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For Immediate Release:
May 24, 2012

More than 50 Ohio Companies Receive Export Assistance *IMAGE Program helps increase Ohio Exports*

Columbus – Today, the Ohio Department of Development announces that more than 50 Ohio companies have utilized the International Market Access Grant for Exporters (IMAGE) program, which is part of the National Export Initiative to double U.S. exports by 2015. The program is administered through the Ohio Department of Development's Office of Business Assistance and is designed to increase exports and create jobs by helping small businesses promote their products and services in new international markets.

"The IMAGE program gives small businesses the opportunity and support they need to expand their services and products abroad," said Christiane Schmenk, Director of the Ohio Department of Development. "This program is another example of how committed the state is to helping businesses succeed and create jobs."

Since the program began in January, the Ohio Department of Development has awarded 15 trade mission stipends, supported 37 international trade shows, 10 U.S. Commercial Service projects, 20 translations of websites or printed materials, and three export education activities. More than 50 percent of the program funding is still available. To qualify for the IMAGE program, an applicant must:

- Be in business for at least one year;
- Be in good standing with all State of Ohio agencies;
- Meet the requirements of the Small Business Size Regulations set forth by the SBA; and
- Operate a licensed business in Ohio to manufacture, assemble, and/or distribute a product or provide an exportable service.

To view full program guidelines and to download an application, please visit www.IMAGE.development.ohio.gov. If you have additional questions about the program, contact IMAGE@development.ohio.gov or (614) 466-5017.

*The **Office of Business Assistance** leads the state's efforts to create, grow, and develop small- and minority-owned businesses resulting in job creation and a strengthened Ohio economy. The Office also provides customized services to increase the exports from Ohio companies. The Office oversees a variety of service programs including the state Small Business Develop Center network, Ohio Business Lending Clearinghouse, the Minority Business Assistance Centers, and more.*

*Working with our partners across business, state and local governments, academia, and the nonprofit sector, the **Ohio Department of Development** works to attract, create, grow, and retain businesses through competitive incentives and targeted investments. Engaged every day in marketing, innovating, investing, and collaborating, the **Ohio Department of Development** works to accelerate and support the teamwork that is necessary for success by providing financial, informational, and technical assistance to those making an investment in Ohio's future.*

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