



ChamberBrief

German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest, Inc. (GACCoM)

March 2011 Issue

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Thank You For Stopping By!

Over 120 members and friends joined us to celebrate our Open House on February 16. We were thrilled at how many of you were excited to see our new office and find out more about our team and our work.



This month, we are returning the favor: You have the opportunity to present your company to the German-American business community by applying (or nominating a company) for one of our prestigious MERLIN Awards. Everyone's favorite event is approaching fast on May 6, and we want to encourage you to apply now to one of our 4 categories.

- Best New Company
- Best Service Provider
- Best Innovator
- Excellence in Training and Education

Find information on how to apply or nominate a company [here](#). Please don't hesitate to contact Anna Cournoyer (cournoyer@gaccomm.org) if you have any questions.

Enjoy reading & we look forward to receiving many applications!

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**BARNES &
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Upcoming Events in March

- **MN Chapter: German Heritage Night with the Minnesota Timberwolves (vs. Dallas Mavericks)**
03/07/2011 Minneapolis, MN
- **YEC Monthly Stammtisch**
03/16/2011 Chicago, IL
- **HR Executive Circle**
03/24/2011 Please contact Virginia Attaway Rounds at 312-494-2163 or rounds@gaccom.org if you would like to attend.
- **CO Chapter: Business Networking Luncheon**
03/24/2011 Denver, CO

Save The Date

- **GACCoM Initiatives at the Hannover Fair**
04/04 - 04/08/2011 Hannover, Germany
- **CO Chapter: Euro-Networking**
04/07/2011 Denver, CO
- **MI Chapter: SAE Reception 2011**
04/12/2011 Detroit, MI
- **MN Chapter: Annual Gala 2011**
05/05/2011 Minneapolis, MN
- **Annual MERLIN Awards Gala 2011**
05/06/2011 Chicago, IL
- **German American Energy Conference (GAE)**
05/12/2011 Berlin, Germany

Collection Services - Inkasso



As part of our DEinternational service offerings, the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest, Inc. (GACCoM) helps both German and American companies successfully collect outstanding debts. When a debt goes unpaid, in some cases misunderstandings are to blame, examples being the language barrier or simply having the wrong contact person. In other cases, the distance between Germany and the U.S. plays a larger role. Some debtors operate under the assumption that the owed party simply will not be able to reach them or penalize them in anyway because of the distance involved and the different legal systems. However, the success we have had over the last several years in closing these cases is proof that these assumptions are wrong.

GACCoM's collection service efforts are directed towards settling the matter without needing to resort to legal proceedings, offering companies a more cost-effective debt collection solution for debts under \$40,000. Our experienced, bi-lingual German American business team works to establish contact with the debtor, and then works with both parties to settle the debt. In many cases, the reputation of GACCoM, as part of a worldwide network with chambers in 80 countries, is sufficient to encourage the debtor to fulfill their obligations. Our role as an international trade organization allows us to serve as objective and professional mediators between the two parties, helping to clear up any misconceptions or misunderstandings as the case proceeds. Fees are based on a flat fee per case, with a percentage of the successfully collected amount due upon settlement.

If you know of a company that could benefit from GACCoM's collection services, Virginia Attaway Rounds, Director of Consulting Services, will be happy to discuss the case in more detail. She can be reached at 312-644-2662 or rounds@gaccom.org.

Member Profile: KOSTAL of America, Inc.



From Lüdenscheid to the World

"Keeping your feet on solid ground" may not be the piece of advice you would expect from an entrepreneur who, for 40 years, ran a company with 31 locations in 17 countries that employs 70% of its more than 10,000 workers abroad. Yet, that is exactly what Helmut Kostal asked of his son Andreas when he made him CEO of the 4th generation family business this past December.

The KOSTAL Group is an engineers driven company from Lüdenscheid near Dortmund that develops and manufactures technologically demanding electronic and electro-mechanical products most widely used in the automotive industry. The number of KOSTAL employees abroad has grown steadily since the early nineties, and KOSTAL North America is an important part of the global company structure. In 2008, the operations were moved to the brand new Center of Excellence in Troy, Michigan, that now serves as the Business Headquarters for the entire North American market including KOSTAL Mexicana. The center is the company's main hub for sales, engineering & design and quality responsibility in North America.

Since the opening of the first US facility in 1981 in Schaumburg, Illinois, KOSTAL has grown a loyal customer base that includes all the big names of the domestic car industry, Ford, Chrysler, GM, and beyond. Dr. Walter Maisel, CEO of KOSTAL North America, and GACCoM Board Member, recalls: "Actually, Volkswagen (VW) was KOSTAL's first major customer in North America and Nissan in the US." When asked about the company's loyalty to the Midwest region, Maisel says: "Despite all the economic challenges the Detroit region has seen, we at KOSTAL know and believe in the huge potential of what is, after all, the most important automotive region in the world. We are convinced to be in exactly the right spot with our new Troy facility."

For more information, please visit www.kostal.us

GACCoM's Territory: State by State



Founded in 1992 in St. Paul, the Minnesota Chapter is the local representative of the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest, Inc. (GACCoM), dedicated to fostering bilateral trade and investment between Germany and the state of Minnesota. With its key industries healthcare and medical equipment, computers and services, printing and publishing, tourism, agriculture, forest and forestry products, the state represents an attractive investment location for German-American companies. Thanks to early settlers around 1900, when almost half of all Minnesotans were of German descent, Minnesota's relationship with Germany is deep-rooted still today.

The mission of GACCoM's Minnesota Chapter is to provide business networking, cultural and educational opportunities for our local members. First introduced in 1998, the Chapter's scholarship program awards scholarships of up to \$1,000.00 to Minnesota high school students each year in order to promote German language studies in high schools. This year's winning students will be celebrated at a Scholarship Award Dinner on March 11, 2011, at the Germanic-American Institute. One of the Chapter's signature events is the upcoming and eagerly awaited Annual Gala on May 5, 2011 with this year's special guest Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert, Speaker of the German Parliament (Bundestagspräsident). The Minnesota Chapter and the Minnesotan basketball team The Timberwolves will also celebrate a German Heritage Night with a game against the Dallas Mavericks and its former NBA MVP and Germany's own, Dirk Nowitzki, on March 7.

To learn more about the Minnesota Chapter and its activities, please visit their newly re-designed website

www.gaccommn.org.

Our Network: Connecting the Dots

Whether you have been a part of our network for decades or are among our **2011 new members**, let us remind you of a couple of ways your GACCoM membership connects you to the world of German-American business - and beyond:

- Visiting a subsidiary or exploring new business opportunities abroad? With 120 AHK locations in 80 countries we are your first port of call - from China to Saudi-Arabia to Brazil. www.ahk.de lists all our locations worldwide; we are always happy to connect you with our local colleagues.
- Detailed information on 3,500 German subsidiaries in the U.S. is listed in the print version of our Directory "**Subsidiaries of German Firms in the U.S.**" or online at www.germancompanies.us
- **SPECIAL OFFERS** - We always keep an eye out for extras that benefit you and your business. We encourage you to take advantage of our latest specials:
 - GACCoM members receive the **HANNOVER MESSE 2011 Premium Gold Pass** free of charge - a minimum EUR 700 value including access to the Official Opening Ceremony featuring Chancellor Merkel from Germany and President Sarkozy from France! [Learn more.](#)
 - The latest edition of the **BWE Wind Energy Market Report**, a standard work of reference for monitoring the steadily growing wind energy market, and this year's **Market Special on Offshore Wind** are now available [in our webstore.](#)

If you have any questions regarding your membership benefits or additional resources, please do not hesitate to [contact us.](#)

GACCoM Proudly Welcomes Its New Member Companies Since December 2010

Accelerate West Central Indiana Economic Development ++ Anchor Danly ++ Barnes & Thornburg LLP ++ Business + Culture ++ EFC International ++ Ernst & Moore Metal Technologies LLC ++ Haimer USA, LLC ++ Michigan Travels, LLC ++ Perkins Coie LLP ++ Peter Wittwer North America, Inc. ++ Plasmatreat USA ++ Starbelly Studios Photography ++ SylviaBecker-Hill LLC ++ Tiba LLC ++ Tunkers, Inc.

Last but not least...

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact our Director, Membership and Chamber Development, Jayne Riemer-Chishty, at riemer-chishty@gaccomm.org or call 312-494-2169. We value your opinion!

GACCoM's Sponsorship Packages 2011 are still available. If you are interested, please contact Jayne Riemer-Chishty to discuss your companies' opportunities. Please visit our [website](#) for more information and pictures from recent GACCoM events.

Best regards,
Your GACCoM Team

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