



*Volume I*

*For a Better Business Environment*

*Issue I*

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### **AmCham Initiates Newsletter**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia's Newsletter. This is the first quarterly edition of what will become a regular monthly publication, similar to the newsletters of sister AmCham organizations in other countries. The newsletter will develop over time to meet the following three objectives:

**1. Improve communication among AmCham and its member companies.**

The newsletter will keep members abreast of AmCham events and activities, and help members learn about and connect with each other by providing member profiles and important member news.

**2. Promote AmCham and its member companies to the Armenian and international business communities.**

As the newsletter develops, it will become an important source of information about AmCham and its members to those currently doing business in Armenia and those hoping to do so.

**3. Provide analysis and commentary on topics of interest to AmCham members and others.**

The newsletter will serve as a source of information about the business environment in Armenia for members and others. This may include feature articles on major Armenian industries, discussion of the business and economic climate in the country, interviews with important figures, or other subjects.

Over time, the newsletter will reach a broad audience of AmCham member companies; US, Armenian, and international business leaders; US and Armenian decision-makers; and other AmCham organizations. It should be an integral part of AmCham activities, complementing the AmCham website and other promotional efforts.

The AmCham Newsletter welcomes member input. If you have comments, notice an error, or have ideas for newsletter content including features or member news, please contact Marshall Chase, AmCham's Senior Adviser, at the AmCham office or by email at [marshall.chase@amcham.am](mailto:marshall.chase@amcham.am). 🇺🇸

*The articles in the AmCham Armenia newsletter express the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia or its member companies.*

## AMCHAM MEMBER COMPANIES

### Gold Sustaining Members:



### AmCham Members by Sector:

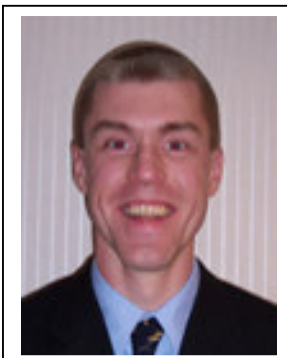
#### Banking, Insurance, Capital Markets

ArmSwissBank  
Cascade Capital Holdings  
Converse Bank Corporation  
First Mortgage Company  
Gravestar Incorporated  
HSBC  
IngoArmenia  
London-Yerevan Insurance

#### Consulting & Accounting

Alpha Plus Consulting  
Ameria  
Firmplace  
Grant Thornton Amyot  
IAB Centre  
KPMG  
Lugera & Makler  
PA Government Services  
Resolution Consultants

## An Interview with AmCham's New Senior Adviser



AmCham recently doubled its full-time staff with the hiring of Marshall Chase as a Senior Advisor in late November. Mr. Chase comes to AmCham through the Emerging Markets Development Advisers Program, funded by USAID, and will be working with AmCham for the next ten months. He is originally from New Hampshire, and recently received master's degrees in Business and Natural Resources through the University of Michigan's Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise. He

has several years of previous experience in business consulting, as well as international experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer and in business education in West Africa.

#### ***Q: Michigan, New Hampshire and West Africa are a long way from Armenia. What did you know about the country before applying for this position?***

A: I probably knew more than the average American, but still very little. I attended college during the early post-Soviet period and was lucky to have studied countries in transition in some of my coursework. I knew a few things about Armenia's economy, politics, and relationships with its neighbors shortly after independence, but it's been more than ten years since then and that knowledge was terribly outdated. Since applying for the job, I have spent a lot of time learning more about the country's current business environment and its amazing history and culture.

#### ***Q: Why did you decide to take this position with AmCham?***

A: I have a strong interest and background in sustainable business practice – that is, making businesses more profitable by addressing environmental and societal issues. I have a lot of experience working with American companies in this field, either on purely domestic issues like environmental performance, or evaluating international markets from an American perspective. But to me, the really exciting opportunities are in promoting sustainable business practices in emerging markets. That's where strong, reputable firms have incredible opportunities to grow while improving lives and the environment.

As I learned more about the position with AmCham, I realized that it was exactly the kind of opportunity I was looking for. Armenia faces significant environmental and social issues ranging from deforestation and energy concerns to corruption and human trafficking. At the same time, many AmCham members are concerned with improving the strength of the country's financial sector, promoting tourism, securing reliable energy supplies, and creating a level business playing field – all of which are related to those environmental and social problems. I saw this as a great opportunity to help make AmCham a stronger organization, one that can help its members address these problems, create new business opportunities, and contribute to a secure and stable country.

(See *Interview*, next page)

## **AmCham Members by Sector:**

### **Energy, Mining & Raw Materials**

Ararat Gold Recovery Company  
Armenian Copper Programme  
Hereward Resources  
SolarEn  
TEAM Energy

### **Foundations**

Cafesjian Museum Foundation  
Eurasia Foundation

### **Hospitality Firms & Restaurant Services**

Armenia Marriott Hotel  
JAZZVE  
Phoenicia Restaurant  
Square One  
Tufenkian Hospitality

### **IT & Telecom**

ArmenTel  
Arminco  
Hylink  
Lycos  
M-Possible  
Synopsis  
Unicom  
Virage Logic International

### **Law Firms**

Arlex International  
International Legal Consulting

### **Manufacturing & Production**

Armen Carpet  
Coca-Cola Bottling  
Made in Armenia Direct  
Treasures of Armenia

### **Marketing & Promotion**

Cognitio Caucasus  
DG Contact  
McCann Erickson

### **Miscellaneous / Other**

American University of Armenia  
Armenian Assembly of America  
Armobil Security Service  
California Trade Office  
Zeppelin Armenia

*Interview (cont.)*

#### ***Q. Could you talk a little more about your previous experience?***

A. I've worked in several areas, but all have centered around the idea that people benefit when businesses play a strong and productive role in society. Most recently, I have worked on market assessment and strategic planning for "more sustainable" business efforts in the forestry, automotive, and seafood markets, including work at Ford Motor Company and major paper industry players. Before graduate school, I spent several years designing and implementing environmental programs for large real estate companies that reduced pollution while saving money. I have also worked with farmers to employ techniques that increased crop yields while preventing deforestation and erosion both as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo and during later entrepreneurial development work elsewhere in West Africa.

#### ***Q. Given your background and interests, what do you think you can do for AmCham while here?***

A. I really feel that AmCham can be the premier organization representing business interests and promoting sustainable economic development in Armenia. I need to learn more about the specific interests and needs of the AmCham members and board, but I will be working closely with them to develop a strategy for the organization's growth and development. I'd like to develop a consensus about what AmCham should look like in, say, five years, and then establish a workable plan to get there. This could include pinpointing specific issues that AmCham should focus on, such as law enforcement, labor force development, or trade promotion; establishing additional exclusive member benefits like member discounts, information resources, or new promotional opportunities; and creating other new services.

In addition to longer-term activities, I have several immediate tasks for the next month or so. I will be learning about AmCham's existing operations and comparing them with AmChams in other countries and with other organizations in Armenia. I will also be laying the groundwork for improved internal and external communications by developing the AmCham newsletter, enhancing the website, and improving the AmCham library.

#### ***Q. You've been in Armenia less than two weeks, but what do you think of the country so far?***

A. It's a wonderful and extraordinarily complex country. Yerevan is a very friendly city, and I have enjoyed being able to walk almost everywhere – as long as I'm careful crossing the street, that is. I was amazed at the amount of construction going on, and the range of shops, clubs, and activities in the city. I have also been surprised by being able to get around pretty well and meet my basic needs without knowing Armenian or Russian.

I have only been out of Yerevan twice so far, but both trips were very influential. One trip was to Echmiadzin, to learn about the problems faced by refugees there. That trip and the work I've done on the issue since have given me some sense of how complex and interrelated things like poverty, deforestation, and lack of economic opportunity are here. My second trip was very different, a hiking tour of ancient churches and the fortress at Dashtadem, and getting a glimpse of the beautiful architecture and mountains certainly whetted my appetite for exploring more of the countryside.

(See *Interview*, next page)

## AmCham Members by Sector:

### Moving & Transportation

Ambertco  
Globalink  
Nomad Express  
Seaborne International  
Unipack  
Unitrans

### NGOs, Development Assistance

Academy for Educational  
Development  
Armenia Tree Project  
Catholic Relief Services  
DAI-ASME  
DFID - APSRP  
EBRD Resident Office Yerevan  
IREX  
Junior Achievement  
RTI International  
United Methodist Committee on  
Relief  
USDA CARD

### Publishing & Design

BARS Media  
Mineh

### Real Estate & Construction

RENCO  
Hovnanian International  
Shen-Concern

### Retail & Wholesale

ArsOil  
Philip Morris Management  
Services  
Sevan

### Travel & Tourism

Armenia International Airports  
Austrian Airlines  
British Mediterranean Airways  
Levon Travel  
Princess Maneh

### *Interview (cont.)*

Overall, I am particularly starting to appreciate how the ancient and modern overlap and interact in Armenia. This may be a peculiarly American perspective – my family is a very old one in the US, but we trace our roots back less than 400 years. In Armenia, there are buildings that have been in use for more than twice that long, and cultural roots run much deeper than that. As a result, I think that there is a much more palpable sense of history here than exists in the US. I see this interplay of ancient and modern in the architecture of Yerevan, in international relations, and I would imagine also in personal relationships and business dealings. I'm looking forward to learning a lot more about the country. 🇷🇺

## AmCham Holiday Assistance

In the spirit of the holidays, AmCham recently decided to open a fund for voluntary contributions to assist needy Armenian families during the harsh winter months. AmCham will partner with Orran ([www.orrان.am](http://www.orrان.am)) to identify and assist families or individuals with substantial needs for food, heating, or other requirements that would not be met without AmCham assistance. AmCham has set a goal of raising between \$3,000 and \$5,000 from members for this effort.

This project will be in addition to Orran's current work providing food, medical assistance, and other aid to more than 65 children and 48 elderly in Yerevan and elsewhere. Orran started as a small NGO in 2000, rapidly gained recognition and support in Armenia and the diaspora, and has grown into a strong organization with the experienced staff required to identify and properly assist families in need. Orran staff will provide details about the assistance supplied from the AmCham fund, including number of beneficiaries and accounting information. In addition, contributing AmCham member companies will be publicly recognized in AmCham and Orran publications. For details about how to contribute, please contact AmCham Executive Director Elen Ghazarian at the AmCham office, tel. 599 187. 🇷🇺



**ORRAN**  
**BENEVOLENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL**  
**ORGANIZATION**  
**"HELPING FAMILIES IN NEED"**

*AmCham would like to thank David Kelly and Cascade Capital Holdings for their assistance in developing this AmCham newsletter design.*