Ambassador: China-U.S. relations means jobs

Clemson a site for virtual meeting where trade issues discussed

By John C. Stevenson
STAFF WRITER
jstevens@greenvillenews.com

CLEMSON — China might seem a long way from Clemson, but forging a strong trade relationship between the U.S. and China over the next 30 years will yield many benefits for all U.S. citizens, including more jobs.

That was part of the message from Jon Huntsman, U.S. ambassador to China, to people from 500 sites across the U.S. and China participating Monday night in a virtual town hall meeting.

"As the (Chinese) currency becomes more properly aligned, we will see more investment in the U.S., we will see more exports from companies in the U.S." to China, Huntsman said through a satellite link from Beijing.

"We are going to see more jobs created in the U.S., and this is critical."

"China Town Hall: Local connections, national reflections" was designed to foster a "better understanding of how we can help shape China's future development," according to the organizers.

Huntsman said that with trade between the two nations approaching $500 billion, "It's important to get this relationship right."

"The challenge is before us, and I think we're up for it."

Huntsman described the current U.S.-China relationship as one of strategic mistrust, and he said the U.S. needs to use some "old-fashioned public relations" to reach all the citizens of China.

He said U.S. students interested in forming business relationships with Chinese partners can study Mandarin Chinese, "a window into the culture."

Prior to Huntsman's comments, Tom Duncan, president and CEO of Charlotte-based Positec USA Inc., talked about his own experiences in forging business relationships with the Chinese.

Duncan founded Positec USA with a Chinese businessman, Don Gao. The company manufactures tools in China and markets them in the U.S. under the Rockwell brand.

Duncan said that although China is a much different place from his native Pumpkintown, it's "not as strange a place as it's made out to be."

"China is different, but what I've learned is with personal relationships and doing business in China, (the two countries) are more similar than different."