

The Jerusalem Post

S. Carolina delegation looks to expand cooperation

By NADAV SHEMER, November 17, 2011



The 28-person delegation included top officials from the government and private sectors.

South Carolina certainly isn't one of the the first locations that comes to mind when Israeli aerospace and biomedical companies think of potential business partners. But that could change after a delegation from the southern US state visited the country this week.

The 28-person delegation, which was organized by the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce Southeast Region, included top officials from the government and private sectors. South Carolina has attracted major corporations such as Boeing and BMW through various businessincentives programs, and officials hope to collaborate with Israeli companies in similar sectors.

The group was well-received in Israel, Jonathan Zucker, chairman of SC-Israel Collaboration and delegation leader, told *The Jerusalem Post* Tuesday in Tel Aviv.

"We've had interest from Israelis [wishing] to partner with us... particularly because of our research universities and our centers of economic excellence, in which we have specialists in specific fields that the Israelis can work with and through which they can access knowledge to which they don't currently have access," Zucker said. He referred specifically to the state's top three universities – Clemson University, the University of South Carolina and Medical University of South Carolina – all of which were represented in the delegation.

Zucker is president of the InterTech Group, a diversified holding company with operating companies and portfolio investments in multiple sectors, including aerospace, medical technology and real estate. His late father, Jerry, was born in Israel but grew up in South Carolina, where he founded the InterTech Group and worked to build partnerships with Israel.

“The opportunity for collaboration is tremendous,” he said. “It’s simply a matter of putting South Carolina on the Israeli map, so to speak, and of bringing certain awareness to the Israelis of what we can bring to the table and vice versa, so we boost both of our economies simultaneously.”

Zucker said he didn’t believe the increasing interest in Israel from other US states – such as Massachusetts, which opened a trade office here this year – would hinder the work of his delegation.

“We certainly pay close attention what other states are doing, but there’s room for all of us,” he said. “We’re all experts in different things. We’re not experts in the same things as you’ll find in Massachusetts... we’re bringing new industries and new research to the table.”

The delegation had a “productive meeting” with Industry, Trade and Labor [Ministry](#) Chief Scientist Avi Hasson, and a memorandum of understanding is in the works, Zucker said. The group received interest for cooperation in the fields of pharmaceuticals and emergency response, he said, and a meeting with the robotics and nanotechnologies team at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev raised “immediate interest” from his delegation.

Henry Taylor, vice president of global business development for the Charleston Regional Development Alliance and a retired US Air Force brigadier general, told the *Post* his organization is focusing on four industries: aerospace, wind energy, information technology and biomed.

Those industries are part of the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce’s focus as well, he said.

A meeting with Yavne-based aerospace company Urban Aeronautics had been very promising, Taylor said.

“They’re developing a product that I think has a very good future,” he said. “We’re anticipating a long relationship with this company, and maybe at some point in time we can get them to do business in South Carolina.”

The visit to Israel had also provided a good learning experience, Taylor said.

“We’ve had a chance to sit down with the medical leadership, particularly those parts of the medical organizations that are focused on entrepreneurship,” he said. “That’s been

very instructive. As we try to implement our strategy back in South Carolina, which includes biomed, part of that is focusing on entrepreneurship and bringing new companies to the marketplace.”

Tom Glaser, president of the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce Southeast Region, said there was a tremendous opportunity for Israel and South Carolina to cooperate in neurotechnology, a field of research that deals with understanding the brain. South Carolina has made a commitment to creating a commercialization mechanism for neurotechnology devices, he said, and there was room for collaboration with Israel Brain Technologies, a nonprofit organization launched by President Shimon Peres in June.