

ON THE GLOBAL FAST TRACK WITH FREEWAY AUTO PARTS

by Erin Butler,
U.S. Commercial Service

Edward Yoon is a car guy. Even before he made cars his career, his hobby was restoring muscle cars, those oversized icons of 1970s pop culture. Ask him what he drives and he'll wax rhapsodic about GTOs and Chevelle SuperSports. For years he's helped his father manage his scrap metal business, Rice Recycling Corp.

In 1994, Yoon decided to get into the business himself and bought Freeway Auto Parts, a small distributor of used auto parts. He now has a three-acre salvage yard and warehouse facility in Santa Ana. Yoon buys banged-up used cars at auction, strips them of salable

parts and then sells the scrap metal to his father's company.

Earlier this year, Yoon started thinking about selling internationally and began to explore his possibilities. A referral led him to the Newport Beach U.S. Export Assistance Center, part of the global network of the U.S. Commercial Service, a Commerce Department agency that provides international business solutions to small and medium-sized U.S. companies. There, Yoon met international trade specialist Raul Lozano, who encouraged him to attend a seminar on the northern Mexican market.

Yoon was encouraged by what he heard. In Mexico and much of Latin

America, he explains, many people drive older American cars — often models several decades old that are rarely seen on the road in the U.S. Convinced that Mexico's border area was a promising market, Yoon immediately signed up for Gold Key Services in Tijuana and Mexicali. The Gold Key is a service in which Commercial Service experts in Mexico screened and researched potential Mexican distributors for Freeway Auto Parts, then scheduled appointments for Yoon with the top prospects. Yoon recently made an initial sale to one of the potential distributors he met in Tijuana and is looking forward to building the relationship.

Lozano continues to provide Yoon with information on the Mexican market and help with the mechanics of exporting. Yoon's biggest shock on working with Lozano and the Export Assistance Center? "It doesn't look like government!" he laughs. Like many people whose experiences with the federal government are limited to the DMV or the INS, Yoon was "really surprised" at the "helpful, entrepreneurial" nature of Lozano and his colleagues, who he describes as "dedicated, serious and sincere."

Yoon recently received his MBA from the University of Southern California and says he's "ready to go full-speed into international business." With Lozano and the Commercial Service behind him, there's no slowing down Freeway Auto Parts. ■



Photo courtesy of U.S. Commercial Service.

International Trade Specialist Raul Lozano of the Newport Beach U.S. Export Assistance Center with Edward Yoon, owner of Freeway Auto Parts, in the company's Santa Ana salvage yard.

SECRETARY EVANS LEADS FIRST BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MISSION TO RUSSIA

by Jennifer Andberg,
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In October 2001, Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans led a senior delegation of U.S. business executives and government officials to Moscow, Russia on the first Business Development Mission of the Bush Administration. The Mission proved to be a great success. At the closing news conference, Secretary Evans stated, "We came to Russia with high hopes. We have not been disappointed. Opportunities in Russia for American businesses have never been more promising."

In addition to launching discussions on potential partnerships with dozens of Russian businesses and government leaders, mission participants celebrated specific achievements, such as three company agreements to cooperate in furthering business, announcements by OPIC and Export-Import Bank on increased investment and an announcement by the Trade and Development Agency of \$2 million in grants for feasibility studies for three projects with the potential to generate \$150 million in U.S. exports to Russia.

This Mission was the direct result of the historic meeting of Presidents George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin in Ljubljana in June 2001. During this meeting, the Presidents made a

commitment to foster the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship on all fronts, and expressed a desire to increase the participation of business. As such, the United States' relationship with the Russian Federation is, and will be, an ongoing priority for this Administration. The Mission advanced the goal of making the trade and commercial relationship that the two countries are building a cornerstone of a new and stronger partnership.

When the Department of Commerce first announced the Mission, the response was immediate and broad-based, and the interest did not waver, even in light of the events of September

11th. Companies – representing various sizes and sectors – applied to participate in the Mission and join the Secretary in promoting U.S. business interests in Russia. The response was tremendous, illustrating the demand by business to explore new opportunities in Russia. After a formal review process was completed, 14 businesses were chosen to participate. The companies ranged from a small entrepreneurial company with fewer than 20 employees to corporations that are among the largest in the world.

The enthusiasm of these businesses springs from their optimism about the current improvements in Russia's



Secretary Evans Witnesses Frito-Lay Announcement

Photo courtesy of Dmitri Butrin.