



Produced by: GLOBAL MEDIA POST

www.gmpost.com

THE STRENGTH OF THE U.S. ECONOMIC HEARTLAND

Relations between the United States and Japan are at an all-time high. While most coverage is given to Japan's ties to the East and West coasts, the U.S. Midwest has remained a major participant in strengthening that relationship. A clear sign of that commitment was evident during the annual U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference held in Tokyo last September.

"This time, as many as five governors participated in the Midwest US-Japan Conference and for the first time in the history of this conference, the prime minister of Japan received the governors from the Midwest. That was a clear sign that Japan was shining a light on the Midwest of the United States," Consul General of Japan in Chicago Naoki Ito said.

The Consulate of Japan in Chicago is a good example of the longevity of this relationship. Last December, it celebrated its 120th anniversary.

"The business climate is getting better. The Midwest enjoys a central location and has good infrastructure, quality of life, universities and workforce. The Midwest and Japanese share a common work ethic. That's really an important thing for us to remember and share with people in Japan," Ito said.

As the first ever non-Japanese head of a Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) office, **Ralph Inforzato** has contributed much to championing trade ties between Japan and the Midwest, given that some Japanese businesses have a misconception that investing in the United States is difficult.

"Our JETRO chairman, Hiroyuki Ishige, wants us to develop a 'Talk to JETRO First' message. I want Japanese companies that are considering expansion to the Midwest to talk to JETRO first because we can help them identify who they should talk to depending on their investment needs in

the American heartland," Inforzato explained.

"And, just as important, when an American company plans to either initiate an investment in Japan or considers adding to an existing investment, again, it can talk to JETRO first. We will make every effort to meet their investment needs in Japan. When a Japanese company invests in the Midwest, it invests in the good leadership reflected by its governors, mayors and state and local economic development professionals," he said.

And what will it take to succeed in the Midwest? Inforzato has this to say: "There is only one key to success. Hire passionate and dedicated workers that will enable a company to sustain business growth. That is the key."

ILLINOIS

The Prairie State has long served as a gateway to the Midwest. With an incredibly diverse economy, Illinois has offered a large variety of opportunities for investment and business collaboration. Known traditionally for its manufacturing and automotive industries, the state has also developed strong pharmaceutical, health care, bio-science, food processing, distribution, logistics and transportation sectors.

"As governor, my top priority is to expand our economic opportunities for the people of Illinois, across our nation and around the world. And there is no better partner for the people of Illinois than the people of Japan," said Gov. Bruce Rauner.

"The friendship and partnership between the people of Illinois and the people of Japan is very strong. It is built on mutual benefit, mutual trust and mutual confidence. We have had strong positive relations for many, many decades," added Rauner, who was among the state governors that attended the U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference last

September.

Meanwhile, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Chicago (JCCC) wants to change the perception of Illinois among more Japanese.

"Most Japanese, myself included, had a stereotyped image of Chicago before they came to visit. But when they come and see it for themselves, Chicago is not what they expect. Most of the Japanese families that come over here for an overseas assignment, end up saying 'Oh, I want to stay here!' when it's time to go back to Japan," JCCC Executive Director Tetsuro Mitani said.

INDIANA

"Hoosier Hospitality" is often mentioned by Japanese who have visited and lived in Indiana. With more Japanese investment per capita than any other U.S. state, Indiana is proud of having made that impact among thousands of Japanese investors and tourists.

"There is no other state that is as proactive and visionary as Indiana in that respect. Because of the very deep roots that we have in economic, academic and community relationships, we truly have a very strong foundation in our relationship with Japan," Japan America Society in Indiana (JASI) Executive Director Theresa Kulczak explained.

As Japan's advocate in the Hoosier State, JASI is also a driving force in fostering cultural ties between Indiana and Japan. And as government officials on both sides come and go, JASI provides a steady and constant presence amid those changes over the years.

Because of the clear economic benefits that come from Japanese investment across Indiana, Gov. Eric Holcomb once labeled Japan "a part of the fabric of our state."

"The great thing is that, within Indiana, these Japanese corpora-



At the U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference in Tokyo last September (from left to right), Kikkoman Foods Inc. Secretary Milton Neshek, Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, Gov. Pete Ricketts of Nebraska, conference co-chairman and Kikkoman Corp. Honorary Chairman Yuzaburo Mogi, conference co-chairman and Winston & Strawn Partner W. Gordon Dobie, U.S. Ambassador to Japan William Hagerty, Gov. Bruce Rauner of Illinois, Gov. Rick Snyder of Michigan, and Masuda Funai Eifert & Mitchell Ltd. President Tom McMenamin

tions have become such an integral part of so many communities, by offering good jobs, sponsoring sports teams and the like. I cannot imagine an Indiana without the positive Japanese presence," Honorary Consul General Peter Morse said.

"The Japan-Indiana partnership is distinct. There's a level of familiarity that has built up over the years. It's not nearly as formal. These are genuine friendships. What we were all taught about *hajimemashite* — a formal expression used on meeting someone accompanied by the bow and the card exchange — is often replaced with hugs, high-fives and knuckle bumps," Morse added.

MICHIGAN

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of its twin-state relationship with Shiga Prefecture, Michigan has not wavered on its efforts to maintain its deep ties with Japan.

"The long history of the Michigan-Shiga Sister State Agreement is a living example of how two states with different histories and cultures can connect deeply and culturally with each other, even though those states are on opposite ends of the world," Gov. Rick Snyder said during a visit to Japan last year.

Consul General of Japan in Detroit Mitsuhiro Wada echoed the sentiment: "Japanese value

long term friendship. This anniversary is very meaningful and significant for further developing the relationship."

Heavily battered by a wide-sweeping financial crisis a decade ago, the Wolverine State, displayed a resiliency associated with its nickname as it engineered one of the most dramatic turnarounds in U.S. history. As of 2017, Michigan ranked seventh in CNBC's "America's Top States for Business" study, jumping 30 spots in only 10 years.

"Many steps have been taken since the crisis. The tax system was completely revised. Thousands of regulations were cut. Detroit has reemerged from bankruptcy. I invite folks to come and experience for themselves everything that is happening here," said Michigan Economic Development Corporation CEO Jeff Mason.

With the state's unemployment rate now aligned with the national average of 4 percent, Michigan can thank Japanese companies for their positive impact. To date, they employ more than 40,000 people across the state.

With the landscape of the auto industry and mobility entering a phase of deep transformation, the government of Michigan is capitalizing on its current upswing to adapt to industry demands by launching various programs designed to spur innovation and im-

prove connectivity.

"Our state was built on its strength in manufacturing. It's in our DNA. Mobility and autonomous vehicles is certainly an area we see tremendous opportunity for growth for Michigan, and by extension, advanced manufacturing," Mason said.

"There are very compelling reasons that companies in mobility should be thinking about coming to Michigan," he added.

With the highest concentration of engineers in the United States, around 75 percent of all auto-related research and development in North America takes place in Michigan, which hosts more than 375 R&D centers.

"We are the world leader in the mobility and the automotive sector, and we want to continue that. Japan has always been a strong partner, so we are working to continue that relationship," Snyder stressed.

OHIO

When Ohio Gov. James Rhodes and Soichiro Honda agreed to build a \$35 million motorcycle plant in Marysville in 1977, few people realized the kind of lasting and significant impact the deal would have on the state and the Japanese giant.

Since the first U.S.-assembled Accord rolled out of the Marysville

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DEFYING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Southwest Central Indiana is unique for having no urban hub in the eight counties that make up the region. Completely rural, the manufacturing intensive area — called the Radius region — had no interstate access road until 2012, and was little known before then.

The construction of Interstate 69 has since provided logistics access, and the benefits are becoming evident. M&C Tech, a joint venture between Moriroku Chemicals and Chubu Chemicals, saw the region's potential as a home and set up operations in 2016.

Radius Indiana President and CEO Jeff Quyle wants to make this Japanese success story the first of many. To promote the area as an investment location, Radius Indiana, through its Regional Impact Fund, can provide financial support to

domestic and international locators. To complement that goal, Quyle and mayors from the region are planning a trip to Japan in November.

"It all goes back to the great friendship between Indiana and Japan. We are front of mind particularly because of our proximity to the Toyota facility. We hope to visit firms in Japan to learn their needs firsthand," he said.

From access to NSA Crane, a sophisticated naval research installation, to the luxurious Pete Dye Golf Course at French Lick, Southwest Central Indiana has a lot to offer prospective locators.

"We have many ways to welcome Japanese firms that want to explore our region. I look forward to talking with them in the fall when we visit them," he added. → www.radiusindiana.com



West Baden Resort in French Lick, Indiana

SELLING THE IDEAL BASE TO JAPANESE

City of Crawfordsville Mayor **Todd Barton** was among the local government officials from Indiana who attended the U.S. Midwest-Japan Conference in Tokyo last September. While many other U.S. states were also represented, Indiana stood out because of the number of local leaders who saw the value in joining the event.

Barton's main objective of the trip was simple: to further deepen the city's ties with auto parts maker Heritage Products and its parent company Hiruta, which has called Crawfordsville home for 30 years.

"We are here for them and want to be supportive. We understand that if they face any challenges, we can work together as a partner to fix them," Barton said.

Touting the success of Heritage Products, the mayor wants to attract more Japanese investment to the city, designated a Stellar



Crawfordsville strikes the right note in building a dynamic and well-rounded city.

Community by the state government in 2015.

"Indiana is unique and, within Indiana, we are unique," Barton said.

"We are reshaping our economic development and breaking the mold on how we do it. I want you to know that we will work with you to make it happen here. We are on your team and we want you to win," he added. → www.crawfordsville.net

AISIN GROUP'S HOME COURT ADVANTAGE

As more Japanese automotive suppliers head to the Hoosier State, **Aisin Group** has called Indiana home for nearly 30 years, giving it the advantage of local market knowledge.

However, the past few years have not been without challenges for the global automotive industry. To adjust to ever-changing market demands, the Japanese company modified its production strategy.

"In the last five to seven years, we made some very good strides in growing our business in North America. We are continuing to grow and develop our R&D ability, and this growth is supported by our technical center and a 950-acre test track and proving grounds in Michigan. And we represent a pretty strong piece of the overall AISIN puzzle," AISIN World Corp. of America President and CEO Scott Turpin said.

In North America, AISIN has facilities in 36 locations and accounts for around 16 percent of global op-

erations. The sixth-largest tier one supplier in the world, it is also the largest manufacturer of automotive transmissions.

With operations concentrated in Michigan and Indiana, AISIN, which also has facilities in several other states, has a big impact on the Midwest's economy.

Its recent \$31 million factory expansion in Seymour added more than 200 jobs. In Crothersville, a \$16 million expansion at Aisin Drivetrain, Inc., will create 50 new jobs.

"Working with the Jackson County Industrial Development Corp. and receiving support from the state and local community dictated our actions in locating additional business and expanding here in Indiana. It's a win-win situation not only for AISIN, but also for the state, our communities and the customers that support our businesses. We are very happy to call the Midwest, and specifically Indiana, 'home,'" said Turpin, who stays on



AISIN World Corp. of America President and CEO Scott Turpin

top of the ever-evolving automotive industry.

"Coming from an engineering background, anything technology driven is always very interesting to me. My excitement is really driven by those 'wow' products. They don't happen very often but when they do, it's a very exciting thing," Turpin also said.

"We're poised to provide another set of industry-leading products as the industry evolves," he added. → www.aisinworld.com

RYOBI LEADS THE OEM PACK

Unlike its Japanese counterparts, **Ryobi Die Casting** ventured into the United States at the request of its "Detroit Three" American customers. The move allowed Ryobi to quickly build a reputation among U.S. original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) as a trusted partner for complex aluminum die cast parts in the automotive sector. Two of the "Detroit Three" are still Ryobi's largest customers.

"We are known in the industry to have high-quality dies that produce very high-quality parts," said Ryobi Die Casting USA President Tom Johnson, who has been with the company since 1985 and has seen annual sales grow from \$50 million to \$400 million.

"We have good dedicated associates. They come from good families. It's not unusual for a father or mother to work here, then see their son or daughter join us as well," Johnson said.

Looking toward the future, Ryobi is diversifying from its flagship products, such as transmission cases and engine blocks. Since 2007, Ryobi Die Casting USA has worked with one of the major Japanese OEMs in developing a new generation of vehicle subframes changing from steel to die cast aluminum, which results in significantly lighter vehicles at competitive costs.

"This kind of subframe has typically been used in luxury vehicles in Europe. Now you can see this in a 400,000



Ryobi Die Casting's vehicle subframes and structural components

unit mass production vehicle in the U.S.," Johnson said.

By expanding its facility from 60 to 100 acres, Ryobi USA hopes to identify new automotive trends to be able to provide their solutions, including those involved in vehicle lightweighting.

"Many vehicle structural parts that were previously made from steel can be converted to aluminum die castings and still exceed all required specifications at a greatly reduced weight. With our deep experience and know-how, we look forward to helping our customers achieve these results," Johnson said.

Ryobi is currently working on large battery cases for hybrid and electric vehicles, predicted to be a standard product for all OEMs eventually. Ryobi is clearly ahead of the game. → <http://www.ryobidiecasting.com>

RURAL, NOT REMOTE



East Central Indiana Regional Partnership President and CEO Mindy Kenworthy

East Central Indiana is home to 18 of almost 300 Japanese companies operating in the state. Made up of 10 counties, the region has attracted several businesses because of its proximity to the state capital, Indianapolis, and three Japanese

automotive assembly plants and their suppliers.

East Central Indiana Regional Partnership President and CEO **Mindy Kenworthy** saw the value of this relationship with Japan early in her tenure and organized a delegation to visit the country in 2016.

"Many of the mayors and local economic development corporation directors haven't had the opportunity to go to Japan before. It was the right time to go," Kenworthy explained.

With all its counties having fully developed shovel-ready industrial sites, East Central Indiana offers plenty of room for growth.

"We have the location, the sites, a history of manufacturing, a skilled workforce and a great work ethic," she stressed.

East Central Indiana's cost of living is also 17 percent lower than the U.S. average and boasts a wide variety of housing and leisure options.

"I tell people that we are rural, but not remote," Kenworthy said. → www.ecirp.org

So Good to be Home.
Indiana is home to Aisin's first manufacturing plant in North America. Nearly 30 years ago, Aisin was welcomed here with typical Hoosier hospitality and a pledge to support the needs of what would become one of the largest automotive suppliers in the world. On behalf of thousands of Aisin team members in Indiana, we say thank you. It's so good to be home.

www.aisinworld.com

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MAKING THE RIGHT MOVE TO AMERICA

Founded in 2014, **Fukai Toyotetsu Indiana Corp. (FTIC)** may be a latecomer for a tier one automotive supplier, but it could not have come to the United States at a better time. In Japan, parent company Fukai Manufacturing supported Subaru's production for almost 80 years.

When Subaru in Japan saw an increase of production of its American counterpart, Fukai Manufacturing saw the benefits of investing in the United States. The move was highly symbolic not only for the Subaru-Fukai relationship, but also for Japan-Indiana ties.

FTIC, a joint venture between Fukai Manufacturing and Toyoda Iron Works, is the first company from Tochigi Prefecture to invest in Indiana, its first twin state.

"Maybe our case will serve as an example for other companies in Tochigi Prefecture looking for opportunities abroad or in America. If we can share our experience, we will have contributed to a stronger relation-



Fukai Toyotetsu Indiana Corp. President Satoru Fukai

ship between both sides," FTIC President Satoru Fukai said.

Looking toward the future, FTIC aims to grow both with the Jamestown community and with Subaru.

"We are very proud to have a customer like Subaru. Their performance has been strongly respected from many angles. We are fortunate to be a part of it," Fukai said. → <http://fticna.com>

A FIRM WITH A HUMAN FACE



While legal services are crucial to businesses, finding the right firm is more than about who gives the best rates.

Barnes & Thornburg (BTLaw), among the largest law firms in the country, prides itself on going the extra mile for its clients.

"Our Japanese clients want a 'one stop shop' for whatever legal need, whether it be about HR, antitrust, corporate compliance, litigation defense or IP protection," said **BTLaw Partner Pete Morse**, who chairs the firm's Global Services Practice Group and is general counsel to many Japanese companies.

"While our firm is designed to support clients, the most re-

warding part of the job is when our clients consider us their true business counselor," added Morse, an honorary consul to Japan and a frequent visitor to the country.

"When Japanese look for law firms, they need friends and someone who can really explain how things are here in the U.S.," said **Hide Niyama**, the firm's Japanese liaison.

"It's a commitment to the client and underlying relationships. Anyone can say that. But here, the client absolutely comes first, whether it's helping with business solutions or finding the right doctor for a Japanese executive," Morse also said. → www.btlaw.com

THE HISTORY WITH JAPAN CONTINUES

Established in 1823, the City of St. Marys in Ohio is known as a leader in business development in Northwest Ohio. Its relationship with the Japanese city of Awaji started in the 1970's, when the first wave of Japanese companies set up operations in the area and employed around 1,000 locals.



CITY OF ST. MARYS

Lock 13 provides is a well preserved reminder of the interesting history of the City of St. Marys.

"We always had a good relationship with Japan and their industries," said Mayor Patrick McGowan. "There is a sizable investment from the Japanese into the city, which is mutually beneficial to both partners. The city itself has a very sophisticated, highly educated and well-trained workforce, but we want to increase the number of our workers."

Apart from three big Japanese firms, Tachi-S, Muro Corp. and Hitachi Metals, the city hopes to attract Japanese small and medium enterprises and boost economic growth. The mayor has expressed his commitment to invest further in utilities infrastructure to rebuild a microgrid that connects all of the city's major industries.

"We can guarantee that in comparison to our competitors, our electrical grid will offer superior reliability at a competitive price. We are sitting on one of North America's finest water resources," explained McGowan, referring to the investment opportunity of building a new water plant in the near future.

"We do appreciate the relationship and respect the Japanese tremendously for their investment into our community. We are always looking forward to growing with them," the mayor said. www.cityofstmarys.net

A CROSS-COUNTRY ADVISER

Whether you're a Rust Belt manufacturer or a startup in the Windy City, building strategic relationships and expanding your company's ecosystem are crucial to its long-term growth.

Since 1999, Avant Global, a U.S.-based business advisory firm, has helped billionaires, business leaders and entrepreneurs in the Great Lakes region, build vital partnerships around the world.

"We see a lot of legacy companies that have been in business for a long time lose market share because they're stuck in the past. On the other hand, many startups turn up their noses at so-called old school business veterans that can actually be valuable mentors and investors," Avant Global Founder Demetri Argyropoulos said.

"By forging connections with the right decision makers, both types of groups can be growing faster and more furiously," Argyropoulos added.



Avant Global Founder Demetri Argyropoulos

For nearly two decades, Argyropoulos and his partners have successfully brought together the right kind people in boardrooms to form lucrative partnerships. To date, the firm has helped forge deals that have generated more than \$15 billion in value for its clients. <http://www.avantglobal.com>

THE U.S. ECONOMIC HEARTLAND

Continued from previous page. plant in 1982, Honda now employs close to 10,000 people and directly or indirectly, contributes millions of dollars to the economy of Ohio, which remains the heart of Honda's American operations. The Marysville plant has produced more than 11 million Accords, while its facility in Anna is Honda's largest engine plant in the world.

"We truly value the contributions of Honda to our city and county. Twenty-five percent of our workforce works at Japanese-owned facilities, most of them tied to Honda and its supply chain. They are a highly respected and appreciated member of our community," Marysville Mayor J.R. Rausch said.

Meanwhile, officials of the city of St. Marys, which has also hosted Japanese companies since the 1970s, are deeply grateful to Honda's steadfast commitment to the city.

"During the recession, Honda in Ohio did not lay off any full-time

employees," Wada said. With the recovery of the auto industry, the state has announced initiatives to adapt to the changing landscape of the sector, such as the installation of smart, connected highways between Union County and the state capital of Columbus, construction of tech parks designed to jumpstart innovation, investments in the utilities infrastructure to lower plant operating costs, and development of educational programs to improve its workforce.

Columbus has also seen a transformation into a more vibrant city that hopes to improve quality of life and attract more talent from outside the state. "The foundations are here. The Japanese presence in Ohio is not going away any time soon. We will continue to serve as a bridge between Japan and central Ohio," Japan-America Society of Central Ohio Executive Director Benjamin Pachter said.



Intersect Illinois President and CEO Mark Peterson

More than a year old, economic development organization Intersect Illinois aims to create jobs, support business and attract investment to the state, which hosts nearly 2,000 foreign companies and is the fifth-largest economy in the United States.

INTERSECT ILLINOIS CONNECTS THE DOTS

Intersect Illinois President and CEO Mark Peterson is thrilled to seize investment opportunities between the Midwest and Japan. The two sides have had a long-running, fruitful relationship because of their shared values, like loyalty and trust, as well as their good work ethic.

During a recent trade mission to Tokyo, Peterson focused on convincing Japanese companies to invest in Illinois, aside from expressing his gratitude to the Japanese companies that already have operations in the state. He also promised to find ways to make business easier and provide more support to investors.

"Innovation is a function of problem solving," said Peterson, who highlighted that the state's economy benefits from a diverse profile of companies from the automotive, manufacturing, agriculture and food processing industries.

He also mentioned the increasing collaboration between IT companies and universities to strengthen the state's technological sector.

Intersect Illinois is planning to organize and take part in more trade missions as part of its effort to connect more businesses from the two sides. <http://intersectillinois.org/>

GROWTH THROUGH INNOVATION AND LOCALIZATION

With nearly a century of history in Japan, alloy-casting maker Kimura Foundry came to the United States only in 2013. Keen on introducing Japanese quality casting to the U.S. market, Kimura Foundry America (KFA) began by importing its products all the way from Japan.

Realizing the importance of localization, Kimura Foundry decided to bring its proprietary casting process to the United States.

"I've visited many states and spoke with our customers. Every one of them said that if I could start a foundry business in the United States, they would be so happy," recalled KFA President Yoya Fukuda. Its Direct Molding Process (DMP) utilizes



Kimura Foundry President Yoya Fukuda

3-D printing in a new method designed by Fukuda himself. Focusing on prototyping rather than mass production, the DMP process eliminates defects in its products. The entire process from 3-D modeling to finished casting takes only five days.

"Our casting is low cost, delivery times short, and quality very high. This allows us to satisfy all of our customers. My DMP process isn't selling casting. We are selling time," Fukuda stressed.

The company broke ground for its new production facility in Shelbyville in neighboring Indiana. It is expected to be operational in late 2018. <http://kimurafoundry.com>

THE PREFERRED LAW FIRM OF JAPANESE BUSINESS IN THE MIDWEST

Representing Japanese corporations for almost 90 years, Chicago-based Masuda Funai has seen the evolution of Japanese investment in the country. President Thomas McMenamin has noted that Japanese activity in the Great Lakes region has clearly been growing recently.

Several Japanese companies that ventured to the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, according to McMenamin, have begun outgrowing their existing facilities. Now, these companies are expanding their plants or



constructing new ones. Masuda Funai, which also has offices in Los Angeles, oversees an average of six expansions every year.

This increased activity was also evident in the area of mergers and acquisitions. In the last six years, Masuda Funai has seen the annual number of M&A deals double as the complexity of these deals grow. It has handled

more mid-market acquisitions for Japanese companies than any other U.S. law firm.

But Masuda Funai's focus is not merely transactional. With information and technology playing a bigger role in a company's success, the firm has become more assertive in protecting the intellectual property of its clients.

"If someone is infringing upon, or alleging infringement by, one of our clients, our client will assert their position vigorously," stressed the firm's patent litigator, Mike Golenson. www.masudafunai.com



INNOVATION IS A SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE



OMRON Management Center of America Inc. Chairman, President and CEO Nigel Blakeway

While OMRON's mission and vision remain the same, its value proposition changed together with the business landscape. From providing specific lines of business, the Japanese company has evolved into a value generator in automation, a goal it set in 2017 as part of the corporation's Value Generation 2020 or VG2.0.

For OMRON Management Center of America Inc. Chairman, President and CEO Nigel Blakeway, while the company may have a lot of competitors in selected areas of automation, none of them offer the "complete package."

"Our automation business globally has the largest share in our portfolio of businesses. It certainly is our most profitable area," Blakeway stressed.

"OMRON offers complete automation solutions broken down systematically known as ILOGS (Input, Logic, Output, Robotics, Safety). From automotive to health care, harmony between humans and machines is always our particular focus, as well as the industry 'internet of things' in this time of growth. That gives us a completely different value proposition for our customers. Everything we do is sensing and control," he explained.

Amid this shift, OMRON remains socially and environmentally conscious. This ethos coincides with the company's commitment to looking after its customers, increasing equipment productivity, minimizing downtimes and conducting regular preventative maintenance checks.

"The respect for the customer is observed within the entire organization," stressed Blakeway, who welcomes the resurgence of the manufacturing industry in the region. "Manufacturing in the Midwest is coming back in a good way and we are benefiting from that. We are positioning ourselves correctly to support our customers' needs." www.omron.us

In the field of health care, for instance, OMRON's corporate social responsibility aims to take part in as many "zero events" in personal wellness as possible. This has led to various partnerships with other companies that specialize, for example, in cardiovascular analysis. These collaborations have prompted OMRON to develop medical devices slated for launch this year.

For further growth, OMRON as has focused on mergers and acquisitions, and also has established OMRON Venture Capital for this purpose. The new company supports innovations that the firm does not yet have, while keeping investments flowing to their core businesses.

"When you look at the IoT world, there are many areas that are out of our areas of expertise. We are open to open-source innovation," Blakeway explained.

And in 2018, OMRON will open its first American research center in California.

"We believe that the sustainability of the company will be very closely linked to our goals," said Blakeway, who also echoed the words of OMRON founder Kazuma Tateisi: "To the machine give the work; to the man give the thrill of creation!" www.omron.us

ILLINOIS: A GLOBAL LEADER IN SOYBEAN TRADE



Illinois soybean grower Stan Born

Japan has been buying soybeans from the United States for more than 60 years. And, about 60 percent of the soybeans imported each year come from the United States.

Illinois is the top soybean-producing U.S. state, home to the Chicago Board of Trade, about 4.2 million hectares of soybean fields and a comprehensive transportation infrastructure. Illinois farmers raise a consistent

supply of high-quality soybeans that are grown sustainably and delivered efficiently.

Japanese soybean buyers visit Illinois to see the soybean industry in person. The Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program connects potential customers with farmers and other members of the Illinois soybean industry.

Illinois soybean farmers are learning about new ways to understand the value and quality of their soybeans. At the same time, they constantly improve soybean production to use less energy

and land to grow high-quality crops. For example, in 2017, they raised a record 16.7 million metric tons of soybeans.

Because every major form of transportation connects in Illinois, they can efficiently deliver soybeans around the world. More than 1,770 kilometers of navigable waterways and 11,200 kilometers of train tracks allow for bulk shipping from Illinois. The state also has 22 loading facilities that fill shipping containers, accounting for around 8 percent of Illinois soybeans. www.ils soy.org

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH LOCAL INFLUENCE

Since establishing its U.S. headquarters in Livonia, Michigan in June 2016, JTL America, a Japanese mechanical testing and analytical service company, determined that mergers and acquisitions were its best ways toward sustainable growth.

The company, known previously as A-kit America when it set up shop in the country, brought its new evaluation technologies and high-quality data analysis to primarily serve the automotive industry in Michigan, the traditional car capital of the United States.

Around six months after opening in the United States, it acquired Knight Mechanical Testing (KMT) in Indiana, which allowed them to diversify into the orthopedic and medical product sectors. The resulting merger in December 2017 was JTL America.



JTL America President Kazumasa Nohara

President Kazumasa Nohara believes that JTL America's localization strategy will provide clients with better services because it is able to combine the best practices of its American and Japanese culture and experiences.

"While customer satisfaction is significant for them, our fast decision making helps our customers move faster, too," he said.

This quick decision-making process has also resulted in investment in new services: ATOS (3-D scanner), X-ray CT and vibration tests.

"Activities that bring together Japanese and American companies are important for our globalization," said Nohara, who is always on the lookout for new business in the United States. <https://jtlamerica.com>

DELPHINUS TRANSFORMS DENSE BREAST CANCER CARE

It is widely known that mammography is not sufficient to detect cancer in women with dense breasts, a risk factor that increases cancer incidence four to six times. While mammography remains the primary imaging modality for breast cancer screening, the need for a better imaging approach is critical to address this large underserved population.

Seventy percent of Asian women have dense breasts and studies show that mammography alone is not an adequate primary detection method for these women because dense breast tissue can mimic or hide cancer on a mammogram.

Hand-held ultrasound has the potential to identify more cancers but is cumbersome and inconsistent, resulting in frequent false positives. Early automated breast ultrasound systems are operator dependent and provide fragmented, sectional scanning, offer-

ing only b-mode imaging, a decades-old technology.

Delphinus Medical Technologies, Inc. has taken on the challenge to transform care for women with dense breasts around the world. SoftVue™ 3-D whole breast ultrasound is a breakthrough solution working to address the most difficult-to-detect dense breast patient population, bringing efficiencies to clinical workflow, while creating a superior imaging experience for women.

SoftVue incorporates the first-ever circular transducer, imaging the entire breast volume in one scan, moving from nipple to chest wall, using no compression or radiation.

SoftVue's TriAD™ technology gathers reflection echoes for tissue structure and captures signals transmitted through the breast for tissue characteristics. This unrivaled design and revolutionary imaging technique delivers



Delphinus Medical Technologies Inc. President and CEO Mark J. Forchette

unprecedented clarity in dense breast imaging, for a gentle, calming imaging experience appreciated by women.

Given the sizable global market, supported by breast density legislation in the United States, a growing worldwide awareness of cancer risk in dense tissue and mammography's deficiencies, Delphinus is changing clinical thought and practice of early cancer detection for women with dense breasts. www.delphinusmt.com

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