



THE PENINSULA

Future of Korea in New Mexico

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From March 19 to 21, 2025, the Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI) led a Future of Korea (FOK) delegation to Albuquerque, New Mexico, with KEI's Economic Policy Analyst Tom Ramage, the U.S. Department of State's Military Advisor for Japanese, Korean, and Mongolian Affairs Ki Suh Jung, and the South Korean Embassy's First Secretary Hae Jung Kim. Hosted by the World Affairs Council of Albuquerque, the week involved outreach and collaboration with New Mexico's business community, industry leaders, and interested residents.

On Wednesday morning, the FOK team visited the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Albuquerque Office, with attendance by the New Mexico Trade Alliance, and received an overview of New Mexico's economy and opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI). They learned about New Mexico's role as a strategic location between the Port of Houston and Los Angeles to support its logistics economy, as well as recent plans to cement the region as a technology hub for quantum computing. Moreover, New Mexico's location as a major semiconductor and solar panel manufacturing center provided food for thought on trade opportunities between South Korea and New Mexico, where South Korea ranked as New Mexico's seventh-largest export destination in 2023.



Afterward, the group was hosted at Albuquerque's Q Station innovation center, where they received a briefing on New Mexico's role in aerospace with its Space Valley industry ecosystem and the areas of collaboration between U.S. and South Korean industries in the area. New Mexico's housing of Spaceport America and strategically important national laboratories such as Los Alamos and Sandia means that government-to-government collaboration is a growing component of South Korea's research and industry prospects in New Mexico.



The next stop on the schedule was a slate of one-on-one roundtable meetings with local companies organized by the [New Mexico Trade Alliance](#), where the group engaged with New Mexico's business leaders on Albuquerque's leading industries as well as the regulatory and business environment in South Korea. The FOK group was delighted to sample local bison strips from [Beck and Bulow](#) and blue corn-distilled whisky from [Tumbleroot](#) while learning about the scientific engagements of [Dark Sky New Mexico](#), [QBiotech](#), and [Pajarito Powder](#) and their areas of overlap with South Korea's advanced technological industries.

Last, the trio was hosted for an engaging discussion with community members moderated by Dr. Gregory Vuksich, president of the World Affairs Council of Albuquerque. The event served as a chance to showcase the important ways South Korean FDI is changing communities across the United States and the U.S. economic policies making that possible. The group also had a chance to answer audience questions on U.S. policy toward North Korea, recent challenges to South Korea's political system, and the future of U.S.-South Korea relations.

New Mexico is one of many communities across the United States where engagement with South Korea—whether through K-culture, investment, or international exchange—is deepening the U.S.-South Korea relationship. Maintaining these types of ties is an essential component in enhancing the two countries' shared security and economic prosperity, and KEI's FOK program aims to make that happen in the communities it serves.

Tom Ramage is Economic Policy Analyst at the Korea Economic Institute of America. The views expressed here are the author's alone.

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