



Jeanne-Marie (Ree) Russell, Senior International Trade Specialist
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("EAC")

Effective 2018, Ree is one of a dozen national Senior International Trade Specialists across the nation who was offered a rare "buyout" – a process targeted to long-time, highly trained, experienced, knowledgeable (and some consider wiser) employees of the Global Agency. On January 3, 2018, the U.S. Department of Commerce Deputy Director General (DDG) and Acting International Trade Administration Secretary (AS) Sarah Kemp at the U.S. Department of Commerce HQ in Washington, DC, sent a personal farewell email to her, commenting about her career and especially her philosophy about the importance of exporting, that said, "Ree, you ROCK!" Although currently no longer a Federal Government Official, her passion remains with growing the U.S. Energy and Environmental sectors, but she loved being part of a global network. Her colleagues were Diplomats at U.S. Embassies and Consulates around the world. Together, they generated profits, revenue, and added jobs for U.S. firms.

In Charlotte, NC, Ree Russell was Senior International Trade Specialist & Certified Global Business Professional for the Federal Government's "export assistance center" for North Carolina firms. A veteran of the U.S. Department of Commerce, she assumed the challenging position of developing more exports for the Energy sector in 2005. She was asked by her then-Manufacturing and Services (MAS), now Industry and Analysis, colleagues at Commerce HQ to cover the civil nuclear sector.

She quickly became a Global Energy Team Sub-Sector Lead, as the Energy sector in the Carolinas blossomed, effective early 2012, heading the civil nuclear sector for that team. She was lead for securing a pivotal Written Impact Narrative (aka Export Success Story) in 2017 for a civil nuclear firm in California that was contracted to maintain civil nuclear plants in China.

Ree also covered client needs in the Environmental Technologies; Architecture, Construction, Engineering (aka ACE)/Design-Build; and Infrastructure sectors. Effective 2014, Ree was acknowledged (in print) for producing the 2013-2014 Environmental Technologies Resource Guide, a public reference for U.S. exporters. Indeed, she invited and received her U.S. Embassy colleagues from the U.S. Embassy in Paris (and also Brussels) in March 2015, to promote the pivotal climate change summit near Paris in late November - early December 2015. Ree also earned her Certification in International Trade Law during 2017. Clients sought her expertise in international Agent/Distributor legal contracts.

She helped North Carolina business executives win international business projects in keeping with the Department's objective of increasing the export of U.S. goods and services, under the National Export Initiative. Ree was a frequent speaker and panelist, helping to stage and promote numerous area international business summits, conferences, seminars, and export workshops in North Carolina. She nominated two separate client firms in 2017, and one in 2016, for the local Charlotte Business Journal International Trade Award annual ceremonies held at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Charlotte. All three firms won, respectively, satisfying the award's rigorous criteria.

Her U.S. Commercial Service global team memberships included Energy (all forms, from civil nuclear to alternative, sustainable, renewable to emerging “green” biofuels), Environment, and ACE/Design-Build sectors. She was a member of the Charlotte World Trade Association, the World Affairs Council of Charlotte, the Carolinas Asian American Chamber of Commerce, and the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association. She was an honorary member of E4 Carolinas, a local Energy sector trade association.

Ree’s personal awards include the first and only “Ambassador of Memphis” award, as selected by the three international business clubs of Memphis. These were the Memphis World Trade Club, World Affairs Council of Memphis, and the Mid-South Exporters Roundtable. She was also awarded the Keys to the City of Memphis/County of Shelby. In January 2005, Ree was nominated as the Minority Business Advocate of the Year by the Tennessee Small Business Development Center regional director, due her Passport to Export training to small and diverse exporting companies located in the Mid-South region. That same year, Ree was selected by the Traffic Club of Memphis for the prestigious National Transportation Executive of the Year Award, due her export assistance to logistics providers and their clients in several states. Ree was co- National Team Leader for the U.S. Commercial Service Asia/Pacific Team during its millennium year, having served as its Regional Team Leader several years earlier when the A/P Team was created by the U.S. Commercial Service HQ.

Prior to her Memphis “EAC” assignment, when posted to Louisville, KY, to help U.S. manufacturers in Kentucky, Ree founded two international business clubs in Kentucky, the Northern Kentucky International Trade Association and the Bluegrass International Trade Association. Her first Federal assignment was to introduce the subject of exporting to Mississippi industries, as the office’s first International Trade Specialist since the Jackson, Mississippi site became a full-service federal export office. She was sworn into her Federal career on January 20, 1981, during a special tandem ceremony for President Ronald Reagan’s first term! Her favorite posting was the one-person Commerce Director in Memphis, TN charged with increasing West Tennessee exports, from 1997 to 2005 until her deployment to Charlotte, NC (which she found an extremely patriarchal and militaristic environment.) Her freedom of creativity in Memphis produced a surge in Tennessee export statistics!

Before joining the U.S. Department Commerce, Ree was responsible for the export of a broad line of industrial biochemical and value-added food products sold to over 63 countries. During her tenure, the firm, Humko Sheffield Chemical, based in Memphis, TN won the prestigious E-Star Award for Excellence in Exporting, primarily due to Ree’s expertise in exporting the firm’s products, manufactured in its disparate Norwich, NY and Memphis, TN plants, to overseas buyers. The Sheffield portion used the by-products of Kraft, Inc’s. cheese production to make medicine. Ree’s export sales accounted for 20% of total company profits!

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