

Swapping Danishes With Home-Made Biscuits

by Bradish J. (Brad) Waring

If you've noticed more tall, blue-eyed blondes with unique accents around town lately, it might be because "they ain't from around here." They're from Denmark.

The Danes have been heavily investing in the Carolinas' future over the past several years by re-locating facilities and importing goods from the Palmetto and Tar Heel States. Included among Danish companies with facilities in North and South Carolina are Copenhagen-based Maersk, the giant global shipping line, which has locations in Charlotte and Fort Mill; and Velux, the Horsholm based manufacturer of skylights and solar systems, which has two facilities in Greenwood that employ more than 550 people.

Denmark strengthens trade alliances in South Carolina

Exports from North and South Carolina totaled \$59.3 million and \$25 million, respectively, in 2007. Goods and services imported from the Palmetto State consist primarily of transportation equipment, machinery, chemical products and crops. Goods and services imported from the Tar Heel State include chemical products, crops, computers and electronic equipment and machinery.

This is part of a broader alliance between the United States and Denmark. In 2006, Danish exports of goods and services to the United States totaled about \$14 billion – 14.4 percent higher than the previous year – making America the country's largest market outside of the European Union. U.S. exports to Denmark totaled nearly \$3 billion in 2007, a significant number given that its entire population is only slightly higher than South Carolina's.

About 375 U.S. companies have Danish subsidiaries, while there are 400 Danish subsidiaries in the United States. The United States is also the second-largest investor in Denmark, with foreign direct investment (FDI) that amounted to \$13.2 billion in 2005, or about 28 percent of all FDI in that nation. Danish investments in the United States have risen significantly as well, reaching \$11.5 billion in 2005 and making this country the third-largest destination for Danish foreign investment.

Global companies invest in the United States to be close to suppliers and customers. The Carolinas have one of the best intermodal networks in the



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country, including the Port of Charleston, an international air hub in Charlotte, convenient highway access via six interstates, and ample rail service. Combined with a strategic location, roughly halfway between New York and Miami and within 1,000 miles of a large majority of the U.S. population, the Carolinas are well positioned.

Beyond that, both states have a productive, flexible, loyal work force, which is particularly important to foreign companies. The Carolinas' technical education systems can effectively train and produce workers who are ready from Day One.

Finally, the Carolinas have earned a reputation for welcoming international investment. For its part, South Carolina ranks No. 2 nationally in share of work force supported by U.S. subsidiaries – translating to over 110,000 jobs, which is 16th highest in the country.

Given all of this, South Carolina has real potential for expanded trade with Denmark. There is already a sound economic relationship to build upon between that nation and ours. The Carolinas have the resources that new and expanding companies need in order to grow. And the states have enjoyed long and profitable relationships with international businesses. Clearly, this is the land of opportunity for Danish companies. ♣



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Courtesy of Velux