BUSINESS

Export sales in SC reach record high

Majority of 2013 exporters were small, medium firms, official says

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More companies in South Carolina grew their business and the economy by selling abroad last year.

According to the International Trade Administration (ITA), merchandise exports in South Carolina rose a record 4.0 percent, growing from $25.1 billion to $26.1 billion in 2013.

The state's strong performance helped the nation reach an all-time record of $2.3 trillion for exports of U.S. goods and supported nearly 10 million American jobs, said the ITA.

Phil Minard, director of the U.S. Commercial Service in Charleston, said a majority of the South Carolina exporters are small and medium-sized firms and they are "reaching new heights with their export success.

"Expanding abroad helps companies' bottom line and supports many jobs here at home," Minard said.

"By selling internationally, many of these exporters are better able to weather changes in the economy while building their global competitiveness," said Denis Csizmadia, director of the U.S. Commercial Service in Greenville.

South Carolina was among the 16 states that set new records for exports last year, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The other 15 states are Texas ($279.7 billion); California ($168.1 billion); Washington ($81.9 billion); Louisiana ($63.1 billion); Michigan ($58.5 billion); Ohio ($50.5 billion); Georgia ($37.6 billion); Tennessee ($32.4 billion); North Carolina ($29.3 billion); Kentucky ($25.3 billion); Connecticut ($16.5 billion); Mississippi ($12.4 billion); Maryland ($11.8 billion); Colorado ($8.7 billion); and Oklahoma ($6.9 billion).

Every $1 billion in exports supports nearly 5,000 jobs across the nation, said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker

"With more than 95 percent of the world's potential consumers residing outside our borders, exports will continue to be an important driver of the local and national economy," Pritzker said.

South Carolina's merchandise export sales in 2013 outpaced the 2012 figures in destinations such as Turkey (16 percent); the Dominican Republic (66 percent); Chile (53 percent); China (50 percent); and Argentina (38 percent). Key merchandise export categories include: transportation equipment; machinery manufactures; chemicals; plastics; and paper, the ITA said.