



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New online tool lets Iowa companies find empty containers and save on shipping

Iowa companies looking to lower shipping costs are invited to explore a new online tool called Container Locator.

The website, at www.containerlocator.com, is a pilot project aimed at taking advantage of the thousands of intermodal freight containers coming into Iowa full and leaving empty. With Container Locator, companies can track down these containers, contact the shippers, and negotiate lower shipping rates using containers that would otherwise leave empty. Iowa companies can lower their shipping costs, shippers can increase revenue by filling containers that would otherwise be transported empty, and the end consumer stands to benefit from the overall lower cost of delivering goods.

"International trade is critically important to Iowa's economy and our state's future," said Jay Byers, CEO of the Greater Des Moines Partnership. "This innovative project will help companies across Iowa export more efficiently, which will help their businesses grow."

A patent is pending for the website. The site will be free to use during its testing phase.

The concept for the Container Locator was hatched in the spring of 2014 through the Freight Roundtable, a forum organized by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to discuss issues related to freight transportation among key stakeholders, including the Greater Des Moines Partnership and the International Traders of Iowa.

The MPO contracted with the CyBIZ Lab in the College of Business at Iowa State University to determine the feasibility of a container-tracking website and then to build it. The resulting website tracks relevant information about intermodal containers, including their origin, capacity, destination, and shipping company.

"This is a great example of business and government collaborating for the good of the entire state," said Todd Ashby, executive director of the Des Moines Area MPO. "We're excited to be launching this website, and we would like to thank the many partners who helped make it happen."

While the website is in its pilot phase, Bridgestone Americas Inc. will be testing the online tool within its operations.

"We've tested the website, and now we are calling on businesses to put the tool to the real test by integrating it with their shipping processes," International Traders of Iowa President Tim Woods said.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS



The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.



The Greater Des Moines Partnership is the economic and community development organization that serves Greater Des Moines (DSM), Iowa. Together with 23 Affiliate Chambers of Commerce and more than 6,000 regional business members, The Partnership drives economic growth with one voice, one mission and as one region. Through innovation, strategic planning and global collaboration, The Partnership grows opportunity, helps create jobs and promotes Des Moines as the best place to build a business, a career and a future.



The International Traders of Iowa is an organization whose mission is to serve the businesses in Iowa in their pursuit of international trade. Through forums developed to exchange practical information, ITI works with Iowa businesses to promote exporting, importing and investment in global enterprises.

ABOUT AN EARLY ADOPTER



Bridgestone Americas, Inc. (BSAM) is the U.S. subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the world's largest tire and rubber company. BSAM and its subsidiaries develop, manufacture and market a wide range of Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires to address the needs of a broad range of customers, including consumers, automotive and commercial vehicle original equipment manufacturers, and those in the agricultural, forestry and mining industries. The companies are also engaged in retreading operations throughout the Western Hemisphere and produce air springs, roofing materials and industrial fibers and textiles. The BSAM family of companies also operates the world's largest chain of automotive tire and service centers. Guided by its One Team, One Planet message, the company is dedicated to achieving a positive environmental impact in all of the communities it calls home.