

JETRO Chicago Midwest NEWSLETTER

Japan External Trade Organization

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Discovering the Value of Tradition at Food-Ex Japan 2016



Guest View

David Vohaska
President,
WA Imports, Inc.

JETRO invited David Vohaska to Japan in early March 2016 as a member of its Buyers Mission to Food-Ex Japan, an annual food & beverage trade show held at Makuhari Messe, outside of Tokyo. The Buyers Mission project is part of JETRO's ongoing effort to promote food products from Japan. Selected buyers from around the world are introduced to Japanese producers and exporters both at trade shows and in locales chosen for their regional specialties.

I recently had the opportunity to participate in Food-Ex Japan 2016 and was able to meet with hundreds of Japanese food companies. The show gave me the opportunity to learn from the exhibitors how their products were produced and what made them special. I also enjoyed meeting

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Commemorating an Anniversary at KIZUNA 5



From the Chief Executive Director

Ichiro Soné
Chief Executive Director,
JETRO Chicago

Five years have passed since the devastating Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. Almost 20,000 people perished and approximately 2,500 people are still missing. To commemorate the fifth anniversary, we held our annual "KIZUNA" (bond of friendship/emotion) business seminars in Chicago and St. Paul, Minnesota, in cooperation with the Consulate General of Japan in Chicago, and the local Japan America Societies.

We wanted to provide an update on the region's recovery, and most of all, to show our sincere appreciation to the people in the U.S. Midwest for their heartfelt and generous support for our country in its time of need.

A Japanese company, a local government official and an American company working at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant all

offered their perspectives on the recovery in Tohoku. We also got an in-depth look at the strength of the region's economy.

We were very fortunate to have several distinguished speakers: Mr. Akihiro Ohyama, Chairman of IRIS USA, Inc., a U.S. subsidiary of a major Japanese houseware supply company that has headquarters and factories in Miyagi Prefecture in Tohoku; Mr. John Olvera, Senior Consulting Engineer at Atkins Nuclear Solutions, which specializes in fire protection systems; and Mr. Yoshiyuki Takasago, Deputy Director-General at the Commerce, Industry and Tourism Department of the Miyagi Prefectural Government. Miyagi had the worst damage among the three prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima) in the recovery area.

IRIS USA started operations in California in 1992 and then built its headquarters, factory and warehouse facilities in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin in 1996. Now it has factories and warehouses in Texas and Arizona as well, and it is expanding its U.S. business every year. Mr. Ohyama said the company is "considering a fourth factory in the U.S. in the near future." Its clear plastic storage boxes are very popular, as

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Indiana Mayor Experiences SelectUSA Road Show and Much More in Japan



Guest View

Joe Wellman
Mayor,
Washington, Indiana

I just returned from a two-week trip to Japan, and what an experience it was! This was my first trip to this wonderful country.

The first week of my trip was spent with the SelectUSA Road Show. This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) as part of their outreach to Japanese companies who are considering a first or expanded investment in the United States. I represented my city of Washington, Indiana,

as one of 17 participants in the program. Washington, Indiana was one of two local cities on the trip; other organizations included state and regional economic development organizations (EDO's) from across the U.S.

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JETRO Around the Midwest

Seminars, Meetings and Events

JASI Japan Update

On Thursday, February 18, the Japan America Society of Indiana (JASI) hosted "Japan Update: A Forecast for Japan, Indiana and Asia in 2016" in downtown Indianapolis. At left, Ichiro Soné provided an update on the five-year recovery and resurgence of the Tohoku region of Japan.

Below left, Ichiro Soné with Jim Lienhoop, Mayor of Columbus, Indiana. Below right, Soné with Sheila Smith, Council on Foreign Relations, and Tom Easterday, Subaru of Indiana Automotive.



GCAMP Seminar at FANUC America



Stephen Vullo introduces JETRO's activities to the Golden Corridor Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (GCAMP) members at a seminar hosted by FANUC America in Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

Economic Club of Minnesota Presents Award

On March 7, Ambassador Michael B. Froman, U.S. Trade Representative, was presented with the 2016 Bill Frenzel Champion of Free Trade Award at The Economic Club of Minnesota luncheon.



From left, Ichiro Soné, Congressman Tom Emmer, Mark Kennedy, Economic Club of Minnesota; Muffy MacMillan, Cargill; Amb. Michael B. Froman, U.S. Trade Representative; Kathleen Motzenbecker, Minnesota Trade Office; Consul General of Japan Toshiyuki Iwado; Former U.S. Trade Representative Carla A. Hills, Hills & Company; Tim Penny, Former Congressman.

JETRO in Kansas and Missouri

On March 24 and 25, JETRO Chicago representatives, along with Minister Jun-ichiro Kuroda of the Embassy of Japan, visited Kansas City, Topeka and Wichita.



Ichiro Soné made a presentation at the Japan Update 2016 Program in Wichita, Kansas. Minister Kuroda also presented at this event.



Jun-ichiro Kuroda and Ichiro Soné met with Esther George, President, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City on March 24.



On March 24, Kansas Governor Sam Brownback welcomed the delegation to Topeka. From left, Keizo Shirakura, Consulate General of Japan in Chicago; Jun-ichiro Kuroda, Embassy of Japan; Governor Brownback; Ichiro Soné; and Antonio J. Soave, Kansas Department of Commerce.



Ichiro Soné is greeted by Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner on February 3 in Chicago, where Gov. Rauner signed an executive order directing the Illinois Department of Commerce to work in collaboration with the newly formed Illinois Business and Economic Development Corporation (ILBEDC).



(Left) Ichiro Soné with Amb. Carla A. Hills



(Right) Ichiro Soné with Amb. Michael Froman



On March 4, JETRO Chicago presented a Japan Lecture Series program at DePaul University, to students heading to Japan.

At right, the DePaul student group is shown at the Toyota Museum in Japan.



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Reporter Finds Dining Gems on a Japan Food Tour



Guest View

Steve Dolinsky
Food Reporter,
Chicago, IL

Steve Dolinsky is a Chicago-based reporter covering food in town and around the world since 1995. His work appears in print, on the radio and most visibly on television on Chicago's ABC station, WLS-TV. He recently returned from a Japan trip with some new

favorite dishes and dining spots. As part of JETRO's efforts to familiarize our readers with Japanese food and ingredients, we thought you'd enjoy Steve's report. Much more is available at <http://www.stevedolinsky.com>.

One of the most fascinating aspects of any trip to Japan is a chance to see the shokunin, or artisans, up close. In the Harajuku section of Tokyo, perched up on the second floor of an office building, a shokunin at Kamakura Matsubara-an with more than 10 years' experience methodically rolls out a dough made from buckwheat flour with a thin wooden dowel, folding and then kneading it to just the right thickness. He then uses a cleaver the size of a football to cut out individual strands of soba noodles, which will eventually find their way into hot broths, scented with dashi, or alternatively, onto cold platters, served with finely-chopped scallions and some shredded nori, or seaweed.

In Kyoto, a 16th generation shokunin takes me through the incredibly detailed process of tofu-making at the 380 year-old Okutan. Resembling an ancient temple, the multi-tiered space is a haven for seekers of high-quality, handmade tofu, and it's served in various forms: as a square puck with sesame, topped with the smallest bit of fresh wasabi, as well as in a steaming cauldron of water; you remove a wedge, then add some shredded green onions, dashi and a bit of sancho pepper. Without question, it's the finest tofu I've ever had – there is texture, substance and the slightest hint of earthiness.

Most American tourists never set foot in Osaka, but the city is obsessed with eating.

Fukutaro specializes in okonomiyaki, a flour-based cabbage pancake loaded up with a kitchen sink's worth of ingredients. "Okonomi" literally means "whatever you want," so proteins like extra-fatty wagyu beef, strips of bacon or handfuls of squid and shrimp are frequent options.

The Frisbee-sized pancakes at Fukutaro are griddled until crisp on both sides. Typical toppings include an "okonomiyaki sauce," think A1 or Worcestershire with a bit of sweetener, plus a healthy drizzle of mayo, cut with some white wine and mustard, usually fired from a few feet away and squeezed out into thin ribbons.

The other signature dish in Osaka is takoyaki, tiny flour-based (and dashi-infused) pan-fried balls, made in special half-moon griddles, the size of a golf ball. Each sphere is embedded with a chewy piece of cooked tako or octopus, and made with ferocious intensity all along busy Dotonbori Street. Once they're cooked to a light, golden brown, they're buried beneath that brownish sweet sauce, a drizzle of mayo and either some dried seaweed flakes or a mound of shaved katsuobushi.

For breakfast one day, I find myself at a stool in Kuromon Market. While sipping hot tea, a man places freshly-cut pieces of fatty, unctuous chuturo



Pictured from left, Tadasuke Ogura, the 16th generation owner of Okutan Kiyomizu, a 380 year-old tofu manufacturer in Kyoto; Steve Dolinsky, Food Reporter; and Kenji Moyushi, Executive Chef of Okutan Kiyomizu.

and otoro sashimi before me. I pop them into my mouth - a breakfast I'll never forget. The market offers dozens of experiences like this, including freshly-made sushi, steamed crabs and grilled wagyu beef skewers. I begin to appreciate the local term *kuidaore*: eat until you drop.

Osaka is also the birthplace of two unique traditions: *kaiten*, or conveyor belt-style sushi, where guests with limited time can pull up a stool, sit at a counter and just pull whatever looks good off of a rotating conveyor. The other tradition, created here in the 1800s, is *kappo*, or counter-style dining, where guests sit directly in front of the chef. This allows for more interaction, making the dinner a more personal, intimate and somewhat elegant experience; the 30 year-old Iwakawa is one such *kappo* worth visiting.

My sushi course includes fluke, kinmedai and fugu (blowfish), while grilled barracuda and bear meat soup both deliver unctuous, deeply complex flavors I've never experienced. "There is a term we use quite a bit: *neuchi ga aru* – is it worth it?" said Kimihiro Eguchi, the owner, along with his in-laws, of the 200 year-old Mimi Restaurant. It was here where I had another local specialty: *udon-suki*, a dashi-based hot pot, in which you cook the vegetables and proteins, then add their homemade, toothsome udon noodles to it. The massive bowl easily fed four, costing less than a fancy tasting menu in Kyoto for one person. "If people think something is over-priced, they won't come back," he said.

- **SOBA IN TOKYO:** Kamakura Matsubara-an, 1-13-14 Jingumae, Shibuya, Tokyo Prefecture
- **TOFU IN KYOTO:** Okutan, 86-30 Nanzenjifukuchicho Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8435, Kyoto Prefecture
- **OKONOMIYAKI (SAVORY PANCAKES):** Fukutaro, 2-3-17 Sennichimae, Chuo-ku, Osaka 542-0074
Chibo, 1 Chome-5-5 Dotonbori, Chuo Ward, Osaka 542-0071
- **TAKOYAKI (OCTOPUS BALLS):** Takoriki, 1-6-1 Kawarayamachi, Chuo-ku, Osaka
- **KAITEN (CONVEYOR BELT SUSHI):** Genroku Sushi, 1-6-9, Dotonbori, Chuo-ku, Osaka City, Osaka
- **KAPPO (COUNTER DINING):** Iwakawa, Japan, 530-0002, 1 and 2 F, Miyoshi Bld., 1-2-9, Kita-ku, Osaka City, Osaka
- **MARKET GRAZING:** Kuromon Ichiba Market, 2 542 0073, 2 Chome-4-1 Nipponbashi, Chuo Ward, Osaka 542-0073, Japan
- **KUSHIAGE/KUSHIKATSU (FRIED SKEWERS):** Kushikatsu Daruma, Shinsekai, 3-4-4 Ebisu-higashi, Naniwa-ku, Osaka 556-0002
- **UDON-SUKI (HOT POT WITH UDON NOODLES):** Mimi, Awajimachi, Chuoku, Osaka 541-0047
- **BASEMENT FOOD HALL:** Takashimaya, 5-1-5 Nanba, Chuo-ku, Osaka 542-8510

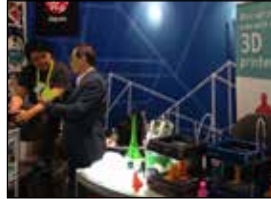
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Japanese Robotics Technology Exhibited at CES 2016

From January 6-9th, the 2016 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) packed the Las Vegas Convention Center and Sands Expo, setting new CES records with nearly 3,900 exhibitors and over 170,000 attendees from around the world. According to the show organizer, the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), over 20,000 products were introduced at CES 2016, a testament to the importance of the show as a global launching point for innovation and technology. Technologies at CES 2016 highlighted the entire tech ecosystem



with the latest in 3D printing, sensors, wearables, robotics, automotive, smart home and the Internet of Things.



JETRO Chicago helped to bring cutting edge Japanese technology to CES 2016 with the Japan Innovation Showcase. Six robotic technology companies were featured in the Showcase, which was located in the Robotics Marketplace in the Sands Expo. The Showcase included two new exhibitors, MJI Robotics and Outstanding Technology, as well as four companies who have exhibited with JETRO in the past:

Topy Industries; Miraisens, Inc.; Paro Robots US; and Yukai Engineering.

In addition to these companies, two startup companies from Japan made their debut at CES in the Eureka Park Marketplace, also located in the Sands Expo. Bonsai Lab, featuring 3D Printing technology, and Westunitis Co., Ltd., featuring wearables technology, joined a record 500 startups from 29 countries in Eureka Park. With heavy attendee foot traffic in the Sands Expo, numerous business and media opportunities were created for all the companies exhibiting in the Japan Innovation Showcase.



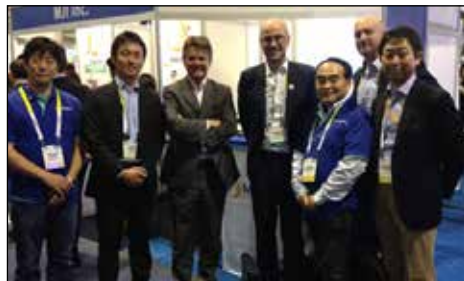
On a final note, the global spotlight of CES also attracts celebrities to promote products or to invest in new tech. Among the many notable visitors at the show, NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal as well as entrepreneur and Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban were spotted walking by the Japan Innovation Showcase, which helped create a buzz of excitement from fans and media. These types of interactions have only become to be expected at the annual International Consumer Electronics Show.



JAPAN EXHIBITORS @ CES 2016

Topy Industries Ltd.	www.topy.co.jp
MJI	www.mjirobotics.co.jp
Miraisens, Inc.	www.miraisens.com
Paro Robots US/ Intelligent System Co. Ltd.	http://intelligent-system.jp/
Outstanding Technology Co., Ltd.	www.ot-c.co.jp
Yukai Engineering, Inc.	www.ux-xu.com
Bonsai Lab, Inc.	www.bonsailab.asia
Westunitis Co., Ltd.	www.westunitis.co.jp

JETRO Staff with exhibitors and visitors at the Miraisens booth



JETRO Presents 18 Japanese Companies in Two Pavilions at 2016 International Home + Housewares Show

The International Home & Housewares Show was held at Chicago's McCormick Place from March 5-8, 2016. This year's show was completely sold-out and featured 2,224 exhibitors from 47 countries. There were more than more than 62,000 buyers from over 125 countries around the world. Once again this year, JETRO



organized two Japan Pavilions in the North and South Halls. This year's pavilions hosted 18 companies, with seven new exhibitors.

This was the fourth time that JETRO organized two pavilions in order to accommodate the exhibitors and the vast array of products they had to offer.

Visitors to both pavilions were able to view firsthand a variety of "Made in Japan" home goods items that combined traditional Japan, modern Japan, and the ancient culture of Japan. Products included everything from traditional kitchen knives, beautiful tableware, artisan glassware, and woodenware to modern products that applied advanced Japanese technology to bring visitors eco-friendly, stylish, smart gadgets and housewares.



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JETRO Chicago Organizes 'Japan Innovation Showcase' at FCA

On Thursday, February 25, JETRO Chicago organized a small exhibition featuring Lightweighting technologies in the headquarters of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, LLC (FCA) in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Twenty-five Japanese automotive suppliers were screened and selected by FCA for the Japan Innovation Showcase, which was only open to employees of FCA.

For many years, JETRO Chicago has worked with the automotive supplier industry promoting the concept of Monozukuri, and with the promotion of North American based suppliers investing in Japan. These efforts have been geared toward supporting North American suppliers in establishing and maintaining business with Japanese OEMs.

In the meantime, many Japanese manufacturers and suppliers have followed Japanese OEMs outside of Japan to the regions where they manufacture, such as North America. To expand their own businesses, these suppliers have sought to work with US and other foreign OEMs manufacturing automobiles in North America.

This is the first time that JETRO has worked directly with one OEM or company to promote Japanese technology in a showcase format. The event was considered a win-win situation as Japanese supplier company participants were satisfied with the contacts met at the event as well as anticipated business, which would be otherwise difficult to obtain without



From left: Consul General of Japan in Detroit Mitsubiro Wada; Sigmund Huber, Director - Global Supplier Relations and Risk Management, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA); Ichiro Soné, Chief Executive Director, JETRO Chicago; Hidemi Saito, Michigan Correspondent, JETRO Chicago

JETRO's support.

Likewise, FCA was pleased with the level of quality and variety of Lightweighting technologies presented by the Japanese exhibitor companies. New business from the event will help FCA meet the rising CAFE regulatory requirements for vehicle and fuel efficiency in the US.

JETRO Chicago is now planning to utilize this strategy of working directly with manufacturers in automotive and other industries to create more direct business opportunities for Japanese supplier companies. This also supports the OEM to find new cutting-edge technology or to fill critical technology needs or gaps within its own supplier chain.

JETRO Chicago Hosts Japan Pavilion with JST at Pittcon 2016

JETRO Chicago successfully hosted its Japan Pavilion at the 67th annual Pittsburgh Conference and Exposition for Analytical and Applied Spectroscopy, otherwise known as Pittcon. The exposition portion of Pittcon 2016 was held from March 7th-10th in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. This year, JETRO organized 10 Japanese companies, including 4 new companies in a first-time partnership with JST, the Japan Science and Technology Agency. These companies introduced new technologies created with JST program support. In total, 7 of our companies were first-time exhibitors at Pittcon. Our Japan Pavilion participants were:

- Airtech Corporation (from Yokohama)
- APCO Ltd. (from Tokyo)
- Dynacom Co., Ltd. (from Chiba)
- E.M.P-Japan Ltd. (from Tokyo)
- Kyoto Electronics Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (from Tokyo)
- Kyushu Keisokki Co., Ltd. (from Fukuoka)
- Otsuka Optics Co., Ltd. (from Tokyo)
- Shinko Denshi Co., Ltd. (from Tokyo)
- Unisoku Co., Ltd. (from Osaka)
- Yabegawa Electric Industries, Ltd. (from Fukuoka)

In addition to providing space at our Japan Pavilion, JETRO Chicago also supported exhibitors by arranging business matching meetings with potential customers and distributors. All of our exhibitors were satisfied with their experience at Pittcon.

Pittcon 2016 drew almost 13,000 conference attendees and exhibitor staff, and about 320 of them traveled from Japan. 37% of conference

Japan Pavilion exhibitors and JETRO staff at Pittcon 2016



attendees were first-timers, and 24% were international attendees, with Japanese attendees comprising the largest group. There were 21 Japanese exhibiting companies, including the 10 in our Japan Pavilion (that number does not include exhibitors registered as U.S. subsidiary locations of Japanese companies). In total, there were 847 exhibiting companies from 37 countries, 119 of them first-timers. Japanese equipment manufacturer Shimadzu is a major sponsor of Pittcon every year.

Japanese precision analytical instruments can be found in laboratories around the world engaging in medical and scientific research, and JETRO Chicago is pleased to promote innovative new technologies and products in this field. We also thank JETRO Tokyo and JETRO Atlanta for their collaboration and support. Pittcon 2017 will return to McCormick Place here in Chicago. If you would like to know more about Pittcon, our Japan Pavilion exhibitors and their products, please contact Stephen Vullo at Stephen_Vullo@jetro.go.jp.



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Guest View: Wa Imports ... from page 1

with many craftsmen of traditional Japanese food products and learn how many of them continue to practice the same techniques, unchanged over many decades.

I enjoyed meeting one-on-one with several companies to taste their products and to further learn about how the products are made. I was particularly interested in the stories of small family-operated companies where the tradition and pride were so evident. I learned a lot about miso (fermented soybean paste) and how many styles there were, and how the fermentation periods impacted the final result.

Some unique items I took notice of included;

- Premium seaweed salt harvested from kelp beds and naturally processed.
- Katsubushi (smoked, fermented and dried bonito), the many different grades and dashi applications.
- Shichimi Togarashi (a Japanese seasoning mixture) and its many different spices.

Although this was not my first visit to Japan, it was the first time I attended Food-Ex. This was a special opportunity that provided a platform for experiencing the flavors of different regions of Japan as well as experiencing the culture of the country.

I believe I have forged some good relationships with several companies that I had the opportunity to spend time with. I look forward to importing these special products, and sharing these amazing crafted delicacies and their stories, rich in history and tradition, with WA Imports' customers in the United States.

For further information on JETRO's future Food and Beverage Buyers Missions, please contact Cathleen Moore, JETRO Chicago, cathleen_moore@jetro.go.jp



A variety of Togarashi spice displayed at a meeting JETRO arranged for David Vobaska at Food-Ex.



David Vobaska (R), President of WA Imports, Inc. and Ryo Tomita (L), a miso craftsman, meet at Food-Ex.

Taste of Japan Awards

On January 27, 2016, at the Union League Club in Chicago, Executive Chef/Partner of Momotaro, Mark Hellyar, was honored with a Taste of Japan Honorary Award. This new multi-city award honors those celebrating the legacy and diversity of both Japan's traditional and modern cuisine and promoting innovative ways to incorporate genuine Japanese foods and ingredients into Western gastronomy.

Chef Hellyar presented his experiences with "Shokuzai" ("food ingredients" in Japanese) and explained the evening's dishes he created highlighting miso, seaweed, and Wagyu beef. Umami (savory richness) is vital to Chef Hellyar's culinary vision and he shared his use of "the fifth taste" with over 100 guests from all segments of the food & beverage industry.



Guests wait to try Chef Hellyar's Maguro Nuta (Bluefin Tuna in a miso & vinegar dressing with seaweed & cucumber).



Three Japanese prefectures' sakes were offered at the Taste of Japan Awards reception along with beer and several whiskies from Japan.



Taste of Japan Chicago Committee Members and Chef Mark Hellyar with his Honorary Award. From left to right; Christopher Koetke, School of Culinary Arts, Kendall College; Mark Palicki, Fortune Fish & Gourmet; Ichiro Soné, JETRO Chicago; Chef Mark Hellyar, Momotaro; Michael Garbin, The Union League Club of Chicago; Steve Dolinsky, ABC 7 Chicago.



A chef prepares Wakamomo, a Momotaro dessert made with Japanese green peaches, whipped tofu & sweetened almonds.



A guest cooks a slice of Miyazaki Wagyu beef imported from Japan. It was served with Chef Hellyar's housemade Yuzu Kosho, a paste made of Japanese Yuzu citrus peel, chili pepper and salt.

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JETRO Introduces Subsidy Program for IoT and Regenerative Medicine Innovation

JETRO has announced a new subsidy program for Global Innovation Centers. This program subsidizes the cost of companies from outside Japan for setting up innovation centers, experimental studies and feasibility studies in the fields of regenerative medicine or IoT (Internet of Things), in collaboration with Japanese companies and other organizations in Japan. The program aims to attract investment and management resources by encouraging the location of high-value-added divisions of overseas companies such as R&D facilities, and making Japan a high value-added hub and innovation base.

Eligible costs could include a portion of:

- The establishment of Global Innovation Centers (Design, facility purchase and rental, equipment and machinery, construction, surveying and tests, etc.)
- Experimental Studies (costs for researchers' employment, business trips, outsourcing, tests, interpretation and translation, equipment and machinery, etc.)
- Feasibility Studies (costs for researchers' employment, business trips, outsourcing, etc.)

The application period began February 16, 2016 and runs through September 9, 2016 (12:00 p.m. Japan Time).

For more information, you can visit https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/invest/incentive_programs.html, or contact Ralph Inforzato at JETRO Chicago, Ralph_Inforzato@jetro.go.jp.

New Articles on Japanese Foods

Mike Sula, a senior writer at *Chicago Reader*, was commissioned by JETRO to write articles on three important Japanese food ingredients: matcha, soba, and shio koji.

All of his articles are available on the JETRO USA website. Direct links are provided below.

His article on matcha looks at how the tea has been historically used in Japanese cuisine, and some unique applications among Chicago chefs. <https://www.jetro.go.jp/usa/topics/matcha-finds-home-in-Chicago-written-by-mike-sula.html>.

His post on soba article looks at how Chicago chefs are using this noodle in both traditional and non-traditional recipes. <http://www.jetro.go.jp/usa/topics/japans-healthiest-noodle-attracts-interest-of-american-restaurants-mike-sula.html>.

His third article examines shio koji, as both a fermenting agent and a seasoning with a myriad uses for chefs and home cooks, used to boost the umami factors in everything from marinating meats and fish, to pickling vegetables to spicing soups, pastas, baked goods, and salad dressings. <https://www.jetro.go.jp/usa/topics/chicago-chefs-spice-up-menus-with-new-japanese-ingredient.html>.

Japan Pavilion at BIO Convention in June

Planning has begun for the Japan Pavilion at the 2016 BIO International Convention, June 6-9, 2016 at the Moscone Center in San Francisco.

Each year the BIO International Convention attracts over 15,000 biotechnology and pharma leaders for a week of intensive networking. The event covers a broad spectrum of life science and application areas including drug discovery, biomanufacturing, genomics, biofuels, nanotechnology and cell therapy.

JETRO Chicago will coordinate the Japan Pavilion (Booth 5514), which will showcase innovative Japanese life science companies and research organizations. The Japanese delegates will exhibit in the Pavilion and participate in the convention's education sessions, networking events and one-on-one partnering meetings. On Tuesday, June 7, the Japan Pavilion will host its Exhibitor Hospitality Receptions from 5:00-6:30 PM.

For BIO 2016, JETRO will organize an education session on Japan's new regenerative medicine regulations. This session, entitled "Japan Regenerative Medicine & Cell Therapy Update," will take place on Wednesday, June 8 at 10:45 AM. JETRO will also organize a Global Innovation Hub presentation on Japan's attractiveness for foreign life science companies. In addition, JETRO will manage booths for Osaka Prefecture (#5504) and the Kobe Biomedical Innovation Cluster (#5726).

More information about JETRO's participation at BIO 2016, including detailed profiles of the Japan Pavilion exhibitors, will be available online at www.jetro.org. To set up an appointment with one of the exhibitors or for more information about Japan's life science sector, contact Robert Corder at robert_corder@jetro.go.jp.

JETRO Publishes First Invest Japan Report

JETRO has published "JETRO Invest Japan Report 2015." This is a comprehensive report on the attractiveness of the Japanese market and activities and perceptions of foreign affiliates in Japan. It discusses the status of foreign direct investment in Japan, trends on policies related to investment promotion and improvement of business environment, as well as JETRO's activities to promote foreign direct investment.

This 48-page report includes these major sections:

- Why Japan? Five Reasons to Invest in Japan
- Expanding Direct Investment in Japan
- Toward Improvement of the Business Environment
- Regional Revitalization and Direct Investment in Japan
- Investment Promotion Projects of JETRO

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Chief Executive Director ... from page 1



Kizuna 5 Program in Chicago. From left: Ichiro Soné, JETRO Chicago; Akihiro Ohyama, IRIS USA, Inc.; Yoshiyuki Takasago, Miyagi Prefectural Government; David D. Johnson, Japan America Society of Chicago

well as its other housewares, pet supplies and cookware.

After the March 11 disaster, the company began to focus on a new product, energy-saving LED lights. This came about because energy saving was a big issue in Japan when all of the country's nuclear power plants were shut down. (Some NPPs which passed reviews under new safety regulations have restarted since last year.) IRIS is now No.3 in the LED lighting market in Japan and it is expanding its sales in the U.S. as well. It believes that the business can contribute to society as a whole by saving energy.

Another big business contribution after the quake was the company's new rice refinery in Tohoku to assist local farmers. The refining process is done with low temperature technology to preserve freshness for a longer time. Rice refined at this facility has been exported to Asia and recently to the U.S. as well. The company hopes to sell more Tohoku rice and other products to the world to assist the region.

When the earthquake hit Tohoku, IRIS suffered major damage to its facilities. Ceilings collapsed, merchandise fell from the shelves and scattered and heavy factory machines fell and damaged floors. It also lost basic utilities such as electricity, gas and water. Mr. Ohyama described what company officials did for the two weeks following the quake. First, they confirmed the safety of their 500 employees. Unfortunately, three employees at another factory in Iwate Prefecture were sleeping at home after working on the night shift and perished.

At the company's retail outlet Daishin Stores, local people, some who had lost everything in the disaster, were lining up to buy basic supplies including water and kerosene. One store manager there received an offer from a customer seeking to buy all of the kerosene at the store, so that he could then resell it to local people at a higher price. The manager rejected this, and instead, he decided to distribute vital supplies to the desperate people for free. The manager thought he was going to be fired for doing so, but he decided that his customers' lives were most important. The company praised this virtuous act and he is now president of its retail store operations.

On the third day after the quake, 388 employees returned to work even though many of them suffered major damage to their homes. Some of them had to walk for 2 hours to work. They believed that it was important to contribute to the community through the company, because so many of its products could help people's lives, including heaters, facial masks

and evacuation kits. Its most popular product was its "Emergency Hand Crank Self-Powered Flashlight/Radio/Phone Charger," so that people could use their cell phones to communicate.

Five days after the quake, the company began sending relief goods to local communities. Seven days after the quake, all employees had reported back to work, and 11 days after the quake, its factories resumed production. Two weeks after the quake, it was able to start shipping to customers again. IRIS had an unusually quick recovery compared to other companies in the region. It also donated 3 million dollars to the region right away, and hired high-school graduates from the coastal areas that suffered massive damage from the tsunami.

Mr. Olvera told us about Atkins' experience at Fukushima Dai-ichi NPP on its fire protection program upgrades working with Tokyo Electric Power Company Ltd. (TEPCO). He updated us on the current situation at the plant: The damaged reactor cores are being maintained, and they are in a safe and stable condition. The removal of the spent fuel from Unit 4 was completed in December of 2014. The next plan is to move onto Units 1, 2, and 3 and begin removing the spent fuel from those units. He believes Unit 3 is scheduled for this year.



Akihiro Ohyama, IRIS USA, Inc.

Mr. Olvera explained exactly what Atkins is doing at the plant: TEPCO needed assistance to address the fire hazard concerns and rebuild the fire protection program. Any fire in that area could release radioactive contamination, which it wants to avoid at all costs. Atkins' main goal is to identify and prevent fire hazards. The full fire hazard analysis is expected to be completed by July and submitted to TEPCO, which has been open to all recommendations that Atkins provided.

The group that Mr. Olvera and his Atkins colleagues work with at TEPCO has made tremendous efforts, and it is just amazing to see how much they have accomplished. At the time the accident occurred, Fukushima Dai-ichi NPP was a very orderly operating facility, until disaster struck and it turned into chaos. Considering this, it is very impressive to see the progress, and Mr. Olvera said he has been very honored and privileged to be a part of it.

Mr. Yoshiyuki Takasago expressed Miyagi Prefecture's gratitude to many American friends who helped in the recovery area right after the disaster, such as the United States Armed Forces who worked so hard on "Operation Tomodachi," and helped clear mud and debris so that Sendai Airport could reopen. Miyagi is very grateful for their continuous support.

He touched upon the recovery of the region's infrastructure. Some 95% of roads and bridges have been restored, and the port function has recovered to pre-earthquake levels. In terms of reconstructing communities to prevent another tsunami disaster, he mentioned two ways of protection. In the northern coastal area with mountains, residential areas were relocated from the coast to high-ground, separate from the commercial/industrial area. In the southern coastal area with



Consul General Toshiyuki Iwado, Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago

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flat land, residential areas were moved further inland, out of reach of the tsunami, and seaside tsunami prevention measures were taken. These include planting forests and farmland near the coast, and putting commercial/industrial areas in between the farmland and the residential areas, with high-ground roads and railways to protect them from the waves.

About 15% of Miyagi's 2.3 million residents had to stay in evacuation shelters after the quake and tsunami. Some 47,000 people still live in temporary housing. The prefecture is trying to build 15,000 units of public housing for them and it is about halfway finished.

Mr. Takasago also mentioned the strength of Miyagi's industries, its advantageous location and access, and its competitive R&D capabilities with Tohoku University and other institutions. Please take a look at Invest Miyagi's English website: <http://www.pref.miyagi.jp/kokusai/investmiyagi/>

To summarize what we learned at the seminars, Tohoku's reconstruction effort is well underway, but there is still lots of work to be done. Much of the infrastructure has recovered, and housing reconstruction is progressing. Industrial production indices have recovered to their pre-earthquake levels.

In Fukushima, decontamination efforts continue. The actual area under evacuation orders due to the NPP accident is quite a limited part of Fukushima, and evacuation orders have been lifted in some areas. Though people in Fukushima have suffered from damage caused by harmful rumors and misinformation, radiation levels in most parts of Fukushima and the rest of Tohoku are now at comparable levels with major cities in Europe and the United States. Local government officials are confident that food from Fukushima is the safest in Japan because radiation levels are measured for all of their agricultural products.

Local governments are trying to create a "New Tohoku" by encouraging new industries such as renewable energy and life sciences. Fukushima has a target to produce enough renewable energy to supply 100% of the energy demand in the prefecture by 2040. It is actively working on mega-solar, wind-farm, biomass and geothermal projects. For U.S. companies that want to start setting up business in Japan in these industries, Tohoku would be a great place to start, with lots of incentives.

Tohoku is also a very appealing place with beautiful nature, great foods and relaxing onsen (hot spring) resorts. We sincerely hope that you can visit Tohoku yourself and see it with your own eyes. The recovery efforts continue, as does Japan's gratitude for the world's ongoing support.



Creating a New Tohoku program in St. Paul, Minnesota. From left: Keizo Shirakura, Consulate-General of Japan in Chicago; Richard Stabl, Honorary Consul (Minnesota); Yoshiyuki Takasago, Miyagi Prefectural Government; Akibiro Ohyama, IRIS USA, Inc.; John Olovera, Atkins Nuclear Solutions US; William Mondale, Japan America Society of Minnesota; Ichiro Soné, JETRO Chicago

Results of JETRO's 2015 Survey on Business Conditions of Japanese Companies in North America

From September 11, 2015 through October 16, 2015 the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) conducted its latest surveys on Japanese-affiliated firms (manufacturers in the U.S. and both manufacturers and non-manufacturers in Canada). We received 639 valid replies from firms in the U.S. (a 56.2% response rate) out of 1,137 to whom we sent questionnaires, while 130 replies were received for the Canada survey (a 62.5% response rate) out of 208. The question items covered areas including: status of operations, future business outlook, and responses to changing business environment.

Some of the survey's findings include:

- Business confidence is good: 81.4% of respondents operating in the U.S. showed that they expect their businesses to mark a profit.
- 47.7% of respondents reported that their operating profits will improve, slightly lower than the 49.8% in 2014.
- 56.7% of firms intended to expand their business in one or two years, which was a 3.6% decrease from the previous year. Specifically, they will mainly expand their sales function and production of high-value added products.

For a detailed summary of the survey, visit <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/news/releases/2015/4e32ded65283c4d8.html>. You can download a pdf report of the results at https://www.jetro.go.jp/ext_images/en/reports/survey/pdf/rp_firms_us201511.pdf.

SelectUSA and JETRO sign Memorandum of Intent



On February 1, JETRO concluded a memorandum of intent (MOI) concerning close collaboration with the SelectUSA program of the U.S. Department of Commerce in the presence of Caroline Kennedy, U.S. Ambassador to Japan. JETRO will support businesses between the U.S. and Japan through this MOI. (Above) At the signing ceremony, clockwise from bottom left, Vinai Thummalapally, Executive Director of SelectUSA, Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, JETRO Chairman Hiroyuki Ishige, and JETRO Executive Vice President Tatsuhiko Shindo.

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We participated in five shows in four cities - Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka. At those shows I estimate more than 400 attendees representing Japanese companies were shown the advantages of investing in America. The program included presentations by the DOC and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), plus case studies of companies who have had success in the U.S. market. Each community & EDO was given time during the program to discuss their individual community or state and to explain the advantages each offered to prospective investors and the uniqueness of their area. In Tokyo, we witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) related to the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. I was excited to meet U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy, Governor Tomikazu Fukuda of Tochigi Prefecture, Indiana's sister-state, and former Ambassador Vinai Thummalapally, Executive Director, SelectUSA, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, while on this trip.

The best part of each program and each day of the Road Show was the networking that occurred. This gave us the opportunity to visit with the business attendees one-on-one and give them further information. We had the opportunity to introduce ourselves to the attendees, and provide them with a better understanding of what we offer, and how we could assist them in their decision to look at America as an option for their success.

I found each of the Japanese company attendees to be friendly and interested in learning more about America. The representatives of the DOC, JETRO and my State's trade office could not have been more helpful in making us feel comfortable and welcomed.

I decided to extend my stay into a second week after the Road Show. During that week my city's consultant, Mr. Larry Ingraham, and I visited

with companies who either have a presence in the State of Indiana or are associated in one way or another with our State. We met with auto makers, parts suppliers, contractors, and governmental representatives. We also visited JETRO's Tokyo office and met with Executive Vice President Tatsuhiro Shindo. The director of the Indiana-Japan Trade Office, Mr. Toshikazu Suzuki, was a big help in coordinating our visits and making me comfortable in a country I had never visited previously. During this week, I met with more than 25 individuals over a period of five days and some 13 meetings. I learned more about their operations and shared more about my city & county. We discussed existing Japanese presence in our area and the assets we could offer to their respective companies. Again all were genuinely interested in learning about the untapped potential of southwestern Indiana.

It wasn't all work – we did a little sightseeing in Kyoto in the intervening weekend where I got to see the beauty of Japan and learn more about its culture and heritage. I partook of some excellent and varied Japanese cuisine in each place we visited, so this was not a weight-loss trip! I also had the very rare, unique experience of viewing a snow-covered Mt. Fuji from the bullet train on a perfectly clear day. I was duly impressed with the hospitality and respect shown by the Japanese people, the cleanliness of their cities, and the openness shown to me as a first-time visitor.

This trip offered me a wonderful opportunity to meet Japanese leaders and business people and to verbalize my vision for the future of my community. I would recommend such a trip to anyone wishing to learn more about Japan and promoting cross-culture investment and experience. My thanks to the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, the U.S. Embassy in Japan, JETRO, Indiana's Japan Office, Mr. Ingraham and everyone involved in making this trip a wonderful experience.



Mayor Wellman with Ambassador Caroline Kennedy



Mayor Wellman (fourth from left) with other state representative, the SelectUSA delegation and Ambassador Kennedy.



Consultant Larry Ingraham and Mayor Wellman are greeted by JETRO Executive Vice President Tatsuhiro Shindo.

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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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