

# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO THE HEARTLAND

*A Project Report by the U.S. Heartland China Association*



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Not all bridges are built of concrete and steel.

Equally important bridges are built on friendship,  
cultural communion and commercial cooperation.

Where these bridges exist, communities flourish.



## INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2021, the U.S. Heartland China Association (USHCA) launched the “Why China Matters to the Heartland” project in response to the growing interest of Heartland community leaders who would like to better examine the U.S.-China relationship at the local level. Combining data from public sources with insights gained from outreach interviews, the “Why China Matters to the Heartland” report attempts to provide an easy-to-access snapshot for each of the 21 states we serve.

Even as the U.S. and China shift toward strategic competition, USHCA believes that the interests of the American people are best served by thoughtful exploration of opportunities with the Chinese people, rather than a wholesale dismissal of ties. And so, we remain committed to promoting a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between the American Heartland region and China through exchanges in culture, education, and business. This project is an effort with that goal in mind.

“Why China Matters to the Heartland” is a resource for business leaders, state and local



**Hon. BOB HOLDEN**  
 Chairman & President  
 U.S. Heartland China Association  
 Former Governor of Missouri

politicians, higher education professionals, and anyone else who wants to understand key data of the Heartland’s cultural, educational, and business ties to China. It also includes perspectives from Heartland community leaders that highlight the benefits their communities have reaped through exchange and interaction with China.

For example, did you know Illinois was the first state to open a trade office in China in 1974, before the normalization of U.S.-China relations? Or that 52% of all U.S. soybeans—a crop originally from China that is widely cultivated across the Heartland region today—is exported to China, our No.1 agricultural export destination? You might be surprised to learn that 6 of the top 25 American universities with a high number of international students, many of them Chinese, are in the Heartland states. Or that St. Louis and Nanjing became the first pair of sister cities between the two countries in 1979.

Few grasp the longevity and multi-faceted nature of the U.S.-China relationship across culture, education, and business. “Why China Matters to the Heartland” helps put things in perspective.



**MIN FAN**  
 Executive Director  
 U.S. Heartland China Association



## OVERVIEW

The year 2023 was truly a rollercoaster for U.S.-China relations. It began with the now-infamous Chinese “spy balloon” floating across the United States, followed by a series of high-level visits between top government officials from both nations that helped steer the relationship away from the precipice, and culminated in the meeting of President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping in San Francisco on November 15, 2023.

For the Heartland states overall, 2023 proved to be a year of renewed cultural ties, stabilized educational exchanges, and robust trade volume even though “tough on China” rhetoric is growing among politicians in pockets of the Heartland in the lead-up to the election year ahead.

### **Renewed Cultural Ties**

The resumption of normal travel between the U.S. and China in 2023 has enabled a steady return of people-to-people exchanges, fostering a more direct and nuanced understanding between the peoples of the Heartland and China, which is much needed.

Many delegations from Chinese cities and provinces came to the Heartland region this year, aimed at exploring trade opportunities and areas of potential collaboration. A delegation from

Hubei was the first Chinese provincial delegation to head overseas when China opened up and they chose to visit USHCA in Missouri on their first stop after traveling for almost 30 hours.

Three Chinese provincial agricultural delegations also traveled to St. Louis early April to attend the 2023 (3rd annual) U.S.-China Agriculture Roundtable, the largest of such delegations since the pandemic.

Heartland community members, business leaders, educational institution representatives, and government officials have also been visiting China this past year. Oklahoma’s cultural ambassador Kyle Dillingham traveled to China to visit Gansu, Oklahoma’s sister province, and performed with Chinese musicians in multiple cities. Two Republican senators from Louisiana joined the bipartisan delegation to China led by Senator Chuck Schumer. USHCA also organized a historic Heartland Mayors Delegation to China that included 6 mayors from 5 different Heartland States.

These exchanges not only provided an opportunity for Heartland community members to advocate for the interests of our region but also allowed for a firsthand understanding of China’s current cultural, socio-economic, and political landscape. We at USHCA believe that people-

to-people exchanges like these represent a beacon of hope and have the potential to shape the future trajectory of this complex and critical bilateral relationship.

### **Stabilized Education Exchanges**

In the 2022/2023 school year, of the total 289,526 Chinese students studying in the U.S., which is 27% of all international students studying in the U.S. during this time, an estimated 75,000 students are in the Heartland region. This number, though only about 80% of the peak enrollment level from 2017-2018, marked a reasonable recovery after a worrying drop during the pandemic.

The post-pandemic rebound of Chinese student enrollment was a relief for many Heartland universities and communities as these students are a critical part of the talent pipeline to enable U.S. innovations, driving America's global competitiveness. Moreover, they contribute substantially to local economies through tuition and daily expenditures as well as the cultural diversity on campuses and in surrounding communities.

Even though Heartland universities remain eager to welcome Chinese students to their campuses while exploring opportunities for reciprocal

student exchanges, China is no longer a top recruiting destination in many universities. India has overtaken China as the leading source of international students in many states. Chinese students are also increasingly turning to other countries to further their education as issues of gun violence and xenophobia against Chinese, as well as the high relative cost of U.S. universities, have dimmed the attractiveness of studying in the United States.

With the resumption of travel, many leaders from Heartland universities have traveled to China to renew and strengthen lapsed partnerships. So have their Chinese peers. Their shared commitment to global education and cross-cultural understanding have resulted in the launch of numerous new programs in 2023, such as the dual degree program between the University of Kansas and Zhejiang Normal University.

### **Robust Trade Volume**

China remains an important country for many of the Fortune 500 companies headquartered in the Heartland States. Business risk has increased significantly for American companies in China and some have chosen to downsize or exit. But, for many major global players, abandoning China's huge market and decoupling from its dynamic business environment is a costly option that

they are not willing to take. According to the American Chamber of Commerce-China's 2023 Business Climate Survey, respondents identified "rising tensions in U.S.-China relations" as the top challenge for businesses. However, "over 96% recognized the importance of a positive relationship for growth, especially in Technology and Services sectors."

Goods and services export from the Heartland region to China remained strong and experienced an overall growth in 2023 up by an average of 10.24% (goods) and 1.9% (services) YOY respectively. Of the 21 Heartland states, 19 saw their goods export to China grow in 2022. Oklahoma witnessed the greatest increase percentage-wise with 48% growth in its goods exporting to China.

The Heartland region exported \$79 billion in goods to China, accounting for 52% of the United States' total goods exports, and \$12 billion in service exports accounting for 30% of the U.S. total. An estimated 523,540 jobs in the Heartland region were supported by trade with China in 2021, out of the total 1,060,000 U.S. jobs supported.

The expansion of trade however is merely one side of the business relationship. There has been a significant slowdown in Chinese foreign direct investment into the U.S. since 2017. Investment projects by Chinese companies currently proposed or underway in the Heartland region have faced significant hurdles, both at the federal and state level. Some projects, despite support from the local government, succumbed to protests from local community members.

The juxtaposition of robust trade and export activities with a deep-seated distrust of engaging in business exchanges with China in general is a central theme we see across the Heartland. While economic opportunities abound, there exists a palpable apprehension rooted in ideological differences, intellectual property issues, and fear of espionage. This tension forms the backdrop against which the Heartland-China relationship unfolds, shaping the decisions and strategies of businesses and policymakers alike.

### **Political Impact**

While data in this report indicates that cultural, educational, and trade ties remain resilient overall between the Heartland states and China, there is growing concern that the hyper-charged political

rhetoric in an election year will have an adverse impact on all three areas. This report touches on the largely negative political perception of China in the Heartland region. This includes instances of notable “tough on China” moments, as well as exploring the wave of legislation emanating from state governments targeting foreign land ownership and, more pointedly, China.

Foreign land ownership has become a heated issue in the Heartland region\*. Public scrutiny and media attention over foreign land ownership has prompted a surge in legislative measures banning or restricting foreign ownership, often fueled by national security concerns towards “adversary” nations such as Russia, Iran, and China. Notably, however, according to data from the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA), such “adversary” nations account for less than 1% of all foreign held farmland. The exact implications of this legislative trend are unclear, though it has significantly increased the business risk calculation for Chinese investors and entrepreneurs looking to invest in the Heartland states. Of immediate concern to many Chinese Americans is the possibility for discriminatory abuse of such laws and the return of a “Chinese exclusion” sentiment even as national leaders, including President Biden, observed the 80th Anniversary of the Repeal of the Chinese

Exclusion Act in 2023. This tension and gap that exist between federal and state approaches will likely increase as the presidential election heats up in 2024.

The House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party also released a report in late 2023 detailing recommendations for the U.S. to decouple from China titled “Reset, Prevent, Build: A Strategy to Win America’s Economic Competition with the Chinese Communist Party.” The view of the future trajectory of the U.S.-China relations reflected in this report is in stark contrast to those held by less hawkish members of the Heartland community. It is nevertheless a cautionary reminder of where the U.S.-China economic relationship might be headed in the future.

Through our outreach interviews, we are already seeing that this general negativity towards “all things China” has spilled over to other areas. Chinese entrepreneurs and investors are avoiding some Heartland states altogether. The number of Chinese students coming to some Heartland states has dropped much more vs. their peers in other states. Chinese language teachers in the Heartland states are seeing a decreased interest among youth to learn about China or the Chinese language. Chinese researchers and scholars at higher education institutions across the country are less enthusiastic

*\*See data sources (pg.9).*

in engaging in cutting edge research, still reeling from the lingering effect of the now-ended China Initiative of the Justice Department.

### **Path Forward Between Pollyanna and Paranoia**

In this increasingly complex environment, Heartland state and local leaders are confronted with the direct and indirect impacts of the U.S.-China tension at the local level. Whether it's the decision to welcome or decline Chinese innovation and investment to accelerate green economic development opportunities, or to stand firmly behind world language learning in our schools when some community members are pushing to defund Chinese language teaching, our local community leaders are buffeted by strong currents from all sides, often without a nuanced understanding of why and how China matters to our Heartland community.

What we have observed is a divergence of approaches among the Heartland states into three camps. First, states that have a long history of working with China and a better understanding of the complex U.S.-China relationship are able to navigate the politically charged environment to advance the interests of their states, yielding growing exports, higher number of Chinese

students on campus, and success in attracting talents and investments. Second, on the opposite end of the spectrum are those states that lack the expertise and knowledge to engage with China today. They tend to run away from anything related to China, to the detriment of the local economy in some instances. Third, in between these two camps are the states that are quietly protecting their interests relating to China while staying out of political storms.

While data may shift year over year alongside bilateral tensions, the importance of the U.S.-China relationship remains constant. Fundamentally, we believe that successful communities in this connected world are those that are globally minded, globally connected, with leaders that are informed and educated about China, the second largest economy of the world.

It is for those who are committed to advancing the interest of their local community through continued learning that we provide this report as food for thought. We encourage readers to review this report, and consider both the benefits as well as the realities of engagement with China so that we are able to find a path forward between pollyanna and paranoia.



## A NOTE ON DATA INCLUDED

This report is based largely on publicly available data from 2021 to 2023 that was compiled in Summer 2023. As such, we expect some numbers to shift in future reports. Information with multi-year data points is based on the availability of information and is compiled from multiple data sources.

Our interns and staff strive to capture the most accurate data available. In the case you do see an error please let us know by email at [contact@usheartlanchina.org](mailto:contact@usheartlanchina.org).

### DATA SOURCES:

For the states' trade statistics: USCBC Export Report 2023.

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For information relating to Chinese companies operating in-state: Rhodium Group and National Committee on U.S. China Relations' "New Neighbors: 2018 Update".

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For information relating to Chinese international students: Open Doors' 2023 Annual Data.

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For the population of Chinese Americans in-state: APIAVote's "2022 AAPI Voter Demographics by State"

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For FDI: Rhodium Group's US-China Investment Hub.

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For sister city relationship information: Asia Matters for America by the East-West Center.

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For foreign land ownership legislation: Mykel R. Taylor, Wendong Zhang, and Festus Attah. 2023. "Foreign Interests in U.S. Agricultural Lands: The Missing Conversations about Leasing."

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### A NOTE ON RECENT FOREIGN LAND OWNERSHIP LEGISLATION

As of December 2023, foreign ownership of U.S. land is currently restricted in 17 Heartland states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

In 2021 and 2022, twelve states proposed legislation restricting or prohibiting foreign ownership of agricultural land (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas). However, of those states, only Indiana passed legislation restricting certain foreign ownership or long-term lease of agricultural land in 2022. Of the Heartland states, 6 enacted foreign ownership laws during the 2023 legislative session, according to the National Agricultural Law Center. Those states include Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee. Several other states proposed legislation, but those bills did not gain traction.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made possible thanks to our partners from across the American Heartland.

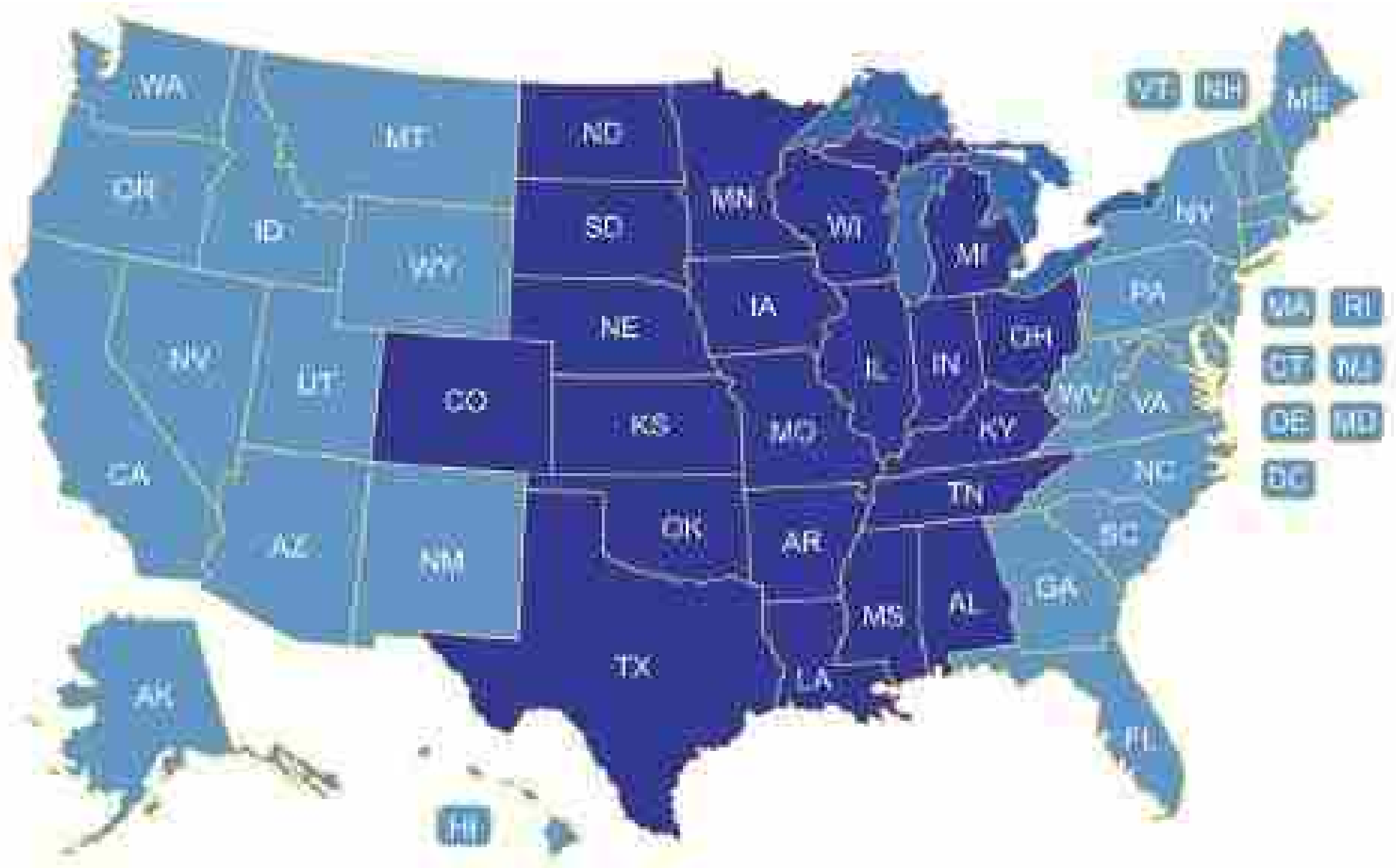
We also want to thank the Ford Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, and Carnegie Corporation of New York for their general support of our organization that made this project possible. Special thanks also go to the China-United States Exchange Foundation and the Carter Center for making this report available in print and online.

Much appreciation also goes to our 2023 team of summer research interns: Kazi Raleh, Amy Liu, and Catherine Chin, and our 2023 administrative intern Dora Meng, led by USHCA Program Associate Ellen Wright.

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HEARTLAND REGION SERVED BY USHCA

# Why China Matters to the Heartland

## REGION

<p><b>HIGHEST AVERAGE RANKING</b>  <small>2019-2022</small></p> <p><b>#3</b></p>	<p><b>REGIONAL AVERAGE:</b>  <small>2019-2022</small></p> <p><b>\$2.3 Billion</b></p>
<p><b>HIGHEST YEAR ON RECORD</b>  <small>2019-2022</small></p> <p><b>2022</b></p>	<p><b>AVERAGE IN STATE:</b>  <small>2019-2022</small></p> <p><b>11% 6%</b></p>
<p><b>TOTAL HEARTLAND CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p><b>89</b></p>	<p><b>TOTAL BEST-IN-STATE PROVIDERS CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p><b>19</b></p>



**GOODS EXPORTS**  
**\$79.6 BILLION**

1	General Motors	10%
2	Bojiac	4.7%
3	Bojiac	4.7%

**SERVICE EXPORTS**  
**\$12.2 BILLION**

1	Bojiac	4.7%
2	Bojiac	4.7%
3	Bojiac	4.7%

**JOB OPENINGS**  
**1,543**

Bojiac	4.7%
Bojiac	4.7%
Bojiac	4.7%

**Education**

**74,993 \$3.2 MILLION**

**874,792 \$54 MILLION**





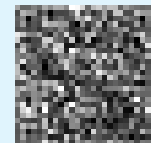
## Quick Glance of YOY Trends: Trade and Chinese Students

State	China's Ranking in State Goods Export Markets		Goods Exports to China 2022 (billions)	YOY Change	% State Global Goods Exports 2022	Service Exports to China 2021 (billions)	YOY Change	% State Global Services Exports 2021	Jobs Supported by Exports to China 2021	Estimated Chinese International Students 2023	YOY Change
	2021	2022									
Alabama	3	3	\$3.20	3.00%	12%	\$0.29	0.00%	7%	14,120	1,723	-16%
Arkansas	3	3	\$1.10	28%	15%	\$0.10	6.00%	7%	8,350	289	5%
Colorado	3	3	\$1.10	-1%	10%	\$0.59	6%	4%	11,420	1,269	-27%
Illinois	3	3	\$6.60	9.00%	8%	\$2.20	13.00%	6%	68,820	14,940	6%
Indiana	3	3	\$5.20	13.00%	11%	\$0.65	1.00%	8%	31,790	5,454	-4%
Iowa	2	2	\$4.00	15.00%	17%	\$0.26	-3.00%	6%	32,830	1,849	-16%
Kansas	2	2	\$2.60	1.00%	15%	\$0.20	1.00%	5%	24,430	804	-24%
Kentucky	3	4	\$3.00	9.00%	9%	\$0.22	-8.00%	7%	15,620	1,142	54%
Louisiana	3	8	\$4.50	8.00%	5%	\$0.46	-4.00%	6%	17,810	1,205	-0.03%
Michigan	3	3	\$3.10	-2.00%	5%	\$0.80	3.00%	6%	24,550	8,677	3%
Minnesota	2	2	\$4.40	8.00%	14%	\$0.67	6.00%	5%	31,880	3,064	-6%
Mississippi	3	4	\$1.20	9.00%	7%	\$0.09	3.00%	8%	8,910	159	-35%
Missouri	3	3	\$2.00	11.00%	11%	\$0.58	7.00%	6%	19,080	6,501	9%
Nebraska	1	1	\$2.60	10.00%	20%	\$0.13	-3.00%	6%	22,020	626	-15%
North Dakota	2	2	\$1.10	8.00%	14%	\$0.06	-9.00%	6%	10,670	0	
Ohio	3	3	\$4.00	2.00%	7%	\$1.10	6.00%	6%	32,750	9,371	-12%
Oklahoma	4	4	\$0.58	48.00%	8%	\$0.16	-2.00%	7%	4,270	742	-10%
South Dakota	1	1	\$1.40	14.00%	28%	\$0.09	-1.00%	5%	11,890	0	
Tennessee	3	3	\$3.60	12.00%	9%	\$0.41	8.00%	5%	19,480	2,227	27%
Texas	3	3	\$22.00	3.00%	6%	\$2.90	3.00%	5%	106,580	9,852	-11%
Wisconsin	3	3	\$2.30	7.00%	6%	\$0.40	8.00%	6%	15,960	5,105	10%
<b>Average/ Totals</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$79.58</b>	<b>10.24%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>\$12.21</b>	<b>1.90%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>523,540</b>	<b>74,993</b>	<b>-2.80%</b>

“Comprehensive data on services exports lag a year behind that of goods, making 2021 the latest year of data available.” - USCBC’s report *US Exports to China 2023*

# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO ALABAMA

Alabama has enjoyed a steady trade relationship with China since 1979 and was the first southern state to establish a sister state/province relationship with China in 1985. In 2022, Alabama's goods exports to China grew by 3%, reaching \$3.2 billion, which is consistent with its annual average around \$3 billion in goods export to China the past decade. Unlike many other Heartland states whose top export to China is agricultural goods, Alabama's top export category to China is motor vehicles. In fact, Alabama led the Heartland states in the number of cars shipped to China thanks to the strong manufacturing presence of global automakers such as Mercedes-Benz, Honda, Hyundai, and Toyota. Alabama has had some success attracting Chinese investments. The largest of them is the \$100 million factory investment by Golden Dragon Copper in Wilcox County in 2014. Despite a strong history of education exchanges between Alabama's universities and their counterparts in China, such as the "Auburn Garden" jointly built by Hubei Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Auburn University in 1988, the pandemic and recent U.S.-China tensions have significantly impacted educational exchanges, as evidenced by declining Chinese student enrollment and student visa issuance. Like many other Heartland states, more politicians in Alabama have adopted a "tough on China" stance than in the past. Governor Ivey signed a House Bill prohibiting foreign entities, including China, from acquiring agricultural property. Additionally, following a national trend, Alabama wireless carriers have been directed to replace Chinese telecom equipment with American alternatives.



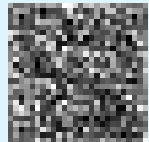
SCAN TO LEARN MORE



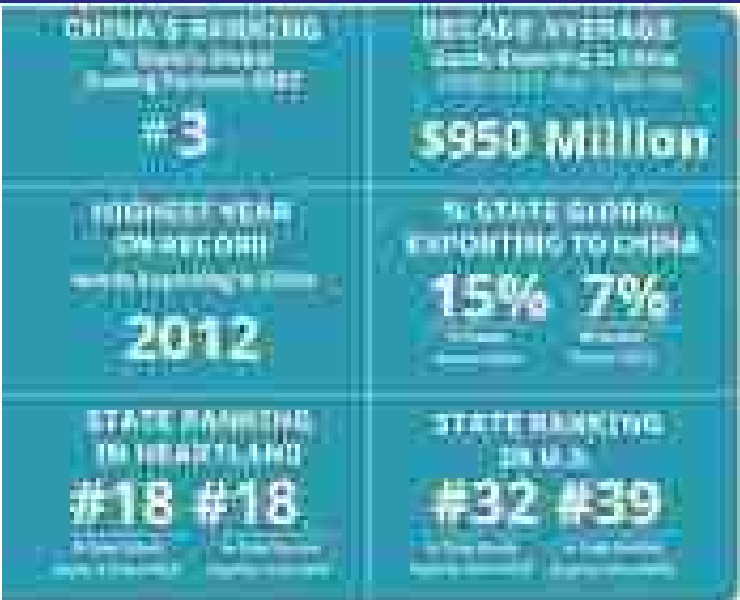


# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO ARKANSAS

In 2022, Arkansas achieved a 28% growth in goods exporting to China for a total value of \$1.1 billion, showcasing a strong comeback after the state experienced an unusual decade-long slump in trade. This marked the second most substantial increase among Heartland states. Yet worsening U.S.-China relations and recent global trade complications have impacted once promising opportunities leading to the cancellation or delay of a combined total of \$1.4 billion proposed investment by four Chinese companies. Arkansas however remains an attractive destination for foreign investment as the region is a major supply chain hub, with proximity to the offices of over three hundred Fortune 500 companies. Arkansas' top employers, such as Walmart and Tyson, count China as major growth markets for their global businesses. The University of Arkansas offers a unique dual degree program in business administration with Soochow University in China. The state also has a rich Chinese American history, especially in the Delta region, which saw the state's first Chinese restaurant open its doors in 1895. Little Rock welcomed back the annual Lanterns Festival which featured Chinese lanterns sponsored by the Arkansas Chinese-American Association (ACAA). State leaders of Arkansas have adopted a "tough on China" stance despite past efforts of the state to grow trade and business ties with China. In 2023 the state legislature passed a bill restricting property ownership by Chinese entities. Arkansas has ordered Northrup, a subsidiary of Syngenta Seeds, which is owned by the Chinese state-owned company China National Chemical Company to divest its agricultural land, the first Heartland state to take such action.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

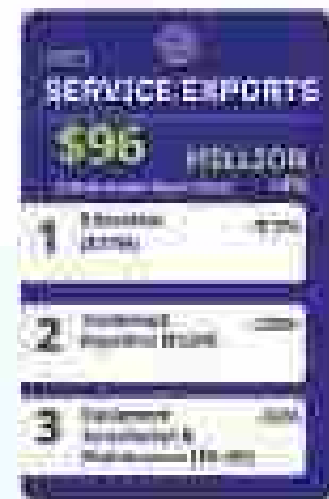


**SISTER CITIES**  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
Suzhou, China

**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
Arkansas  
Soochow University



**Education**



**289**

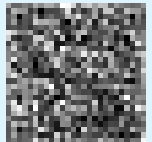


**\$37 MILLION**

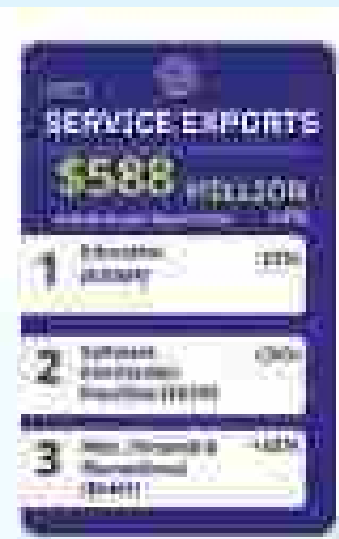


# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO COLORADO

In 2022, Colorado maintained a robust trend in goods exports to China, holding steady at \$1.1 billion, surpassing the 2008-2017 pre-trade war average of \$637 million. Notably, meat product shipments to China soared to \$412 million, a substantial increase from \$104 million in 2020, reflecting China's growing demand for high-quality American beef. Colorado's strength in renewable energy, clean-tech, and tourism further positions it well for service export expansion with China. Yet as with many Heartland states, such promising opportunities may be hampered by broader geopolitical tensions. Colorado's solar industry, for example, was heavily impacted by a 2022 federal investigation into potential Chinese avoidance of tariffs. Chinese Americans, although small in numbers, have had a long history in Colorado. Denver's Historic Chinatown was once one of the largest and most prosperous Chinatowns in the Heartland before it was destroyed during anti-Chinese sentiment in 1880. Thanks to John Yee, a Flying Tigers veteran who had emigrated to Colorado, Denver and Kunming became sister cities in 1986 and celebrated their 35th year of friendship via a virtual celebration in 2021. The University of Colorado, Boulder, initiated the Teaching East Asia program, training K-12 teachers to educate younger generations on Chinese culture, history, and language.



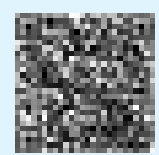
SCAN TO LEARN MORE





# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO ILLINOIS

Illinois was the first state in the U.S. to open a trade office in China in 1974 and has maintained a dedicated team in the country. This consistent investment in the relationship has contributed to Illinois' robust exporting to China, which ranked second in the Heartland region in 2022, achieving its highest-ever total goods export value of \$6.6 billion. Among the Heartland states, Illinois shipped the highest value of oilseeds and grains to China in 2022. Many Chinese investors, entrepreneurs, and companies have found home in Illinois due to its strengths in a wide range of industries. Most recently, Gotion, a prominent electric vehicle battery maker, chose Manteno for a \$2 billion electric vehicle lithium battery factory, which will create 2,600 jobs—a landmark manufacturing investment lauded by Governor Pritzker as one of the most significant new manufacturing investments in the state in decades. Furthermore, Illinois boasts a substantial Chinese student population, the highest in the Heartland region. An estimated 14,940 Chinese international students, constituting 27% of the state's total international students in the 2022/2033 school year, contributed an estimated \$532 million to the state's economy. Additionally, Illinois is home to one of the largest Chinese American populations in the Heartland.

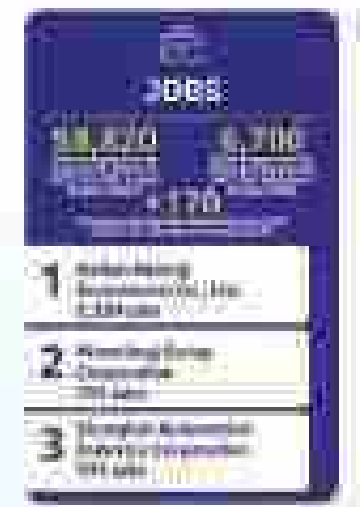


SCAN TO LEARN MORE



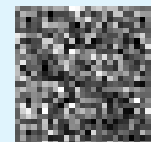
**SISTER CITIES**  
Chicago - Beijing  
Chicago - Shanghai  
Chicago - Shenzhen  
Chicago - Nanjing  
Chicago - Hangzhou  
Chicago - Guangzhou  
Chicago - Chengde  
Chicago - Kunming  
Chicago - Wuhan  
Chicago - Xi'an  
Chicago - Tianjin  
Chicago - Nanjing  
Chicago - Hangzhou  
Chicago - Guangzhou  
Chicago - Chengde  
Chicago - Kunming  
Chicago - Wuhan  
Chicago - Xi'an  
Chicago - Tianjin

**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
Illinois - Jiangsu  
Illinois - Guangdong  
Illinois - Zhejiang  
Illinois - Shandong  
Illinois - Henan  
Illinois - Sichuan  
Illinois - Shaanxi  
Illinois - Jiangxi  
Illinois - Hunan  
Illinois - Anhui  
Illinois - Fujian  
Illinois - Liaoning  
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Illinois - Hangzhou  
Illinois - Guangzhou  
Illinois - Chengde  
Illinois - Kunming  
Illinois - Wuhan  
Illinois - Xi'an  
Illinois - Tianjin

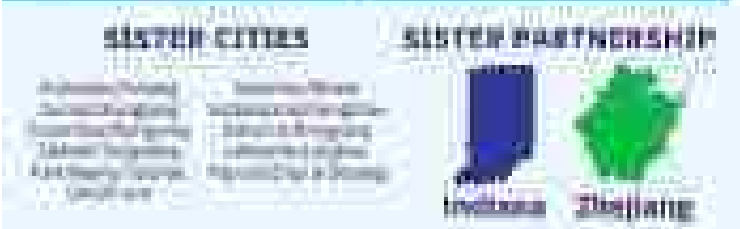


# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO INDIANA

Indiana's goods export to China reached a record-high in 2022 —\$5.2 billion—more than double the pre-trade war decade average of \$2.3 billion. Notably, Indiana's oilseeds and grains exports to China alone hit \$1.7 billion in 2022, thanks to the persistent efforts of trade associations such as the Indiana Soybean Association. Many Indiana-headquartered global corporations, such as Cummins and Eli Lilly, have benefited from their investment in China. Chinese investments in Indiana are also slowly growing, such as Nanshan America, which invested more than \$100 million in its Indiana aluminum extrusion facility. Chinese fashion retailer SHEIN is among the latest new arrivals. Until very recently, the America China Society of Indiana (ACSI) had helped the state cultivate a strong sister state/province relationship with Zhejiang Province, which started in 1987. Indiana also boasts a remarkable 12 sister city pairs with China, including the newest pair of sister cities: Carmel Indiana and Xiangyang, Hubei. Mayor Jim Brainard of Carmel, the vice chair of USHCA's Board, led a historic Heartland Mayors Delegation to China in November to meet their counterparts in China to explore opportunities for city-to-city collaborations around energy transition, climate mitigation, and green economy. At the state level, however, Indiana's political landscape reflects growing caution towards China, as evidenced by the 2023 passage of Senate Bill 268, directing the Indiana Public Retirement System to divest pension investments in the Chinese government within five years. Indiana was the first state to take action in the recent trend of the China-targeted restricting of foreign land ownership in 2022 with Senate Bill 388.

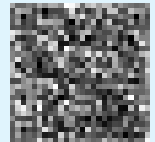


SCAN TO LEARN MORE



# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO IOWA

As a top agriculture state, ranking #2 for soybean production and #1 for pork, Iowa enjoys a robust bond with China, the world's largest agricultural importer. 2022 marked the highest year on record for Iowa's goods exports to China at \$4 billion, which is much higher than the \$2.2 billion average between 2008-2017. Iowa's significance in U.S.-China agricultural trade was further illustrated by the many high-level bilateral agriculture forums that have taken place in the state. Most recently, contracts for multi-billion-dollar purchases were signed by Chinese buyers at the "U.S.-China Sustainable Agricultural Trade Forum" in Des Moines in October 2023, an event organized by the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and China Chamber of Commerce (CFNA), in conjunction with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Soybean Association. Rich exchanges between Iowa and China have flourished following the establishment of Iowa's sister state/province relationship with Hebei Province in 1983. Iowa has also benefited from a unique friendship with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who spent 6 months in Iowa early in his career. During his visit to San Francisco in November 2023 to attend APEC, many of Xi's "Old Friends" from Iowa, including Ms. Sarah Lande, former Governor of Iowa Ambassador Terry Branstad, and Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, were invited to the special reception and dinner in his honor. However, with accusations of seed sample theft endorsed by the Chinese government, China has become a polarizing topic in the state.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



**SISTER CITIES**  
Iowa's sister cities include Des Moines, Iowa City, and Ames, Iowa. Iowa's sister cities include Des Moines, Iowa City, and Ames, Iowa.



**Education**  
Iowa ranks #1 in the U.S. for the number of students studying in Iowa.

**Transportation**  
Iowa ranks #1 in the U.S. for the number of students studying in Iowa.

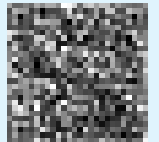
**Health**  
Iowa ranks #1 in the U.S. for the number of students studying in Iowa.





# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO KANSAS

Kansas maintained a \$2.6 billion goods exporting to China in 2022, the highest recorded value for the state, culminating in China surpassing Canada as the state's second-largest global trading partner. This marks a significant rebound from the trade war slump averaging at just \$900 million. While Kansas maintained a consistent total export value, it is noteworthy that the state, renowned as the "Air Capital of the World" with aerospace products ranking as its third-largest export to China, the world's largest aviation market, experienced a significant decrease in this sector in 2022. Since 1981, Kansas has fostered a robust relationship with sister state Henan, which celebrated their 40th year in 2021. Chinese Americans in Kansas are instrumental in promoting cultural and educational exchanges between their state and China. But the high-profile case around former University of Kansas professor Feng Tao, who was implicated in the now-closed China Initiative, continues to dampen the enthusiasm of Chinese scholars on campus as he appealed the last charge against him that has not been dropped. Educational exchanges between Kansas and China took a hit during the pandemic like many other Heartland states but have since recovered some despite the growing negativity towards China among its politicians. Fort Hays State University and Sias University in Henan have had a very successful joint degree program since 2000, contributing millions of dollars to the economy of Kansas. In 2023, the University of Kansas announced a new program offering degrees at Zhejiang Normal University, drawing criticism from the state government.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



**Education**



**804** Jobs



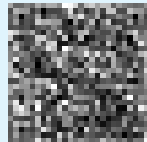
**\$71 MILLION**





# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO KENTUCKY

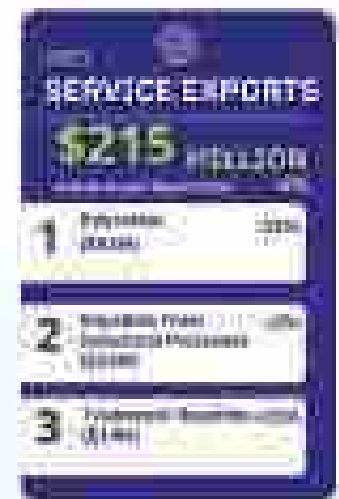
In 2022, Kentucky achieved a record-high of \$3 billion in goods exported to China, a 9% YOY growth after a remarkable 48% expansion in 2021. Kentucky also enjoys robust two-way business relationships with China. Yum! Brands Inc., headquartered in Kentucky, has been very successful in China, notably with KFC becoming one of China's leading fast-food chains, contributing 27% to global revenues. Yum! Brands celebrated the opening of its 500th KFC store in Shanghai in June 2023. Many Chinese companies and investors find Kentucky an attractive destination because of its strength and legacy as a regional manufacturing center as demonstrated by Chinese acquisitions of Kentucky-based GE Appliance (\$5.6 billion acquisition by Haier Group in 2016) and Lexmark (\$3.6 billion acquisition also in 2016). However, trade and investment faced obstacles in other areas, such as the suspension of a project in Hopkinsville, over concerns about the company's alleged ties to China. The plan involved Microvast, a Texas-based electric vehicle battery manufacturer, intending to create 600 jobs locally. Following an investigation, the U.S. Department of Energy withdrew its \$200 million grant to Microvast, halting the project. Kentucky's educational exchanges with China are growing. Contrary to the regional trend, Kentucky's population of Chinese international students actually grew by 54% for the 2022/2023 academic year. Since the University of Kentucky signed an inter-university exchange agreement with Jilin University in 2011, the partnership has grown to 6 dual-university degree programs from bachelor's degrees to PhDs.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



**SISTER CITIES**  
Kentucky has sister city relationships with Chengde & Fuzhou, China's largest and second largest cities.

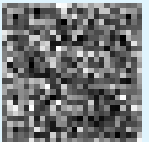


**Education**  
Kentucky's international students from China were 1,142 in 2022, up from 883 in 2021. Kentucky's international students from China were valued at \$9.5 million in 2022, up from \$7.5 million in 2021.



# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO LOUISIANA

Louisiana achieved a record-high goods export value of \$4.5 billion to China in 2022, marking an 8% increase. Building on a series of 20-year LNG supply contracts with Chinese companies, Louisiana has emerged as the center of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export boom and a significant player in American energy exports to China. At \$2.9 billion, oil and gas constitute over half of the state's 2022 total exports to China. Several Chinese companies have made significant investments in the state, such as Shandong Yuhuang Chemical, a Chinese methanol manufacturer, which invested \$1.85 billion in 2014 and created approximately 400 direct jobs. In addition, Sea Mark Management Inc. & Yuan Hua Technical & Supply Corporation, another major Chinese presence in Louisiana, arrived to offer logistics, ship agency, and technical support. Louisiana is well positioned for further trade expansion after the dredging of a key 250-mile stretch at the mouth of the Mississippi river to greater depths to accommodate larger vessels with higher capacity is completed. Prior to the pandemic, the state also attracted many Chinese visitors to its cultural centers such as New Orleans. Many of Louisiana's universities have well established exchange programs with Chinese universities. Senators Cassidy and Kennedy, representing Louisiana, were part of a bipartisan delegation of six U.S. Senators who visited China in 2023. After undergoing a host of amendments following protests by Chinese American residents at the State Capitol, House Bill 537 was passed in 2023, banning those connected to "foreign adversaries" from buying or leasing property in Louisiana.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



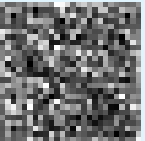
**SISTER CITIES**  
Shanghai, China  
Houston, Texas

**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
Louisiana  
Louisiana does not have a sister state relationship with a province of China.

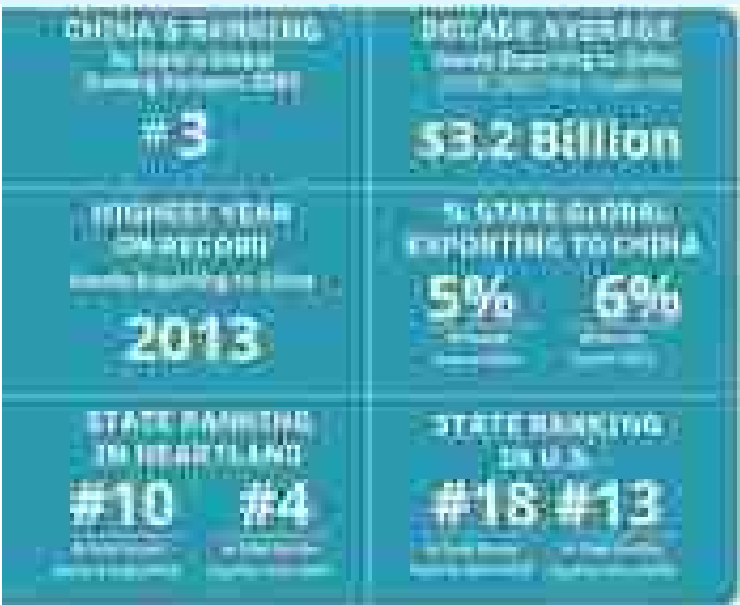


# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO MICHIGAN

Michigan's two Chinese sister provinces, Sichuan and Guangdong, are the result of the state's earlier investment to develop ties with the Chinese automotive industry, the historical bedrock of the Michigan-China business relationship. GM and Ford, headquartered in Michigan, have been very successful in China, and Chinese automotive suppliers have likewise found success in Michigan. However, 2022 saw a significant -31% decline in motor vehicle parts exports, dropping from \$747 million to \$510 million. This decrease is attributed to supply chain challenges and ongoing trade tensions. Gotion Inc., a U.S. subsidiary of Hefei Gotion High-Tech Power Energy Co., Ltd, is planning a \$2.4 billion electric vehicle battery factory in Green Charter Township, sparking community protests over perceived ties to the Chinese government. While initially hailed as a victory by Governor Whitmer, protests resulted in the project's suspension. Ford Motor has scaled back its initial electric vehicle-focused \$3.5 billion project called BlueOval Battery Park Michigan, for which the company plans to collaborate with China-based Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Ltd (CATL). Many universities in Michigan have exchange programs with their peers in China. Among them, the University of Michigan holds great historical importance in U.S.-China relations. It welcomed its first Chinese students in 1892 and has educated generations of leaders in the U.S.-China Relations space. It was also the first stop on the 9-city tour of the Chinese Ping-Pong team in 1972, in a series of events that later became known as "Ping-Pong Diplomacy", for which a 50th anniversary celebration was held at the University of Michigan in 2022.



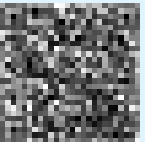
SCAN TO LEARN MORE





# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO MINNESOTA

Minnesota's trade relationship with China continues its upward trajectory in 2022 with an 8% increase in goods exported, reaching a total value of \$4.4 billion, the highest year on record for the state. China is the state's top agricultural export market, as the commodities the state produces (soybeans, hogs, corn, feed, dairy) are in high demand in China. Leading multinational corporations headquartered in Minnesota such as 3M, General Mills, and Cargill have significant business interests in China. Chinese business involvement benefits the state in other ways as well, such as with Cirrus, the Duluth-based aircraft company purchased by a Chinese owner in 2011. It is now one of the city's major employers with 1,588 workers. Embracing its connections with China, Minnesota also celebrated the 35th anniversary of its sister-city relationship with Changsha during the Mid-autumn festival, featuring over 35 groups from the Twin Cities' Asian community, highlighting its multicultural spirit and engagement with Asian partners. The Minnesota-China relationship also boasts strong educational partnerships. University of Minnesota is home to one of the largest groups of Chinese students in the U.S. and has educated some of China's leading agriculture experts. Many educational institutions in Minnesota, ranging from boarding schools to private colleges, enjoy a great reputation in China and attract significant numbers of Chinese students to the state. At the local level, Mayor Kim Norton of Rochester participated in USHCA's 2023 Heartland Mayors Delegation to China to explore opportunities for city-to-city collaborations around energy transition, climate mitigation, and green economy.



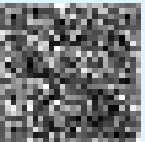
SCAN TO LEARN MORE





# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO MISSISSIPPI

In 2022, Mississippi's goods exports to China reached \$1.2 billion, approaching the state's record high of \$1.3 billion in 2012. Mississippi's trade ties with China have remained stable post-trade war, consistently exporting over \$1 billion in goods annually since 2020. Despite the steady trade, China has slipped from third to fourth position among Mississippi's global trading partners. Compared to other major agricultural states in the Heartland, whose agriculture export to China has grown significantly despite trade tensions in recent years, Mississippi could benefit from stronger promotion efforts and more diverse export channels. The Mississippi Delta region also has a unique but seldom-told Chinese Heritage dating back to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, when immigrants of Chinese ancestry were brought in to work the vast agricultural fields. This legacy has been carefully preserved by the Delta Chinese Heritage Museum in Cleveland Mississippi. Current state leaders of Mississippi, aligning with other Heartland peers, are contemplating legislation to restrict foreign land ownership. But interest in engaging with China and learning more about China exists among local leaders, such as Mayor Robyn Tanehill (Oxford MS) and Mayor Chokwe Lumumba (Jackson MS), who were members of the 2023 Heartland Mayors Delegation to China.



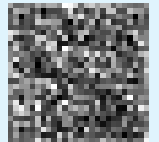
SCAN TO LEARN MORE



**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
Mississippi currently does not have a sister state relationship with a province of China.

# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO MISSOURI

Missouri opened its first trade office in China in 2004 under the leadership of then-Governor Bob Holden, now the Chairman and President of U.S. Heartland China Association. Despite the ebb and flow of interest at the state level, China remains one of Missouri's top export markets. In 2022, Missouri shipped a record-breaking \$2 billion in goods exports to China. Educational institutions in Missouri have many established partnerships with Chinese universities, such as the Washington University-Fudan University joint EMBA program that celebrated the 20th anniversary in 2022. However, Missouri state leaders have maintained a "tough on China" stance, with Governor Mike Parson urging the Missouri State Employees Retirement System to divest in China. Despite these challenges, Missouri stands as a key player in Heartland-China collaboration. In April 2023, the U.S. Heartland China Association organized the 3rd Annual U.S.-China Agriculture Roundtable in St. Louis, hosting the largest Chinese provincial agriculture delegation in recent years. St. Louis witnessed multiple Chinese delegations in 2023, with officials presenting a symbolic dragon boat to commemorate the 44th anniversary of the partnership between St. Louis and Nanjing. Notably, the Missouri Historical Society's Chinese American Collecting Initiative aims to catalog and preserve historical artifacts, including a recent collaboration with students to protect a Chinese graveyard in Valhalla Cemetery. Mayor Barbara Buffaloe of Columbia participated in USHCA's 2023 Heartland Mayors Delegation to China to explore opportunities for city-to-city collaborations around energy transition, climate mitigation, and green economy.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

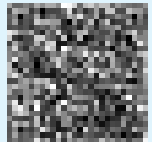


**SISTER CITIES**  
Canton, China  
Chengde, China  
Chongqing, China  
Guangzhou, China  
Harbin, China  
Shanghai, China

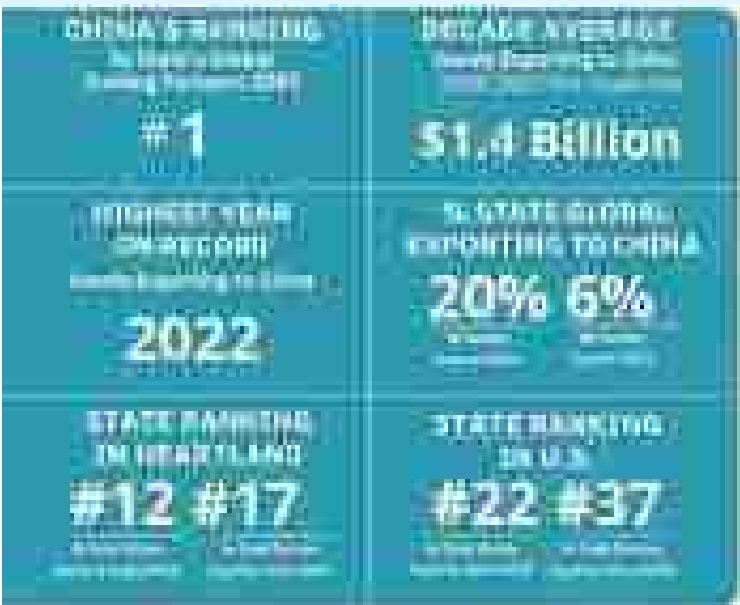


# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO NEBRASKA

Nebraska's exports to China are in a period of rapid expansion, with 2022 once again marking a record high as China remained the state's top export market. Chinese exports accounted for 20% of Nebraska's global goods, with Nebraska among the leading exporters of beef to China amongst Heartland states. Further expansion of its exports to China are likely given the bilateral desires for expanded collaboration in agriculture and the abundance of agricultural innovations in livestock and crop production technology coming from the state. Universities in Nebraska have well-established partnerships with Chinese universities such as a short-term health professional exchange program between University of Nebraska Medical Center and three top Chinese medical schools: Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, Tongji University, and Capital Medical University. Over the last few decades, Chinese investments in the states have ranged from subsidiaries of multinational agriculture players with Chinese ownership to smaller manufacturers of lawn and farm equipment. Politicians from Nebraska have recently taken measures to distance the state from China over espionage concerns. Governor Pillen's March executive order banned the use of communication equipment from companies like Huawei, ZTE, Hytera, Hangzhou Hikvision, and Dahua due to their ties with the Chinese Communist Party. In 2023, Governor Pillen faced criticism for dismissing the work of a local award-winning reporter, who had immigrated from China, as being from "Communist China."

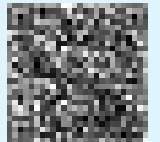


SCAN TO LEARN MORE



# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota's goods exports to China remained at an all-time high in 2022 of \$1.1 billion. This total marks an astonishing quintupling in its goods exports to China in recent years, and a significant increase from the 2008-2017 average of \$642 million. North Dakota counts China as its second largest global trading partner behind Canada, and this is entirely due to China's purchasing of North Dakota's oilseeds & grains. Soybeans—a crop originally from China—account for a sizable portion of the state's export to China. In fact, Chinese soybean demand from the state exceeds existing supply, and future export shipments are already booked for the next year. Additionally, North Dakota's ambition to become a carbon-sequestration-capital positions it well to engage with China around climate change related opportunities. Chinese investment in the state however took a major hit when the \$700 million corn milling plant in Grand Forks proposed by Chinese feed manufacturer, Fufeng USA, was abandoned in 2023. Despite initial support, politicians, including Governor Doug Burgum, now exercise caution and oppose the project. Presidential hopeful Governor Borgum has taken an increasingly tough stance on China, claiming that we are in a new cold war. In 2023, Governor Burgum signed Senate Bill No. 2371 into law, prohibiting local development and ownership of real property by "foreign adversaries."



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



**SISTER CITIES**

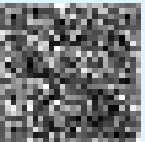
**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
North Dakota currently does not have a sister state relationship with a province of China.



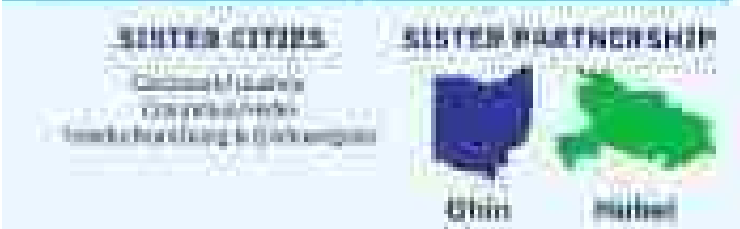


# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO OHIO

In 1979, Ohio and Hubei became the first sister state/province pair between the U.S. and China. The Ohio-China trade and business relationship remains strong, with goods exports to China exceeding \$3 billion every year since 2010. In 2022, goods exports to China remained steady at \$4 billion. Many corporations headquartered in Ohio, such as P&G, count China as a major market, and investments from Chinese companies have also steadily grown. Fuyao Glass, the \$700 million Chinese investment that revitalized the economy of the Dayton area, has generated over 2,000 jobs since its arrival in 2014. Its most recent expansion will bring an additional 500 jobs, and push total investment to \$1 billion by 2024. Shanghai-based Sencorp plans to build a \$916 million manufacturing plant in Sidney for electric vehicle (EV) batteries. Invenery intends to partner with the Chinese company LONGi to build a solar panel assembly factory near Columbus. Education is also a bulwark of the Ohio-China relationship. An estimated 9,371 Chinese students studied in Ohio in the 2022/2023 school year contributing approximately \$333 million to the state's economy. However, the proposed Ohio Higher Education Enhancement Act aims to sever academic and financial ties between Ohio's higher education institutions and their Chinese counterparts. Notably, Ohio State University's long-standing collaboration with Wuhan University faces challenges if the bill is enacted, jeopardizing decades of faculty exchanges and research partnerships. In 2023, Ohio passed legislation prohibiting foreign entities listed on a registry published by the Ohio secretary of state from purchasing or owning agricultural land in the state.



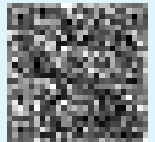
SCAN TO LEARN MORE





# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma achieved a remarkable 48% increase in exports to China in 2022, the highest YOY growth in the Heartland region. Oklahoma's status as the second largest beef producing state in the U.S. and its top agricultural exports (beef, wheat, and pork) being in high-demand by China prompted tremendous growth in the state's agricultural exports to China. The exporting of miscellaneous crops increased by 219%, and meat exports by 44%. China nearly doubled its imports of Oklahoman pork from 2017 to 2022. Although the Chinese American population is relatively small in the state, Chinese immigrants were the first Asians to settle in Oklahoma around 1880. Sister city partnerships like that of Tulsa-Beihai, established in 1987, remain vibrant. Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador Kyle Dillingham went on two musical goodwill tours of China in 2023, including a visit to Oklahoma's sister province of Gansu. Educational collaborations have also helped Oklahoma strengthen its relationship with China, such as the joint degree programs that Oklahoma State University has with 4 leading Chinese universities and the only Sino-U.S. joint program on fire safety engineering. While Oklahoma fosters collaborative higher education ties with China, K-12 education faces challenges. Tulsa Public Schools discontinued its Chinese language program due to national attention on the district's ties to Confucius Classrooms, indirectly associated with the Chinese government, during congressional testimony. Governor Kevin Stitt's efforts to limit land acquisition by Chinese nationals, raises uncertainties about future growth.

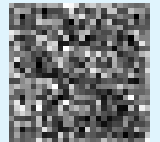


SCAN TO LEARN MORE



# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota's trade with China has more than quadrupled since its lowest point at the height of the U.S.-China trade war in 2018. The \$1.4 billion worth of goods exported to China in 2022 marked a significant increase from the 2008-2017 average of \$712 million. Almost a third of the state's global goods exports is going to China, a primary export market for South Dakota. Beyond agriculture, businesses in South Dakota are eyeing the Chinese market for potential export expansion, especially around manufacturing. Smithfield, acquired for close to \$5 billion in 2013 by Chinese company Shuanghui, is the second-largest employer in South Dakota. It continues to contribute significantly to the local economy as well as South Dakota's export of pork, the main animal protein consumed in China. But shifts in political attitudes are taking hold. Despite unrealized plans for a state-level Committee on Foreign Investment, South Dakota lawmakers continue pushing bills aimed at curbing Chinese influence in the agricultural sector. Governor Noem signed a bill into law that bans "evil foreign governments," China included, from contracting with South Dakota governments. Though the Chinese American population is small in the state, the history of early thriving Chinese American communities in the Black Hills is still celebrated each Chinese New Year.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE



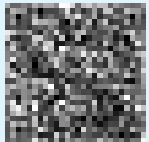
**SISTER CITIES**  
South Dakota does not have a sister city relationship with a province of China.

**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
South Dakota does not have a sister state relationship with a province of China.



# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO TENNESSEE

Tennessee's goods exports to China in 2022 reached \$3.6 billion, significantly higher than the average of \$2.1 billion per year from 2008-2017. Among the Heartland states, Tennessee has emerged as a leading exporter of medical and navigational equipment. The strong presence of global automotive players in the state have attracted many Chinese component producers to set up operations nearby. But for Chinese companies in Tennessee the business environment has recently proved fraught. In 2023, lawmakers passed a measure restricting property purchases by residents from U.S.-sanctioned countries, including China. Tennessee Congressmen also successfully blocked a potential \$200 million grant from the U.S. Energy Department to the Texas-based battery manufacturer Microvast Holdings over the company's alleged ties to China. Nevertheless, Microvast intends to move forward with a \$300 million investment in Clarksville, expecting to create more than 250 jobs, with more to follow. On the education front, many Chinese students enter the university system of the state and go on to contribute significantly to Tennessee's highly skilled workforce. The Chinese American population has been growing in the state. Among the state's leaders, Mayor Lee Harris of Shelby County participated in USHCA's 2023 Heartland Mayors Delegation to China to explore opportunities for city-to-city collaborations around energy transition, climate mitigation, and green economy.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

**CHINA RANKING**  
IN HEARTLAND EXPORTS TO CHINA

**#3**

**HIGHEST YEAR ON RECORD**  
IN HEARTLAND EXPORTS TO CHINA

**2022**

**STATE RANKING IN HEARTLAND**

**#8** **#10**

**SISTER CITIES**  
CHANGSHA, HANGZHOU, SHANGHAI & XI'AN

**BIOMEDICAL AVERAGE**  
IN HEARTLAND EXPORTS TO CHINA

**\$2.1 Billion**

**% OF STATE GLOBAL EXPORTING TO CHINA**

**9%** **5%**

**STATE RANKING IN U.S.**

**#15** **#24**

**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
WITH SHANGHAI

**GOODS EXPORTS**

**\$3.6 BILLION**

- Medical Equipment (\$1.1B)
- Transportation & Travel (\$1.0B)
- Food & Beverage (\$1.0B)

**SERVICE EXPORTS**

**\$405 MILLION**

- Business Services (\$100M)
- Travel & Transportation (\$100M)
- Education (\$100M)

**JOBS**

**11,000** **2,300**

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Professional Services

**Education**

25,373

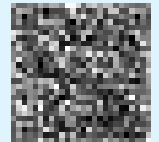
**2,227**

**\$86 MILLION**

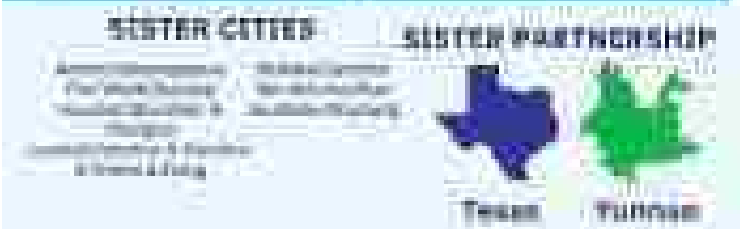
**\$1.9 BILLION**

# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO TEXAS

Texas' trade volume with China is significantly higher than that of other Heartland states. The \$22 billion in goods exports to China in 2022 was more than double its yearly average from 2008-2017. Much of this surge may be attributed to the increase in oil & gas exporting made possible by numerous recent deals over the past few years such as the Cheniere Energy and PetroChina contract for 1.8 MTPA (million tons per annum) for a period of 24 years. In the 2022/2023 school year, an estimated 9,852 Chinese students studied in Texas contributing an estimated \$583 million to the state's economy. Texas is also home to one of the largest Chinatowns in the United States. The first Chinese to arrive in Texas did so in 1870 to build the Houston and Texas Central Railroad, and then again in 1881 to build the Southern Pacific Railroad. China's Trina Solar, one of the world's largest solar panel makers, has announced it will build a 5 gigawatt solar panel factory in Wilmer, Texas. The \$200 million facility will be more than 1 million square feet in size and will create 1,500 local jobs. However, negativity towards China is growing among the state's politicians, evident in the Texas State Senate Bill S.B 147, which aimed to restrict land ownership for Chinese citizens. A watered-down version of the bill reached the House of Representatives before dying out due to protests from Asian American communities and various groups. Governor Greg Abbott also banned TikTok on government devices amid security concerns over Chinese government access to sensitive information.



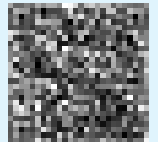
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# WHY CHINA MATTERS TO WISCONSIN

Wisconsin's goods exports to China reached a value of \$2.3 billion in 2022, the highest recorded to date. Among the many agricultural exports from Wisconsin to China is the prized American Ginseng. Most of the American Ginseng exported to China is grown by small family farms, whose livelihood has been negatively impacted by the trade war. The dairy industry of Wisconsin, along with peers from other states, are seeking growth in China, one of the fastest growing dairy markets in the world. Chinese companies have also found opportunities in Wisconsin such as the Chinese-owned ND Paper, which completed the expansion of its mill in Biron helping to reduce energy consumption. Cultural ties are flourishing, exemplified by the Wisconsin Chinese Chamber of Commerce's Moon Festival event. Educational exchanges between Wisconsin and China have flourished in the past decades. In 2023, amid a shift where India surpassed China as the leading origin for international students in many Heartland states, Wisconsin's Chinese international student population remained substantial with 37% of international students coming from China. In the 2022/2023 school year, an estimated 5,105 Chinese students, many of them at University of Wisconsin's Madison campus, contributed approximately \$132 million to the state's economy.



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**SISTER CITIES**  
1984 Confucius Temple  
La Crosse University  
Purdue University  
University of Wisconsin  
University of Illinois

**SISTER PARTNERSHIP**  
2010 Wisconsin  
Hainan



**Education**  
37% of international students



**Education**  
37% of international students

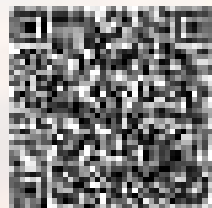


**5,105** | **\$132 MILLION**









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