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Ohio Lawyer Aims to Connect Midwest Growers With Cuba

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COLUMBUS, OH – Change is occurring quickly as the U.S. opens relations with Cuba, especially in the island's agriculture and industrial sectors. Kevin Braig, an agribusiness and environmental compliance lawyer with Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP, is paying close attention to these developments and taking steps to become a resource for businesses looking to enter Cuban markets. He recently visited the country as part of the Ohio State Bar Association's Cross-Cultural Educational Exchange Program to immerse himself in the culture and learn about the legal and business issues companies will soon encounter.

"Cuba is poised to start climbing the ladder to becoming a more normalized and free enterprise country," said Braig. "Once the embargo is lifted, not only will Cuba's path to having a middle class accelerate, but it also will increase demands for all products grown by Midwest growers."

The trip provided Braig with the opportunity to explore the country's legal system by consulting with Cuban attorneys and international attorneys based in Havana. These interactions provided insight on how regulations on lawyers impact their interactions with the government and clients. Between meetings and seminars, Braig was also able to have conversational insights with Cubans on the country's culture landscape.

"The society is very politically driven, as opposed to purely economic," said Braig. "Building trust is the most important thing that can happen right now so strong relationships can be in place when the embargo is lifted."

Braig has extensive experience representing large scale agricultural operations in communicating and negotiating with both state and local governments, as well has handling regulatory issues related to all aspects of agribusiness. He hopes to use his experiences to help U.S. companies identify opportunities when

sanctions are eased or lifted.

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