

MIDWEST REPORT 2025/2026

GERMAN AMERICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE®
OF THE MIDWEST



GLÄNZENDE
AUSSICHTEN FÜR
IHR BUSINESS.

Auf zu neuen Märkten. Mit den AHKs.



Erfolgreich in die USA zu
expandieren war noch nie so
leicht: Jetzt kostenfreie
Erstberatung buchen.

AHK

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DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

OF THE GERMAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE MIDWEST,

2025 brought a lot of change – a new Administration in Washington DC started in January and a new German Federal Government took up office in May. In these sometimes turbulent times, the expertise of GACC Midwest and its members was as ever highly sought after. I feel privileged to have GACC Midwest in my home court, so to say, covering all the 13 Midwestern States in the Consulate General's jurisdiction.

The close relationship between Germany and the United States is vital for global stability and security, built on shared values, history, and interests. When it comes to the core interests of Germany and Europe – Security, Freedom and Prosperity, the U.S. remains our most important partner outside of Europe.

Visitors from Germany are often surprised to hear that Chicagoland has the highest concentration of subsidiaries of German companies in the U.S., followed by the Detroit region. This shows the **pivotal role of the Midwest for transatlantic trade and economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic.**

GACC Midwest plays an important role in bringing over delegations to the U.S., and in turn to Germany as well. These **delegations focus on future-oriented industry sectors where German companies are global leaders.** Be it the production, storage and transportation of hydrogen, the cooperation on carbon capture and storage, the future of infrastructure or plant engineering solutions for battery production and recycling. These fields are of major importance to our soci-

eties and the way we shape our own future. GACC Midwest is not only connecting businesses, but is also looking at the bigger picture such as Startup Ecosystems in both our countries. Discover the strategies that drive success and gain inspiration for your own projects sums it up pretty well.

Jointly with GACC Midwest we continue to try to address the one challenge I hear about from every company I visit and in every conversation with regional Economic Development Organizations: **how to find, train and retain the right talent.** ICATT has done great work these last 10 years. Now we should explore how to widen the tent. The Skills Initiative brought stakeholders in Nebraska and Missouri together to identify needs and next steps. We are also in close touch with the State of Ohio on establishing a cooperation on workforce development issues.

The fact that the Consulate General has participated in GACC Midwest events in Nebraska, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois in this year alone shows that **GACC Midwest might be located in Chicago but is truly an organization for the whole region.**

I am looking forward to continued close cooperation with GACC Midwest in the coming years.

Best regards,

Michael Ahrens

Consul General
of Germany in Chicago



FOUR YEARS OF GROWTH, RESILIENCE, AND TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

Dear Members, Partners, and Friends of GACC Midwest,

As outgoing chair, reflecting on the past 4 years, one thing stands out above all: the strength and momentum of our German American business community. This has been a period of meaningful growth—shaped not only by new initiatives and partnerships, but by the way our members, partners, and teams have worked together with purpose and resilience. Throughout my term as AHK Chairman, I have seen how this shared commitment continues to move our chamber forward.

A major milestone came in 2025 with the launch of the **German American Executive Summit**. Created to bring senior leaders together for strategic dialogue, it quickly became a standout success, setting the stage for its next edition in 2026 and underscoring the strong demand for executive-level exchange.

In 2023, the chamber celebrated its **60th anniversary**, entering a new era—one shaped by renewed collaboration and long-term vision. Nowhere was this more evident than in our **workforce development initiatives and the creation of the German American Apprenticeship & Education Foundation**. Our apprenticeship programs continued to expand nationwide, helping companies build talent pipelines rooted in German quality standards. This momentum aligned with a major milestone: the **10-year anniversary of the ICATT Apprenticeship Program**, which has become a national model for employer-driven training in the U.S.

The evolution of the **Christkindlmarket** reflects this same spirit. During the pandemic, we adapted quickly, transforming the beloved tradition into a virtual experience to keep communities connected. That spirit of resilience has laid out the groundwork for what would come next: a return to in-person markets at Daley Plaza and Wrigleyville, and the expansion of a new market in Aurora, Illinois, continues as one of the visible symbols of our cultural and economic engagement. As we prepare for the **30th anniversary of our beloved Christkindlmarkets**, this spirit of engagement continues.

Throughout these past four years, we have strengthened our network, expanded our reach, and advanced initiatives that will continue to shape the German American business landscape for years to come. **Thank you for your partnership, trust, and commitment throughout my term.** A heartfelt thank you for the remarkable cooperation among the chairmen of our GACC network, which has truly elevated our collective efforts, as well as to the entire GACC Midwest team for their dedication, passion, and hard work. I look forward to seeing the continued progress of this exceptional community as we build the next chapter together.

Best regards,

Matthias Amberg

Chairman,
GACC Midwest /
Chairman, German
American Chambers of
Commerce (GACCs)



DEAR PARTNERS, COLLEAGUES, AND FRIENDS,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this year's Midwest Report, our annual look at one of the world's most dynamic, resilient, and influential economic regions, especially for German American trade and investment.

The American Midwest has long been known as the heart of manufacturing—with the top seven US states for manufacturing per capita all in our region. For decades, German companies have found a natural home here, drawn by the region's strong industrial base, skilled workforce, and culture of engineering excellence. For over 60 years, GACC Midwest has supported countless companies, working together to expand their investments in the region.

As global supply chains evolve and industries adapt to transformative challenges, the Midwest stands out as a region built for the future. Its commitment to innovation, sustainability, workforce development, and long-term investment mirrors the priorities of German industry. This alignment creates a powerful foundation for continued collaboration and shared success.

Thank you for being part of our community and for your continued engagement with GACC Midwest. Together, we will keep building the engine of the transatlantic industry—right here in the heart of America.

Best regards,

Mark Tomkins
CEO & President
GACC Midwest



DID YOU KNOW...

The Midwest is home to the **top 7 states** in manufacturing per capita.

\$667 billion in total German investment in the U.S.

There are **6,200 German companies** operating nationwide.

These companies support more than **871,400 jobs** in the U.S. economy.

Source: rgit-usa.com, mfgmil.com

GERMAN AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE BOARD

Meet the Chairmen of the Board of Directors of the German American Chambers of Commerce



Volker Baer
CEO, Würth Group of North
America Inc.
Vice Chair
GACC New York



Matthias Amberg
Partner, Rödl & Partner USA
Chair
GACC Midwest



Gerrit Zwergel
President & CEO - Finance |
Koenig & Bauer (US) Inc.
Vice Chair
GACC South



Susanne Gellert
President & CEO
GACC New York



Matthias Hoffmann
President & CEO
GACC South



Mark Tomkins
President & CEO
GACC Midwest

DR. HELENA MELNIKOV'S U.S. VISIT

STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC TIES

At a time when German and global businesses face unprecedented challenges—from **energy costs and trade tension to shifts in global supply chains—strong, innovative leadership is critical**, Dr. Helena Melnikov took the helm of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2025, succeeding Dr. Martin Wansleben after 23 years of leadership.

Dr. Melnikov's first official visit to the United States included a delegation of CEOs from IHKS across Germany. In their first stop in New York, the delegation engaged in a high-level discussion with the AHK USA Board and colleagues from AHK Canada. This was followed by a roundtable with the GACC NY board members.



The delegation also visited **Evonik's Americas headquarters in Piscataway, NJ**, receiving in-depth presentations on the company's U.S. operations and touring its state-of-the-art laboratories.

Building on these high-level policy discussions in New York, the delegation continued to **Washington, D.C.**, where the DIHK delegation was

welcomed by the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce. The delegation met with key stakeholders, including the German Embassy Washington D.C., members of Congress, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the White House Council of Economic Advisors, and the European Union Delegation. Discussions centered on the U.S. political and economic outlook, foreign direct investment, and trade policy, **reaffirming the importance of the German American partnership and the shared goal of strengthening transatlantic cooperation.**



Dr. Melnikov's U.S. visit reflects DIHK's **commitment to fostering transatlantic partnerships, supporting trade and investment, and advancing innovation**. By engaging directly with both policymakers and entrepreneurs, she has set a proactive tone for DIHK's work, ensuring that German businesses are well-positioned to navigate global challenges while maintaining a strong, unified voice in an evolving economic landscape.

GLOBAL GERMAN CHAMBER NETWORK



FROM THE MIDWEST TO THE WORLD

INSIGHTS FROM THE AHK WORLD CONFERENCE 2025

From the Midwest perspective, **staying connected to global trends and shared challenges** is essential for helping companies navigate today's rapidly changing economy. In May, GACC Midwest participated in the AHK World Conference at the DIHK in Berlin, where leaders, including board members, from our 150 offices in 93 countries, as well as representatives from government, industry associations, and IHKs, came together to exchange insights, discuss solutions, and strengthen global ties that make our network so effective.



The conference explored some of the most pressing issues facing businesses worldwide, including **building more resilient supply chains**,

navigating uncertainty in fast-changing markets, leveraging innovation and digital tools, and supporting sustainable economic growth. These discussions highlighted an important truth: no single market has all the answers—but by sharing knowledge, staying flexible, and learning from each other, our global network can help companies adapt, compete, and thrive.



For GACC Midwest, the conference was an opportunity to gain new perspectives, understand emerging trends, and explore innovative approaches to supporting businesses in our region. It also reinforced the value of collaboration across borders—how exchanging ideas and experiences can lead to stronger solutions for everyone.



HDI

Your Partner in Transformation

Global Solutions from a Local Insurer. As an experienced industrial insurer with a tradition spanning more than a century, we pride ourselves on being a trusted and reliable partner by offering tailored programs to meet the evolving needs of our clients. With an international network of local insurers in more than 175 countries, we have the global reach and local expertise to connect you to the world.



www.hdi.global



GERMAN AMERICAN EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

REFLECTION AND LOOKING AHEAD

The 2025 German American Executive Summit marked a milestone for transatlantic business, uniting for the first time all regional German American Chambers of Commerce (GACCs) in the U.S. to host a single national summit. Sold out weeks in advance, the event brought together leaders from industry, government, and the innovation sector, underscoring the strength of the German American economic relationship and the demand for closer collaboration amid global uncertainty.

A highlight was the 2025 German American Business Awards, honoring companies and individuals including OERTZEN Group, CMBu Energy Inc., HEYCO Werk USA Inc., HARTING Technology Group of North America, and Richard Wolf Medical Instruments Corporation were honored as recipients of the 2025 German American Business Awards.

The summit featured a strong speaker lineup, led by German Ambassador to the U.S. Andreas Michaelis, whose keynote on Transatlantic Trade & Current Developments set the tone for discussions on supply-chain

resilience, emerging technologies, and geopolitical risk—making it one of the most forward-looking agendas in the event's history.

The release of the 2025 German American Business Outlook (GABO) provided added context on the continued expansion of German subsidiaries in the U.S. While participants addressed challenges such as political volatility, trade tensions, talent shortages, and regulatory pressure, discussions were marked by openness and a shared sense of resolve.

The summit reaffirmed the transatlantic relationship as a key driver of stability, growth, and opportunity. We look forward to welcoming participants to the 2026 German American Executive Summit in New Orleans, March 5–6.

“The **2025 German American Business Outlook** reaffirms the **strong and enduring commitment of German companies** in the US market. Year after year, we see growing investments that drive innovation, expand manufacturing, and create high-quality jobs across the country. This continued growth underscores the **deep economic ties between Germany and the United States**, fostering a business environment that is resilient, forward-looking, and built for long-term success.”

– **Matthias Amberg**
Chairman, GACC Midwest



March 5-6, 2026 | **New Orleans, LA**

All of the U.S. in One Place—
New Orleans, Here We Come.

Join top leaders where business, politics, and innovation meet.

Gain insights from the **German American Business Outlook Presentation**, attend the **German American Business Awards Dinner** and hear from expert panels on **transatlantic trade, innovation, and government policy**.



Register Here

GERMAN AMERICAN **20**
EXECUTIVE SUMMIT **26**



GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CHICAGO

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Launching 9th Grade in 2026-2027

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germanschoolchicago.com

2

Our Chamber & Chapters



MEET THE MIDWEST OUR CHAMBER & CHAPTERS

At the center of America's diverse landscape lies **the Midwest**, home to our regional network and thriving German American business community. GACC Midwest, with our offices in Chicago and Detroit, together with our chapters in **Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin** serve as our on-the-ground presence—bringing the German American business community to life across the Midwest and ensuring companies throughout the region receive strong, localized support.

Acting as **regional hubs**, each chapter offers **direct access to GACC Midwest services** along with networking opportunities, industry programs, and community-building events. By being present where our members operate and live, our chapters extend GACC Midwest's impact and create a **unified, dynamic transatlantic network** that reaches every corner of the region.

Our membership is as diverse as the industries we serve, with **no single sector representing more than 20%** of our network. With **600+ member companies** across the region, we, bring together businesses from Germany and the Midwest—ranging from manufacturing and tech to services and trade.

Together, our network **makes the Midwest a powerhouse** in the German American business corridor. Anchored in **Denver, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee**, our chapters provide meaningful local engagement and international reach that help businesses grow, innovate, and lead in a rapidly evolving transatlantic landscape.

We invite you to discover how our chapters and members continue shaping the Midwest's impact across the transatlantic business landscape.



WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Strong business communities don't grow by chance — they grow through consistent connections and meaningful collaboration. That belief shaped everything the Wisconsin Chapter achieved in 2025. Whether bringing professionals together each month, celebrating longstanding members, or hosting German delegations, the chapter strengthened Wisconsin's role as a bridge between local industry and German partners.

1

MONTHLY STAMMTISCH

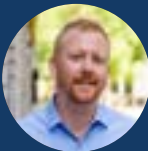
The monthly Stammtisch at Kegel's Inn in Milwaukee continued to be the heartbeat of the Wisconsin Chapter. More than a recurring meetup, it became a space where new relationships formed naturally and where members could exchange ideas in an informal, welcoming setting. Attendance grew steadily throughout the year, underscoring the value of in-person connection within our network.



2

ANNUAL VIP RECEPTION AT GERMANFEST

Set within the vibrant atmosphere of Milwaukee's Germanfest, the annual VIP Reception blended cultural celebration with high-value networking. Members, partners, and guests came together to strengthen professional ties while enjoying one of the region's most iconic festivals — a reminder of how shared heritage can deepen modern business relationships.



Your Contact

Philipp Lissmann
Interim President
+1 (863) 660-6509
lissmann@gaccwi.org



3

HONORING LONGSTANDING MEMBERS

This year, the Wisconsin Chapter proudly recognized members whose enduring support has helped advance our mission. Their longstanding commitment reflects the spirit of collaboration and innovation that anchors the Chapter's work.

15 Years of Membership

Hermle USA, Inc.
Eisen Fox & Company, LLC
German Immersion Foundation, Inc.

10 Years of Membership

Milwaukee 7



4

WELCOMING THE BRANDENBURG DELEGATION

One of the year's defining moments was hosting the Brandenburg business delegation at the Grohmann Museum in Milwaukee. The visit brought Wisconsin and German companies together for discussions on digitalization, Industry 4.0, AI in production, and sustainable manufacturing. Participating firms — including Ailoy, OLIGO Surface Controls, IBAR Systemtechnik, and others — highlighted the momentum behind transatlantic cooperation and the opportunities emerging across advanced manufacturing and technology.

Looking Ahead

With strong momentum from 2025, the Wisconsin Chapter is poised to expand its programming in the coming year — introducing new networking formats, continuing the ever-popular Stammtisch, and deepening collaboration with regional partners.

COLORADO CHAPTER

Colorado Chapter Marks Continued Growth in the Region

The Colorado Chapter (GACC-CO) continued to strengthen its presence across the state in 2025, marked by expanding membership, a robust events calendar, and deeper engagement with Colorado’s growing transatlantic business community.

German American Treffpunkt: A Growing Hub for Business, Culture, and Community

Following its successful opening in 2024, the German American Treffpunkt quickly became a cornerstone for the Chapter. In 2025 alone, the co-working and conference facilities were booked nearly 200 times, underscoring the space’s importance as a central hub for collaboration, networking, and community activity.

Executive Director Samantha Seems describes the Treffpunkt as “a bridge between two cultures,” connecting German innovation with Colorado’s evolving economy. “We’ve seen tremendous success in building a space that not only supports our members’ day-to-day needs, but also serves as a central location for key events, discussions, and partnerships,” she noted.

Your Contact



Samantha Seems
Executive Director
& Board Secretary
+1 (719) 822-2058
samantha.seems@gacc-co.org



Growth in Membership, Events, and Connections

GACC-CO’s momentum showed in its programming: the Chapter hosted over 30 in-person events, supported 13 external programs at the Treffpunkt, and welcomed four German business delegations, strengthening its role as a connector across industries and international markets.

For the first time, the Chapter co-hosted Cherry Creektoberfest and Snowmass Oktoberfest, expanding German heritage programming in Colorado. New initiatives like the Friday Afternoon Club (FAC) created informal networking opportunities, while the Annual Members Meeting remained a key fixture.

To support this growth, the team expanded to five employees, boosting the Chapter’s capacity to deliver high-quality programming and member services across the region.

Reaching New Audiences Across Colorado

The Chapter expanded its reach with networking events in Colorado Springs and the launch of the Old Colorado City Christkindlmarket, connecting with new communities statewide. The Denver Christkindlmarket celebrated its 25th anniversary at its new Auraria Campus location next to the Mile High Tree, featuring new attractions like glass ornament workshops and a merry-go-round, along with returning entertainment.

Looking ahead to 2026, the GACC-CO is excited to expand the OCC Christkindlmarket and deepen its engagement in southern Colorado, while continuing to strengthen programming and member engagement across the Denver metro area.



For more information, visit www.gacc-co.org

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

1

MONTHLY STAMMTISCH NETWORKING

Monthly Stammtisch gatherings at local favorites — including **Surly Brewing in Minneapolis** and **Union 32 Craft House in Eagan** — remained a central touchpoint for relationship-building. These gatherings consistently attracted new faces and helped strengthen the Minnesota Chapter's sense of community.

2

EURO-COCKTAIL AT NORWAY HOUSE

In May, **Norway House in Minneapolis** hosted an international networking event with European Chambers. Remarks from **Tom Hanson, Diplomat in Residence at the University of Minnesota Duluth**, helped strengthen collaboration within Minnesota's international business community and set the tone for a year of transatlantic engagement.

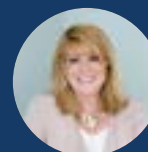
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MINNESOTA UNITED VS. HOLSTEIN KIEL MATCH

July brought together attendees at the **Germanic-American Institute in St. Paul** for a pre-game meet & greet before heading to Allianz Field, also in St. Paul. Cheering on Minnesota United and Germany's Holstein Kiel created a lively, community-focused celebration of German American friendship.



Your Contact



Sharon Heywood
Executive Director
+1 (612) 865-4170
office@gaccminnesota.org

4

ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

Held in the Twin Cities, the annual family-friendly picnic once again brought together the network and partners for a relaxed afternoon of conversation, connection, and Minnesota summer traditions.



6

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 2025 tournament took place at **Crystal Lake Golf Club in Lakeville**, continuing to be one of the Chapter's **most anticipated annual events**. With strong sponsor support from OEM Fabricators, Wendling Financial, and others, participants enjoyed a day of networking and friendly competition.

5

SOMIC USA GRAND OPENING

Members came together in Inver Grove Heights to celebrate the grand opening of **SOMIC USA's new facility**, a company known for its advanced end-of-line packaging machinery that helps manufacturers automate and optimize their packaging processes—highlighting the continued investment and innovation of German businesses in Minnesota.



Looking Ahead

Save the date for the **2026 Annual Golf Tournament** on September 21, 2026.

GACC MIDWEST MICHIGAN OFFICE

Advancing Transatlantic Innovation in Battery and EV Manufacturing

In 2025, Michigan cemented its role as one of North America’s leading centers for electric vehicle (EV) production and the fast-growing battery supply chain. The state’s deep manufacturing heritage and focus on retooling for the energy transition have made it a natural partner for German industry. As local automakers accelerated battery cell line expansion and energy storage integration, they increasingly looked to Germany’s strengths in precision engineering, automation, and plant design to meet the demands of large-scale, sustainable production.

This synergy—between Michigan’s manufacturing momentum and Germany’s technological expertise—defined much of the year’s transatlantic exchange. Across the state, new partnerships formed around advanced automation, energy efficiency, and production resilience, underscor-

ing how shared industrial roots can drive forward next-generation innovation.

A Record German Presence at The Battery Show

Nowhere was this momentum more visible than at **The Battery Show 2025** in Detroit. The event saw a **record 35 German companies** exhibiting at the German Pavilion, marking the largest presence to date. Their technologies—from cell manufacturing equipment to energy storage solutions—highlighted how German engineering is shaping the foundation of North America’s electrification efforts.

To build on the dialogue happening on the show floor, **we**, together with **Hannover Messe North America Inc.**, **VDMA**, **WN+J**, and **the German American Business Council of Michigan**, hosted a series of **invite-only events on October 9–10**. These sessions created space for candid conver-

sation among OEMs, suppliers, and policymakers about the future of supply chain security, the pace of EV adoption, and strategies to maintain manufacturing competitiveness on both sides of the Atlantic.

German Delegation: Connecting Industry Leaders

Recognizing Michigan’s pivotal role in the energy transition, **15 leading German innovators** traveled to the state in December as part of the **Global Market Entry Program**, funded by the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE)**. Their visit was driven by a shared question: how can plant engineering solutions accelerate the scaling of battery and energy storage production worldwide?

Throughout the week, delegates met with local manufacturers, research institutions, and economic development leaders, exchanging ideas

and exploring collaboration opportunities. The visit culminated in a **public expert conference in Detroit on December 2**, where participants discussed how automation, process optimization, and transatlantic partnerships can strengthen the global energy storage value chain.

Looking Ahead

What began as a year of collaboration in Michigan now points toward a new phase of co-innovation. The relationships forged in 2025—at trade fairs, expert conferences, and factory floors alike—are shaping the foundation for cleaner, smarter, and more connected manufacturing on both continents. As the global race toward electrification accelerates, the partnership between Michigan and Germany stands out as a model of how industry can innovate together for lasting impact.

MICHIGAN INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHT: EV & ENERGY STORAGE

Michigan’s rapidly expanding battery ecosystem is driving new opportunities in:

- **Plant engineering and automation**
- **Battery cell and module production**
- **Energy storage integration**
- **Transatlantic R&D and workforce training**

Your Contact



Markus Wirth
Head of Michigan Office &
Director, Consulting Services
+1 (248) 432-0532
wirth@gaccmidwest.org

ENTDECKE DIE VORTEILE VON OAKLAND COUNTY

(DISCOVER THE OAKLAND COUNTY ADVANTAGE)



AMERICAN RHEINMETALL SELECTS OAKLAND COUNTY

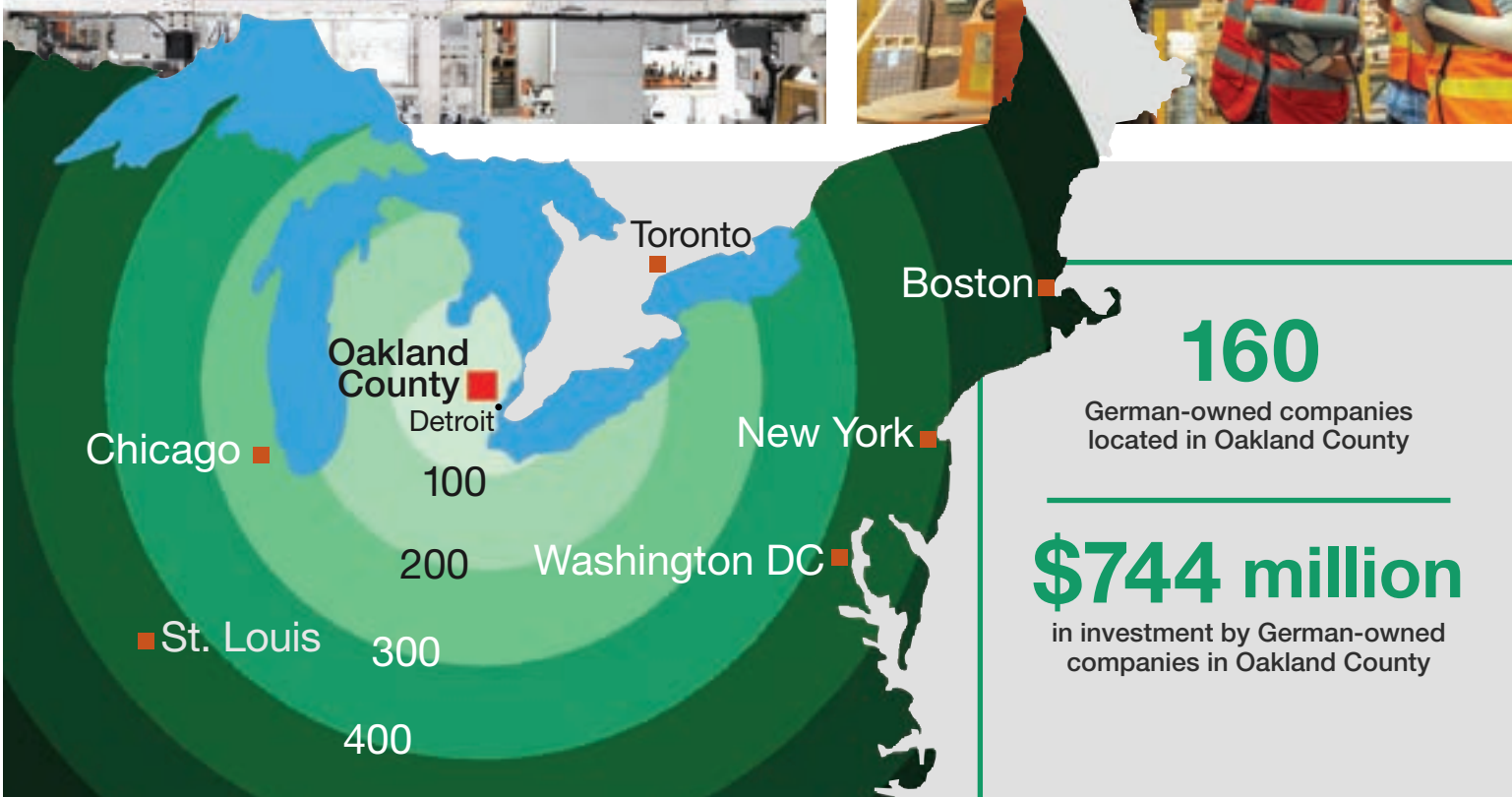
Oakland County, Michigan is an excellent place for international companies to invest, proven by American Rheinmetall's recent decision to establish its new North American headquarters in Auburn Hills. The Dusseldorf, Germany-headquartered company chose Oakland County to expand its U.S. footprint with a more than 168,000-square-foot engineering and prototyping facility. This new location will take advantage of the county's impressive engineering talent as American Rheinmetall plans to hire **450** new employees and invest more than **\$31 million**. With more mechanical and industrial engineers than any other county in the U.S., Oakland County's engineering prowess serves the world's most advanced companies.

OAKLAND COUNTY IS MOBILITY & MORE

American Rheinmetall isn't alone in recognizing the opportunities of Oakland County. Already home to **160** German-owned companies, the county has an acclaimed reputation amongst German firms. Many of those 160 companies operate multiple locations in the county, totaling **190** German-owned sites. While Oakland County is known as the "Epicenter of Mobility," the German companies in Oakland County operate not only in the automotive/mobility industry, but also advanced manufacturing, defense, and engineering & design. The decision by defense contractor American Rheinmetall shows how Oakland County's engineering and manufacturing expertise expands into industries beyond automotive.

GERMAN COMPANIES FIND A HOME IN OAKLAND COUNTY

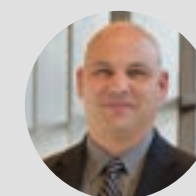
Oakland County is also home to prominent German companies such as AUMOVIO, BASF, Dürr, FEV, Henkel, Kostal, MAHLE, Röchling, Siemens, SW, ThyssenKrupp, TÜV SÜD, Volkswagen, Webasto, Witzemann, ZEISS, and ZF. These companies continue to grow in the county, while other German companies establish roots. Since 2010, German-owned businesses have created over **4,800** jobs, retained nearly **7,000** jobs, and invested more than **\$744 million** in Oakland County. These decisions to begin or expand operations in the county showcase the available opportunities of Oakland County's vast customer and supplier networks. The connections between Oakland County and German companies are so strong, the German American Chamber of Commerce's Midwest Michigan office is in Farmington Hills, Oakland County's second-largest city.



OAKLAND COUNTY IS HERE TO HELP

Oakland County's Economic Development Department is enthusiastic to support American Rheinmetall in establishing its new Auburn Hills location, and no matter a company's size, industry, or country of origin, is prepared to assist companies in locating, growing, and succeeding in Oakland County.

For more information on how Oakland County Economic Development supports businesses:



JOHN WOLF-MEYER
Manager of Global Business Attraction
wolf-meyerj@oakgov.com

[AdvantageOakland.com](https://www.advantageoakland.com)



GACC MIDWEST CHICAGO OFFICE

Not Just Flyover Territory — A Destination for Business

Located on the iconic **Michigan Ave in downtown Chicago**, our headquarters proves there's nothing "flyover" about the Midwest. Overlooking Lake Michigan and Millennium Park, the GACC Midwest Office offers members a dynamic space to work, meet, and connect at the center of transatlantic business.

Our Chicago office doubles as a home base for members: a space to work, meet, and build new partnerships. With flexible Member Landing Spots, state-of-the-art conference rooms, it's also the ideal setting for **annual meetings, conferences, and evening receptions**. Business travelers and local professionals alike find it a

productive place to touch down, collaborate, and host.

The GACC Midwest Office is also home to **Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI)**, **VDMA**, **FrankfurtRhein-Main**, **Hessen Trade & Invest**, and **Deutsche Messe AG**, as well as over **130 virtual offices** of German companies. This creates a dynamic network of German organizations under one roof. Sharing the building with the **Goethe-Institut Chicago**, **Messe Düsseldorf**, and **NRW.Global Business**, the office is part of a broader community advancing German business, culture, and innovation in the Midwest.



Member Landing Spots

- Complimentary workspace access for GACC Midwest members
- Available for half- or full-day reservations
- Convenient downtown location close to major transit lines

Meeting & Event Spaces

- Host meetings, workshops, conferences, and receptions with skyline views
- Modern technology and on-site support
- Member discounts available for bookings

Your Contact



Franziska Hennig
Manager, Front Office
& Operations
+1 (312) 585-8333
hennig@gaccmidwest.org

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

LANG Technik – Hartland, WI Headquarters

LANG Technik celebrated the soft opening of its new U.S. headquarters in Hartland, Wisconsin, reinforcing its commitment to supporting American manufacturers. The facility showcases LANG’s innovative workholding and automation solutions, serving industries from aerospace to medical devices, and highlights the company’s dedication to strong local partnerships and transatlantic collaboration.



Viega North America – Mantua, OH Grand Opening

Viega North America officially opened its \$178 million manufacturing, distribution, and training center in Mantua, Ohio. The ribbon-cutting brought together company leaders, government officials, and local stakeholders, highlighting Viega’s focus on innovation and workforce development. The 244,000-sq-ft facility emphasizes sustainability, targeting LEED Gold certification.



KNUTH Machine Tools USA – Lincolnshire & Houston Expansion

KNUTH Machine Tools USA (Lincolnshire, Illinois) continues to expand its American presence after decades of providing high-quality CNC and conventional machining solutions. In May 2025, the company hosted a two-day Open House with live demos and customer tours and opened a new branch in Houston, Texas, underscoring its commitment to U.S. manufacturing.



BearingPoint & ABeam Consulting – Joint Venture

BearingPoint and ABeam Consulting have launched a joint venture, BearingPoint NA LLC, headquartered in Chicago. Combining global consulting and SAP expertise — including AI-enabled SAP services — it will serve clients across the Americas. With 15,000 professionals, the venture delivers scalable, client-focused digital transformation with local relevance and global reach.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS 2025

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIMTEC US Inc.• Alfing Corporation• Aprio• ARTUS AG• Avison Inc• Battenberg Robotic L.P.• Beacon Global Advisors• Bernd Münstermann GmbH• Birg Law LTD• BITS Consulting GmbH• Black Rifle Coffee Company• Bode GmbH• CO Berliner Haus LLC• Crane4You• CS-COSMOS STIHL Manufacturing• DB Schenker• Denver Oktoberfest• Dickinson Wright• Drees & Sommer USA Inc.• EcoVAP | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EMO-LOG GmbH• Ettlin Smart Textiles GmbH• FEV Consulting Inc.• Global Climate Associates LLC• Grow Clinic• Hellmann Worldwide Logistics, Inc.• HG Medical USA LLC• Illinois EDC• Kiel Americas• Kruger North America• Landesbank Baden-Württemberg• Lanny Inc• Larson & Darby Group• LINX Global• Logineer USA LLC• Marquette University; German Program• Melink Solar• Meltzer Hellrung | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MS XTEC• NORDAKADEMIE - Hochschule der Wirtschaft• OroraTech USA Inc.• Pixel Technologies• P3 USA• RECALO North America Inc.• ROLAND ELECTRONIC GmbH• Rutronik Inc.• Schacht Millworks LLC• SD International Advisors• Styria Inc dba Kaiser Bakery• SunMatic Solar• Tautz & Schuhmacher LLC• TE&D Advisors• Teel & Company• Toedt, Dr. Selk & Coll. GmbH• TWI Group, Inc.• Waldmann Lighting Company• Würth Group |
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THANK YOU TO OUR NATIONAL PARTNERS



THANK YOU TO OUR PATRON MEMBERS



THANK YOU TO OUR PLATINUM & SUSTAINING SPONSORS

PLATINUM SPONSORS:



SUSTAINING SPONSORS:



MEMBERSHIP ANNIVERSARIES

30 YEARS:

Fraunhofer USA, Inc.
Miller Canfield
Plante Moran, PLLC
Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur, LLP

25 YEARS:

HARTING, Inc. of North America
Herrmann Ultrasonics, Inc.
NRW.Global Business (North America) LLC

20 YEARS:

KohlInhofer Agency
South Central Indiana Economic Development Region
Weil Technology North America, LLC
Weishaupt America, Inc.

15 YEARS:

Chicago Teahouse
Eisen Fox & Company, LLC
Hermle USA, Inc.
German Immersion Foundation, Inc.
J.P. Morgan
Natecs International, LLC c/ EyeC-America
Perkins Coie LLP
Vetter Development Services USA, Inc
World Trade Center Denver

10 YEARS:

A-Z Plumbing Services
Broker USA, Inc.
Felsomat USA, Inc.
German Machine Tools of America (GMTA)
Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
Milwaukee 7
Rommelag USA Inc.
Schunk Law Firm P.C.
Siemens Corporation
Zimmerman Jackson, P.C.

MEMBER BENEFITS HIGHLIGHT

Join a thriving transatlantic business community built for impact.

With **600+ member companies**, **50+ networking events** and access to a **National Membership Directory**, GACC Midwest connects you to decision-makers, innovators, and industry leaders shaping the German American business scene.

Whether you’re looking to expand into new markets, strengthen partnerships, or tap into insights across manufacturing, technology, sustainability & more, GACC Midwest is your gateway to the networks and knowledge that drive global success.

Become a Member of GACC Midwest — Your Trusted Partner for over 60 years

Networking Opportunities

Participate in industry-focused and networking events, and meet decision makers.

Membership Directory

Be visible in our online directory to find partners, customers, and collaborators.

Brand Exposure

Our marketing team is here to support your brand and increase your visibility.

Member Landing Spot

Use our downtown Chicago “landing spots” for meetings, layovers, or working between trips.

Business Referrals

Leverage our network: we connect and refer member companies to each other.

Services & Discounts

- 401 (k) Multiple Employer Plan
- Discounts on selected services

Your Contact



Nicolas David
Manager, Membership Engagement
+1 (312) 585-8017
david@gaccmidwest.org

MARKETING IN THE US

As a GACC Midwest member, you’re already connected to a powerful transatlantic business network, gaining access to industry insights, high-value events, and a community built on collaboration and innovation. But membership doesn’t just open doors—it amplifies your voice.

To help you turn those connections into real visibility and impact, we offer a suite of strategic marketing opportunities designed to elevate your brand and ensure your story reaches the right audience.

LinkedIn Spotlights:

13,000+ followers

- Share product updates, events, and promotions with our audience while collaborating on targeted LinkedIn ad campaigns to reach transatlantic-focused professionals.

Executive Update:

5,000+ subscribers

- Place an ad in our monthly newsletter, which reaches a highly engaged audience and consistently achieves an open rate of over 50%, giving your message strong visibility among transatlantic professionals.

GACC Midwest Website:

162,000+ yearly page views

- Increase brand awareness and website traffic with a prominent banner ad on the GACC Midwest website, reaching visitors across the German-American business community.

GACC Midwest Report:

Online and Distributed to
+600 Members & Partners

- Increase brand visibility with our annual print and digital publication across the German American business community.

**Let us help you tell your story —
and make sure the right people hear it!**

3

Network Highlights



TRANSATLANTIC BUSINESS INITIATIVE

TBI advocates for strengthening economic relations between Germany and the United States and Canada, serving as the point of contact for economic-policy issues for the German government, the governments of the United States and Canada, as well as EU institutions.



Recently, we were honored to host representatives from the TBI delegation led by the global CEO of DHL Group, Tobias Meyer at our Chicago office, providing a full day of strategic dialogue and collaboration focused on how the Midwest's industrial and innovation strengths align with Germany's transatlantic priorities.

TBI is a regional initiative of the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), the Federation of German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (BGA), and the Association of German Banks (BdB). Through TBI, companies can actively participate in expanding transatlantic relations and developing proposals on selected policy areas — via steering committees dedicated to trade and investment policy, energy and climate policy, data and the digital economy, and business and finance.

Two dynamic roundtables brought together senior executives from leading German firms—including Siemens, BASF, Mercedes-Benz, SAP,

DHL Group, Merck KGaA, ABB E-mobility, and more—alongside key U.S. partners and policymakers to explore opportunities in trade, innovation, and investment. From strategic discussions at the **German American Chamber of Commerce Midwest**, to hands-on innovation at **mHUB**, and a visionary visit to the **DHL Americas Innovation Center**, the visit highlighted how the Midwest's industrial base and clean-tech potential align with Germany's innovation goals.



Kristin Richards, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and Sam Ridders, Deputy Secretary and COO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, were among the U.S. representatives in attendance, contributing perspectives on strengthening regional cooperation.

Amid shifting trade policies and global challenges, one thing remains constant: **The Midwest's commitment to international partnership**

With its skilled workforce and central location, the region continues to be a magnet for investment and collaboration. From groundbreaking ceremonies to boardroom discussions, the message is unmistakable—the **Midwest is open for business, and German companies are helping lead the way.**

THE MIDWEST OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Across the **Midwest** state economic development offices are actively welcoming foreign direct investment, offering incentives, and partnering with global companies to build resilient manufacturing ecosystems. For German firms, this regional openness has translated into a wave of new investments, expansions, and groundbreakings—proof that transatlantic industry remains strong at America's center.

Here are some examples: In Illinois, **Silesia Flavors**, the German-headquartered flavor and fragrance company, broke ground in June 2025 on a 130,000-square-foot facility in Huntley, IL. The company is investing approximately US \$40 million and plans to add 41 full-time jobs. The new plant will triple its U.S. footprint, integrating manufacturing of sweet and savory flavors,

research labs and warehousing for distribution across the Americas.

Meanwhile, **CLAAS Group**, the German agricultural equipment maker, broke ground on a new 44,800-square-foot Research & Development Center on its Omaha, Nebraska campus. The US \$10 million investment is designed to serve all North American engineering, testing and prototype functions for the company's combines and farm-machinery business.

Additionally, **WITTENSTEIN** has deepened its established Midwest footprint with its U.S. location near Chicago in Bartlett, Illinois. The company's expansion adds over 32,000 square feet of production and office space, reinforcing its role as a key player in precision drive technol-

ogy. By leveraging Illinois's central position in the industrially strong American Midwest—along with access to skilled specialists and reliable suppliers—WITTENSTEIN continues to anchor advanced manufacturing capabilities in the region.

“WITTENSTEIN North America continues to expand its local assembly and production capabilities. Our growth in Bartlett reflects a long-term commitment to strengthening our U.S. presence. Producing and sourcing locally shortens lead times, reduces environmental impact from transportation, and requires us to build the expertise needed to manufacture high-precision gearboxes with the quality our customers expect.”

– **Peter Riehle, President & CEO**

Together, these projects highlight how the Midwest's manufacturing strength and skilled workforce continue to attract world-class innovators. With every groundbreaking, the region reinforces its role as a vital hub in the transatlantic industrial landscape.



Ohio Delivers as a Strategic Hub for Business Growth

Innovative German companies across diverse sectors have found unique advantages available only in Ohio.



Source: Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research (2024)
International Corporate Investment in Ohio Operations



With a central and strategic location in the USA, robust infrastructure, skilled workforce, competitive cost advantages, and thriving business climate, Ohio ranks among the top states for business. Its pro-business environment is why international companies choose Ohio when expanding their operations. Ohio is home to nearly 1,000 foreign-owned companies from 42 countries, and Germany stands out as the second-largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with approximately 750 establishments.

Since its creation in 2011, JobsOhio has proudly supported nearly 100 projects by German companies, either establishing new locations in the state or expanding their operations, resulting in the creation of approximately 40,000 jobs. These companies are incredibly diverse, spanning a variety of sectors, from food and agriculture to advanced manufacturing. Some of these companies are multinational with global name recognition, and most are representative of the typical German Mittelstand. Several of these companies entered the U.S. market decades ago, while others are relatively new to the market. Some have chosen to locate in urban and suburban locations, while others have preferred more remote settings, similar to their headquarters in Germany.

Executives from Covestro, Gealan Window Systems, KIRCHHOFF Automotive,

and Viega North America shared insights on their growth journey in Ohio. These stories highlight why these companies chose Ohio as a strategic hub for their U.S. operations and how they are shaping the state's industrial future. What do they have in common? Reliable support offered by JobsOhio and its regional network partners, either for the selection of a new location or for the expansion of an existing one. The executives share insights about the value proposition of Ohio and how JobsOhio and its regional network partners offer long-term support.

COVESTRO, a global leader in innovative polymer materials, started its operations in Leverkusen in North Rhine-Westphalia. In 2025, it announced an expansion at its facility in Central Ohio to serve the growing needs of the automotive, healthcare, and electronics industries in North America.

GEALAN WINDOW SYSTEMS from Oberkotzau, announced earlier this year its North American headquarters in Central Ohio, introducing premium European window and door solutions to the U.S. construction market.

KIRCHHOFF AUTOMOTIVE, based in Iserlohn, has been a cornerstone employer in Southeast Ohio since 2009, and continues to expand its role as a crucial supplier in the U.S. automotive sector through long-term investment in workforce development and community partnerships.

VIEGA NORTH AMERICA, a subsidiary of the Viega Group based in Attendorn, is a market leader in metal piping systems serving the industrial, commercial, and residential sectors. With locations in Colorado, Kansas, New Hampshire, and New York, their latest fully electrified and operationally carbon-neutral plant opened this year in Northeast Ohio, setting a new benchmark for the industry.

When talking about the rationale for the selection of the respective locations and what competitive edge Ohio offers, all four companies have identified logistics as a main driver for their investment, particularly the close proximity to a large number of customers and East Coast operations, which enables Viega, for example, to reduce its carbon footprint as it pertains to logistics and transportation. Gealan goes as far as to mention that the perceived disadvantage for incoming Atlantic freight has proven false for their business model and that the inland port has been an integral part of their import process.

"Ohio's strategic location continues to exceed our expectations, providing seamless access to major metropolitan markets including Columbus, Cincinnati, Lexington, and Louisville. The robust interstate and state highway infrastructure facilitates efficient logistics for our suppliers, customers, and employees, creating a transportation advantage that directly impacts our operational efficiency"

- KIRCHHOFF Automotive

The representatives of these companies also talked about the availability and quality of talent. This topic often intimidates international companies with plans for internationalization to the U.S. Not only have they not faced significant challenges in finding great people to hire, but KIRCHHOFF Automotive shared its access to a dedicated workforce that is willing to commute reasonable distances and the ability to create an optimal operational environment as key advantages.

"We have consistently benefited from a well-prepared workforce that understands manufacturing processes and embraces our company culture"

– Covestro

The **cost and ease of doing business** don't go unrecognized, with KIRCHHOFF Automotive discussing the region's competitive energy costs and Covestro highlighting Ohio's industry-friendly government, which has been instrumental in creating an environment where businesses like theirs can thrive.

While these drivers brought the German companies to Ohio, we asked how the relationship with JobsOhio,

its regional network partners, and regional and local stakeholders made a difference. Companies often recognize JobsOhio's customized approach to incentives and programs as a key factor that sets it apart from other U.S. locations.

Gealan Window Systems noted that state and local stakeholders have shown a great interest in its new North American headquarters. Beyond the initial setup, the company has benefited from constant assistance in establishing its business infrastructure. For example, regarding recruitment, a significant amount of data was made available about the workforce and salaries, enabling an ideal setup that would allow the company to both attract and retain talent.

Viega acknowledged that the collaboration with JobsOhio and its regional network partners was instrumental in aligning its project goals with the community's needs and ensuring a seamless process. From workforce development to coordination with state and local leaders, the collaboration helped move the project forward quickly and confidently.

JobsOhio remains a long-term partner for business growth, as both Covestro and KIRCHHOFF Automotive can attest. Both companies noted their partnership with

JobsOhio helped streamline project execution, reduce implementation times, and provide access to a wide range of resources.



"Our collaboration with JobsOhio, Ohio Southeast, and regional economic development partners has been instrumental in our operational success. These partnerships have facilitated strategic capital investments and comprehensive workforce training programs that have directly enhanced our facility's capabilities and our employees' skill development."

– KIRCHHOFF Automotive

JobsOhio recognizes that establishing a new location or expanding existing operations doesn't happen without challenges. And more often than not, those challenges include attracting, developing, and retaining a skilled workforce. Having a good partner in place during the business growth process is key to efficiently overcoming challenges as they arise.

Viega considers its challenges as being very similar to those of other growing manufacturers, particularly around workforce availability and navigating regulatory requirements. With the support of JobsOhio and regional partners, Viega was connected to workforce development resources, training programs, and offered streamlined communication channels with regulatory bodies. These partnerships allowed the company to address potential obstacles proactively, ensuring an efficient project launch and a strong foundation for long-term success.

"We strive to not only advance innovation but also to provide our employees with meaningful opportunities to shape the future of the industry."

– Viega North America

KIRCHHOFF Automotive proudly talks about the stability of its workforce, with 40% of its employees maintaining tenure of five years or more, which is a significant achievement when benchmarked against employee retention trends in the U.S. This retention rate reflects both the strong work ethic of Ohio's workforce and the company's ability to attract and retain quality talent. These results were achieved with a dedicated talent strategy in place that focused on restructuring their employment model to enhance workforce stability. This included successfully transitioning from a mixed temporary-permanent workforce to an entirely full-time employee base, implementing a comprehensive compensation strategy, increasing starting wages, and introducing performance incentives, attendance bonuses, and shift differentials.

All four companies value the role they play in the communities that welcomed them to the U.S. Covestro remains committed to being a well-respected employer of choice in the community. This investment enables the organization to support its community outreach initiatives, including STEM education programs.

KIRCHHOFF Automotive North America President and

CEO Larry Hagood shared that moving forward, the company will continue to evaluate opportunities for operational expansion and workforce development that will strengthen both its business capabilities and the positive impact on the Ohio communities it serves.

"As we grow our operations, we're also focused on growing our positive impact on the local economy and the communities we call home."

– Covestro

READY TO MAKE YOUR NEXT MOVE?

Visit jobsOhio.com/germany to learn more about how JobsOhio can support your business expansion in the U.S. and why so many German companies call Ohio home.

Alina Harastasanu
JobsOhio Director,
European Business
Development
Harastasanu@jobsOhio.com



YOUR MOVE.



PHARMA IN THE MIDWEST

Growing Pharma Investment Strengthens the Midwest as a Hub for Innovation

The U.S. Midwest is a key hub for pharmaceutical innovation and investment — and German companies are playing an essential role.

A prime example is **Vetter Pharma**, a leading global contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO), which recently broke ground on a new \$285 million clinical production facility in Des Plaines, Illinois. The new state-of-the-art site will expand Vetter's North American presence and reinforce the company's position as a trusted partner in aseptic manufacturing for early clinical development.

Once completed in 2029, the 860,000-square-foot facility will provide additional capacity for small-batch production of novel active ingredients and create opportunities for highly skilled employment in the Chicago area.

Across the region, the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors are seeing increasing investment from German companies drawn by the Midwest's strong talent pool, advanced research infrastructure, and collaborative business environment.

In fact, the Midwest accounts for roughly 27% of all U.S. pharmaceutical manufacturing com-

panies, with states like Illinois and Indiana leading national growth in exports and facility expansions — underscoring the region's growing prominence in life sciences production. From startups to global leaders, firms are finding the Midwest to be a strategic location for innovation, production, and partnership.

Dr. Susanne Lemaine, President at Vetter Development Services USA Inc., emphasized how this momentum reflects the growing transatlantic connection in the life sciences sector.

"As one of the most important biopharmaceutical markets worldwide, the U.S. is home to the majority of our customers. The Midwest stands out for its renowned academic institutions, helping us attract the specialized talent needed to innovate and partner with our customers in shaping the future of healthcare."

As Vetter's new Des Plaines facility takes shape, it stands not only as an investment in the next generation of pharmaceutical development, but also as a symbol of the region's expanding role in global life sciences — powered by strong German American partnerships.



75
YEARS
VETTER

Where passion meets purpose

We shape the future

With more than 7,300 staff members worldwide, our success spans the globe while remaining committed to the regions in which we operate. As an independent family-run pharmaceutical service provider, we have achieved a lot for patients in need — and there is still much more to come.

Get to know Vetter
vetter-pharma.com



Vetter Pharma International USA Inc.
10 W. Algonquin Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016 USA
infoUS@vetter-pharma.com

Rely on us.



DEFENSE OPPORTUNITIES IN NIEDERSACHSEN

Germany's Historic Defense Investment Opens Transatlantic Doors

Germany's new €400 billion defense modernization program marks the largest investment of its kind in the nation's history. Beyond strengthening security, it signals an era of industrial renewal — one that invites American companies to play a central role in shaping Europe's future defense landscape.

A New Era for Transatlantic Industry

From our Chicago office, Invest in Niedersachsen supports U.S. companies eager to connect with one of Germany's advanced and innovative regions. With this landmark initiative, Germany is prioritizing modern defense capabilities, resilient supply chains, and sustainable industrial growth.

“What begins as collaboration in defense will undoubtedly extend across sectors — reinforcing the long-standing transatlantic values of reliability, innovation, and shared prosperity.”

This transformation brings enormous opportunity for American firms in aerospace, defense technologies, and unmanned systems. The focus within aerospace is shifting from civil to defense applications — including drones, helicopters, and maintenance systems — all areas where U.S. expertise excels.



PARTNERING IN NIEDERSACHSEN

Germany's investment framework does not require full domestic production. This flexibility makes Niedersachsen an ideal entry point for U.S. companies seeking partnerships or local production footprints. At Invest in Niedersachsen, we guide companies through the process — from identifying strategic sites such as former military hangars or greenfield locations, to accessing investment grants, permits, and key industry networks. Our partners include leading manufacturers such as Rheinmetall, Krauss-Maffei Wegmann, and Airbus Defense.



Bridging Industrial Strengths

Headquartered in the Midwest, the heart of the Great Lakes manufacturing corridor, we are ideally positioned to foster these partnerships. The region's shared engineering traditions and commitment to quality mirror Niedersachsen's strengths in precision manufacturing, energy innovation, and advanced mobility.

4

Events



REGIONAL GERMAN AMERICAN BUSINESS OUTLOOK EVENTS

What do German subsidiaries in the U.S. expect for the year ahead? Each year, the German American Chambers of Commerce survey them annually through the **German American Business Outlook (GABO)**, assessing economic trends and transatlantic business prospects.

In early 2025, the **GABO results** were presented in February at the German American Executive Summit in Orlando, Florida. In the Midwest, regional events—hosted at **HARTING in Elgin, IL** and **TRUMPF in Plymouth, MI**—highlighted national trends through a regional lens. Expert panelists provided localized analysis of the survey data, exploring what the findings mean for German companies in the area.

Global Survey, US Impact

In Fall 2025, the **German American Chambers of Commerce (GACCs)** released **U.S.-specific insights** based on DIHK’s World Business Outlook, offering a clear picture of business expectations as companies look toward 2026. **See survey details below.**

Join us in **March 2026 in New Orleans, Louisiana**, for an in-depth look at the results of the **German American Business Outlook (GABO)** survey. Discover fresh insights into transatlantic business trends, market expectations, and the key forces shaping opportunities and challenges in the year ahead.

DIHK WORLD BUSINESS OUTLOOK FALL 2025 - U.S. SURVEY RESULTS & ANALYSIS



INVESTMENT: 70% PLAN TO MAINTAIN OR INCREASE THEIR INVESTMENTS IN THE U.S.



MAJOR RISKS: 59% CITE ECONOMIC POLICY, FOLLOWED BY TRADE BARRIERS (55%) AND DECLINING DEMAND (43%).



BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS: 87% EXPECT STABLE OR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.



CURRENT BUSINESS SITUATION: 40% OF GERMAN COMPANIES IN THE U.S. RATE THEIR SITUATION AS GOOD, 16% AS POOR. DESPITE A SLIGHT RISE IN NEGATIVE VIEWS, THE U.S. REMAINS A KEY MARKET.

Interested to learn more about our events? – Talk to Us

Your Contacts



Michael Miltenberger
Coordinator, Events & Membership
Tel.: +1 (312) 585 - 8338
miltenberger@gaccmidwest.org



Nicolas David
Manager, Membership Engagement
+1 (312) 585-8017
david@gaccmidwest.org



DHL Innovation Center

As global supply chains evolve, members visited the DHL Americas Innovation Center to see the technologies driving this shift. They explored advances in sustainability, digitalization, AI, robotics, and more, gaining insight into DHL's innovations and their growing importance for the future of global logistics.

📍 **Rosemont, IL**
👤 *Emilia Endara*
Innovation Engagement Officer
Jim Giedraitis
Head of DHL Innovation Center

March 19, 2025



GACC MIDWEST
CONNECTION SERIES
ILLINOIS

Sponsored by  



tesa

As factories become more automated and electrified, materials matter more than ever—making tesa the ideal start to our 2025 Michigan series. On a guided tour with President Tobias Banik, attendees saw how tesa's adhesives enable high-speed assembly, durability, and design flexibility, highlighting how unseen innovations shape the future of production.

📍 **Grand Rapids, MI**
👤 *Tobias Banik*
President

April 2, 2025



EcoG

Electric mobility infrastructure is expanding rapidly, and EcoG is at the forefront. Guests saw how its modular charging and open standards accelerate EV adoption through a hands-on demo and virtual tour at the American Center for Mobility, highlighting integration with renewable energy and smart grids.

📍 **Ypsilanti, MI**
👤 *Robert Skinner*
Managing Director

June 25, 2025



GACC MIDWEST
CONNECTION SERIES
MICHIGAN

Sponsored by  



HEIDENHAIN CORPORATION

To show how precision and digitalization are reshaping manufacturing, HEIDENHAIN gave attendees an exclusive tour of its facility, highlighting advanced motion-control and automation systems used across North America.

📍 **Schaumburg, IL**
👤 *Gisbert Ledvon*
VP - Machine Tool I
End User I Digital Mfg

July 9, 2025

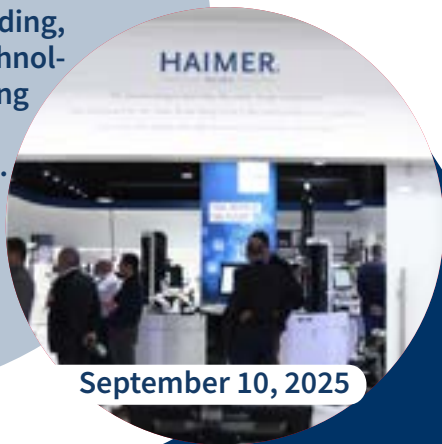


HAIMER

To boost accuracy, efficiency, and speed, manufacturers need cutting-edge tools. At HAIMER's Technology Center, participants saw next-generation toolholding, balancing, and shrink-fit technologies in action, highlighting how innovation drives shop-floor performance.

📍 **Villa Park, IL**
👤 *Manuel Merkt*
COO and VP
of Marketing

September 10, 2025



ARNOLD FASTENING SYSTEMS

To help OEMs and Tier suppliers accelerate innovation, Arnold Fastening Systems demonstrated engineering excellence in an interactive demo, showcasing advanced fastening technologies designed to make manufacturing smarter, faster, and more reliable.

📍 **Rochester Hills, MI**
👤 *Mario Alberto Guzman Gaytan*
Director of Sales
Ryan Ward
Head of Engineering

September 17, 2025



WHITE ASPARAGUS DINNER

Why do we gather each year for the White Asparagus Dinner? Because some traditions deserve to be experienced — not just remembered. *Spargelzeit* is more than a season; it's a cultural bridge that brings the essence of Germany's springtime to Chicago, connecting cherished heritage with the city's vibrant culinary scene.

This year's White Asparagus Dinner in Rosemont, Illinois brought together culinary tradition, meaningful business connections, and a mix of familiar and new faces from across our network. Guests joined us at **Sky on Nine** for an elevated three-course journey showcasing Germany's iconic white asparagus — flown in fresh especially for the occasion.

From the classic white asparagus soup and *Schinken*, to a beautifully prepared seasonal entrée and an unique panna cotta, every dish told a story of craftsmanship, tradition, and the shared appreciation for an ingredient that has defined German springtime for generations.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 WHITE ASPARAGUS DINNER SPONSORS



Your Contact



Michael Miltenberger
Coordinator, Events & Membership
Tel.: +1 (312) 585 - 8338
miltenberger@gaccmidwest.org

A Celebration for German Culinary Tradition

But the evening offered more than exceptional food. It was a celebration of **transatlantic connection**, authentic conversation, and the joy of gathering as a community. A heartfelt thank you goes to our Official Event Partner, **EMO Trans**, whose precise coordination ensured the white asparagus made its journey from Germany to Chicago in perfect condition — a true reflection of the collaboration at the heart of GACC Midwest.

As we look ahead, we're already excited to welcome everyone back next year for another unforgettable evening celebrating culture, community, and *Spargel*!

Save the date for May 20, 2026, and join us at **Sky on Nine in Rosemont, IL**, for our annual White Asparagus Dinner—one of our most anticipated traditions.



DEUTSCH-AMERIKANISCHER WIRTSCHAFTSTAG



A milestone for transatlantic collaboration, the 10th Deutsch-Amerikanischer Wirtschaftstag (DAWT) in Munich was the **most attended DAWT** to date. In a time of geopolitical tensions, shifting trade policies, and structural economic change, DAWT fosters dialogue between business leaders and policymakers to ensure cooperation, stability, and innovation in both markets. The forum highlights how essential a strong and open U.S.-German trade environment is for maintaining growth, competitiveness, and resilience in global supply chains.

The event brought together **340 participants and 110 distinguished speakers**, including **Hildegard Müller**, President of the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), **Hubert Aiwanger**, Bavarian State Minister for Economic Affairs, and South Carolina Governor, **Henry Dargan McMaster**. Both government representatives highlighted the importance of deepening collaboration between Germany and the United States in trade and innovation.



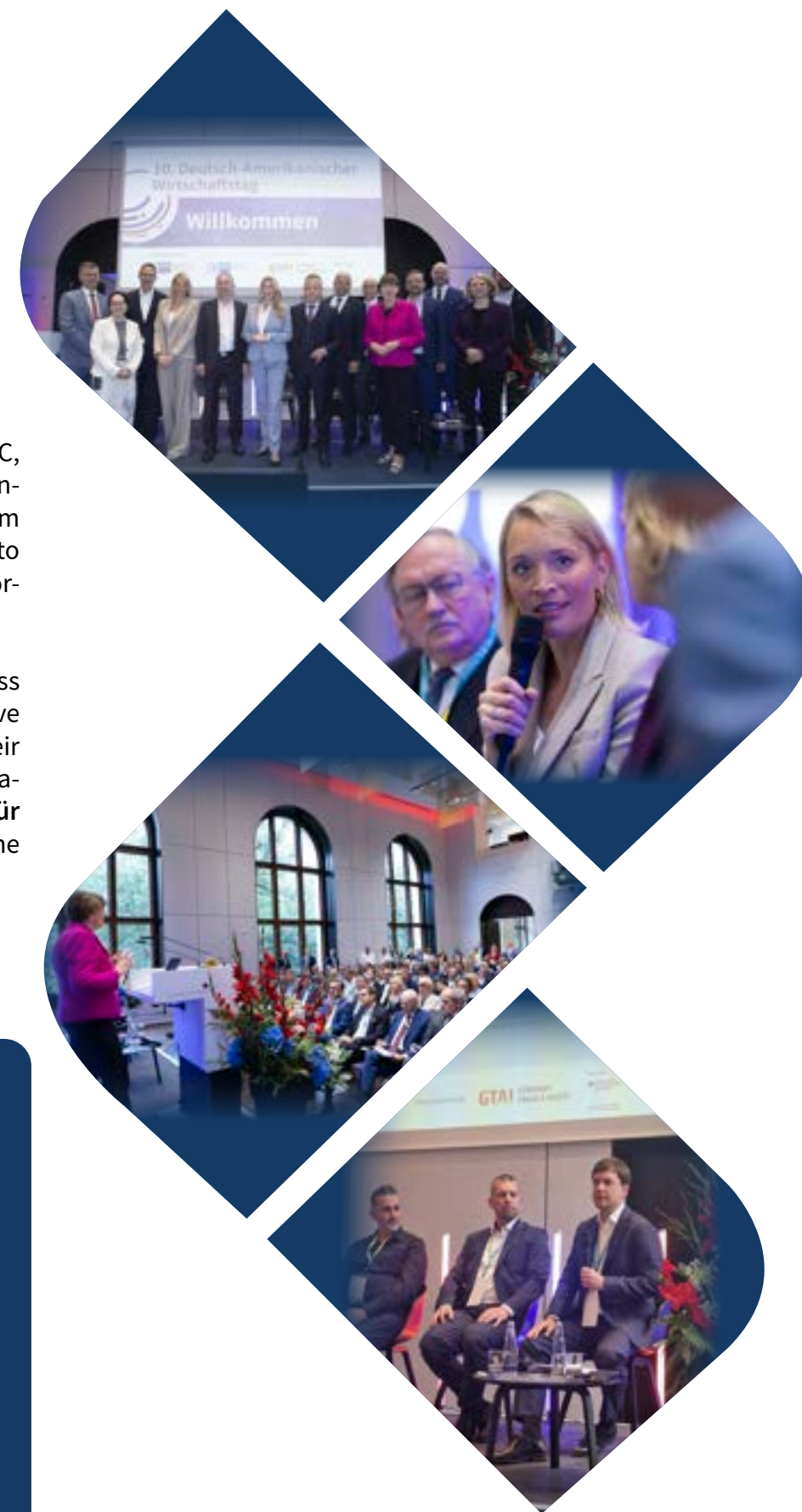
Celebrating 10th Anniversary

Matthias Amberg, Chairman of GACC, emphasized that while geopolitical tensions and tariff policies pose short-term challenges, they also open the door to forward-looking strategies and new opportunities for transatlantic business.

We want to thank all who made this success possible — to the **attendees** for their active participation, to the **speakers** for their insights, to the **sponsors** for their invaluable support. Another thank you to **IHK für München und Oberbayern** for hosting the event in such a meaningful setting.

NEXT STOP: MAINZ!

The 2026 DAWT will take place in Mainz on June 9, 2026, and will be organized by the **German American Chambers of Commerce (AHK USA)** and supported by the **Arbeitsgemeinschaft Rheinland-Pfalz**. Whether exploring the U.S. market or building new partnerships, **DAWT 2026** offers the ideal platform to connect, exchange ideas, and gain fresh perspectives.



EUROPEAN PROFESSIONALS NETWORKING

Where Global Perspectives Meet Chicago Energy

Great ideas rarely happen in isolation — they happen when people from different backgrounds collide, swap stories, and challenge each other’s thinking. That spirit is exactly what fuels **European Professionals Networking**, GACC Midwest’s quarterly series connecting Chicago’s internationally minded business community.

What began as a simple gathering has evolved into one of the city’s most anticipated touchpoints for professionals with European ties. Each event draws **well over 100 guests**, creating an atmosphere that feels both electric and effortlessly welcoming. Conversations flow easily, new partnerships form within minutes, and the mix of

industries and cultures represented keeps every interaction fresh.

The venues elevate the experience even further. From **skyline rooftops** to cultural landmarks — and even a festive winter edition at the **Chicago Christkindlmarket** — each gathering brings its own character and charm. The settings not only frame the evening but amplify the sense of community at the heart of the series.

Save the dates! Join us **March 25, 2026** at LM Studio and **June 3, 2026** at Twenty Six Rooftop for our next EPN events.

EPN is supported by European Chambers across Chicagoland and sponsored by their members.

THANK YOU FOR THE GREAT COOPERATION:

- Bulgarian American Chamber of Commerce
- Consulate General of Canada
- Consulate General of Denmark-Trade Commission
- Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Dutch American Chamber of Commerce
- Dutch Chicago Club
- French American Chamber of Commerce
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce
- International Trade Association of Greater Chicago
- Irish American Chamber of Commerce
- Latvian American Chamber of Commerce
- Norwegian American Chamber of Commerce
- Polish American Chamber of Commerce
- Swedish American Chamber of Commerce
- Trade Commission of Spain
- Ukrainian American Chamber of Commerce

“What a great event with an incredible location! My highlight was the many great conversations and contacts.”

– Franz Ernst
(The Fractional CxO Company)



BEARING POINT & GACC MIDWEST

AI in Action Across the Supply Chain

Artificial intelligence isn’t just a buzzword—it’s the force reshaping global supply chains today. Companies that embrace AI now are already defining the future of logistics, efficiency, and workforce transformation. That urgency was the driving reason behind the event.

In September, BearingPoint and GACC Midwest brought together industry leaders and innovators at the DHL Americas Innovation Center in Rosemont, Illinois for an immersive exploration of AI’s impact on supply chains.

Dynamic keynotes from **Jared Coyle**, Chief AI Officer at SAP Americas, Inc., and **Ralf Dillmann**, CEO of BearingPoint North America, set the stage with powerful insights into real-world applications of AI.

A thought-provoking panel discussion—“**Clarity Amidst Disruption: AI Across the Supply Chain**”—featured Coyle, Dillmann, and Rich Parkhurst of KUKA Robotics. Together, they unpacked how AI is not only transforming operations but redefining the skills needed across every level of the workforce.

Participants toured the DHL Americas Innovation Center with **James Giedraitis**, Head of the Center, experiencing cutting-edge technologies and hands-on demonstrations that showcased innovation in motion.

The day concluded with networking among peers united by a common vision: driving smarter, more connected supply chains through collaboration.

The Takeaway: AI isn’t the future—it’s the present. Those who act now aren’t just adapting; they’re shaping tomorrow’s global landscape.



Partner With US!

GACC Midwest is proud to help member companies create tailor-made events that bring industry insights to life and foster meaningful connections within the German American business community. If your company is interested in hosting a customized event, talk to us!



Nicolas David
Manager, Membership Engagement
+1 (312) 585-8017
david@gaccmidwest.org

GACC MIDWEST ANNUAL GALA

BENEFITING THE GERMAN AMERICAN APPRENTICESHIP & EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Changing Lives, Building Futures

Why does the partnership between Germany and the United States matter? Because it changes lives. It builds futures. It strengthens communities through opportunity — and nowhere was that more evident than at the **GACC Midwest Annual Gala** this October.

More than a celebration, the Gala was a showcase of impact: a night devoted to advancing **workforce development and apprenticeship programs** that power our transatlantic economy. Every toast, every conversation, and every paddle raised carried a shared purpose — to open doors for the next generation of skilled talent.

At the heart of the evening stood the **German American Education Foundation**, whose support ensures apprentices can access certification resources and study tools that lead to debt-free, high-paying careers.

Guests didn't just hear about innovation — they experienced it firsthand. **Hermann Ultrasonics** impressed with their ultrasonic drink technology, while **WITTENSTEIN's** flight simulator turned the ballroom into an adventure hub. A spirited

live and silent auction, a paddle drop, and even a festive visit from the **Christkind** added to the evening's excitement.

But beyond the celebration, it was a reminder of what's possible when industry, education, and community come together. As **ICATT Apprentice graduate and trainer Nick Roher** put it best:

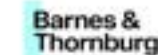
“You have the opportunity to change somebody's life every day. You should take it.”

That sentiment captured the essence of the night — a Gala not just about recognition, but about **creating lasting impact** across generations.

Mark your calendars!

Join us on **October 16, 2026**, for our **Annual Gala**—one of our signature events of the year. This special evening celebrates transatlantic collaboration, with all funds raised supporting the German American Education Foundation and its workforce development initiatives.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 GACC MIDWEST ANNUAL GALA SUPPORTERS



CELEBRATING **TRANSATLANTIC** **PARTNERSHIP** AT THE GACC MIDWEST ANNUAL GALA



Your Contact



Michael Miltenberger
Coordinator,
Events & Membership
Tel.: +1 (312) 585 - 8338
miltenberger@gaccmidwest.org

Kiel Through the Decades: A Legacy in Motion



A Workshop That Started It All

In 1945, in the quiet town of Nördlingen, Germany, a craftsman named Franz Kiel began a modest venture in metalworking. What started as a small workshop making iron parts soon grew into something extraordinary. Guided by craftsmanship and an eye for quality, Kiel laid the groundwork for what would become one of the world's leading manufacturers of bus and train seating.

Eighty years later, millions of passengers in cities like New York, Hong Kong, Sydney, London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin take their seats on Kiel products — continuing a journey built on innovation, comfort, and trust.

1945-1960: Building a Foundation

After the war, resources were scarce, but determination was not. By 1948, Kiel had established its first production facility, producing metal parts, furniture, and vehicle equipment for notable customers including Mercedes-Benz, MAN, and Magirus Deutz. As the company grew, so did its ambition.

By the 1950s, Kiel employed more than 120 people and launched its first milestone innovation — the Greyhound bus seat (1956) — featuring an adjustable backrest and lateral movement. It was the beginning of Kiel's mission to make every ride more comfortable.



1960-1980: Growth and Momentum

The next two decades brought expansion and modernization. As travel boomed, Kiel evolved to meet new demands — adding armrests, footrests, and enhanced comfort features that set new standards in passenger seating. By the 1970s, Kiel's craftsmanship had caught the attention of Deutsche Bundesbahn, marking its entry into the rail market — a partnership that would shape its future.



1980-1990: Innovation at the Core

In the 1980s, innovation defined Kiel's next leap forward. The company developed seats with improved noise reduction and longevity, culminating in the "Kiel 1" (1981) — the world's first one-piece, self-supporting plastic shell seat for city buses. As technology advanced, so did Kiel's approach. Robotic welding, automated production, and ergonomic design transformed its facilities into state-of-the-art operations.

By decade's end, Kiel had become a symbol of reliability and innovation across both bus and rail industries.



1990-2011: From Local Expertise to Global Reach

The 1990s opened a new chapter, globalization. Kiel expanded across Europe with subsidiaries in Turkey, Poland, the Netherlands, and France, combining local craftsmanship with global reach. The company also strengthened its internal structure with new upholstery and surface technology divisions, elevating both aesthetics and functionality.

By the early 2000s, Kiel had evolved from a component supplier into a complete seating systems provider — serving buses, trams, and trains worldwide.



2009-2019: Kiel's Rise in North American Transit

Crossing the Atlantic marked another turning point. In 2009, Kiel established Kiel N.A. LLC in Elkhart, Indiana, chosen for its proximity to key suppliers and customers.

The company's first project with New Flyer Industries led to a remarkable opportunity — producing 775 carsets for the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, one of the largest rail projects in North America. Momentum followed quickly: the Massachusetts DOT, New Jersey Transit, Houston Metro, and others trusted Kiel for their fleets.

By 2019, Kiel's U.S. footprint expanded further with the acquisition of Kustom Seating Unlimited (KSU N.A., LLC) in Bellwood, Illinois — expanding its rail market presence and manufacturing capacity.



2020-2025: A Unified Future as Kiel Americas

In 2022, a new era began. Kiel Americas was established, uniting Kiel N.A., KSU N.A., and Kiel Real Estate under one roof at 3000 St. Charles Road, Bellwood, Illinois. This hub now drives production, R&D, and customer solutions for the entire North American market. With a team of around 100 employees, Kiel Americas blends global innovation with local expertise.

The company's "It's Up to You®" modular seating concept lets customers personalize their experience — from upholstery and headrests to built-in seatbelts and wireless charging.

And soon, Kiel will grow again. In early 2026, a new 100,000 sq. ft. facility will open, an expansion driven by growing demand for high-quality passenger seating across North America.



5

Consulting Services



US MARKET ENTRY BOOTCAMPS

Expanding into the U.S. offers enormous opportunity — but navigating tax systems, legal frameworks, logistics, and cultural differences can be complex and time-consuming. GACC Midwest's **US Market Entry Bootcamp** provides companies with the knowledge, tools, and expert guidance they need to confidently build a strong foundation and succeed in this dynamic and competitive market environment.

Led by renowned industry specialists, this comprehensive workshop takes participants through all essential aspects of a successful market entry, including U.S. tax and legal requirements, transatlantic logistics, digital sales strategies, cross-cultural communication, and visa regulations. Through interactive discussions, practical insights, and personalized 1:1 consultations, par-



ticipants learn how to apply this information directly to their own business strategy and decision-making.

Organized multiple times a year in collaboration with German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs), the program has become a trusted and widely used steppingstone for companies preparing to enter or expand in the U.S. market. In 2025, the Bootcamps took place in Frankfurt, Erfurt, and in a virtual format. Building on this continued success, GACC Midwest will host its **first U.S.-based Bootcamp in Chicago in 2026**, scheduled alongside the Automate Trade Show and featuring exclusive site visits and valuable networking opportunities.



Your Contact



Anna Roselinde Hack
Senior Manager, Consulting Services
Tel.: +1 (312) 585-8012
hack@gaccmidwest.org

RECRUITING SERVICES

Successful market expansion in the U.S. depends on one critical factor: securing leaders and specialists who can perform and adapt quickly. German American companies continue to face a competitive labor market and high hiring expectations, making it essential to identify talent that can contribute effectively from day one.

From Crisis to Stability: How Interim Leadership Made the Difference

This year, a German-owned US subsidiary faced a critical leadership gap during a longer period of restructuring and financial strain. With downsizing already underway, there was little time to secure a leader who could stabilize operations and prepare the company for the next phase. The challenge was not only speed. The interim executive needed turnaround expertise, strong financial acumen, and the ability to take charge from day one — while also guiding a team through uncertainty. Equally important were sensitivity, the ability to

identify and support key performers, and maintaining cohesion during difficult decisions.

To meet these requirements, our Recruiting Services team began with in-depth discussions with the company’s management to clarify priorities and decision criteria. We executed a focused search, interviewing multiple candidates within days. The resulting shortlist presented each profile transparently, highlighting both relevant strengths and areas of potential misalignment. This structured approach allowed the company to move quickly while keeping decisions fact-based.

Within three weeks, an Interim Executive was appointed, providing stability, ensuring continuity during restructuring, and giving the company time to define its long-term leadership strategy. For us, the case underscored that in interim mandates, success depends on balancing urgency and decisiveness with the leadership qualities required to keep a team engaged and future-oriented.

WHY COMPANIES CHOOSE GACC MIDWEST RECRUITING SERVICES: RECRUITMENT SNAPSHOT 2025

95 %
Fill Rate

Consistent success across industries and functions

8- 13 Weeks
Average Placement Time

Efficient matching without compromising on fit

Projects Completed Nationwide – Focus on the U.S. Midwest

Diverse Roles Filled: Executive | Technical | Sales | Administrative | Interim Leadership

Bilingual recruiters bridging German precision with U.S. business practice.

RECRUITING HIGHLIGHTS 2025

PACKAGING & MANUFACTURING



Sales and logistics placements supporting North American expansion.

FOOD & BEVERAGE



Technical Sales and e-commerce hires strengthening U.S. market presence.

ENGINEERING & MACHINERY



Executive searches, including General Manager and interim C-level roles.

MEDICAL & PHARMA



Finance and accounting placements for growing U.S. subsidiaries.

SOFTWARE & ELECTRONICS



Specialized roles such as Application Specialists and Sales Engineers.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

CAQ Inc. North America

When CAQ Inc. North America began building its U.S. operations, our Recruiting Services team supported them in hiring their first two Software Trainers, establishing a foundation for long-term growth. Vice President Markus Pulcher praised the collaboration:

“We were impressed by GACC Midwest’s understanding of both German and U.S. work cultures. The process was efficient, and the candidates were exactly what we needed.”

CAQ Inc. expressed full satisfaction and “gladly recommend GACC Midwest’s recruiting services to other businesses.”

DID YOU KNOW:
GACC Midwest Members receive a discount on Recruiting Services

Your Contact



Nathalie Rusznyak
Senior Manager, Recruiting & Consulting Services
+1 (312) 585-8007
rusznyak@gaccmidwest.org

J-1 VISA SERVICES

Invest in Global Talent — Strengthen Your Business

In a competitive global market, companies need talent with agility, fresh thinking, and international perspective. J-1 Visa interns bring exactly that — contributing new skills, innovative approaches, and cross-cultural insight that strengthen teams and support organizational growth.

Beyond their daily contributions, international interns help build long-term value. They expand global awareness, deepen cultural intelligence, and strengthen international networks — advan-

tages that increasingly shape future partnerships, market insights, and cross-border collaboration.

The **GACC Midwest J-1 Visa Program** enables companies to access these benefits with ease. We manage all administrative and regulatory requirements, ensuring a smooth, compliant process so your team can focus on business outcomes: developing future leaders, accelerating innovation, and cultivating a globally minded workplace.

AT A GLANCE WHY COMPANIES CHOOSE GACC MIDWEST



Bilingual support—no translations needed



Provide localized knowledge of resources and culture



Connect with potential interns at Virtual U.S. Internship Fair



Receive personalized guidance and full compliance support



Demonstrate commitment to international education and exchange

WHAT IS THE J-1 VISA?

The J-1 Visa is a U.S. Department of State program that facilitates international exchange by allowing foreign university students and recent graduates to gain professional experience in the United States. Participants may intern for up to 12 months, contributing to knowledge sharing, skill development, and cross-cultural understanding across industries.



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

“Thanks to the support of the GACC, we welcomed our first international summer intern from Germany — an exceptional addition to our team. She quickly adapted to the U.S. workplace culture and delivered outstanding contributions, particularly within our HR department. [...]”

The summer internship program was a tremendous success, and we are now more open than ever to welcoming new talent from anywhere in the world.”

— Sandra Musielak
Human Resources Manager
Gebrüder Weiss, Inc.

“Hosting international interns has strengthened our global outlook and enhanced collaboration across cultures. It has also helped us build a pipeline of diverse talent and foster innovation through new ideas and approaches.”

— Rosalinda Almanza
aPHR, Talent Acquisition
Specialist
FUCHS LUBRICANTS CO.

Your Contact



Aimee Goodman
Manager, Recruiting &
Consulting Services
+1 (312) 763-2989
goodman@gaccmidwest.org

MARKETING SERVICES

LOCALIZE YOUR SERVICES

Your Gateway to Effective U.S. Marketing

Succeeding in the U.S. market requires more than translating existing materials — it demands a **clear understanding of how companies communicate, compete, and build trust in a fast-moving environment.** Businesses that tailor their messaging to U.S. expectations gain a powerful edge: **stronger visibility, sharper positioning, and a greater ability to turn interest into long-term partnerships.**

GACC Midwest helps companies achieve exactly that.

Our team combines international communication expertise with a nuanced understanding of **U.S. branding, digital strategy, and customer expectations.** Whether you're entering the market or expanding your presence, we ensure your story is told in a way that resonates and delivers results.

How We Equip You for U.S. Market Growth

HIGH-CONVERTING LANDING PAGES

We create or enhance landing pages that quickly communicate your value, guide visitors through your message, and drive meaningful engagement — all tailored to U.S. market norms.

DIGITAL & PRINT MARKETING MATERIALS

Flyers, brochures, sales collateral, pitch decks, product sheets, presentations — we provide both content and design that reflect a professional, cohesive, and U.S.-ready brand identity.

STRATEGIC SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

We develop and manage content strategies that build visibility and credibility, supported by clear planning, coordinated execution, and performance reporting.

U.S. MARKET LOCALIZATION

We adapt your existing materials to match U.S. tone, terminology, and communication style — ensuring your message feels natural, professional, and aligned with industry expectations.

VIRTUAL

INTERNSHIP FAIR

Global Talent Pipelines Start Here

Companies across industries rely on globally minded talent — people whose international experience and adaptability drive innovation. For students abroad, connecting with U.S. employers can shape their careers; for companies, these conversations inspire new perspectives.

To support this, GACC Midwest and GACC South host virtual internship fairs throughout the year, creating a direct bridge between international students and U.S. companies. These events help students learn how to pursue U.S. internships and show how cross-cultural experience strengthens careers and transatlantic cooperation.

The fairs bring together students in fields like engineering, business, IT, logistics, finance, architecture, and international relations. Through

presentations, panels, and networking, they gain insight into U.S. workplace expectations and how to stand out. Companies benefit as well, using the fair to share industry knowledge, boost visibility at international universities, and connect with emerging global talent — even when they're not actively hiring.

“The Internship Fair was our first opportunity to connect with these impressive young people and discuss what skills and experience they could add to our team. We look forward to participating every year!”

— **Jeana Anderson**, Executive Director, Germanic-American Institute

Every interaction at the Virtual Internship Fair strengthens transatlantic talent pipelines and supports a more globally prepared workforce.

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:



Your Contact



Alexandra Bolz
Manager, Marketing &
Consulting Services
+1 (248) 965-3560
bolz@gaccmidwest.org

Your Contact



Aimee Goodman
Manager, Recruiting &
Consulting Services
+1 (312) 763-2989
goodman@gaccmidwest.org

HANNOVER MESSE 2025

At HANNOVER MESSE 2025, the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest, Inc. and the Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Toronto) hosted a high-level panel discussion on the Trade & Investment Stage titled: “Navigating North American Trade: Challenges and Opportunities for German Companies.”

Against a backdrop of evolving U.S. trade policies, including tariffs and potential shifts in trade relations, German companies face both challenges and opportunities across North America. How might these developments impact German investments and operations? Are businesses prepared to adapt their strategies to mitigate risks and seize new opportunities?



Panelists from the AHKs of Canada, Mexico, and the USA—alongside representatives from Siemens AG and NGen Canada—shared firsthand insights and practical guidance on navigating this complex and changing environment.



The discussion provided valuable perspectives on how companies can remain agile, informed, and resilient amid geopolitical uncertainty.

For companies across the Midwest and beyond, understanding the shifting dynamics of North American trade is essential for long-term success. By fostering dialogue between key stakeholders from both sides of the Atlantic, the event underscored the importance of strategic adaptability, informed decision-making, and cross-border collaboration.

Panel:

- Roger Hallett (NGen Canada)
- Mark Tomkins (German American Chamber of the Midwest)
- Christian Hoffmann (Siemens AG)
- Yvonne Denz (Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce Inc.)
- Andreas Müller (German Mexican Chamber of Industry and Commerce),
- Moderator: Dr. Mark Heinzel (The German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK))

Contact Us!

If you are a U.S.-based business interested in participating in HANNOVER MESSE (20-24, April 2026) as your gateway to international trade and investment, contact your Chicago-based HANNOVER MESSE team to learn how you can get involved.



Katrin Geisler
Official Sales Representative of
Deutsche Messe AG in the U.S.
geisler@hf-usa.com



Collaborations: SAP Roadshow AI in Manufacturing – From First Steps to Smart Solutions

As digital transformation and artificial intelligence continue to redefine manufacturing, companies are seeking practical ways to integrate these technologies and drive sustainable, data-driven growth. To meet this need and inspire

Through dynamic panels featuring top voices in AI and manufacturing, participants walked away with actionable strategies for turning challenges into opportunities — one smart step at a time.



collaboration within the German American business community, SAP Labs partnered with GACC Midwest to bring the future of intelligent manufacturing to life through the SAP Labs Digitalization and AI Innovation Tour.

The May 2025 stop at the TRUMPF Smart Factory gathered industry leaders and innovators to explore practical pathways from early adoption to fully smart solutions. Designed especially for GACC members and SMEs, the event fostered collaboration, knowledge exchange, and inspiration for sustainable, data-driven growth.



Gustavo Millan, Senior Director of the Global Industrial Manufacturing Business Unit at SAP Labs U.S., delivered the keynote presentation. The panel was moderated by **Said Al-Hallaj**, Founder & CEO of NETenergy and featured **Tony Papke** (MxD), **Franziska Lestorti** (AWS), **Lauren Dunford** (Guidewheel), and **Israel Squires** (Midpoint Consulting), who shared insights on moving from early AI adoption to scalable smart solutions.

DELEGATION TRIPS & TRADE MISSIONS

CONNECTING MIDWEST & GERMAN STARTUP ECOSYSTEMS (GERMANY TRIP: BERLIN & LEIPZIG)

To strengthen the ecosystems’ ability to attract and scale cleantech startups, this initiative—supported by the European Recovery Program (ERP)—connected U.S. and German experts through targeted exchanges and high-visibility engagements at key innovation hubs and events.



April 2025

THE FUTURE OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE (U.S. TRIP)

Aiming to strengthen transatlantic collaboration, this ERP-supported delegation introduced German water-sector stakeholders to U.S. water-infrastructure solutions and connected them with experts and innovative projects in Wisconsin and Illinois.

THE FUTURE OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE (GERMANY TRIP)

Fostering transatlantic collaboration, the ERP-supported delegation provided U.S. water-sector experts with direct insight into Germany’s infrastructure and climate-resilience solutions through targeted visits across three key regions.



September 2025

BRANDENBURG DELEGATION: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRIP TO THE US

With the U.S. Midwest emerging as a global manufacturing hotspot, the Brandenburg delegation set out to gain market insights and identify collaboration opportunities by uniting industrial and tech companies for engagements with leading regional partners in Illinois and Wisconsin.



June 2025



March 2025

TRANSATLANTIC BUSINESS INITIATIVE (TBI)

The delegation brought German industry leaders to Chicago for roundtables, site visits, and exchanges with U.S. partners. With companies like DHL Group, Merck KGaA, SAP, and ABB E-mobility, the visit aimed to advance German business in the U.S. and engage state-level stakeholders on shared issues.



October 2025



October 2025

SOLUTIONS FOR THE PRODUCTION, STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION OF HYDROGEN

Our hydrogen delegation was fully booked, bringing eight German companies to Chicago and Houston for site visits, roundtables, and networking. As part of BMW’s German Energy Solutions Initiative, the trip offered an important first step into the dynamic U.S. hydrogen market.

ADVANCED PLANT ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS FOR BATTERY MANUFACTURING & RECYCLING

To explore opportunities in the U.S. battery sector, a German delegation focused on advanced plant engineering for battery production and recycling visited Michigan and Illinois. As part of the BMW-supported Global Market Entry Program, participants connected with key regional stakeholders.



December 2025

CONNECTING MIDWEST & GERMAN STARTUP ECOSYSTEMS (U.S. TRIP: ILLINOIS & COLORADO)

Focused on cleantech and deep tech, German startups and ecosystem partners explored the U.S. Midwest through panels, site visits, and strategic networking. The trip offered a platform to build partnerships, share insights, and uncover new innovation opportunities.



December 2025

CARBON CAPTURE CARBON STORAGE (CCUS TRIP)

Advancing German engagement in the U.S. CCUS sector, the delegation explored major projects and regulatory frameworks in Illinois and California, gaining practical insights, partnership opportunities, and U.S. best practices relevant for Germany.



December 2025

CONNECTING MIDWEST AND GERMAN STARTUP ECOSYSTEMS

The Midwest and Germany share much in common—deep industrial expertise, strong university networks, and a commitment to sustainability-driven innovation—yet these regions are not to be overshadowed by traditional startup hotspots like Silicon Valley or Berlin.

The Connecting Midwest and German Startup Ecosystems initiative, part of the European Recovery Program (ERP) funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE), is strengthening transatlantic collaboration in cleantech, climate, resilience, and energy security. Specifically targeted toward ecosystem stakeholders; including public-sector leaders, investors, accelerators, corporates, and startup support organizations. The initiative aims to build a long-term, sustainable transatlantic network, and by doing so, it highlights the Midwest and Germany as attractive, yet often underrecognized, hubs for innovation.

In March 2025, a U.S. delegation—including representatives from World Business Chicago, the States of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Nebraska, the City of Denver, and startup support organizations—traveled to Berlin and Leipzig to connect with Germany’s startup and cleantech ecosystems. Building on that success, a German delegation travelled to the Midwest and Denver

later in the year to continue the exchange. These visits strengthen transatlantic collaboration across cleantech, hardtech, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing, showcasing both regions as powerful yet often overlooked hubs for innovation and sustainable growth.

Through a mix of delegation visits, workshops, roundtables, and job-shadowing programs, the ERP Startup Ecosystem project connects leading U.S. and German players across the innovation landscape. The program has been extended for three additional years, through 2028, with tailored delegation programs designed to deepen collaboration across key sectors.

- **2026:** Hardtech with a focus on manufacturing and industry
- **2027:** Hardtech with a focus on life sciences
- **2028:** Hardtech with a focus on food, beverage, and water

This spirit of openness and collaboration positions Chicago—and the broader Midwest—not just as a destination, but as a launchpad for European cleantech startups to scale, innovate, and forge lasting transatlantic partnerships, demonstrating the Midwest as a strategic gateway for sustainable growth and breakthrough innovation.

“CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, AND THE MIDWEST IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS WHEN IT COMES TO SCIENCE-DRIVEN INNOVATION AND THE BIG OPPORTUNITIES IN ENERGY TRANSFORMATION. IF YOU ARE WORKING ON CLIMATE TECHNOLOGY, WE INVITE YOU TO COLLABORATE WITH US. CHICAGO IS OPEN FOR OUR EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND REMAINS DEDICATED TO BUILDING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS.”

— **ABIN KURIAKOSE,**
CHIEF INNOVATION & STRATEGY OFFICER, WORLD BUSINESS CHICAGO



Upcoming Delegations 2026

- **Business Development Trip:** Energy Resilient and Cost Efficient Solutions for Thermal Processes in Energy Intensive Industries (March 23-27, Illinois & Ohio)
- **Northern Germany Trip to the US:** Innovation and Structural Change: Advancing Energy, Manufacturing, and Logistics (May 3-8, Detroit & Chicago)
- **Business Development Trip:** Furniture Industry (May 11-15, Chicago & New York)
- **Transatlantic Innovation Network:** Connecting Midwest & German Startup Ecosystems (Midwest & Germany)

Your Contact



Britta Schneider
Deputy Director,
Government Projects
and Trade Missions
Tel.: +1 (312) 585-8346
schneider@gaccmidwest.org



THE FUTURE OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Water is our most critical resource — and safeguarding it requires innovation, collaboration, and a global perspective. In 2025, GACC Midwest brought together water infrastructure experts from Germany and the US for two transatlantic trips under the the European Recovery Program (ERP) funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) “The Future of Infrastructure.”

In April, German specialists visited Wisconsin and Illinois, exploring cutting-edge utilities, research centers, and companies such as The Water Council, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, WILO, and Northwestern University’s Center for Water Research. Delegates examined climate adaptation, digital transformation, sustainable water management, equity in water access, and water security, gaining firsthand insight into the scale and operational sophistication of US water infrastructure.

In June, US organizations traveled to Germany, visiting North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, and Baden-Württemberg to experience advanced European water management. Participants toured Roche Diagnostics, the Emscher Renaturation Project, IKT – Institute for Underground Infrastructure, and energy-positive wastewater treatment plants. The trip offered a comprehensive view of Europe’s sustainable and resilient water strategies, providing inspiration and practical insights for US organizations.

While the US excels in large-scale infrastructure and operational capacity, Germany leads in advanced treatment and integrated sustainability strategies. Sharing lessons, building networks, and fostering partnerships accelerates innovation, strengthens climate resilience, and safeguards water resources for future generations.



WATER IS ESSENTIAL

Critical to public health, economic growth, food security, and climate resilience



NO COUNTRY HAS ALL THE ANSWERS

The US excels in scale and operations, Germany in advanced treatment and integrated planning



COLLABORATION ACCELERATES INNOVATION

Sharing best practices helps both sides adopt proven solutions faster



GLOBAL CHALLENGES REQUIRE GLOBAL RESPONSES

Climate change, population growth, and pollution demand transnational approaches



EXCHANGES BUILD NETWORKS

Personal relationships lay the foundation for joint projects, student programs, and technology transfer

What is Global Mobility Management and what are the most common pitfalls managing a global workforce?

An interview with Florian Darmstadt and Victoria Stadnyk from Rödl USA

GACC: Victoria, what is Global Mobility Management?

Global Mobility Management is the strategic coordination of international employee assignments, ensuring smooth transitions and compliance across borders. It includes various components such as relocation logistics, immigration, compensation, cultural integration, and expatriate tax management. First and foremost, it is monitoring and staying informed about where my workforce is located throughout the year. Secondly, it is developing and applying policies for different kinds of assignments. As outside advisors we often meet with company's that have comprehensive mobility guidelines, but they are rarely followed, and department heads make individual agreements with employees without timely informing the Human Resources Department.

No, there are no legal requirements to have standardized Global Mobility Policies in place. However, for larger organizations with lots of cross-border exchange of employees, it is highly recommended, as it simplifies negotiations with employees and seeking approval of labor unions. Without a policy each individual employee transfer needs to be analyzed and requires executive decision making on how to structure the employee transfer with varying legal, tax, and social security consequences.

GACC: Is it a legal requirement to have a Global Mobility Policy?

GACC: You mentioned that there are different structures of employee transfer. Can you elaborate a bit more on this and are there structures that are better than others?

There isn't a one-size-fits-all structure; it depends on the facts. Global Mobility Specialists typically classify transfers into four categories:

- 1. Business Trips:** Short stays of a few weeks, no family relocation, minimal impact on compensation; handled through standard travel policies.
- 2. Short-Term Assignments:** Temporary placements of 3–12 months for specific projects, usually without full family relocation or permanent status change.
- 3. Long-Term Assignments:** Transfers over 12 months, often involving full relocation of the employee (and sometimes family) under a formal assignment agreement.
- 4. Localization:** Permanent relocation where the employee moves to a local contract and joins the host country's workforce.



Florian Darmstadt

Partner, CPA, Dipl.-Kfm.
at Rödl in the United States.

Florian.Darmstadt@roedlusa.com
+1 713 325 9112



Victoria Stadnyk

Associate Partner, CPA
at Rödl in the United States.

Victoria.Stadnyk@roedlusa.com
+1 713 325 9106

GACC: What about remote employees? Are they also considered on assignment?

Remote employees are generally not considered to be on assignment in the traditional Global Mobility world. Assignments typically involve a formal (physical) relocation to another country or location for a defined period, often with structured support such as relocation benefits, tax planning, and immigration services. Remote employees work from a location of their choice, which may or may not be in the same country as their employer. While they may face tax and compliance considerations, especially if working cross-border, their situation is usually managed under the remote work policies rather than formal assignment.

However, as remote work becomes more common globally, tracking employee locations, assessing permanent establishment risks, and ensuring proper tax and legal compliance become complex responsibilities for companies.

It is highly recommended. Each U.S. state has its own tax laws, and employees working across state lines - whether on assignment, remotely, or temporarily - can trigger complex state income tax, payroll, and withholding obligations.

GACC: In the context of U.S. State Taxation, do companies also have to involve their Global Mobility Department?

GACC: What are best practices and at what stage should company's talk to you?

As early as possible. Ideally during the planning phase of employee transfer. Early involvement allows us to assess potential risks, design compliant and cost-effective structures, and align the assignment with company policies and strategic goals.

Global Mobility Expatriate Tax team can offer comprehensive support across all key areas of international employee management which include:

- Assignment Planning & Structuring
- Tax Compliance & Advisory for both Employer and Employees
- Assistance with Policy Development & Implementation
- Cost Projections & Budgeting
- Compliance Risk Management

GACC: What services can be outsourced to you as a Global Mobility Tax Service Provider if a Company does not have its own Global Mobility Function?

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Workforce Development



ICATT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

10 Years of Growth, Impact, and National Recognition

Addressing the growing skills gap and preparing a workforce for the future, **ICATT (Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training)** was launched in 2015 to bring the proven **German Dual Education System to the U.S.** The goal—create a sustainable solution to workforce challenges and strengthen the economy through skilled talent.

What is the impact of apprenticeship? It combines hands-on training with a debt-free associate degree, giving apprentices real-world experience while providing companies with highly skilled, loyal employees and a sustainable talent pipeline.

Over the past decade, ICATT has grown from 5 companies and 5 apprentices into a nationally recognized program, shaping workforce development across the country. Through these programs, more than 900 apprentices have already launched high-paying, rewarding careers—and we are proud of every one of them. As companies recognized the **value of structured, high-quality apprenticeships**, ICATT’s network expanded across the Midwest and beyond. Over the past decade, ICATT Network Companies have collectively invested more than \$13.5 million in tuition alone, providing apprentices with valuable, debt-free training and education.

One of ICATT’s most significant achievements is its **85% retention rate**, reflecting both **apprentice success and the strength of partnerships among companies, colleges, and ICATT**. Graduates are ready to contribute on day one, while companies benefit from reduced recruitment costs and a steady pipeline of skilled talent. Upon successful completion of the program, apprentices earn an associate degree plus an **internationally recognized German DIHK/AHK certification** — a credential benchmarked against the rigorous standards of the German Dual Education System.

In August 2025, ICATT reached a historic milestone: recognition as a **National Program Standard by the U.S. Department of Labor**. This allows companies nationwide to register apprentices under a consistent, high-quality framework, ensuring training aligned with global best practices and backed by federal credentials.

As **ICATT celebrates its 10-year anniversary**, it remains focused on expanding its reach, meeting growing demand for skilled workers, and helping companies build competitive, technologically advanced workforces.

Strong workforces don’t happen by chance—they are built through investment, partnership, and vision.

Talk To Us!



Sascha Alexander Kuhn
Deputy Director,
Apprenticeship Network
+1 (312)494-2167
kuhn@gaccmidwest.org



THREE COMPANIES THREE JOURNEYS

Driven by the need to build a sustainable pipeline of skilled talent while maintaining world-class quality standards, three notable companies have shaped the evolution of the **ICATT and MAT² (Michigan Advanced Technician Training) Apprenticeship Programs** over the past decade. **ICATT** administered by GACC Midwest, is the leading German-style apprenticeship model in the U.S., rooted in the German Dual Education System. **MAT²** is Michigan's pioneering German-inspired program, combining classroom instruction with paid, hands-on industry experience to develop highly skilled technicians.

As one of the founding companies of the **MAT² Apprenticeship Program**, **BROSE** reflects the steady, deliberate growth of the program's early years. Over twelve years, it has offered more than

60 **Mechatronics Technician** apprenticeships, blending on-the-job learning with classroom instruction. This gradual expansion refined program standards and processes, laying the groundwork for faster growth by future companies and establishing **MAT²** as a trusted model for Michigan manufacturing apprenticeships.

On the other end of the spectrum, **Wittenstein** has taken a highly focused approach since becoming one of the founding companies of the **ICATT Apprenticeship Program**. By selecting a small group of **CNC apprentices** each year, **Wittenstein** demonstrates that even a small-scale program can deliver immense value when paired with German standards and structured development. For **Wittenstein**, each apprentice represents a long-term investment in specialized

skills and company culture, ensuring workforce continuity and excellence.

Building on that foundation, **Continental Tires America** shows how apprenticeships can scale rapidly and strategically. Since joining **ICATT** in 2021, **Continental** has offered more more than 60 apprentice positions at its Mt. Vernon, Illinois, facility—and partnered with **Kaskaskia College** and **Rend Lake College** to pilot a new **Industrial Electronics Technician** profile. **Continental** ensures graduates meet internationally recognized standards and provides a steady pipeline of skilled employees ready for full-time roles.

Together, these three companies tell the story of evolution of **ICATT and MAT²**. From **Wittenstein's** precision-driven, small-cohort strategy to **BROSE's** steady growth, to **Continental's** rapid expansion, each journey demonstrates how German-style apprenticeships adapt to different business models and talent needs. No matter the pace, the result is the same: a **stronger, more resilient workforce** prepared to meet the challenges of modern manufacturing and drive innovation for years to come in the U.S.



ICATT & MAT² GRADUATIONS

This year’s graduations celebrations are more than individual achievement—they honor a **decade-long commitment to building a highly skilled workforce** ready for today’s technology-driven industries. By combining classroom instruction with hands-on experience, ICATT and MAT² apprentices gain the technical expertise and practical skills that make them immediately valuable to employers and critical to the region’s economic growth.

For **48 dedicated apprentices**, this commitment has culminated in success: they have earned ICATT and MAT² Apprenticeship Certificates, US DOL Journeyman Cards, DIHK Certificates, and AAS Degrees, marking the completion of three years of intensive training and on-the-job learning. These graduates now officially launch their careers in advanced manufacturing and business, prepared to contribute to innovation and workforce excellence.



This year’s graduation carried special significance as **ICATT marked its 10-year anniversary**. Over the past decade, the program has trained hundreds of apprentices, demonstrating the effectiveness of the German-style dual education model in the United States.

The ICATT graduation ceremony was hosted at our GACC Midwest office, while the MAT² ceremony took place at Henry Ford College. During the ICATT ceremony, Harper College was recognized for its decade-long partnership, emphasizing the importance of strong institutional collaboration in delivering industry-aligned training of the highest quality.



Companies participating in ICATT and MAT² have invested over **\$13.5 million in tuition fees alone**, reflecting their dedication to developing a **highly skilled workforce** and supporting apprentices with both **classroom instruction and hands-on experience**. Distinguished guests at the ICATT graduation included **German Deputy Consul General Dirk Schulz** and **Swiss Deputy Consul General Jeorg Oberschmied**, who highlighted the global relevance of apprenticeship models.

The accomplishments of these graduates are a testament to the success of collaborative workforce development. Congratulations to all—your dedication, talent, and perseverance continue ICATT’s mission to prepare the next generation of skilled professionals and shape the future of advanced manufacturing.

GERMAN AMERICAN APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE & AWARDS

Building Futures Through Apprenticeships: CLAAS Honored for Lasting Impact

Apprenticeships create lasting impact by opening clear pathways into high-skill, high-growth careers, empowering individuals to gain confidence, purpose, and long-term stability. This transformative potential is at the heart of why **CLAAS** was honored at the **2025 National Apprenticeship Conference**. Their commitment to developing future-ready talent and strengthening transatlantic workforce collaboration earned them the **2025 German American Apprenticeship Award**, presented during a ceremony celebrating excellence in vocational training.

Jurors recognized **CLAAS’s** approach—prioritizing quality training, individualized guidance, and international exchanges—creates exactly this kind of meaningful impact. By investing in mentorship, coaching, and early engagement with local schools and STEM programs, **CLAAS** ensures apprentices not only gain skills but also develop the confidence and mindset needed to succeed.

This commitment to meaningful learning is reflected in the words of **Matthias Ristow, President of CLAAS Omaha Inc.**, who emphasized the importance of apprenticeships to the company’s success: *“At CLAAS, we view apprenticeships as essential to our long-term success...Our partnership with the ICATT Apprenticeship Program helps us attract, train, and retain motivated individuals who share our passion for technology and innovation.”*

Through its dedication to high-quality training and mentorship, **CLAAS** demonstrates how apprenticeships can transform careers and strengthen communities. By investing in people today, the company is building a skilled, confident, and future-ready workforce for tomorrow.



Developing Strong Trainers and Leaders

From Train the Trainer to Corporate Leadership Programs

In today’s fast-paced business environment, companies succeed when employees are supported, mentored, and empowered by skilled trainers and leaders. Organizations that invest in developing both training and leadership capabilities build sustainable talent pipelines, foster engagement, and drive long-term growth. Strong leaders help employees perform better, collaborate more effectively, and stay with the company longer.

Since 2017, close to **500 professionals** have completed the **Train the Trainer certification program**. Originally designed to equip apprenticeship trainers with practical skills, the program now supports a wide range of professionals who train others as part of their roles, from service technicians guiding customers through complex equipment to HR teams onboarding new employees and department leaders mentoring teams. By focusing on communication, effective training strategies, and the psychology of learning, participants are able to teach with clarity, consistency, and confidence.

Building on the success of the Train the Trainer program, GACC Midwest has expanded by developing corporate leadership programs tailored to their unique needs. In 2025, **Schattdecor**, a global surface manufacturer, worked with GACC Midwest to create a year-long Corporate Leadership

& Development Program for their management team. The program included interactive sessions combining practical tools, reflective exercises, and peer-to-peer learning, allowing leaders to immediately apply new concepts in their daily work.

Throughout the program, participants gained a clearer understanding of their motivations and values that impact their ability to lead their teams effectively, as well as practical techniques to train and build a shared framework to support collaboration and growth.

“Train the Trainer program was informative, engaging and highly educational to all aspects of training and development. We had such a pleasant experience that we are interested in enrolling our additional managers into the program.” - Katherine LeClare Director of HR Schattdecor
Investments like these pay off when leaders who are equipped to coach, communicate, and manage effectively reduce turnover, strengthen engagement, and create a pipeline of talent ready to take on future challenges. Programs that focus on both training and leadership development help organizations prepare employees and leaders to meet today’s demands while positioning companies for sustainable growth.

Contact Us!

With in-person and virtual course options available, getting your trainers top-tier instruction has never been easier. To learn about our upcoming course options, or if you would like to host a Train the Trainer course at your company, contact Geneva Scurek.



Sascha Alexander Kuhn
Deputy Director,
Apprenticeship Network
+1 (312)494-2167
kuhn@gaccmidwest.org

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The Christkindlmarket



A YEAR OF FIRSTS AND FAN FAVORITES

In 2025, the Christkindlmarkets returned to three beloved locations - Chicago at Daley Plaza, Wrigleyville at Gallagher Way and Aurora at RiverEdge Park - bringing with them a vibrant mix of cherished traditions and exciting new experiences. Among the three locations, returning fan favorites included special events such as Wine Tasting and Glass Ornament Making, along with the popular Culture and Cheer Tours.

This year also introduced the first-ever Krampus-Themed Event, adding a playful twist to the festive lineup. Complementing these activities was a refreshed merchandise selection that

delighted guests of all ages. Leading the new merchandise collection was the adorable Krampus Stuffie, joined by stylish Fedora Hats and collectible magnets.

Of course, the star items remained the annual mugs, a tradition since the markets began. The 2025 edition featured two distinctive designs: a red heart-shaped mug with a white interior and illustrations representing all three locations, and a charming gingerbread mug adorned with a gingerbread man in Lederhosen and a gingerbread woman in Dirndl - beautifully reflecting German culture.



Additionally, a newly designed beer stein and the fifth annual ornament, crafted in glass and hand-painted in Europe, added elegance to the lineup. The ornament, shaped like a heart and inscribed with “Ich liebe Christkindlmarket” (“I love Christkindlmarket”), perfectly paired with the heart-shaped mug.

The 2025 season marked the 29th year in Chicago, with exciting preparations already underway for a milestone anniversary in 2026. In Aurora, the market celebrated its fourth season at RiverEdge Park, achieving its largest scale yet with over 60 vendor booths. Meanwhile, visitors warmly welcomed the return of the Wrigleyville market at Gallagher Way with staple vendors after a one-year pause. Together, these three locations created a joyful, bustling holiday atmosphere, continuing the Christkindlmarket legacy of community, culture, and celebration.



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Deputy Director
Apprenticeship Networks



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Certification



Myriam Klein
Senior Manager
Applicant Outreach & Special
Projects



Jaymee Dhein
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Exams, and Certification,
Apprenticeship Networks



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the U.S.



Ricarda Schuhmacher
Consultant
Consulting Services



Johanna Schlegel
Consultant
Government Projects
& Trade Missions



Simone Pohl
Director
Marketing, Membership &
Events



Nicolas David
Manager
Membership Engagement



Jayson Bard
Coordinator
Events & Membership



Michael Miltenberger
Coordinator
Events & Membership



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Coordinator
Marketing & Communications



Virginia Rounds
Special Projects



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Kate Bleeker
Vice President
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Marketing & Intercultural
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Manager, Special Events &
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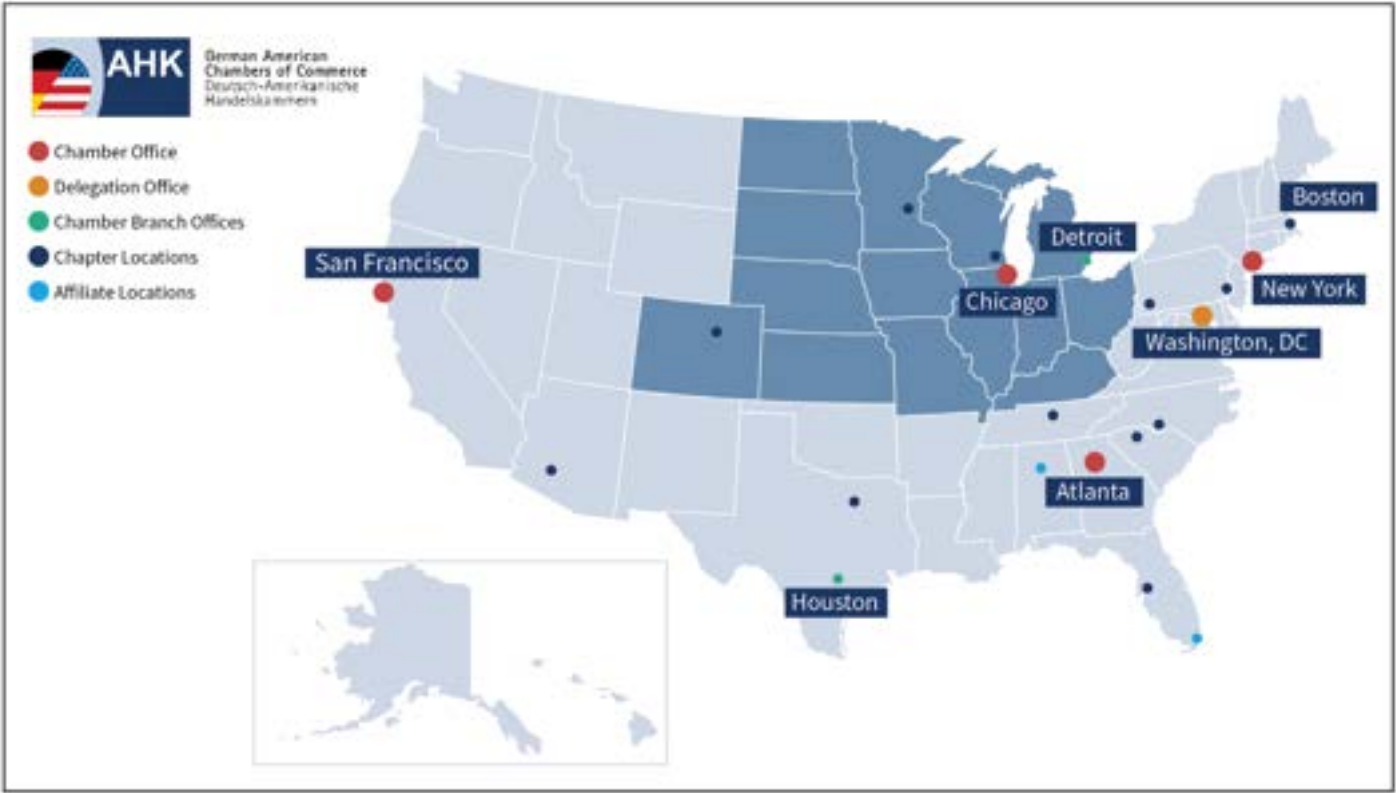


Hanna Tallman
Assistant Manager,
Sponsorship & Special
Projects

Thank you to our 2025 trainees, apprentices & interns!

- Annie Quan Boi Luu
- Alina Mendoza
- Anna Moore
- Ashtynn Fitzgerald
- Carina Benezra
- Elia Jacob Haase
- Elisa Lehmann
- Emily Feikema
- Eva Liles
- Fabian Fleck
- Finja König
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- Hagen Warne
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ABOUT GACC MIDWEST



The main offices of the German American Chambers of Commerce (GACCs) are in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, alongside their branches in Detroit and Houston. The GACCs cater to a vast network of members and National Partners with a wide variety of services for US market entry, apprenticeships in the US, and industry events for their German American business network.

The German American Chamber of Commerce® of the Midwest (GACC Midwest), headquartered in Chicago with a branch office in Detroit, was founded in 1963. GACC Midwest is an integral part of the German Chamber Network (AHKs) with 150 offices in 93 locations around the globe. Our

continuing mission is to promote German American business relations and to support trade and investment between Germany and the United States, especially the Midwest. Our organization combines elements of a trade commission, a membership association, and professional consulting services for market entry, apprenticeships in the US, and more.

In addition to our offices in Chicago and Detroit, GACC Midwest has three Chapters across the US. Our Chapters in Colorado (CO), Minnesota (MN) and Wisconsin (WI) organize additional events for companies and members and offer them access to both a local and regional network.



German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest, Inc.

150 North Michigan Avenue,
35th Floor, Chicago, IL 60601
+1 (312) 644-2662
info@gaccmidwest.org
www.gaccmidwest.org

*Project Management & Graphic Design
of the 2025 Midwest Report:*
**Emily Feikema, Melanie Reiner,
Stephanie Dal Porto**

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