ireland Chamber of Commerce-United States, mission will focus on the life sciences, information technology and travel & tourism sectors

BOSTON, MA - Thursday, September 4, 2008 - Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray today announced he will lead a business development trade mission to Ireland and Northern Ireland in October. The mission will focus on creating economic development opportunities in the life sciences, information technology, and travel and tourism sectors.

"I look forward to further developing the many relationships between Massachusetts and Ireland and Northern Ireland," said Lieutenant Governor Murray. "This mission will allow me to spread the message that Massachusetts is open for business with two of our major international partners."

Lieutenant Governor Murray will lead a delegation including Senate President Therese Murray, other state government officials, industry leaders and representatives from higher education institutions such as the University of Massachusetts Worcester Medical School. The delegation will travel to Galway and Dublin in Ireland, and Belfast and Derry in Northern Ireland October 5th to October 11th. The delegation has been coordinating with the Ireland Chamber of Commerce's New England Chapter (ICCUSA). In all four cities, the Lieutenant Governor will meet with representatives from government, academia and the private sector.

"This trade mission will allow us to partner with Ireland and Northern Ireland and promote industries such as life sciences, biotechnology, information technology and tourism," said Senate President Therese Murray. "By meeting with experts in both the public and private sector, we will be able to set groundwork and move forward on expanding these industries and bringing jobs and revenue to the Commonwealth."

Ireland and Northern Ireland were chosen for a business development mission because the regions share growing life sciences, information technology, and travel and tourism sectors, as well as, historic and cultural ties to Massachusetts. Building ties in these specific industries will benefit Massachusetts, Ireland and Northern Ireland, by leading to more international companies to utilize Massachusetts as a gateway to North America.

"The Commonwealth has great business relationships with Ireland and Northern Ireland that cut across a range of industries, including medical devices," said Tom Sommer, President of MassMEDIC. "This trip will enable the Commonwealth to build on the investments that Irish companies have already made here in Massachusetts, while also helping to open doors for Massachusetts companies looking to grow in the European market."

Just recently, Creganna, a leading Irish medical device company, opened a manufacturing facility in Marlborough and plans to create close to 100 new jobs. In addition, Cognex, a Natick based machine sensor company has recently expanded its manufacturing capacities abroad, establishing a plant in Cork, Ireland to better compete in the European market.

Over all, total value exports from Massachusetts to Ireland have been rising since 2004 with a remarkable growth of 55% from 2006 to 2007, representing over \$715 million in commodities. In addition, the value of exported pharmaceutical products to Ireland increased over 6,000% from 2006 to 2007 alone.

ICCUSA is a highly regarded networking organization that actively promotes the development of economic, commercial, financial and educational relationships between the United States and the island of Ireland. ICCUSA members are business executives and entrepreneurs in the U.S., Ireland and Northern Ireland.

"Ireland is a leading trading partner with the United States and this trade mission will serve to further strengthen the significant business relationships that exist between Ireland and Massachusetts," said Fergal Woods, Director of ICCUSA New England. "A key objective of this trade mission is to further promote Massachusetts as the 'go-to State' for any Irish or European companies wishing to conduct business in the United States."

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and its agency the Massachusetts Office of International Trade & Investment (MOITI) will oversee details of the trade mission. Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and the respective governments of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain have also been partners in the planning process. The cost of the trade mission will be paid by the Commonwealth's active trade partners MassPort and the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) under agreement with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. In addition MOITI, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, and the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority will be hosting a series of travel and tourism promotional events for the delegation. Non-Administration and private sector participants will reimburse MassPort and MTC for costs associated with their participation. The budget for this trade mission is approximately \$170,000.