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## **World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia Establishes New Program to Increase Philadelphia-Area Exporting to Latin America**

**NOVEMBER 16, 2005 (PHILADELPHIA, PA)** – The World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia (WTCGP) is pleased to announce a new initiative, the Latin American Trade Development Program. The primary goal for this program is to increase the number of Philadelphia-area small to medium-sized companies participating in international trade.

The Latin America Trade Development Program focuses on Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean. The WTCGP decided to implement this program because of the U.S.'s renewed focus on trade with Latin American countries, as demonstrated through trade agreements including the recent Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). With the WTCGP's support, companies in the five-county Greater Philadelphia region will be better equipped to develop their export potential in Latin America, in turn accelerating the economic growth in the Greater Philadelphia region.

“We are very pleased to be able to introduce the new Latin American Trade Development Program,” says Joanna Savvides, president, WTCGP. “We are always looking for new programs that increase the number of regional companies interested in and ready to export. This program will serve the Greater Philadelphia region by creating jobs through international trade and fostering economic growth.”

As the new leader of the program, Brigg M. Lopez, PhD, possesses an impressive international business development background. Having served as an international affairs advisor for International Business Development Consultants, located in Lancaster, Pa., and as the Latin American Trade Specialist for Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture, Lopez is well versed in Latin American business environment.

“I am very much looking forward to assisting regional companies in expanding their businesses into Latin America,” explained Lopez. “Based on my past experiences and current market research, I know that these countries are full of opportunities which will help enhance our region's economic standing.”

Continuing with its mission of providing a world-class portfolio of services that stimulates international trade growth and leads the Greater Philadelphia region to economic prosperity, the WTCGP will implement the Latin American Trade Development Program in five stages: participant selection, market research, education and training, trade mission and trade shows, and follow-up.

The WTCGP is seeking a minimum of 30 companies to participate, and these companies will be chosen through an export-readiness assessment process. With the assistance of the

WTCGP, the participating companies will then select the best markets for their products through database research and in-country support. A comprehensive training program will educate participating companies on legal issues, transportation, documentation, cultural and language differences, and more.

The WTCGP will also encourage companies to visit their Latin American markets in order to acquire first-hand experience through trade shows, trade missions and meetings with potential business partners. Having coordinated a number of trade missions in the past to countries including India and China, the WTCGP considers trade missions an excellent vehicle for connecting American businesspeople with potential trading partners, enabling them to discuss in person the latest industry innovations, new products and business opportunities. Following these face-to-face meetings, the WTCGP will be an ongoing resource for participating companies to pursue additional business.

### **About the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia**

A 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia (WTCGP) is a licensed and certified member of the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA), and provides international trade support to businesses in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. This relationship provides WTCGP members with access to innovative WTCA networking programs and World Trade Centers around the globe. Since its inception in October 2002, the WTCGP has provided approximately 500 companies in the Greater Philadelphia region with international trade assistance. For more information, please visit [www.wtcphila.org](http://www.wtcphila.org).

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