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# JETRO Chicago Midwest NEWSLETTER

Illinois • Indiana • Iowa • Kansas • Michigan • Minnesota • Missouri • Nebraska • North Dakota • Ohio • South Dakota • Wisconsin

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## Mayor R.C. Klipsch, City of Petersburg, IN: Insights on Japan Foundation's GEN-J Program

**Prepared by Kelly Highland, JETRO Chicago**

The Japan Foundation's Grassroots Exchange Network-Japan (GEN-J) Invitation Program provides an opportunity for community and business leaders from the Midwest and South Regions of the United States, to visit Japan. Through this program, the Japan Foundation facilitates a network for the participants to develop relationships with Japanese business leaders to gain a deeper understanding about Japan and Japanese companies.



*Mayor R.C. Klipsch*

I had the pleasure of interviewing one of the GEN-J invitees, Richard C. Klipsch, Mayor of Petersburg, Indiana, who visited Japan for the first time this past May.

### Your first time visiting Japan Mayor, please share your impression with us?

Since this was my first visit, I was extremely nervous. I was invited by Consul-General of Japan in Chicago Naoki Ito, to be a participant in this invitation program. It was truly an honor to be invited. Since I had only 2-3 weeks to prepare, I contacted Theresa Kulczak, Executive Director of the Japan America Society of Indiana to

**See "Mayor Klipsch," page 3**

## Midwest-Japan: Innovative Models



### From the Chief Executive Director

**Ralph Inforzato**  
*Chief Executive Director,  
JETRO Chicago*

There is a sense of enthusiasm in the Midwest-Japan relationship. This wellspring of energy is driven by innovative models in technology, the persona of local and state governments and how they perceive Japan, and new enabling programs bringing the Midwest and Japan closer together.

### Innovative Technology

Continental Structural Plastics (CSP) and its parent company Teijin Limited developed and are currently ramping up a lightweighting parts solution for the GM Sierra Pickup Truck, which will result in hundreds of new production jobs in Huntington County, Indiana.

The specific innovation is called CarbonPro pickup, which weighs just 60 lbs. I watched in amazement as Consul General Naoki Ito easily lifted this carbon fiber, thermoplastic pickup box off a large rack on the factory floor. My point is that as the CSP/Teijin innovation goes into commercial production, the facility must greatly expand their workforce to meet the demand capacity for the GMC Sierra Pickup. Just ten years ago, this CSP facility was experiencing the challenges of the U.S. financial crisis. Now the facility is thriving because of this carbon fiber pickup box which directly will account for hundreds of new jobs. (See the "Dream Team" piece featuring CSP's Eric Haiss).

**See "Chief Executive Director," page 10**

## Teijin Acquisition of CSP Created a Global Automotive Materials "Dream Team"

When Teijin Limited announced the \$825 million acquisition of Continental Structural Plastics (CSP) in January 2017, it was announcing a combination of materials know-how and automotive manufacturing expertise that would create a global automotive components powerhouse.

Together, CSP and Teijin combine the chemistry, process and supply chain knowledge the automotive industry needs to make advanced composites the material of choice for body panels, battery carriers, pickup boxes and structural applications. Prior to the acquisition of CSP, Teijin had some automotive parts supply experience in low volume applications on super cars. "But as we started to promote our carbon fiber reinforced thermoplastic Serebo and other technologies intended for high volume production, we were running into hesitation from our OEM customers," explained Eric Haiss, CSP executive vice president. "They were not sure we could make the transition from material supplier to parts supplier for a major program."

Haiss, who was a vice president with Teijin Advanced Composites America before being appointed to the executive team of CSP following the acquisition, said that Teijin



*Eric Haiss, Executive Vice President, Continental Structural Plastics (CSP)*

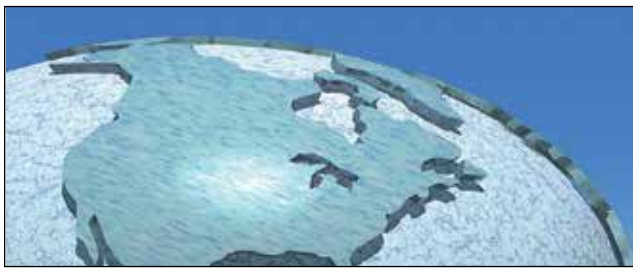
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## JETRO Around the Midwest

### Seminars, Meetings and Events



JETRO Chairman and CEO Nobuhiko Sasaki (front row center) made a visit to the JETRO Chicago office on Friday, June 21.



Ralph Inforzato greets former Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper in Chicago on Monday, May 6.



JETRO Chicago's Ralph Inforzato addresses the May 9th Schaumburg Business Association's International Manufacturing Sales & Incentives program, in Schaumburg, IL.



JETRO Chicago visited Lincoln, Nebraska on April 10. Pictured above, from left: George Behringer, Honorary Consul of Japan in Nebraska; JETRO representatives, Kikuko Ono, Tsubasa Hashimoto and Ralph Inforzato; Lincoln Chamber of Commerce President, Wendy Birdsall and Pat Haverly, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce Vice President.



The April 10 visit to Lincoln also included a meeting at the Nebraska Cattlemen's Association. Above, from left, Tsubasa Hashimoto, JETRO Chicago; George Behringer, Honorary Consul of Japan in Nebraska; Mike Fitzgerald, Editor, Nebraska Cattlemen; and Ralph Inforzato.

Ralph Inforzato meets with Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds on July 9 in Des Moines.



## JETRO at The SelectUSA Investment Summit

The SelectUSA Investment Summit brings global companies together with economic developers from across the United States, all for one purpose – to connect global business to local investment opportunities. This year's event took place June 10-12 in Washington DC.



Above, from left: J.P. Nauseef, President and CIO, JobsOhio; Shigeki Maeda, Executive Vice President, JETRO; Hon. Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio; Ralph Inforzato, JETRO Chicago; Issei Hatakeyama, President, JETRO New York; and Justin Kocher, Manager, Int'l Business Development, JobsOhio.



Shigeki Maeda, JETRO; Jeff Mason, President & CEO, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC); Ralph Inforzato, JETRO Chicago.



Shigeki Maeda, JETRO, with Debi Durham, Director, Iowa Economic Development Authority.

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## Two Midwest Delegates Share Views of Japan Foundation's GEN-J Program

### The Story Behind the Project – Daikin Applied Americas Inc., Faribault, MN



#### Guest View

**Deanna Kuennen**  
Director, Community  
& Economic  
Development,  
City of Faribault, MN

In my professional life, I am an economic developer. My days involve working with businesses to help them grow. Last year I was working very closely with a local HVAC manufacturing company that was vetting

locations for a new plant to manufacture a state-of-the-art product. While I considered this a local company (having a presence in our community for over 60 years) – the reality is that Daikin Applied is a Japanese company, the largest HVAC manufacturer in the world, with 90 production sites worldwide and customers in more than 150 countries. That global footprint and international corporate designation did not change how I approached the job ahead, and I simply did what I do best. With a high level of professionalism and an authentic dose of enthusiasm – I worked closely with the company's local leadership, provided information as to why Faribault, MN was the best location for the new plant and investment, packaged an incentive portfolio that would meet the company's needs, and demonstrated our city's ability to deliver projects on time. At the end of the day, Daikin Applied chose Faribault for their new \$40 million state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. This is fantastic for our community – and a reflection on how Faribault is an international engagement-ready city that is able to assist and grow foreign-owned businesses.

Shortly after Daikin Applied announced that their new plant would be in Faribault, MN, I was in Washington, DC for SelectUSA representing the State of Minnesota. Using the Daikin Applied project as a conversation starter, I secured an invitation to attend the Japanese Ambassador's Reception where I met and dialogued with many Japanese business representatives. One conversation was with Yoshiyuki "Yogi" Uemura, President of the Daikin U.S. Corporation, where we talked about the recent Daikin project announcement and I expressed gratitude for the company's investment in Faribault. Mr. Uemura extended an invitation to come to Japan and tour the Daikin facilities. While I thought this was just a nicety, Ralph Inforzato, JETRO Chicago Chief Executive Director heard about this invitation and kindly educated me on Japanese etiquette, letting me know that the invitation was sincere. Mr. Inforzato encouraged me to honor the invitation. I took to heart Mr. Inforzato's words, and left SelectUSA with the goal of enhancing the Minnesota/Japan relationships that was developing, and working towards a visit to Japan.

I continued to pursue my goal enhancing the Japan/Faribault connection. With the help of Mr. Inforzato's persistence and by working with my colleagues at the Minnesota Trade Office, Faribault was selected as a stop on Consul-General of Japan in Chicago Naoki Ito's Grassroots Tour. Over the course of a day, Consul-General Ito, his Team, and JETRO



See "Guest View: Kuennen," page 8

### Mayor Klipsch ... from page 1

provide me with information and advice regarding proper Japanese protocol and business practices. For instance, I had my business cards translated into Japanese since I learned the importance of business card exchange in the Japanese culture. To be in Japan for the first time was a bit overwhelming, however Japan is so beautiful and it was fascinating to see how smoothly everything moved in Tokyo with so many people in a small area. Once in Japan, we travelled via bus and this was a wonderful opportunity to truly experience traditional and rural areas in Japan.

I was honored to be a part of the first of two groups that attended this invitation program. My group consisted of 19 members, representing 5 states. Besides me, there were two other mayors in attendance representing Michigan and Georgia.

#### What were some of the highlights of your visit to Japan?

I must convey that the entire program was well structured and organized and so much effort went into planning this from beginning to end. The agenda consisted of visiting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan Business Federation (Keidanren), JETRO and Nippon Steel. Each one of these visits was extremely educational for me, however two truly stood out. The first being JETRO. From the time we arrived, we were greeted at the door by JETRO representatives and then taken to a conference room. We were greeted by Executive Vice President, Shigeki Maeda. Mr. Maeda explained the role of JETRO and its commitment to strengthening the U.S.-Japan relationship, and he also spoke of JETRO's new commitment to "Grassroots Outreach". The importance of grassroots outreach is to inform for instance, local communities in the U.S. who are unaware of not only JETRO, but about the relationship between the U.S. and Japan; the contribution of Japanese companies to the communities they are invested in; workforce development. Mr. Maeda then opened the floor for each one of us to introduce ourselves and explain about our communities. Well I informed Mr. Maeda that I met JETRO Chicago and its Chief Executive Director Ralph Inforzato through the grassroots outreach program. Ralph visited Petersburg, IN several times to explain about the U.S.-Midwest-Japan-JETRO relationship. I find it to be fascinating that JETRO facilitates relations connections throughout the world – just incredible.

The next highlight of this trip was the visit to Nippon Steel in Fukuoka. It was astonishing to see industrial communities in rural areas of Japan. The plant manager gave us a tour of the plant and it was incredible. The plant was operating with cutting-edge technology and I couldn't help to notice how clean the facility was, especially for a steel plant. Nippon Steel has four joint ventures in the State of Indiana related to the automotive industry.

#### For Japanese companies looking to expand their business to Indiana, what is advantageous for them in either Petersburg, Indiana and Pike County?

First of all, Petersburg is positioned perfectly in southwest Indiana with regards to available land. There is plenty of land along I-69 and the land owner is willing to sell. Secondly, Petersburg has natural resources such as coal and gas; it is close to a regional airport; there is a rail system to transport products. And lastly, I would like to convey that Petersburg and Pike County needs, wants and welcomes Japanese investment. And we have a very capable workforce.

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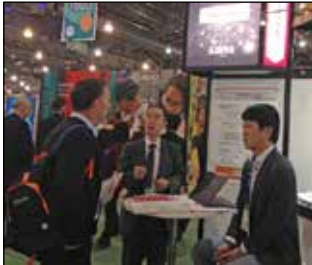
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## JETRO Hosts 22 Japanese Life-science Companies at BIO 2019

Prepared by Matt Feagley, JETRO Chicago



The Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) held its 26th Annual BIO International Convention in Philadelphia from June 3-6. There were more than 1,800 exhibitors, which included 46 international, regional and state pavilions. More than 17,000 individuals attended, from 65 countries and 49 states.

This year, JETRO recruited 22 Japanese life science companies and research organizations to exhibit in the Japan Pavilion. They presented advancements in regenerative medicine; drug discovery tools; new treatments for oncology, pain management, cognitive and neurological disorders; contract manufacturing; and R&D. BIO's advanced partnering system allowed the exhibiting companies to search for potential partnering opportunities and arrange meetings. The meeting spots within the Japan pavilion were busy from open until close throughout the entire convention, with approximately 600 official partnering meetings taking place.

As a part of the program, JETRO Chicago organized a partnering workshop for our Japanese exhibitors. Representatives from AbbVie, Eli Lilly, and Johnson & Johnson made closed-door presentations to the Japan Pavilion members. Speakers introduced their companies, detailed the therapy areas which they focus on, explained how they collaborate with other firms on research, licensing and marketing. Their presentations were followed by a networking session where Japanese delegates were able to connect with the speakers.

On the final day of the exhibition, JETRO organized an Invest Kansai event at the Venture Café Philadelphia. The event featured speakers from various governmental organizations in the Kansai region, as

*JETRO Chicago's Ralph Inforzato, with Tom Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania, and Issei Hatakeyama, President of JETRO New York*



well as pitch sessions from 6 of our Japan Pavilion Exhibitors. The annual BIO International Convention is the largest event for the biotechnology sector, covering a wide spectrum of life science and related fields, including bio manufacturing, biofuels, cell therapy, drug discovery, genomics, and nanotechnology. Next year's BIO International Convention will take place June 8-11, 2020 in San Diego, California. If you are interested in learning more about Japan's life science sector or JETRO's biotech initiatives, contact Matt Feagley at [Matt\\_Feagley@jetro.go.jp](mailto:Matt_Feagley@jetro.go.jp).



*Norikazu Mori, JETRO Tokyo, speaking at the Global Innovation Hub - Japan Session*



*Speakers at the Partnering Workshop for Japan Pavilion Exhibitors included (above, from left) Bin Li, Abbvie Inc.; Gurkeerat Singh, Eli Lilly and Company; and Michal Preminger, Johnson & Johnson.*

### Contact JETRO Chicago • [www.jetro.go.jp/usa/](http://www.jetro.go.jp/usa/)

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For general information, call the number above.

The JETRO Chicago team offers a wide variety of business support services for companies in the Midwest planning to initiate a business presence or seeking to add to their existing investment in Japan, and/or work with Japanese companies. Please feel free to contact us.

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## Welcome and Farewell



JETRO Chicago is pleased to welcome Fujio Fujimoto as the new Director of Research and Promotion/Agriculture Department. Mr. Fujimoto is a native of Hyogo-Prefecture. Mr. Fujimoto graduated from the University of Tokyo where he studied law. He joined the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in 2007 and was assigned to several departments, such as the department for stable supply of rice, the department for collecting agricultural land, and the department for organizing policies for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. He also joined the Reconstruction Agency to revive the Tohoku region following The Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. Please contact Mr. Fujimoto at [Fujio\\_Fujimoto@jetro.go.jp](mailto:Fujio_Fujimoto@jetro.go.jp)



In June, we bid farewell to Ken Kasahara who joined JETRO Chicago three years prior, as the Director of Research and Promotion/Agriculture team. During his tenure in Chicago, he worked to promote Japanese Sake and food products throughout the U.S. Mr. Kasahara has also spoke at several seminars concerning Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in Japan. Upon returning to Japan, he will resume working at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). JETRO Chicago wishes Mr. Kasahara the best of luck in his new position back in Japan.

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## AllianceSTL, Leadership Council of SW Illinois and Area Leaders Strengthen Business Relations with Keidanren USA



### Guest View

**Jim Alexander**  
Senior Vice President,  
AllianceSTL

In an ongoing effort to cultivate business development and strengthen relationships with corporate leaders from Japan, several public and private sector leaders from the St. Louis region travelled to Washington, DC this

past June for a lively information exchange at Keidanren USA. The event was organized by the St. Louis Economic Development Alliance (AllianceSTL) and the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois (LCSI) in close collaboration with JETRO Chicago and Keidanren USA. The primary goal of the meeting was to develop strong associations with Japanese businesses that have the potential to locate new facilities in the St. Louis region.

This unique gathering represented a first for the St. Louis bi-state region. The concept of this joint meeting was the result of continued collaboration that originated in Chicago this past February with AllianceSTL, JETRO Chicago and LCSI. Our distinguished colleagues at JETRO Chicago have a keen understanding of the impressive assets and business climate strengths of the bi-state St. Louis region. They have done their research on the region and recognize its tremendous potential for Japanese businesses.

The meeting with Keidanren USA presented a unique opportunity to detail the compelling story of the Metro East's explosive economic and population growth, the impressive talent pipeline stemming from the area's dynamic higher education community, and the unique industry clusters helping to drive the current momentum.



In addition, the meeting underscored the commitment of SW Illinois elected officials, including Mayor Herb Roach of O'Fallon and Kurt Prenzler, Board Chairman of Madison County. We also were

joined by a distinguished leader from the region's vibrant educational sector, Dr. Randy Pembroke, Chancellor of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Dennis Wilmsmeyer, Executive Director of America's Central Port highlighted the impressive river, road, rail and runway logistics assets of our region. Michael Mueller, Ameren Illinois' VP of Economic Development and Michael Brooks, Clayco's Director of Economic Development also presented how their organizations will support Japanese business investment in our region. Dr. Ronda Sauget, Executive Director and CEO of LCSI was on hand to further enhance the strategic conversations which were initiated in Chicago.

The June meeting in DC allowed our team of regional leaders to



*Jim Alexander presenting at the Keidanren USA event in Washington DC.*

provide important in-depth demographic information about the specific assets of the bi-state region. Perhaps most importantly, it gave us the opportunity to be transparent and convey our genuine desire to welcome Japanese executives and businesses. The genuine rapport we established with each member of the delegation is foundational to our future collaboration. We were able to directly reinforce our desire to help our Japanese colleagues achieve their strategic objectives. We are all tremendously enthused about prospective joint efforts with Japan. In fact, we are preparing for a visit from JETRO Chicago, Keidanren USA and the Consul-General of Japan's Chicago office, this autumn.

AllianceSTL is cognizant that as the Japanese invest in specific regions, they invest themselves fully. In turn, that serves as a magnet for additional Japanese companies to move into the region. We are confident that our collaborative business environment is uniquely equipped to help our Japanese corporate counterparts successfully reach their growth potential in the St. Louis region. We are looking forward to the upcoming visit, allowing us the privilege of showcasing our attractive region and further enhancing the outstanding relationships that have been established with our ongoing outreach and partnership.



*AllianceSTL team at the Keidanren USA event in Washington DC.*

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## Japanese Delegates gather in Cincinnati for Select USA Spin-Off Program

**Prepared by Kelly Highland, JETRO Chicago**

Directly following the Select USA Program held in Washington, DC, JETRO Chicago organized a "Spin-Off" program which took place in Cincinnati, Ohio, June 13-14. The theme of this program was AI/IoT in advanced manufacturing and it was specially designed for the Japanese delegates who also participated in the DC program. There were 17 Japanese delegates who travelled to Cincinnati to join the spin-off program.

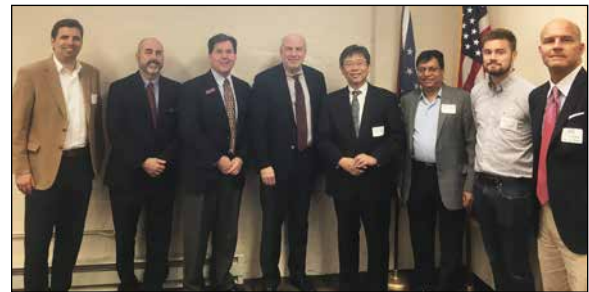
The first day began with an overview of the U.S. Midwest and the State of Ohio at the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. This overview also encompassed an explanation of how the Cincinnati region offers many opportunities to Japanese companies looking for new innovation in AI/IoT technologies in advanced manufacturing, and how they can implement them in their facilities. Those on the agenda for the morning overview were: Ralph Inforzato, Chief Executive Director of JETRO Chicago; Takayuki Watanabe, Executive Director of JETRO; Karthik Avadhanula, Director of Advanced Manufacturing at JobsOhio; Cierra Clymer, Director of International Business Development at REDI Cincinnati; Joe Dehner, President of the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati; and Hiroshi Tanaka, Vice President of the Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati.

The group was then off to visit Physna located in downtown Cincinnati. Physna engineered a geometric search engine which is a support system for CAD software. This search engine uses advanced 3D recognition by first finding models by searching for shapes, patterns, hole sizes and then looks for the differences and/or similarities allowing companies to locate problems within their system. Utilizing the Physna system increases efficiency in CAD design and manufacturing. Next on the agenda was a visit to the University of Cincinnati 1819 Innovation Hub. This is the anchor to Cincinnati's developing innovation district. 1819 is a one-stop destination where companies ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500 interact with each other and university talent, and they collaborate on innovative projects. In the afternoon we visited Makino located in Mason, OH. Makino is one of the largest machining manufacturers in the world. Makino uses a technology developed by iTSpeex and we were fortunate to see how their technology is applied in a factory setting. This is a speech recognition technology that listens to human machine operators and then assists with accurately and efficiently completing their tasks. The final stop for the first day was at HCDC Incubation facility. HCDC helps build businesses and promote job creation in 3 simple ways: businesses incubation, business lending, and economic development services. As a not-for-profit economic development company, HCDC's mission is to be a driving force behind business development. HCDC arranged for four entrepreneurial companies who are either currently using or have used the incubation facility to make presentations about their innovative products/services, to our delegation. The evening ended with a very involved meet and greet networking reception.

Day two of the Spin-Off Program began with a visit to Gosiger located in Dayton, Ohio. Gosiger is a family-owned and operated machine tool distributor and manufacturing solutions provider, which has been in operation for almost a century. Gosiger works closely with all of their clients so they can develop solutions that are customized to each situation. They build these solutions around the industry's finest machine

tools and accessories, and provide installation, training, maintenance, replacement parts and unmatched technical support. The final destination for this delegation was a visit to Predictrics Corporation. Their mission is to deliver predictive software solutions that enable users to make data-driven decisions. Their predictive analytics solutions take the guesswork out of production and maintenance planning and replace it with accurate predictions. This in turn reduces unplanned downtime and significantly increases productivity and improves quality.

The Japanese delegates who joined the Spin-Off program found the meetings, company visits/tours to be very interesting and educational. This Spin-Off program was a great opportunity for JETRO to showcase the innovation that is being created in the Cincinnati/Dayton area.



*At the HCDC Incubation facility on June 13, with members of HCDC, the economic development office for Hamilton County, Ohio. Patrick Longo, President, HCDC is 3rd from left, with Ralph Inforzato, JETRO, and Consul-General Tsutomu Nakagawa, Consulate-General of Japan in Detroit.*



*(Above) Visiting Makino North America Headquarters, (global machining technology company) to observe how iTSpeex is utilized, on June 13 in Mason, Ohio.*



*Visiting the 1819 Incubation Hub at the University of Cincinnati.*



*(Right) Visiting Physna LLC, a 3D modeling software developer, June 13.*



*At the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.*

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## North Central College and JETRO Partner for Japan Career Day



**Prepared by Haydee Nunez, Director of Career Development, North Central College**

North Central College is proud to partner with JETRO Chicago to create new talent recruitment initiatives that connect Japanese companies with students and graduates from our various academic programs including Japanese, Engineering, and Business.

With the support of President Troy Hammond, North Central worked closely with JETRO to explore new talent pipeline relationships through campus recruiting for Japanese companies in the region. This collaboration was a natural fit since North Central has long standing ties to Japan dating back to 1870 that includes hosting students from Japan on our campus, a 4 year Japanese language program, and a variety of study away opportunities in Japan.

"This partnership with JETRO allows us to help fulfill the talent needs of the business community while delivering on our mission to prepare our students to be global citizens and leaders," said President Troy Hammond. "I'm hopeful that this builds on North Central's rich history of programing and international exchanges with Japan."

North Central is excited to participate in a Human Resources Seminar, hosted by JETRO, to share information about campus recruiting as a strategy to develop the next generation workforce in Illinois and across the region. We shared information about the upcoming recruitment event, Japan Career Day, to be hosted at North Central and were happy to see several attending companies register for the event on the spot.

This collaboration led to hosting Japan Career Day on our campus in April, to help learn about recruiting at campus career fairs. More than

100 North Central College students, alumni, and JETAA attended to meet with 14 companies and learn about opportunities available in the region.

"The Japan Career Day was a wonderful opportunity for North Central's Japanese program students, especially graduating Japanese majors. They had a chance to show off their Japanese communication abilities by talking with Japanese speaking employers. A student with Japanese and computer science double major received an offer and started her internship at one of the employers in May. Another Japanese major was invited to an interview and started working right after graduation in June." Said Dr. Fukumi Matsubara, professor of Japanese.

Employer partners joined the planning committee for lunch before opening Japan Career Day to students and the day ended with a campus tour which included the newly built Dr. Myron Wentz Science Center and the School of Business and Entrepreneurship.

We feel strongly that our relationships with JETRO is developing into a true partnership. JETRO kindly let North Central's Japanese program borrow Paro, the therapeutic seal robot for about a month. Paro had meet and greet opportunities with Japanese program students. In addition, Paro participated in the Dyson Wellness Center's Dog Day, designed to invite therapy dogs to relieve student, staff and faculty stress on campus. Paro also visited a psychology's professor's office and her classes.

We are grateful for the partnership and look forward to working with JETRO in the new academic year.



## JETRO Introduces "Open for Professionals" Site

As globalization advances in today's world, professionals with a high-level of knowledge and skills are playing an active role transcending borders. Japan aims for further development by welcoming such competent professionals from around the world. Japanese companies are in need of highly-skilled foreign professionals to support their global business. In Japan, not only are there large corporations but also many competitive small and mid-sized businesses, many of which expect highly-skilled foreign professionals to play an important role in their overseas business from an early stage.

The new "Open for Professionals" location on the JETRO headquarters website provides a wealth of resources for individuals wishing to explore the opportunities for professionals at Japanese companies. The site is divided into four steps:

- 1. Study & Work in Japan:** Japan welcomes talent from across the world. For those who are interested in studying at a Japanese university or working at a Japanese company, they can learn more about Japan's system and latest information.
- 2. Career Search:** For those who are considering a career in Japan, they can learn more about what type of companies are actively seeking to employ highly-skilled foreign professionals, and how to find prospective employers or meet with them at events.
- 3. Required Procedures:** After finding employment, there are various procedures required to work in Japan. Prior to obtaining a visa, it is necessary to acquire a status of residence. Learn more details about the processes and procedures.
- 4. After Employment:** For those working in Japan for the first time, the different social security systems and new living environment may seem confusing. A list of consultation services for inquiries about the various public insurance systems, living environment, and Japanese language studies is available.

You can find all of these resources at <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/hrportal/>.



## Japan-Northeast Indiana Summit helps Build Business Relationships

Prepared by Tsubasa Hashimoto, JETRO Chicago

The Japan-Northeast Indiana Summit 2019 took place at Purdue University in Fort Wayne, Indiana on April 26. Over 70 people attended the summit, including local leaders looking to build a relationship with Japanese companies. The purpose of the event was to develop and nurture the Japanese business community in northeast Indiana and to update and discuss current economic issues related to the U.S.-Japan and Indiana-Japan economic relationships.

The highly motivated economic development team of this area, the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership acknowledged the importance of creating opportunities to meet one another to share information in order to retain, attract and also to grow Japanese companies' investment in the region.

At the Summit, the President of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, John Sampson, made his opening remarks, reporting both the population and economy in the northeast region are growing steadily. The northeast Indiana region actually had an inflow of 5,000 people last year.

The Hon. Naoki Ito, Consul-General of Japan in Chicago, explained the current U.S.-Japan political relationship and celebrated the special economic and cultural connections between Indiana and Japan.

Ms. Kristin Diczek from the Center for Automotive Research explained the present automotive situation, trade negotiations and the U.S. tariff issue. Understanding cultural differences was also mentioned during the panel discussion. Yoshi Ogawa from the Japan America Society of Indiana gave a lecture on the cultural differences that Americans may face when initiating contact with Japanese companies which he illustrated by examples that we have all experienced.

The last part of the Summit focused on workforce development. Fred Payne, Commissioner of Indiana's Department of Workforce Development explained the platform to skill up the state's workforce. And in a panel discussion moderated by JETRO Chicago's Chief Executive Director Ralph Inforzato, who made a presentation about Japanese companies' investment trends and JETRO's initiative on the labor force issues. Rick Sereno, Oji InterTech, shared some successful cases in his company and showed how the company is collaborating with a local high school.



Ralph Inforzato presenting at the Summit's Workforce Discussion panel, April 26, in Fort Wayne, IN.

After the event, the attendees were invited to a tour of Ivy Tech's Keith E. Busse Technology Center. The tour led by the Dean and faculty members gave attendees better understanding of the schools technical programs for skilling up students who could transition seamlessly into the regional workforce.

This event serves as a state and Midwest benchmark for other U.S. economic development teams that wish to demonstrate the investment that Japanese companies have made in their region and strengthen the relationship between their state's region and Japan. For more information, please visit: <https://neindiana.com/>

### Guest View: Kuennen ... from page 1

representatives met with business leaders and public officials, visited Japanese developments in southern Minnesota seeing first-hand how Japanese investment is supporting innovative product development, had in-depth conversations regarding sustainability and workforce, and explored ways to foster economic relationships between Japan and Minnesota. The visit was an opportunity to highlight the people and places that make us Faribault. This visit led to a surprise invitation to participate in the Japan Foundation's GEN-J Program – to travel to Japan, meet with business leaders, and experience the Japanese culture.

I had to pinch myself. I was going on a journey of a lifetime, and honoring an invitation to visit Daikin in Japan. In May 2019, I traveled with 18 others to Tokyo and Osaka.



Deanna Kuennen with Shigeki Maeda, Executive Vice President, JETRO

The week-long itinerary included a meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where we were greeted by Mr. Kiyoto Tsuji, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, discussed our shared democratic values and the need for business and trade rules to be fair. We visited the Japan External Trade Organization, meeting with Mr. Shigeki Maeda, Executive Vice President. Mr. Maeda expressed JETRO's enthusiastic commitment to strengthen the Japan/U.S. connection expanding business opportunities inward and outward, and insightful conversation followed regarding the shared workforce challenges being faced by companies and how we can collaborate to find creative solutions.

Next, we visited with Teruko Wada, Deputy Director International Affairs Bureau at Keidanren, learning about Society 5.0 and their initiatives towards a stronger and more resilient U.S./Japan relationship.

The week also included dinners filled with lively and interesting conversations with business leaders hosted by the Japan Foundation and the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and a chance to tour the Daikin Technology and Innovation Center. Daikin shared information about their "Forest of Knowledge," competitive mindset, creative collaborations, and future direction in artificial intelligence and open innovation. During this visit, I was also able to express our appreciation, in person, for the company's investment in Faribault, and present the company leadership with a letter from our Mayor. I ended the visit with an open invitation for the Japanese leadership to visit Faribault anytime.

Today I am back in Faribault, MN, reflecting on my trip. This journey of a lifetime that started as "just doing my job" has led to many "pinch myself" moments. I was impressed with the beauty of Japan, the sincerity of its people, and the fact that that while we may be located miles apart – we face many of the same challenges and want many of the same things. This experience has inspired me. I want to learn more about Japan businesses, do my part to strengthen existing and new partnerships, and build a platform for communication and understanding. It is now my responsibility to take what I have learned and run with it. My journey is not over, but is only just beginning!





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also recognized that carbon and glass fiber applications were both handled by the same



teams with the OEMs. "At Teijin, we really believed that carbon fiber reinforced plastics were going to replace glass fiber reinforced plastics like CSP was making. We were familiar with CSP because we were talking to the same people at the customers. And CSP was already established as both a material supplier and a parts supplier with these customers."

In addition to aiming to become a parts supplier, Teijin also had a desire to diversify in overseas markets, especially in North America. At the same time, CSP was looking for a way to expand its global footprint. "These factors made this acquisition attractive to both parties," said Haiss. "CSP was already very successful in North America. Because of the company's success with lightweighting, they had significant interest from overseas customers to supply lightweight structural and Class A components, but didn't necessarily have the manufacturing footprint to meet this demand."

As any manufacturer knows, establishing overseas operations can be challenging, and put a real strain on both human and financial resources. Through the acquisition, CSP now has access to the resources of Teijin, allowing the supplier's global growth to continue.

With the backing of Teijin, CSP's international growth has continued, primarily through the acquisition of Inapal Plásticos in 2018. This acquisition added two manufacturing locations in Portugal, and more importantly, expanded relationships with European-based global OEMs. Today, CSP has 17 locations on three continents, with additional facilities anticipated in North America and China within the next year.

From a cultural perspective, there were not only country cultures to learn, understand and integrate, but also an industry culture. As a Tier One automotive supplier, CSP often needs to make decisions quickly to meet the demands of its automaker customers.

"I was a little concerned about the pace of decisions within Teijin and whether or not it would be fast enough to meet CSP's needs," said Haiss. "But Teijin has really done a great job of working with CSP on the important issues, and having grace when urgent decisions are necessary. In the past two years, we see a trend to 'meet in the middle' where CSP is working hard to make the business more predictable, and Teijin has enacted policies that give CSP flexibility to meet our customer's needs."



*The Continental Structural Plastics (CSP) Showroom*

*The Continental Structural Plastics (CSP) headquarters in Auburn Hills, Michigan.*



## Japan Pavilion at the National Restaurant Association Show

*Prepared by Tamara Rasbury, JETRO Chicago*

JETRO organized its 2nd Japan Pavilion at the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show 2019, held from May 18-21, at Chicago's McCormick Place. The pavilion consisted of 17 exhibitors from Japan and it also housed



a demonstration kitchen stage. This year, NRA celebrated its 100th anniversary with more than 2,000 exhibitors and attracting more than 43,000 attendees from all around the world.



The Japan Pavilion had many unique and new products attracting food and beverage professionals and influencers. Compared to last year's NRA Show, there were more products that were trendy in the U.S. Some of the products that were right

on the trend included vegan pancakes, brown rice cheese and others that targeted health conscious consumers. The pavilion also had Sake and Japanese whiskey which are gaining popularity in the U.S.

A total of six chefs from famous Chicago restaurants demonstrated at the kitchen stage. Each chef created unique dishes using the exhibitor's products. The demonstration kitchen also gave the exhibitors an opportunity to promote their products. We believe that the demo kitchen gave the attendees ideas of how to use unique products in new ways, teaching them that the products do not have to be used in a traditional way.

In all, we believe that the NRA Show was successful from the positive feedback received from exhibitors and the increased interest of the products from the attendees. With the increase in popularity of Japanese food used by professionals and influencers, we believe that there will be an increase in the understanding and awareness by both the professionals and the consumers. We hope that by being a part of NRA Show, we could support Japanese companies and spread the word of Japanese cuisine and culture.



*Chef Alex Trim from Bar Ramone (L'EYE) demonstrating using Shredded Yuzu peels.*



*Demonstration by Exhibitor (Yamaguchi Aburaya Fkutarō). They created Matcha pancake using their organic green tea.*

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### Innovative Local Government

The role of the local government of Huntington City and Huntington County cannot be underestimated in the successful build-out of this CSP facility. The leadership remembers that a mere ten years ago, Huntington County's unemployment reached 14%. Huntington City Mayor Brooks Fetters and Mark Wickersham, Executive Director for Huntington County Economic Development quickly recognized that CSP presented a major opportunity, and they worked closely with the company to work through new building codes and regulations resulting in a smooth CSP expansion. Here we have a case where innovation developed in Japan morphs into scale up for mass production in the Midwest, which is fully supported by the local and state governments and results in significant job growth.

Close collaboration with companies is a matter of routine in Huntington and throughout this region. As Kate Virag, Vice President of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership said, "Manufacturing is our identity." And the Huntington County unemployment rate for annual 2018 is a remarkable 3.5%. Why? Northeast Indiana's innovative local governments, economic development professionals and consistent support of companies are resulting in a strong economy.

### Innovative Program

Over the years, I have met with so many Midwest local leaders and economic development groups who have expressed to me their sincere interest in visiting Japan, however were prevented by cost issues. In almost all cases, the budgets of local governments are very limited for global travel. These leaders clearly have the capabilities in terms of professionalism and personal integrity to development relationships in Japan. I am a strong believer in the importance of my JETRO Tokyo colleagues and Japanese company representatives, such as the Keidanren interacting with and meeting our local Midwest leaders while they are in Tokyo.

A new initiative, the Grassroots Exchange Network-Japan (GEN-J) Invitation Program developed by the Japan Foundation is an utter breakthrough, which is gradually bringing our local leaders to Japan. The GEN-J Invitation program is an innovative model because it is directly supporting our local leaders who have a strong and genuine interest in the business and cultural aspects of Japan, but could never organize this type of visit because of cost considerations. You will take heart in the fresh insights we are featuring by GEN-J participants Richard C. Kliptsch, the Mayor of Petersburg, IN and Deanna S. Kuennen, Community and Economic Development Director from the City of Faribault, MN, both focusing on their first in-Japan experiences.

### State Governments Embracing Japan

As a participant at the SelectUSA conference in Washington, DC last month, I found a heightened awareness about Japan. I visited 21 government exhibitions and found myself engaged in conversations with representatives of state governments who are planning trips to Japan on behalf of their governors.

I was more of a listener in these conversations as state representatives spoke to me about Japan, seeking to learn how JETRO could assist them with planning and guidance for their visits. From across the U.S., there are governors who are planning to visit Japan this autumn who would normally not consider global travel. Why now? I believe American governors see Japan as a fellow democracy and a reliable trading and investment partner. Governors have come to realize that through the years, Japanese companies' investments in production facilities in the United States continue to drive job growth.

Japan and the Midwest; as a model for technology innovation creating American jobs (Dream Team and Huntington City); as a model facilitating our local Midwest leaders to visit Japan and develop new relationships (GEN-J Invitation interviews) and; Japan and America, as partner democracies embracing and welcoming our governors' visits (SelectUSA experience), these models are creating a new and deeper harmony between the U.S. and Japan.



*Sara Folstad, Administrator, Rice County, MN (left) and Deanna S. Kuennen, Community & Economic Director, City of Faribault, MN (right) with The Honorable Shinsuke Sugiyama, Japan Ambassador to the United States (at the SelectUSA Conference in Washington DC, June 11, 2019).*

Recommend the JETRO Chicago Midwest Newsletter to a colleague, so they can keep up with the latest news, events and ideas that are helping Midwest companies develop businesses in Japan and with Japanese companies. For a FREE subscription delivered quarterly via e-mail, send name, title, company/organization name, address, phone number and e-mail address to [Kelly\\_Highland@jetro.go.jp](mailto:Kelly_Highland@jetro.go.jp)