

# Deseret News

## *Trade mission to China to pay big dividends long term, analyst says*

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SALT LAKE CITY — Utah is the only state in the nation with positive export growth since 2009. And a recent trip to the world's most populous country could serve to enhance that already lofty position.

Last week, Lew Cramer — president and chief executive officer of World Trade Center Utah — returned from China where he accompanied Gov. Gary Herbert, along with other local business and community leaders, on a trade mission. The trip was arranged as an effort to build and expand international business partnerships — particularly in the rapidly growing Chinese market.

Speaking Thursday to an audience at the annual Envision Utah Corporate Friends Breakfast at the Little America Hotel, Cramer said Utah is uniquely prepared to develop numerous successful business relationships in China beginning right now.

"We have so many high-tech companies expanding (and) high-tech is where (China) want(s) to grow," he said. "It's a natural (fit) for us."

He also noted that the state's diverse language capabilities make Utah a well-regarded potential business partner in the Chinese business community.

"There were so many meetings that we went into that businessmen on our side spoke fluent Mandarin ... that impressed the heck out of them," Cramer explained.

He said that Utah being recognized as the only state in the nation to double its exports over the past five years was a key validation that the Beehive State is becoming more globally focused. He said the state is "perfectly poised" to do the same over the next five years as well.

Cramer said that in July, five provincial governors from China and some business leaders will visit Utah to further the relationships that are currently being developed. He said Utah's ability to contend in the global marketplace will hinge on how well the state cultivates its international associations with other nations.

"Our opportunities to compete and partner with (China) have never been better," Cramer said. "They know that we're a well-managed state with an economy that's working and growing. They know that we're doing growth in a smart, planned and forward-looking way."