

# GA Gov. Kemp is leading a weeklong economic development mission to Italy



Macon Telegraph · Mike Haskey/mhaskey@ledger-enquirer.com

Gov. Brian Kemp announced Friday he will visit Italy for a weeklong trip to fortify business relationships with one of Europe's largest economies.

The Republican governor, first lady Marty Kemp and state economic development recruiters will meet with several Italian companies next week that operate facilities across Georgia, while also trying to seal the deal on potential new projects.

From manufacturers of pasta sauceto tires to firearms, the trip's itinerary features companies from [across a spectrum of industries](#), which Kemp said adds vital variety to Georgia's economic mix.

"When you look at the investments that people are making in our state, it's always good for us not to be reliant on one industry," he told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "That's what has really held Georgia's economy up for decades."

The mission comes a month after Kemp [visited South Korea](#) to strengthen its corporate ties with Georgia, furthering the second-term governor's business recruitment agenda on an international stage. Kemp has made economic recruitment, particularly in rural Georgia, a cornerstone of his campaigns. He's also an oft-floated name for future federal office.

Kemp's predecessor, [Gov. Nathan Deal](#), led the last international business pilgrimage to Italy in 2017, the same year Italian eyewear manufacturer Luxottica Group announced it would expand its Henry County facility by 1,000 employees. Luxottica is listed among nine companies that Kemp will visit from Monday through July 27.

Some companies, such as firearms stalwart Beretta and pasta sauce producer La Regina di San Marzano, are celebratory stops to tout recent Georgia projects. Beretta subsidiary Norma Precision in 2022 announced a [\\$60 million factory expansion](#) in coastal Chatham County. La Regina in 2020 announced a [\\$20 million food processing facility](#) in Bacon County, which today receives its Italian tomatoes through the Port of Savannah.

Others like tire manufacturer Pirelli have Peach State pedigrees spanning decades. The company's Rome factory has operated since 2002.

"When you look at where the Italian companies are in Georgia, they're literally all over the map," Kemp said. "... They're diverse investments, so it's not a bunch of companies doing the same thing."

Italy, the third-largest economy in the Eurozone, is one of Georgia's top 15 trade partners, with \$3.4 billion in total trade moving between them in 2023. An estimated 90 Italian-owned facilities support roughly 5,000 jobs across Georgia, according to the [Georgia Department of Economic Development](#).

On top of raising his political profile, the trade missions are a form of catch-up after the COVID-19 pandemic limited Kemp's international visits.

"Because of COVID, we went a long time without making these trips," he said. "We have a lot of pent-up demand."

## **Kemp's Italy itinerary**

Here are the companies with existing Georgia operations that Gov. Brian Kemp will meet with during his weeklong economic development mission to Italy.

**La Regina di San Marzano:** A pasta sauce manufacturer with a processing facility in Alma.

**Beretta Holding S.A.:** A firearms manufacturer with a facility in Chatham County.

**Elemaster:** An electric manufacturing services provider with its U.S. headquarters in Duluth.

**Pirelli:** A tire manufacturer with its U.S. headquarters in Rome.

**Luxottica:** An eyewear designer and manufacturer with a manufacturing and distribution center in McDonough.

**TMC Transformers:** An industrial group that makes low voltage dry-type transformers and reactors with its U.S. headquarters in Waynesboro.

**Aquafil:** A fiber, nylon and polymer producer with two plants in Cartersville.

**Epta:** A refrigeration company with its U.S. headquarters in Columbus.

**MAPEI Group:** A chemical company with multiple Georgia facilities, including a training center in Calhoun and a factory in Dalton.