

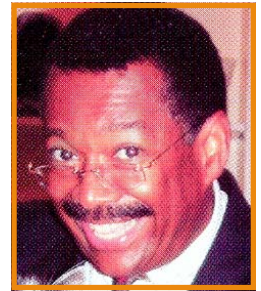


PROVENCE PROMOTION

Interview with Leslie McBee, United States Consul General in Marseille

“Provence is still and will remain a preferred region for economic installations!”

Now that 15 000 of its citizens live in the South of France and a large proportion of the million American tourists who visit France every year also visit the PACA region, Leslie McBee is a very busy Consul General! Particularly because commercial relations between Provence and Lincoln's homeland are continuously strengthening under his leadership Like his cooperation with Provence Promotion. So is Provence becoming America's new Eldorado?



Leslie Mc Bee

> And what does your cooperation with the Provence Promotion agency and regional institutions consist of?

Leslie McBee : The United States General Consulate, the United States Embassy Commercial Service and Provence Promotion signed a partnership agreement in June 2003 related to the joint production of two CD-Roms providing economic information – one on aeronautics and the other on microelectronics.

This operation provided an essential tool for American companies who would like firstly to export their products and their services in France, and secondly to encourage them in setting up or making investments in the Bouches-du-Rhône department.

The three institutions have pooled their multimedia tools in order to concentrate information supplied by the United States Embassy Commercial Department (www.buyusa.gov/France) and information supplied by Provence Promotion and accessible on its site, on a single medium.

This project was setup because of the broad range and complementary nature of information contained on the two web sites and the professional and friendly relations between the United States General Consulate and Provence Promotion. The agreement was renewed for the creation of a third CD-Rom entitled «Doing business in France».

> What do you think about "repatriation" programs such as Home Sweet Home and Start in Provence for French people living in the USA?

These are programs very well designed in terms of logistics, information and assistance provided. They offer a genuine alternative to French people who would like to move to Provence. And anyway, who wouldn't after browsing through the brochure published by Provence Promotion?!

> Has the quality of Franco-American relations suffered economically from recent geopolitical divergences?

Although the tourist influx has dropped temporarily, Provence has incontestable specialties such as optics and biotechnology and does and will remain a preferred region for economic setups. Note also that scientific education and R&D in the PACA region have a good international reputation.

> More broadly, what are the economic and industrial roles of a Consul?

Our role is to explore new opportunities for American companies and to bring together French and American citizens. Another objective is to be on the lookout for French and Americans who might cooperate.

> What is your feeling about the development of microelectronics and new information and communication technologies in the PACA region, along the lines of Silicon Valley?

The PACA region has a strong potential for development in microelectronics and new information and communication technologies. The presence of companies such as ST Microelectronics, Atmel, Gemplus and Applied Materials provide perfect illustrations of the vitality of the region in this field.