

MIDDFEST INTERNATIONAL

Celebrating INDONESIA in 2009

Middfest International
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NEWS RELEASE
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MIDDFEST INTERNATIONAL, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PLAN US- INDONESIAN BUSINESS EXCHANGE AND CONFERENCE

Middletown, OH - Middfest International's focus on Indonesia in 2009 will include a two-part business exchange and conference September 30 to October 2 in Middletown.

The Chamber of Commerce serving Middletown, Monroe and Trenton will host Indonesia Business Day on Friday, October 2 at the Manchester Inn and Conference Center. Highlights of the event will include panel discussions covering the current Indonesian business and political climate, success stories from local area and regional companies on product marketing and conducting business in Indonesia. There will also be discussion and information regarding the Obama Administration's renewed strategic partnership between the two countries.

The morning session registration will commence at 7:15 am, followed by breakfast and welcome comments by Middletown Mayor Larry Mulligan and Chamber Chair Paul Nisbet. Peter Gontha, a well-known Indonesian media personality who will be representing the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Wayne Forrest, President of the American-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, have been invited to lead the morning sessions. Ohio State University political science professor R. William Liddle, an expert on Indonesian and Muslim world politics, is also scheduled to lecture conference attendees. Registration for the afternoon session will begin at 11:45 am followed by lunch at 12:15 pm and the keynote address given by Ambassador Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat. David Merrill, President of the United States-Indonesia Society, will lead the afternoon session. Governors from two Indonesian provinces, the Secretary General of the Indonesian Ministry of Industry and representatives from various other government agencies will also be in attendance. The event will conclude at 3:00 pm, followed by scheduled one-on-one meetings with visiting Indonesian representatives.

To register for the Chamber/Middfest International Indonesia Business Day, please contact Bill Triick, The Chamber of Commerce at 513-422-4551 or bill@thechamberofcommerce.org. The registration fee for each session is \$50.

The Indonesia Business Day will be preceded by a two-day business exchange September 30 and October 1 which will allow visiting Indonesian business and government representatives an

opportunity to hold meetings with locally-based firms and professionals interested in fostering commercial relations with Indonesian companies. Industry sectors that have been identified so far include aviation, education, bio-medical and manufacturing (focus on paper and rubber). The fee for the business exchange is \$200. For additional information and registration, please contact Deborah Schultz at 513-321-1415 or transborders1@cs.com

The business segment of the Middfest celebration has been a mainstay of the cultural event which has occurred annually in and around Middletown's Donham Plaza and City Building since 1981. This year's focus on Indonesia presents a unique opportunity for both countries due to US President Obama and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's recent commitment to developing a comprehensive partnership which will be formalized when President Obama travels to Indonesia this November. Key areas of the relationship will focus on education, democracy and climate change.

Indonesia's place as the world's fourth most populous country, the most populous Muslim nation in the world, and its strategic placement in East Asia along key trade routes, underscore its importance geopolitically to the US.

Part of the action plan of the US-Indonesian partnership is an emphasis on what Middfest advisor and former US Ambassador Alphonse La Porta calls "people-to-people diplomacy." "These days, in order to influence public opinion, there has to be cross-cultural contacts of all kinds," he says, emphasizing the value which Middfest offers with its unique and comprehensive approach to featuring its chosen country. The business community plays a fundamental role in strengthening the partnership between the two countries, and with approximately fifty companies in the Cincinnati-Dayton area currently involved in commercial activities in Indonesia, Middfest's 2009 business programs offer opportunity for increased contact and growth.

The Middfest International weekend celebration will begin at 5:30 pm on Friday, October 2 at Donham Plaza and will continue through Sunday, October 4. Live Indonesian performances, entertainment by local and regional artists, exhibits on science, history, literature and religion, children's activities, an Indonesian Market, and foods from around the world will be featured.

For media inquiries, please contact Christina Papakirk, christina.papakirk@gmail.com, 513-460-6647

Middfest International is a premier cultural event with dance, music, cultural exhibits and food from many countries throughout the world. Held annually in Middletown, Ohio, Middfest has celebrated a different country each year since 1981 and will feature Indonesia in 2009 from October 2-4. For more information, visit our website www.middfest.com or contact Middfest Executive Director Virginia Ritan at 513-425-7707 or email middfest@siscom.net.

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