



## O'Malley to lead trade mission to Asia

### ***10-day trip to include visits to China, South Korea and Vietnam***

By Andrea K. Walker, The Baltimore Sun

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[Marlin Steel Wire Products](#) founder [Drew Greenblatt](#) hopes the trip will help him expand his business to South Korea. The Baltimore manufacturer already sells [wire baskets](#) to Japanese companies such as Honda and Toyota. He has had difficulty making inroads in South Korea.

"This is one of these things where face-to-face is the best way to open up opportunities that will hopefully push us over the edge," Greenblatt said. "The nice thing about it is that because the governor is there doors will be opened that wouldn't be opened to small manufacturer in Baltimore City otherwise."

Wallace Loh, president of the University of Maryland, College Park, hopes the trip will help with his vision of turning the institution into a "university without borders."

"It is the research, the education and the training of the next generation that will drive the knowledge-based economy of the future," Loh said. "The two are very well linked."

Maryland is home to more than 300 foreign-owned companies from 30 countries. About 105,000 Marylanders, or 3.5 percent of the labor force, work for foreign-owned firms.

As governor, O'Malley has led trips to Israel, Ireland and Sweden.

Maryland officials have worked to deepen ties with Asia. They say the state was one of the first to open a trade and investment office in China; Maryland also has offices in South Korea, Vietnam, India and Taiwan.

The University of Maryland recently started an incubator designed to help Asian businesses make the transition to doing business in the United States.

The Department of Business and Economic Development's Office of International Trade and Investment made contact last year with more than 250 Asian companies. Officials say the talks resulted in six firms establishing offices in the state.

At the same time, they say, the office helped 75 Maryland companies export to Asia, helping to generate \$65 million in sales.

"Because we have had such long relationship there, we think its good idea to cultivate it," said Maryland Secretary of State John McDonough, who will go along on the trip.

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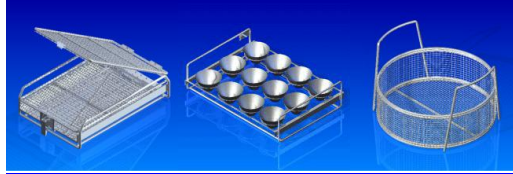
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