

## AmCham-China Goes Central

Wuhan Consulate's July 4th reception was  
a chance to lay out our vision

representatives of many businesses with operations there have been asking for some time if AmCham-China could support them in this region that hundreds of millions of people call home.

Although the international business community has long been in Central China, in the last year or two we have seen a surge in interest among our members about establishing or boosting their presence in the region. Our provincial trips to Hubei and Chongqing, for example, were sold out as companies look to expand investment beyond the traditional coastal centers.

In one meeting with the business community just before the July 4th reception, I had the chance to explain AmCham-China's mission. I also described the services we provide, including what we could do even for non-members as part of our drive to offer clear value to the community at large. The response was very encouraging.

The formal launch of our Central China chapter will take place later this year in Wuhan. It comes at a really exciting time. Our founding members can begin to flesh out the organization's specific goals for the region. After all, the business models and needs of our members in Beijing are not necessarily the same as those elsewhere in the country, and the issues they face may also be different. Therefore, AmCham should always be flexible enough to adjust accordingly.

During the Consular General's reception and the following day we held several meetings with Chinese officials from neighboring areas. All of them were very encouraging and

they were excited to learn of AmCham-China's expansion. Several invited us to lead provincial trips to their areas, and we are looking into all of these possibilities.

The opening of the "AmCham-China, Central China Chapter," as it is to be known, will mark a new stage in the chamber's development. In a post-Olympics economy, the international focus will continue to shift toward Central and Western China, and we are prepared to meet that challenge. While the physical office will be in Wuhan, the chapter will serve as a hub to many critical areas, most specifically the six Central China provinces of Anhui, Hubei, Jiangxi, Hunan, Henan and Shanxi.

Indeed, the end of the Olympics marks the beginning of an incredibly exciting new period of expansion and continued development for the American business community. We have long been focused on Beijing, and appropriately so, given our members' needs. The changes here over the last two decades have been dizzying. It has been an exciting time to be in the capital city, and will continue to be. And in the months and years to come, it will be just as exciting to be in Central China, a challenge that we embrace.

AmCham looks forward to bringing this dynamic part of the country into the fold and welcoming many new members to the community.

James Zimmerman  
AmCham-China Chairman



With MOFCOM Minister Chen Deming in Wuhan

The eyes of the world have been focused on Beijing for the last year. China itself has focused its energy on the city for even longer as it has prepared to present its face to the international stage. Ironically, during this same period, much of the business community has begun to look beyond the capital city to the many opportunities in the Chinese heartland. As the glow of the Games fades, the real economic push through to the country's center and beyond is likely to take hold and accelerate.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, the reality of this trend was reaffirmed for me in Wuhan. That was the day the American Consulate there celebrated the first year of its existence with a great party attended by hundreds of businesspeople and government officials from around the region. For AmCham-China, it was a great opportunity to commend Wuhan Consular General Wendy Lyle and everyone at the Embassy for the substantial work they have done to open this gateway into the country's west. At the same time, it gave us the chance to extend discussions with the American community about our plans to launch AmCham-China's Central China chapter. In fact,