

# ibNEWS™

## international business news from the heartland

Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, North & South Dakota

### Event & Information Web Sites

- Nebraska events and news: [www.mitaonline.org](http://www.mitaonline.org)
- Iowa events & news: [www.iowatraders.com](http://www.iowatraders.com)
- Kansas City events & news [www.itckc.org](http://www.itckc.org)
- Minnesota events & news [www.mgta.org](http://www.mgta.org)
- South Dakota events & news [www.sd-exports.org](http://www.sd-exports.org)
- North Dakota events & news [www.exportnd.com](http://www.exportnd.com)

### Articles of Interest

1. 2006 Export Trade Index Improves
2. First National Bank Ad
3. Omaha Company Finds Success in Taiwan.
4. How to Pursue Your New Product Idea
- 5 Taiwan Battles for Recognition
6. ibFLASH



## Heartland Exports Close Out Year Higher Than 2005

The good news for Heartland exporters is that new export orders grew faster in 2006 to a monthly average 54.3, while 2005 export growth averaged 53.8.

Imports averaged 57.5 in 2006, down from 58.2 in 2005.

“As the dollar continues showing weakness against foreign currencies, exports may continue to show faster growth in 2007,” said Creighton University Economics Chair, Professor Ernie Goss, who tracks the index for *ibNEWS*. “This scenario depends greatly on the state of world economies as well. If economic strength grows globally, we can expect Heartland exports to grow.”

The year closed out with new export orders rebounding with slower growth to 51.3, up from November’s 50.0, according to the most recent survey of Heartland purchasing managers.

December imports jumped to 57.9, up significantly from November’s 50.7.

“U.S. economic strength ac-

counted for the December rise in imports,” explained Goss.

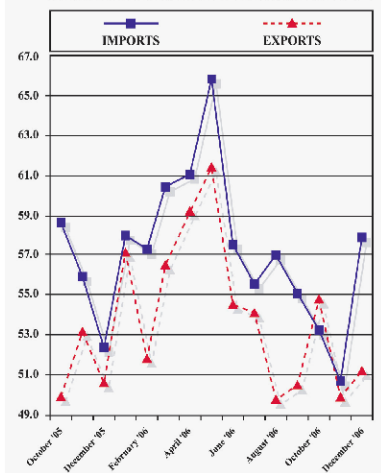
On the national level, December new export orders revealed slower growth, to 54.3, down from November’s robust 56.9. Nationally, imports slipped slightly to 55.5, down from November’s 56.5.

December’s export growth was felt primarily in apparel, leather & allied products; nonmetallic mineral products; printing; primary metals; misc. manufacturing; food, beverage & tobacco products; computer & electrical products; and transportation equipment.

The *ibINDEX* is a real-time, leading indicator of monthly changes in both new export orders and imports for the 9-state region including Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and North & South Dakota.



HEARTLAND TRADE INDEX  
PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY



**The Heartland Trade *ibINDEX*™**  
produced in cooperation with Creighton University and sponsored by First National Bank

### 2006 Exports

Jan—57.2 Jul—54.2  
Feb— 52.0 Aug—49.9  
Mar—56.6 Sep—50.6  
Apr—59.2 Oct—54.9  
May—61.5 Nov—50.0  
Jun—54.5 Dec—51.3

### 2005 Exports

Jan—58.1 Jul—56.5  
Feb—55.3 Aug—56.9  
Mar—53.0 Sep—51.3  
Apr—53.6 Oct—50.0  
May—55.6 Nov—53.3  
Jun—51.7 Dec—50.7



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## Senior Care Company Sets Franchise Roots in Taiwan

It makes sense. Countries with aging populations are seeking ways to care for their elderly people. Taiwan is a case in point with some 2.5 million of its 23 million age 65 or higher.

One Nebraska company has found a way to help, and export its service at the same time.

Home Instead Senior Care happens to be the world's largest provider of home health care services for seniors through a network of franchise operations located throughout the USA, Canada, Japan, Portugal, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, the UK...and Taiwan.

"We identified countries where the private sector profitability seemed to make sense, and high income per capita," said Yoshino Nakajima, vice president international development for Home Instead. "We also examined the public sectors where the attitude toward senior care was great, and where we saw franchising opportunity."

The U.S. Commercial Service in Omaha, headed by Meredith Bond, aided in the effort by disseminating news releases and newsletter articles worldwide. Nakajima also worked the GLOMAC committee that she served, of the International Franchise Association (IFA), to get out the word on international franchising.

According to Nakajima, a Taiwan pharmaceutical company—China

Chemical Pharmaceutical Company (CCPC) contacted Home Instead. CCPC held a press conference in Taipei, attended by Home Instead CEO Paul Hogan,



**Taiwan is a growth market for Home Instead Senior Care of Omaha, Nebraska.**

International Development Manager Rod Roberts and Nakajima. "A few of their clients also attended after doing research of their own, which helped solidify the deal," noted Nakajima.

Home Instead signed a master franchise agreement with CCPC in April, 2006, and began pilot operations in October. In a pilot operation, they must operate one pilot office, and get the experience of doing it themselves. This includes educating the community about the service. "the pilot office will also become a test office for new tools and procedures," said Nakajima.

The Taiwan master franchise requires CCPC to open a specified number of offices within 15 years.

"The Taiwan culture is similar to that of Japan in terms of elder care," noted Nakajima. "They are both good markets. Japan now has nearly 150 offices."

Home Instead operates 715 offices worldwide.

For more information, contact Yoshino Nakajima at [ynakajima@homeinstead.com](mailto:ynakajima@homeinstead.com)



**Home Instead has also been prolific in Japan with some 150 offices as the franchise finds it a strong market.**

### Lunar New Year Coming February 18th

On Chinese New Year's Eve, members of the family come together to share a delicious meal, give out "lucky money" in red envelopes to children, and stay up all night to welcome in the new year.

# Have An Idea For A New Product?

## Step 1 — Validate it

By Steve Pope—R2FACT Product Development

When someone thinks he or she has a new product idea, there are basically four possibilities to consider:

1. The product may already be on the market, somewhere now.
2. The idea, or variations, is protected by one or more approved patents.
3. A patent on the idea is pending. The application has just been filed. It just published, or is currently in the review process.
4. Someone else in this world is simultaneously developing the same idea.

With an increasingly global entrepreneurial market, one must validate the ideas as new before spending considerable resources.

Here are some quick and easy steps to follow in your validation:

**Research Idea** – Go to the top three search engines – Google, Yahoo, Teoma. Enter single key words that describe your idea.

**Analyze Market** – Go back to your search engines and enter single key words that describe the function, or appearance, of your idea.

1. If you find your idea, create a simple spreadsheet of each item and briefly compare those that are direct competitors. How many? How long on the market? Features? Costs?
2. If you do not find your idea, there may be other related products that have a similar function to your idea. For these indirect competitors, do the same as above.

**Search U.S. Patent and Trademark Office online** – Go to <http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html> and search issued patents. Click on "Quick Search" and enter key words

that describe the function and appearance of your idea. Then search Published Applications.

**Record Idea** – Go to [http://inventors.about.com/od/inventormagazines/bb/log\\_book.htm](http://inventors.about.com/od/inventormagazines/bb/log_book.htm). Buy a formal logbook for approximately \$15 – 20, and begin recording and sketching your idea.

**Disclose to USPTO** – Go back to the USPTO Web site (<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/disdo.html>). Read the instructions and mail in your idea – 2 forms, \$10 and a return addressed stamped envelope - to the Patent office. (Contact R2FACT for template forms if you have difficulty.) Remember that this is an acceptance & preservation (filing) for 2 years of "Disclosure Documents" as evidence of the date of conception of an invention. It does not protect you, and is not a grace period to file for patent.



**Evaluate the Idea** – Go to [www.innovation-institute.com](http://www.innovation-institute.com), which provides inventors/entrepreneurs and product marketing/mfg. enterprises with an objective, third-party analysis of the potential and risks of their ideas, inventions and new products. They evaluate using 45 criteria with results in 6 – 8 weeks. To do this:

1. Download: PIES Invention Evaluation Registration & Disclosure "Short" Forms.doc.
2. Mail in required form, description, sketches, etc. of the idea.

Cost is \$240 and may take an hour of time. Before you submit your idea to this institute,

check with a patent attorney for potential legal issues of publicity disclosing your idea prior to filing a patent application.

**Qualified Patent Search**—Finally, identify a qualified patent attorney, and verify that he or she is registered with the USPTO at <http://des.uspto.gov/OEDCI/>

Even if you do not intend to, or decide not to proceed with filing a patent, it is recommended to have an attorney run a full patent search to insure that your idea has not already been patented.

For more information, or assistance, contact Steve Pope at R2FACT Product Development, [steve@r2fact.com](mailto:steve@r2fact.com) Tel: 913-268-0983

## How About A New Idea For An Existing Airport?

When Kansas City's International Airport (KCI) realized it had twice the land as Chicago's O'Hare, yet only 30 % of it was developed, it turned to a 3rd party—developer Trammel Crow—to develop a Business Air Park.

The purpose? Attract businesses that are major airfreight users.

According to Gary Bartek, KCI Manager of Cargo and Economic Development, the aim is 2-fold:

1. Obtain revenue from currently idle land, and
2. Attract more air cargo operators.



## Taiwan Struggles For Recognition While Boasting Strong Trade

Commentary by Fred Baehner

Many Heartland companies already do business with Taiwan. These include large companies, such as Garmin and Home Instead Senior care (see accompanying article on Page 3)

Likewise, there are many smaller companies from this region which trade with Taiwan. *ibNEWS* has covered some of these companies in previous issues, and include Mid-America Aviation (Fargo, ND), Kid Stuff Marketing (Topeka, KS), and Greenies (Kansas City, MO) to name just a few.

Why?

The primary reason is that the USA has long had strong business ties with Taiwan. In 2006, bilateral trade with Taiwan grew 10 percent to \$55 billion — a blend of exports and imports.

Taiwan's foreign reserves are third largest in the world, and Taiwan is a major investor in countries throughout SE Asia. The USA was Taiwan's largest export market, until China replaced us.

Despite unofficial diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the USA operates a very healthy defacto embassy—the American Institute—in Taipei to promote on-going trade.

Taiwan reciprocates with its Taipei Economic & Cultural Office. The Kansas City TECO covers six states here in the Heartland.



Still, Taiwan hangs in the balance of threats from China, which considers Taiwan a runaway province.

China continues to block Taiwan from membership in the UN, WHO, and other world organizations.

Its only significant breakthrough came in 2002, when it was accepted into the WTO.

From a practical standpoint, the best way for Taiwan to attain international recognition— and eventually USA recognition and UN ad-

continued and increased emphasis on tourism and trade.

We know about trade, but why tourism?

Tourism strikes an emotional chord, which tends to produce deep feelings among visiting people resulting in lasting friendships and affection for the people.

Next year is an opportunity to get people from many countries to “stop by” Taiwan on their way to the summer Olympics in Beijing.

Many people who attend the summer games will be business and corporate leaders—the very folks who can do so much to increase trade with Taiwan as well. Business leaders exert a great deal of influence with political leaders—especially here in the USA.

Whatever Taiwan's eventual goal is, they deserve to be treated better by our community of nations.

Come on now—even the Vatican is a member of the WHO.

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## ibNEWS

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*Each month, we'll bring you the latest trend in new export orders and imports for the Heartland. Our exclusive index is the only real-time, leading economic indicator of changes in exports and imports.*

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## ibFLASH

The disruptive winter of '06/'07—we think it has been tough here in the Heartland. (which it has)

End of January snow and ice have made traveling in southeast England nearly impossible.

Nasty storms battered Germany in late January as well, as winds and heavy rains swept across the country causing disruptions in air and surface transportation.

While in the tropics, severe rains in Indonesia caused massive flooding, gridlocking traffic and causing delivery service delays.