

## Draft Agenda – “Midwest Meets Germany” 2026

### Delegation Trip for Midwest Manufacturing Ecosystem Stakeholders to Southern Germany – July 19 -23, 2026

The following agenda represents a draft program and may be adjusted according to current industry developments, participant input, availability and logistical considerations. Final details will be confirmed closer to the delegation date.

#### Two weeks prior to the start of the trip

Time	Program
Virtual / morning	<b>Virtual Meet &amp; Greet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual introduction and overview of the delegation program</li> <li>Exchange of expectations and discussion of the trip’s objectives</li> <li>German-American Business Essentials: Intercultural training session for US participants focusing on business practices and cultural aspects in Germany</li> </ul>

#### Sunday, July 19: Arrival in Stuttgart

Time	Program
Evening	<b>Welcome Dinner and Kick-off Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with local ecosystem representatives</li> <li>Introduction to the program, participant introductions, and discussion on the current state of transatlantic relations</li> </ul>

#### Monday, July 20: Stuttgart

Time	Program
Morning	<b>Briefing: Get to Know Southern Germany</b> Overview of Germany’s industrial and innovation landscape & discussion about cooperation opportunities. Expert insights from industry associations, city / state representatives, manufacturing ecosystem stakeholders and research institutes (e.g. VDMA, Fraunhofer IAO, Stuttgart Center for Manufacturing Technologies).  <i>Location: e.g. IHK Region Stuttgart</i>
Morning	<b>Site Visit (e.g. Mercedes Benz, Festo, Trumpf, Kercher, NEURA Robotics)</b> The site visit will feature a guided factory tour, presentations, a discussion session, and an opportunity for Q&A.

Noon	Group lunch (at site visit)
Afternoon	<p><b>Midwest Meets Germany – Discussion &amp; Networking</b> Sample Program:</p> <p><b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b> Opening of the session and introduction of delegation participants and German counterparts.</p> <p><b>Midwest Pitch (2 min each)</b> Delegation participants present short pitches addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What distinguishes their region and institution</li> <li>• Key regional strengths and focus industries</li> <li>• Specific areas where they are seeking transatlantic cooperation and partnerships</li> </ul> <p><b>US Business Climate &amp; Midwest Insights</b> Delegation participants share perspectives and insights on the current business climate in the United States and the Midwest, followed by an open discussion.</p> <p><b>Best Practices from Baden-Württemberg</b> Two local SMEs share practical insights and lessons learned from their expansion into the U.S. market, highlighting opportunities and challenges of transatlantic business engagement.</p> <p><b>Exchange with Local Industry</b> Networking and discussion with local manufacturers and industry associations (e.g., Bosch, MAHLE, Hermle), focusing on cooperation opportunities and industry perspectives.</p> <p><i>Location: tbd</i></p>
Evening	<b>Group dinner in Stuttgart</b>

## Tuesday July 21: Heilbronn / Ulm

Time	Program
	<i>Transfer to Heilbronn (ca. 1h)</i>
Morning	<p><b>Breakfast &amp; Morning Briefing: Heilbronn – Silicon Valley on the Neckar</b></p> <p>Meet the ecosystem: Heilbronn, Germany, is rapidly transforming from a traditional industrial town into a major European technology and innovation hub, often referred to as a burgeoning "Silicon Valley of AI" or "Silicon Valley on the Neckar". Driven by massive investments from the Dieter Schwarz Foundation (owner of Lidl/Kaufland) and the state of Baden-Württemberg, the city is building an extensive ecosystem focused on artificial intelligence, software, and robotics.</p>

	<p>The briefing features experts on the local manufacturing ecosystem (such as TUM Heilbronn) and offers participants direct opportunities to connect and engage with German manufacturing companies and ecosystem stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Location: tbd</i></p>
	<i>Transfer to site visit</i>
Morning	<p><b>Visiting IPAI (Innovation Park Artificial Intelligence)</b></p> <p><i>Positioned as one of Europe's largest AI ecosystems, this 30-hectare site aims to create a "Global Home of Human AI" by 2027, bringing together researchers, startups, and established companies.</i></p> <p><i>Location: Im Zukunftspark 11/13, 74076 Heilbronn, Germany</i></p>
1pm	Group lunch on IPAI Campus
2pm	<i>Transfer to Ulm (ca. 2h)</i>
4pm	Arrival in Ulm
4 – 7pm	<p><b>Exploring the historic city of Ulm</b></p> <p>Guided walk through Ulm's charming old town, including the iconic Münster, the picturesque Fishermen's Quarter (Fischerviertel), and the atmospheric alleys and squares of the historic city center.</p>
7pm	<p><b>Group dinner at traditional German Beer Garden</b></p> <p>Location: Teutonia, Friedrichsau 6, 89073 Ulm, Germany</p>
9pm	Hotel check-in

### Wednesday, July 22: Ulm / Augsburg

Time	Program
9 – 11am	<p><b>Site Visit in Ulm (e.g. Wieland, Magirus, Gardena, ZwickRoell)</b></p> <p>The site visit will feature a guided factory tour, presentations, a discussion session, and an opportunity for Q&amp;A.</p> <p><i>Location: tbd</i></p>
11am – 12pm	<b>Transfer to Site Visit Augsburg (ca. 1h)</b>
12 – 2pm	<p><b>Site Visit in Augsburg (e.g. Airbus, Hosokawa, Rolls Royce Solutions, KUKA, Gruenberg Wasserfiltrierung)</b></p>

	The site visit will feature a guided factory tour, presentations, a discussion session, and an opportunity for Q&A.
	Transfer to Discussion & Networking
2 – 4pm	<p><b>German SMEs Meet Midwest – Discussion &amp; Networking</b> Sample Program:</p> <p><b>Opening by the US Delegation</b> <i>e. g. “The Midwest as a Launchpad for German SMEs”</i> Location factors, economic policy environment, cluster landscape &amp; support structures</p> <p><b>Discover Augsburg: Swabia’s Manufacturing &amp; Innovation Hub</b> Presentation highlighting Augsburg’s industrial strengths, advanced manufacturing ecosystem, and opportunities for transatlantic cooperation and partnerships</p> <p><b>Best Practices from Swabia</b> Two SMEs from Swabia share practical insights about their entry into the US market. Ideally, these companies come from regions relevant to the delegation so they can speak about specific U.S. states; suggestions from participants are welcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What triggered the expansion into the USA?</li> <li>• What role did local partners play?</li> <li>• Which pitfalls were avoided?</li> </ul> <p><b>Midwest Pitch (2 min each)</b> Delegation participants from the US present short pitches covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their respective region</li> <li>• Relevant industry clusters</li> <li>• Business attraction and SME support structures</li> <li>• Opportunities for German American cooperation</li> </ul> <p><b>US Market Insights Session</b> Expert participants from the US delegation share perspectives and insights on the current business climate in the United States and the Midwest.</p> <p><i>Location: IHK Schwaben (tbc)</i></p>
Evening	<i>Transfer to Munich</i>

## Thursday, July 24: Munich region

Time	Program
Morning	<p><b>Business Breakfast with local manufacturing ecosystem stakeholders</b> Sample Program:</p> <p><b>Welcome &amp; Networking Breakfast</b> Informal networking breakfast with local industry representatives, economic development organizations, and innovation stakeholders (e.g., Bayern International, Bayern Innovativ), providing an opportunity for initial exchange and relationship-building.</p> <p><b>Introduction: The U.S. Midwest as an Industrial Powerhouse</b> Presentation introducing the U.S. Midwest as a leading industrial region, highlighting manufacturing strengths and opportunities for transatlantic collaboration.</p> <p><b>Keynote: Bavaria’s Industrial Landscape &amp; Munich as a Global Tech Hub</b> Overview of Bavaria as a major industrial location and Munich’s role as one of the world’s leading technology and innovation hubs.</p> <p><b>Midwest Pitch (2 min each)</b> Delegation participants present short pitches covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What distinguishes their region and institution</li> <li>• Key regional strengths and focus industries</li> <li>• Specific areas where they are seeking transatlantic cooperation and partnerships</li> </ul> <p><b>US Business Climate &amp; Midwest Insights</b> Delegation participants share perspectives and insights on the current business climate in the United States and the Midwest, followed by discussion with German stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Informal Exchange &amp; Networking</b> Open discussion and networking in an informal setting to encourage dialogue and explore cooperation opportunities.</p> <p><i>Location: e.g. IHK München</i></p>
	<i>Transfer to site visit</i>
Morning	<p><b>Site Visit in Munich region (e.g. Roche Diagnostics, Siemens AG, MAN, Wacker Neuson SE, Siltronic AG)</b></p> <p>The site visit will feature a guided factory tour, presentations, a discussion session, and an opportunity for Q&amp;A.</p>
Noon	<b>Group lunch</b>
Ca. 3pm	<b>Midwest Meets Bavaria – Industry Networking Event at World’s Oldest Brewery</b>

In an informal and dynamic setting, representatives from Midwest US regions and Bavarian/German industry come together to build connections, exchange expertise, and explore opportunities for transatlantic cooperation.

Delegates get to briefly introduce themselves at the beginning of the event.

*Location: e.g. Weihenstephan, Alte Akademie 2, 85354 Freising, Germany*

Evening

Bus drop-off at hotel / Munich train station / downtown

**Official End of the Delegation**

