

## ***MSE Vice President Accompanies Montana Senator Max Baucus on Trade Mission***

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In early December 2004, Jeff Ruffner, Senior Vice President of MSE Technology Applications, Inc. and General Manager of the Mike Mansfield Advanced Technology Center, had the opportunity to travel with Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) on a trade mission to New Zealand and Australia. ([See related article.](#)) The purpose of the trade mission was twofold. First, as the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, the Senator plays a critical role in establishing the priorities and key aspects of U.S. Free Trade Agreements with other countries. The U.S. recently completed a free trade agreement with Australia and is poised to start one with New Zealand. The second aspect of the trade mission is the Senator's continued efforts to open opportunities for Montana companies around the world.

According to Ruffner, the trade missions provide a very cost effective way to go into the market very quickly to determine if there are opportunities for MSE.

Mr. Ruffner's goal for this trade mission was also twofold. First was to determine if MSE could expand the market for its Tetragenics Division product line. When trying to sell overseas you must have a unique product, because selling services overseas is difficult at best. Tetragenics provides products that are used in many businesses around the world and the goal was to identify a distributor in New Zealand and Australia that could increase Tetragenics sales.

Mr. Ruffner met with one company in New Zealand and five companies in Australia and is following up with discussions regarding the establishment of representation agreements in both countries.

A secondary aspect of the trade mission for Mr. Ruffner involved the U.S. Free Trade Agreements. About two years ago Jeff was appointed by the Secretary of Commerce to a committee that reviews and comments on proposed free trade agreements. The function of the Committee is to provide Congress with information on the agreements and their impact on U.S. business. Mr. Ruffner was involved in the Australian Free Trade Agreement and will be involved in any Free Trade Agreement with New Zealand. ([See related article.](#))

Senator Baucus has been a great supporter of expanding Montana business overseas. Given MSE's position as the premier technology company in Montana, the Senator is committed to helping MSE expand its business in the highly competitive international arena.

Mr. Ruffner was afforded the opportunity to meet and sit in on discussions with Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. It is not very often that one gets this kind of opportunity.

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