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Center for Manufacturing Sciences, and major universities are also growing rapidly in importance.

Contact: Canadian Consulate General, Detroit

The Southeastern United States, with Atlanta at the hub and a population of over 47 million, has been the fastest-growing region in the United States over the past six years.

Forty-three of the Fortune 500 companies are headquartered in the region, and it now leads other regions in the six major retail segments — food, apparel, automotive, furnishings, pharmaceuticals, and leisure. There has been a rapid expansion of professional service industries, particularly in health care, transportation and communications — sectors that have made the region a prime target for investment promotion and technology transfer. Atlanta is a leading test market for business-to-business services, including software and telecommunications applications. It has a flourishing high-tech industry and offers opportunities for strategic alliances in specialized niches such as biotechnology and site remediation.

Contact: Canadian Consulate General, Atlanta

The Southwest region, revolving around Dallas and Houston, is a boom area of 33 million people. It has a GDP higher than Canada's, is home to 50 Fortune 500 companies (up from 37 just 10 years ago) and is taking on new prominence as the NAFTA gateway to Mexico's market of 90 million. Interest in Canadian products is growing rapidly, and trade with Canada exceeds the area's trade with the United Kingdom, France and Germany combined.

Opportunities for Canadian firms can be found in the information technology, environment, energy, medical/health care, agri-food and consumer product/service sectors. Texas's IT sector is second only to California's in employment and exports, and is first in job growth, capital investment and semiconductor production. Houston is the world centre for major oil and gas project decisions, and the resurgence of Gulf

of Mexico offshore activity is creating demand for equipment and services and providing opportunities in the environmental sector. Promising consumer-product and agri-food opportunities are based on the projected, higher-than-national-average growth in retail sales and personal income to 2001.

Contact: Canadian Consulate General, Dallas

The State of California, with a population of 32 million, constitutes the world's seventh-largest economy. California is Canada's biggest market for natural gas and is a prime target for a range of Canadian

aerospace, defence, biotechnology and, in particular, information-technology products. The San Francisco Bay/Silicon Valley area is home to 7,000 high-tech companies, representing a combined market value of \$450 billion. California is the acknowledged world leader in the field of multimedia applications in a U.S. market, expected to reach US\$24 billion by the year 2000. Los Angeles is, of course, vitally important to the Canadian entertainment industries, providing ever-expanding opportunities for companies interested in the production, distribution and financing of film, commercials and television programs. California is also a principal export point for the United States to trade with the Orient.

Contacts: Canadian Consulate General, Los Angeles; Canadian Trade Offices, San Francisco and San Jose

The Pacific Northwest corner of the United States, a market of 11 million people, accounted for bilateral trade of \$18.4 billion in 1996.

With the steady movement of business from California and other parts of the United States to the Seattle and Portland areas, annual growth rates in the region have been well above the U.S. average.

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