

TradeSource

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Celebrating Milestones and Excellence in Trade

In this issue, the U.S. Census Bureau—alongside our federal partners including the Export-Import Bank of the United States and the U.S. Small Business Administration—brings you vital resources, programs, services, tips, and tools to help develop export strategies and expand your reach in the global marketplace. Whether you are new to exporting or seeking to grow in new markets, we are here to ensure you are fully equipped for success. Discover how federal services can help you safely navigate international business and gain a strategic edge through exporting.

Celebrate the inspiring success of this year’s Exporter of the Year, and travel back in time with us to mark a decade since AESDirect was integrated into the Automated Commercial Environment—a milestone that transformed how export data is filed and managed. Finally, we invite you to honor the remarkable careers of three trailblazers from the U.S. Census Bureau’s International Trade Program—Gerry Horner, Paul Newman, and Wendy Peebles—whose dedication and innovation have left a lasting legacy on the world of trade and data.

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Business Exporter of the Year Leverages Family and SBA for Global Market Success

By Stephen Sullivan, senior international trade specialist, Office of Manufacturing and Trade and Joe Raycraft, finance manager for the New England region, U.S. Small Business Administration



Michael Auletta managing the BAUER booth at the Dubai Airshow in 2023.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) 2025 Small Business Exporter of the Year is a company and family success story with a history longer than its street name, "Century Drive."

Bauer, Inc. got its start as an electrical contracting firm in the early 1900s. In the 1930s, as the postwar aviation industry took off, the Pratt & Whitney aircraft company in Hartford, Connecticut, emerged as a leader in aircraft engine innovation. To support the development and testing of their engines, Pratt & Whitney turned to Bauer for its expertise in refrigeration and heating systems. Bauer was brought on to create temperature simulation systems critical for engine component testing. As demand for specialized engine testing solutions grew, Bauer gradually shifted focus—eventually leaving the electrical trade behind to concentrate solely on aircraft component test equipment.

While Bauer kept its original name, today, it is the Auletta family business. Lou Auletta Sr. started with Bauer in 1971 as chief engineer and eventually purchased the company. His sons, Louis and Mark, are now president and chief executive officer and chief operating officer, respectively; Auletta's grandson, Michael, is senior vice president for Sales, Marketing & Service; and Bob Abrams, chief financial officer, rounds out the management team.

Bauer is located in Bristol, Connecticut, about 25 minutes from Bradley International Airport, where it employs more than 100 people. There, its test and support equipment business operates across 75,000 square feet of manufacturing and engineering facilities. Bauer's aerospace test systems and specialized support equipment help ensure safety and reliability in air travel worldwide.

Bauer has been exporting goods for more than 50 years. Auletta Sr. recognized the opportunity to grow globally soon after taking over in the 1970s. Lou Auletta Jr. continued with his father's philosophy and has significantly ramped up international efforts in recent years, thanks largely to the efforts of Auletta Jr.'s son, Michael, who manages global sales. Recognizing the importance of face-to-face meetings, Michael spends about 200 days on the road each year, mostly internationally. This year (2025) represents Bauer's second consecutive year of record sales.

Michael is a big believer in the importance of developing relationships with global clients. He jump-started the Asian market by living in Singapore for 2 years during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. He went there to build a network and to establish deeper relationships with new and existing customers.

Michael stresses the need to invest in the long term to achieve global market success. For example, he shared that the company had recently received its first purchase from a large Japanese prospect that he had visited and forged a relationship with over a 9-year period!

"You need to gain their trust," he says. "Get out there, invest in the region—not just through visits, but also participating in trade shows, and other opportunities for face time to build relationships."

He added, “You also need to be willing to take risks. Sometimes, at the beginning of the relationship, this might require us to be more agreeable to customer-centric contracts. The ultimate goal is to create value and a long-term client relationship.”

This strategy has been aided by the [SBA's State Trade Expansion Program \(STEP\)](#) grant and the U.S. Commercial Service. Over the last decade, Bauer utilized STEP grant funding that opened new markets by defraying a portion of the cost associated with attending aerospace and maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO)-focused trade shows abroad. “It’s critical to be visible at trade shows that help demonstrate Bauer’s commitment to its global customer base,” says Michael. “STEP helps support our mission to be present—to initiate and nurture those important international customer relationships.”

For over 2 decades, Bauer has utilized the services of the U.S. Commercial Service, including market entry strategies, tailored partner matchmaking in multiple international markets, and support with a wide range of export documentation/logistics challenges. In addition, Bauer actively participates in numerous aerospace trade programs and procurement seminars.

In the early 1990s, Auletta Sr. contributed significantly to Connecticut’s export community by serving as chair of the Connecticut District Export Council—all members being appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. During this time, he collaborated closely with the U.S. Commercial Service to develop export programs addressing the specific needs of Connecticut businesses.

In 2024, Bauer received two prestigious honors from the Connecticut District Export Council: the New-to-Market Award for its successful sales to Qatar; and the Growth Award for achieving an exceptional increase in exports to Ethiopia.

Bauer Inc. also realizes that although there is more to successful international business than just finding clients, it needs to figure out ways to be more competitive. Bauer turned to [SBA's Export Working Capital Program \(EWCP\)](#) to support its global sales growth.

Bauer has secured a multimillion dollar EWCP asset-based structured line of credit that provided the flexibility the company required to support the issuance of standby letters of credit to its global customers as advance payment guaranties. The SBA’s EWCP only requires 25 percent collateral on the issuance of standby letters of credit, providing the company with additional liquidity and allowing it to better compete in global markets.

The ability to offer competitive payment terms to international buyers is one of the surest ways for a company to stand out. For Bauer’s large MRO customer

base, the EWCP asset-based line of credit allows more flexibility plus higher advance rates on accounts receivable and inventory to help Bauer cover the costs of production while awaiting progress payments.

Progress payments are common in the manufacturing sector and are based on project milestones as they ensure cash flow aligns with work completion and helps to reduce the financial strain, especially for projects that can take several months to design, build, and complete. Bauer typically requires an upfront payment from customers at contract signing followed by progress payments upon completion of engineering drawings and during the various stages of completion—with the final payment due upon shipment.

In return for the advanced and milestone payments, customers typically require an advance payment guaranty, or performance bond, where they are able to get money back if the seller is not able to meet the requirements of the contract. Advance payment guarantees and bid and performance bonds are executed through the issuance of a standby letter of credit.

EWCP plays an important role in Bauer’s export activities to more than 80 countries. Today, international trade sales represent 35 percent of overall sales and directly support 35 jobs.

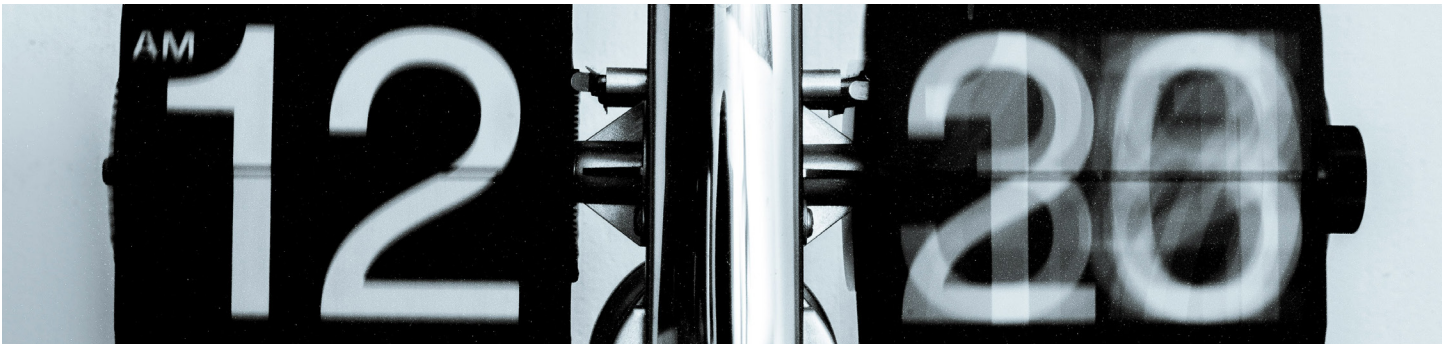
The Aulettas pay their success forward by advising and mentoring other Connecticut small businesses to participate in global markets and promote exports.

Family, community, and effective utilization of SBA export promotion resources all help make Bauer an ideal SBA National Exporter of the Year. Congrats to Bauer and the Auletta family for this well-deserved recognition!

For more on the STEP Grant, visit www.sba.gov/step.

To learn more about SBA working capital, which can support international or domestic business, visit www.sba.gov/partners/lenders/7a-loan-program/7a-working-capital-pilot-program or search “Find an SBA export finance manager” in a search engine.





Time Flies! AESDirect Was Refactored Into the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) “Single Window” 10 Years Ago!

By Theresa Gordon, branch chief, Data User and Trade Outreach Branch, U.S. Census Bureau

It’s hard to believe it has been 10 years, but the AESDirect filing system has resided in ACE since 2015. In 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) were tasked with creating a “single window” for international trade, eliminating the need for separate submissions to different agencies. This resulted in a streamlined process for the trade community and the centralization of exports and imports.

Two key factors played a significant role in the development of the single window concept:

- Different software and infrastructure were used to develop and maintain each system, leading to increasing costs for maintaining and securing both platforms—especially given the ever-changing technical requirements.
- The trade community faced inefficiencies in having to manage different systems and processes for their exports and imports.

To provide some background, with respect to export processing, the Automated Export System (AES) consisted of two components: CBP’s AES mainframe application (that allowed companies to batch file Electronic Export Information [EEI]) and the Census Bureau’s AESDirect (a web-based interface providing companies with several options to file shipments).

The 2015 deployment of AESDirect in ACE eliminated the Census Bureau’s need to maintain a separate web interface and system. Re-engineering and integrating AESDirect into ACE improved the export process for U.S. businesses and federal agencies involved in controlling outbound goods, including CBP, the Bureau of Industry and Security, and the Department of State.

In addition, this system provided improved access to federal agencies responsible for collecting, monitoring, and publishing information on exports.

Additionally, the single-window ACE system mirrored the reports functionality already available to import filers, providing exporters with access to their historical export filings for the last 5 years. This not only eliminated the manual data request process handled by the Census Bureau, but also empowered exporters with real-time accessibility to all electronic shipment information for improved compliance and monitoring.

This major accomplishment would not have been possible without the collaboration across multiple government departments and agencies as well as cooperation from all of you—the trade community who assisted with acceptance testing, provided valuable feedback through the deployment and transition, and adhered to transition timelines. The Census Bureau/CBP team worked diligently to meet the established deadline for completion of this highly visible and significant undertaking and the team’s success was ultimately recognized with a Department of Commerce Gold Award in 2016. This key partnership continues today as the Census Bureau and CBP collaborate to maintain the AES and deploy the latest regulatory and technical updates and improvements.

Time surely flies and we would be remiss if we did not reflect on this 10-year milestone and all the effort that went into making the “Single Window” a reality. Thank you for taking the time to reflect with us. If you need any assistance, there are a variety of points of contact listed within (from commodity classification to regulatory guidance and everything in between), so don’t hesitate to reach out to us at your convenience.

Is My Commodity Description Sufficient?

*By Jazzarae Black, David McDonald, and Jessica Mangubat,
Trade Regulations Branch, U.S. Census Bureau*



It's critical for companies shipping goods from the United States to provide commodity descriptions in the Electronic Export Information (EEI) that are sufficient for both statistical and enforcement purposes. A detailed and clear commodity description is required to assist the U.S. Census Bureau with verifying the commodity information provided to produce accurate export statistics. This requirement also assists enforcement and export control agencies such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) with ensuring compliance with export control regulations.

The Foreign Trade Regulations (FTR), located in Title 15, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 30, is maintained by the Census Bureau and sets the requirements for filing EEI and defines the data elements to be reported, including the commodity description. The commodity description, defined in Section 30.6(a)(13) of the FTR, instructs filers to “report the description of the goods shipped in English in sufficient detail to permit verification of the Schedule B or HTSUSA number. Clearly and fully state the name of the commodity in terms that can be identified or associated with the language used in Schedule B or HTSUSA (usually the commercial name of the commodity), and any and all characteristics of the commodity that distinguish it from commodities of the same name covered by other Schedule B or HTSUSA classifications.”

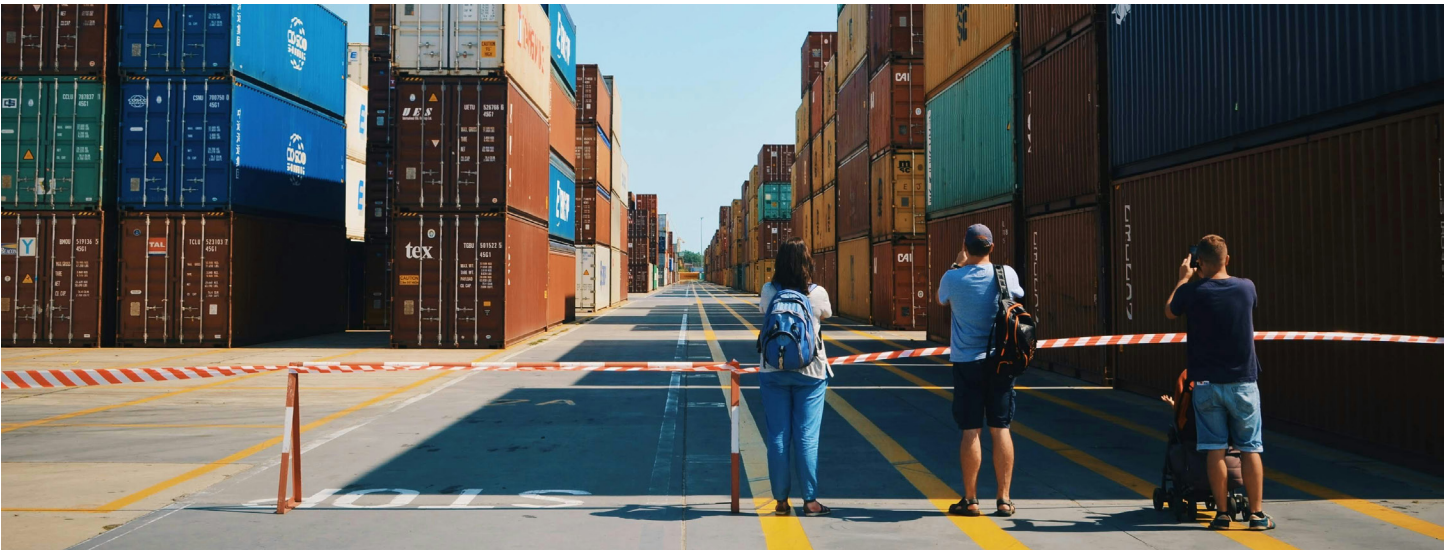
The dilemma that occurs the most at the Census Bureau is that filers enter in the Schedule B or HTS description rather than what is required under Section 30.6(a)(13). In many cases, the filers are using third party software that automatically populates the commodity description using the Schedule B or HTS description when the filer enters the Schedule B number. For example, a U.S. company is exporting four-door sedans and provides their authorized agent the Schedule B Number 8703230190. The authorized agent's software then prepopulates “USED VEHICLES, ONLY SK IG 1500-3000 CC, NESOI” in the EEI filing. This is not descriptive enough for the Census Bureau or enforcement agencies, such as CBP or BIS, to identify what is being exported. The authorized agent should consult with the U.S. company to determine what the pending exported commodity is. In this case, the authorized agent should overwrite what was prepopulated with the vehicle's year, make, and model.

This would be a sufficient commodity description and satisfy both the Census Bureau's statistical requirements and other agencies' enforcement needs.

Filers should be aware there are additional requirements for controlled goods that require an export license. First, if the commodity being exported is licensed, the commodity description reported in the EEI must conform with what is shown on the license. If the shipment qualifies for a license exemption, the description needs to be sufficient to ensure compliance with that license exemption. This is to satisfy the needs of the export control agency. However, if the description on the license does not include all characteristics needed by the Census Bureau to fully verify the Schedule B number, the filer must report the missing characteristics—along with the license description—in the commodity description field of the EEI. Second, the commodity description field only allows for 45 characters, so the filer needs to balance providing enough information to satisfy the needs of the export control agency and the Census Bureau. In some cases, the filer may need to truncate what it reports.

For additional questions regarding the EEI filing requirements, contact the Trade Regulations Branch at 1-800-549-0595, option 3 or email <emd.askregs@census.gov>.

For additional questions regarding commodity descriptions and classifications, contact the International Trade Indicator Micro Analysis Branch at 1-800-549-0595, option 2 or email <eid.scheduleb@census.gov>.



Protect Your Exports: Tools and Strategies to Mitigate Risk

*By Alexis Bascombe, business development specialist,
Export-Import Bank of the United States*

With 95 percent of the world's consumers located outside the United States, exporting offers small businesses the opportunity to expand internationally. By offering their products or services to other countries, businesses can compete globally, which gives them the chance to diversify their customer base, increase their revenue, and mitigate risks. In return, more American jobs are created resulting in a stronger and more productive workforce.

Although exporting has many benefits, doing business internationally makes companies susceptible to different forms of risk, both commercial and political, including:

- Protracted default when a customer is delinquent on their payments.
- Insolvency and bankruptcy when a customer's liabilities are greater than their assets, resulting in their inability to pay the exporter.
- Currency transfer risk when an international buyer is unable to access U.S. dollars to pay its U.S. supplier.
- Expropriation when the government claims the property of the buyer for public use.
- Other political risks such as war, revolution, and insurrection.

Much of this risk is a function of the country where the exporter is planning to do business. Before committing

to a sale, an exporter should complete an assessment of the country's risk conditions. This will help the exporter better understand the country's economy, exchange rate dynamics, banking system, business conditions, political and social dynamics, among other factors. The International Trade Administration also provides [resources on assessing country risk](#).

Beyond the country where an exporter is planning to do business, there are also risks associated with specific buyers, so exporters must conduct customer due diligence. Here are a few tips:

- Scrutinize initial contact. Be wary of generic emails with unprofessional language and suspicious content.
- Check email addresses. Verify email addresses match the company's domain name.
- Review website registration information. Use tools like [DomainTools](#) and [Whois.com](#) to check the website's age and IP location. A website established less than a year ago can be a red flag.
- Gather company information. Collect the company's full legal name, local language name, business registration number, address (including its local language format), and contact details.
- Use the [Consolidated Screening List](#). This resource, administered by the International Trade Administration,

shows businesses and individuals impacted by export restrictions. It's troubling if a match involved in an export transaction turns up on this list.

- Common sense. Take your time and pay attention to details when evaluating potential buyers. Do your homework and conduct web searches, looking for any red flags like bad press or litigation history.

EXIM Is Here to Help

The Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) has trade finance solutions to give an exporter peace of mind. One of these solutions is [Export Credit Insurance \(ECI\)](#), which protects exporters' international receivables from the risk of buyer nonpayment. Exporters insured under a policy can sell on more favorable open account credit terms rather than more costly methods, such as obtaining a letter of credit.

To find out where EXIM provides coverage, the [Country Limitation Schedule](#) indicates whether full, limited, or no EXIM support is provided for buyers in each country. Rates are provided for countries that are open to EXIM coverage, which are used to calculate certain types of ECI policyholder premiums.

To learn more about exporting by state, including economic impact and top products exported from each area, download EXIM's free [Export Tools and Opportunities](#) guide. To find out how EXIM can assist you in your export journey, [schedule a free consultation](#) with a trade finance specialist today.





Lasting Impact of Collaborative Work

By Dawit Asmellash, business analyst, Trade Data Collection Branch

This article highlights the remarkable careers of three individuals from the U.S. Census Bureau's International Trade Program: Gerry Horner, Paul Newman, and Wendy Peebles. Their collective 90 years of service helped revolutionize the Automated Export System and improve export data collection. The camaraderie they cherished speaks volumes about the teamwork and shared purpose throughout their careers. The significance of their collective efforts benefited the export trade community and improved the process for countless businesses. As they retire, they will embark on new adventures, leaving behind a legacy of innovation and dedication.



Gerard "Gerry" Horner's career has been a testament to his commitment to modernizing the export trade process, from playing a key role in the development of the Automated Export System (AES) to his efforts enhancing compliance measures at

the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS). His innovative approach earned him prestigious awards and recognition

for his contributions to U.S. Foreign Trade Regulations and electronic export filing. His transition from the U.S. Census Bureau to the BIS further showcased his expertise, where he played a vital role in the development of AES data warehousing and strengthening compliance measures. His work assisting with the implementation of the International Trade Data System helped earn his team the Gold Award (the U.S. Department of Commerce's highest honor) in addition to being awarded the Census Bureau Director's Award for Innovation, and the Department of Commerce's Silver Award for his achievements. After leaving BIS, Gerry returned to the Census Bureau to continue working with the trade program as the Branch Chief of Trade Regulations.

Gerry's career in public service helped strengthen economic and national security while improving export processes. His legacy and impact on trade programs and regulations are evident. In retirement, Gerry plans to celebrate his daughter's upcoming wedding and enjoy golfing before his wife joins him in retirement in 2026, when they can embark on new adventures together. With experienced managers carrying on the regulatory work and ongoing support from senior managers, the Foreign Trade Statistics Program remains well guided.



Paul Newman's 34-year career exemplifies dedication, innovation, and leadership in revolutionizing export data collection. He began his career as a commodity analyst, then quickly transitioned into developing and marketing the Automated Export System (AES), which

revolutionized trade data processing. His leadership in AESDirect and his contributions to integrating its functionality into the Automated Commercial Environment demonstrated his commitment to efficiency and progress.

Paul has received the Director's Award for Innovation, the Hammer Award from Vice President Al Gore, and the prestigious Gold Medal award from the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2016 for his contributions to the AESDirect Refactoring project, which all underscore the far-reaching impact of his work. His efforts streamlined export reporting, benefiting businesses, and ensuring compliance with trade regulations.

Beyond his technical expertise, Paul's journey from analyst to branch chief showcases his ability to lead and innovate. His enduring contributions to AES and export compliance will undoubtedly continue to shape the field. He leaves behind a highly capable team with deep expertise in AES and AESDirect. Their years of experience and specialization guarantee that the legacy of his work will continue uninterrupted, and the foundation he has helped establish will undoubtedly support ongoing improvements and innovation in export filing.

Paul's dedication to the mission allowed him to embrace challenges and forge strong relationships with colleagues and the trade community. Paul now looks forward to he and his wife Tracy's retirement plans that include exploring National Parks, taking trips to Disney, attending Los Angeles Dodgers baseball games, and spending more quality time with their family.



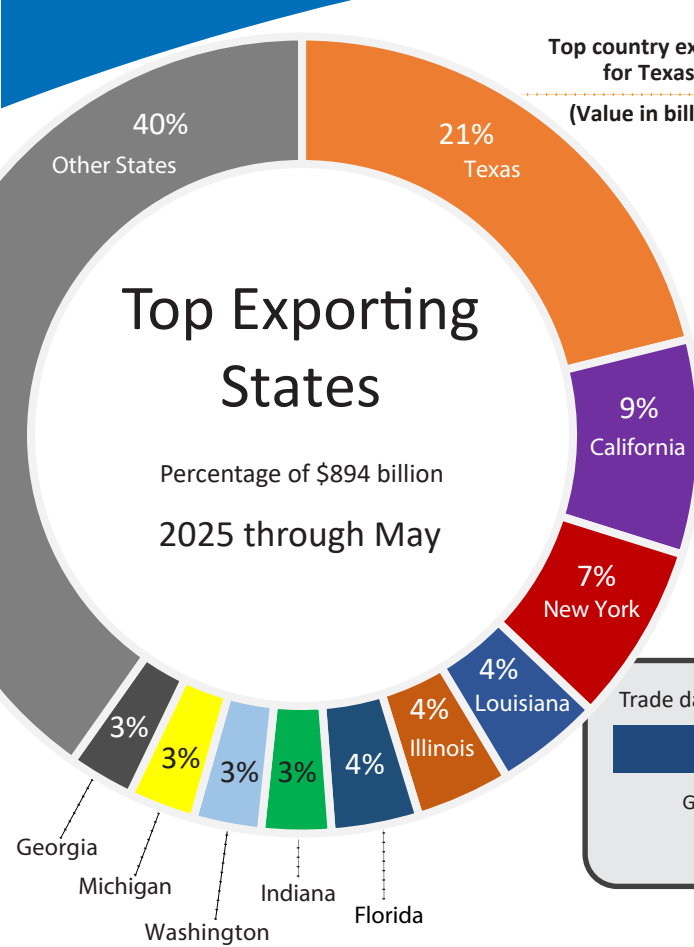
Wendy Peebles dedicated herself to training and educating the ever-growing trade community throughout her career with the U.S. Census Bureau. Sharing her expertise through compliance seminars, trade shows, and private business presentations, she

empowered businesses to navigate the intricate landscape of export filing. The positive feedback she received from those she assisted underscores her professionalism and ability to make a meaningful impact. Beyond training, her leadership in diverse subject-matter branches provided her with a comprehensive understanding of the former International Trade Management Division, enabling her to contribute significantly to export data collection, compliance, and other partnerships.

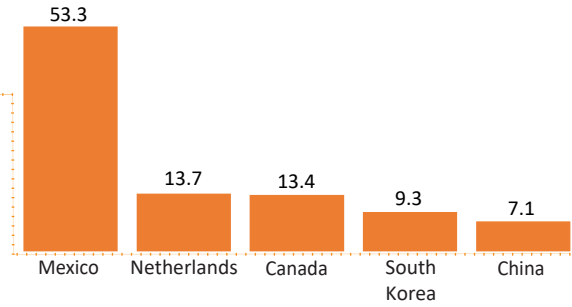
Her collaborations with prominent agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection demonstrate her ability to bridge gaps and enhance the effectiveness of export programs. Wendy prioritized delivering exceptional service and making customers the priority. Knowing that the outreach staff prioritizes service and customer needs brought a sense of confidence and pride as she heads into retirement after 38 years of public service.

Wendy plans to spend time with family and friends, pursue various hobbies such as gardening and traveling, and stay engaged through ministry involvement and community outreach, all of which will keep her connected to causes she cares about. Wendy echoes Gerry and Paul's heartfelt sentiments during her time with the U.S. Census Bureau and her rewarding career in international trade and looks forward to this next chapter with gratitude and excitement.

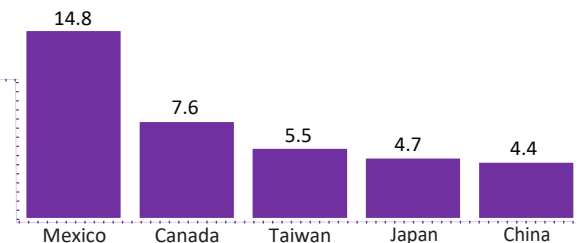
We appreciate Gerry, Paul, and Wendy's commitment to public service and we wish them the best in their retirement. They have spent almost all of their careers in international trade and are very familiar names and faces to many in the trade community. Their presence will be missed at the Census Bureau but they have left behind a legacy of competence and expertise that will continue to carry forward the work and mission.



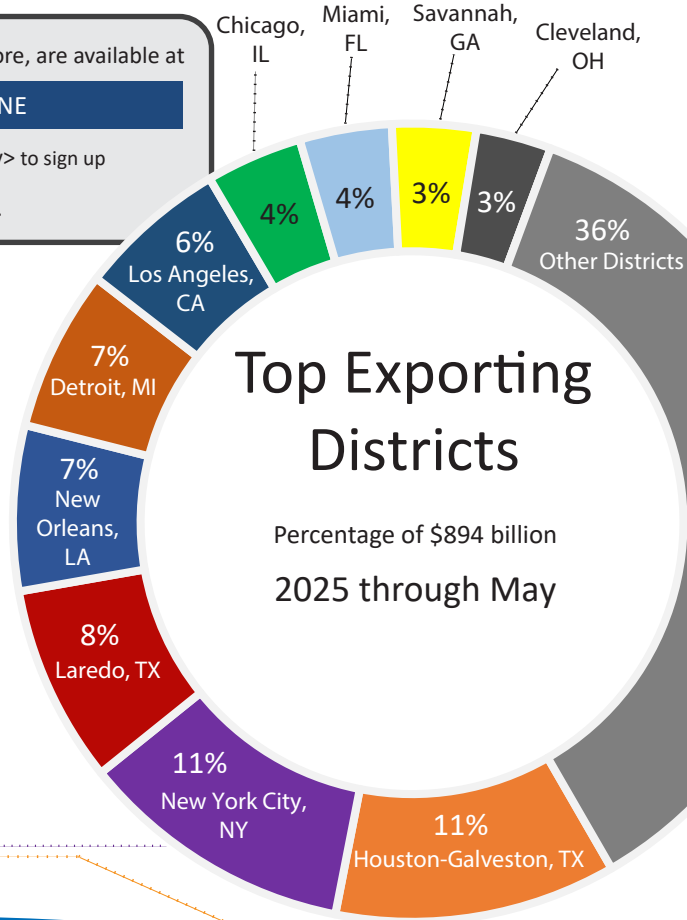
Top country exports for Texas
(Value in billions)



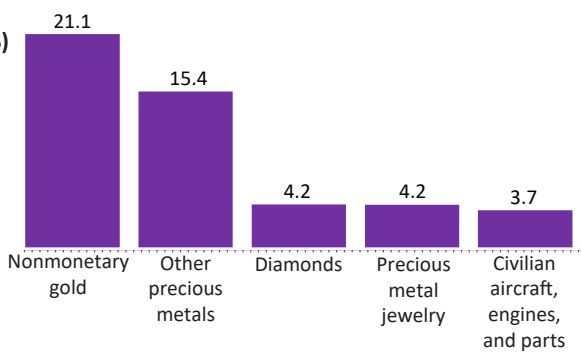
Top country exports for California
(Value in billions)



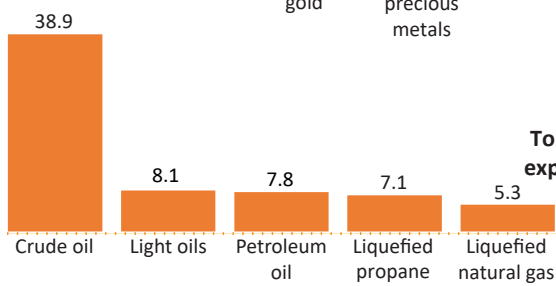
Trade data like this, and much more, are available at
USA TRADE® ONLINE
Go to usatrade.census.gov to sign up
for your FREE account.



Top Harmonized System (HS) exports for New York (Value in billions)



Top Harmonized System (HS) exports for Houston-Galveston (Value in billions)



Contact Information

International Trade Helpline	
Global Reach blogs: < www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/global-reach.html > 800-549-0595 (refer to the menu options below)	
<p>Assistance With the Automated Export System, Option 1</p> <p>Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m. (Eastern Time) Email: <askaes@census.gov></p>	<p>Assistance With Commodity Classification, Option 2</p> <p>Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (Eastern Time) Email: <eid.scheduleb@census.gov></p>
<p>Assistance With Regulatory Guidelines, Option 3</p> <p>Monday-Friday 7 a.m.-5 p.m. (Eastern Time) Email: <emd.askregs@census.gov></p>	<p>Assistance With Information on Trade Data, Option 4</p> <p>Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. (Eastern Time) Email: <eid.international.trade.data@census.gov></p>
<p>Assistance With Trade Outreach, Census Vetting, and Export Reports Authorization, Option 5</p> <p>Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-6 p.m. (Eastern Time) Email: <exportreports@census.gov></p>	

Automated Export System (AES) Partnership Agencies	Websites
The email addresses below are not secure. Confidential company information should not be sent to these addresses.	
<p>U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Trade Enforcement and Facilitation</p> <p>For general questions: <ofo-export-cargo@cbp.dhs.gov> For vehicle questions: <cbpvehicleexports@cbp.dhs.gov> David Garcia, program manager, Outbound Enforcement and Policy Office of Field Operations 202-344-3277</p>	<p>Export-Import Bank of the United States <www.exim.gov> U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agriculture Service <www.fas.usda.gov> U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Industry and Security <www.bis.doc.gov> International Trade Administration <www.export.gov> <www.trade.gov> U.S. Census Bureau International Trade Management Division <www.census.gov/foreign-trade> U.S. Department of Homeland Security U.S. Customs and Border Protection <www.cbp.gov> U.S. Small Business Administration Office of International Trade <www.sba.gov/international> Small Business Development Centers <www.sba.gov/sbdc> U.S. State Department Directorate of Defense Trade Controls <www.pmdtcc.state.gov> U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/office-of-foreign-assets-control-sanctions-programs-and-information></p>
<p>Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)</p> <p>Help Desk, Washington, DC 202-482-4811 Western Regional Office, Newport Beach, CA 949-660-0144 Western Regional Offices, San Jose, CA 408-998-8806</p>	
<p>Directorate of Defense Trade Controls, U.S. State Department, Washington, DC</p> <p>Response Team 202-663-1282 Help Desk 202-663-2838</p>	