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**SECRETARY MERRILL, CONGRESSMAN
COURTNEY PARTNER WITH U.S.
COMMERCE DEPARTMENT TO HELP
CONNECTICUT SMALL BUSINESSES**

SECRETARY OF THE STATE WORKING WITH US EXPORT ASSISTANCE CENTER
IN MIDDLETOWN TO OFFER LOW-COST WEBINARS ON DEVELOPING
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, EXPORTS

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today joined U.S. Representative Joe Courtney (CT-2) and the U.S. Commerce Department Export Assistance Center in Middletown to launch a series of monthly webinars in 2012 that will help Connecticut small businesses break into international export markets, expand profits, and ultimately create more jobs. The webinars are sponsored by the U.S. Commerce Department Export Assistance Center in Middletown and will cover topics including: *Export Letters of Credit, Export Documentation, Global Defense Market Opportunities, Export Compliance, Export Opportunities for Farm and Agricultural Products, International Standards and Certifications, and Globalize your Company Website*. Webinars will provide to Connecticut businesses vital information and training without leaving their office. Each webinar is 60-90 minutes with opportunities for interactive questions and answers with the participants, and experts in each field who will lead the discussions. The webinars will be prepared and broadcasted by the Middletown, CT US Export Assistance Center. Registration for the webinars will be on the Center's website www.export.gov/connecticut and additional webinar topics will be announced in the spring.

“This is an exciting and important partnership between the state and federal government to help small businesses in Connecticut,” said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut’s Chief Business Registrar. “Even in a tough economy, export-driven business profits earned by Connecticut companies continue to shatter records. Connecticut companies exported

more than \$16 Billion in goods and services in 2010, and we want to encourage the growth of this market as much as possible. More exports overseas means more profits for our entrepreneurs and more jobs created at home. It's that simple."

"The manufacturing sector today is one of the brightest spots in our recovering economy," said Congressman Joe Courtney. "Building on two consecutive years of job growth within the sector requires opening new markets – something I have worked hard to do during international trade missions to Israel, Brussels and the UK. Like those trade missions, today's webinars are designed to give Connecticut companies the know-how and access they need to move products out the door and build jobs here at home."

Secretary Merrill has committed to using the resources of her office to assist the Commerce Department's outreach to Connecticut businesses by directly contacting more than 100,000 businesses registered with the Secretary of the State's office to inform them of the opportunities available through the webinars. Information about the exporting opportunities will also be posted on the Secretary of the State's CONCORD business registry website online at www.sots.ct.gov

The schedule of the export webinars is as follows:

Export Letters of Credit (January 25, 2012): To avoid the risk of nonpayment by overseas customers many sales are guaranteed by Letters of Credit. Smaller companies often struggle with the terms and terminology of these documents and how best to negotiate the payment instrument. This webinar will cover payment risk and Letter of Credit basics.

Export Documentation (February 16, 2012): Every export transaction requires documentation for both US Customs and the customs authority of the importing country. This webinar covers the basics of documentation and international Commercial Invoices.

Global Defense market Opportunities (Date TBD): Connecticut's defense industry is vital to our State's economy. With the US shrinking Defense budget, CT's defense industries must seek new markets. This webinar will be an overview of defense industry markets worldwide and how best for Connecticut companies to enter those markets.

Basics of Export Compliance (Date TBD): Exporting aerospace and defense equipment and components often requires licenses and other export compliance paperwork. This webinar covers the basics of compliance and export licenses along with the recent changes in the regulations.

Export Opportunities for Farm and Agricultural Products (Date TBD): This webinar will give Connecticut's small farmers and specialty Agricultural exporters the opportunity to hear what assistance is available to them from the CT Dept of Ag, the US Dept of Commerce Export Assistance Center and the CT District Export Council through a recently awarded USDA Grant.

International Standards and Certifications (Date TBD): Many countries and regions require unique certifications and standards testing for products. This webinar will address European Union, Brazilian, Chinese and Middle Eastern requirements for product importation.

Globalize your Company Website (Date TBD): Company websites are the store front for sales and information on company products. Many smaller companies are missing international opportunities because their website is not "Global Friendly". This webinar will focus on international product descriptions, search engines, translations and the cultural aspects of international websites.