

Damascus Fair Draws Brazil's Small Businesses Attention

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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São José do Rio Preto, city in the interior of the Brazilian southeastern state of São Paulo, will take five companies to the Damascus International Fair, due to occur in the Syrian capital between the 3rd and 12th of September.

This will be the first action by the recently created department of international relations of the city's Economic and Tourism Business Development Secretariat.

According to the department's coordinator, Fernando Morett, the Damascus International Fair was chosen for the strong influence of the Syrian-Lebanese community in the region and for the interest the local businessmen themselves have in the Arab market.

"The participation in the fair will be a window for our products for the entire Arab market," he stated.

According to Morett, the city's exports to the Arab countries happen sporadically, but the companies that will participate in the fair still don't export to the region.

"The businessmen believe in the potential of this market," he said.

The five companies going to the trade fair are sweets makers Doces Cossari and Fábrica de Doces São Rafael, phytotherapy products manufacturer Bionatus, the leather articles producer Ambar Leather, and the soft drinks company Refrigerantes Poty.

The companies will exhibit their products in a space organized by the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (CCAB).

The international relations department of São José do Rio Preto was created earlier this year to increase the city's exports. "We are developing a series of actions to increase exports," said Morett.

According to him, the industrial sector in the city is well diversified and has from agro-industries to technology companies. Jewelry is one of the highlighted segments.

The majority of the companies are small sized. Last year, the city's external sales yielded US\$ 17 million, an increase in 44% in relation to 2003.

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