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Ed cetera: Washington needs Korea trade

Posted by Kate Riley

Washington's oldest and newest industries are heading up efforts to counter some of the presidential campaign's anti-trade rhetoric, especially when it comes to the United State's pending Korea Trade Agreement.

Microsoft and Washington Farm Bureau are co-chairing the newly formed Washington State/U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement Coalition.

While anti-trade rhetoric gets traction in America's rustbelt, it is toxic to Washington state where one in three jobs is related to trade. And Korea poses great opportunities for Washington industry, whether its software or potatoes exports.

Representing Microsoft is Dorothy Dwoskin, senior director of Global Trade Policy and Strategy, and from the farm bureau is Patrick Connor, national affairs director.

Their leadership comes none too soon as the United States' pending trade agreements have become targets in the superheated presidential election campaigns. Both Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are promising to retreat from the United States' efforts develop markets for U.S. products through trade agreements.

Kathleen Connors, president of the Washington Council on International Trade, notes that Korea was the state's 5th largest trading partner in 2007.

Trade is getting a bad rap, especially considering that international trade is one of the few bright spots in a flagging economy.