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# JAPANESE FIND INNOVATION BEYOND SILICON VALLEY AND CAMBRIDGE

Over several decades, Japanese investment gravitated towards certain corners of the United States for various reasons: Japan's proximity to California, the concentration of banks and financial firms in New York, the strength of manufacturing in the South and Midwest, and the indisputable reputation of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Silicon Valley as hotbeds of innovation.

While particular regions have established deep ties with Japanese companies, investors from Japan remain focused on finding new growth areas in the United States.

Collectively identified as The Mountain States, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming are carving out their own niches and building their own unique selling points to attract more foreign investment.

Inbound Japanese FDI in the U.S. has doubled since 2002. JETRO's 2018 company survey of U.S.-based Japanese executives points out that 54% of Japanese companies already in the U.S. have plans to expand.

For this new wave of Japanese investors, many of them start-ups or small and medium-sized enterprises, the strict regulatory regimes, lack of open land and the high operating costs in the tried-and-tested East and West Coasts make their ventures infeasible.

And these are the investors eager to contribute to the Japanese government's "Society 5.0" project – a vision of the world where smart cities, self-driving electric cars, robots and artificial intelligence dominate.

So, these new pioneers have come to the Southwest and Mountain states, a region that invokes images of vast spaces and a history of risk-taking Americans exploring the New Frontier.

"We are so lucky to have a very active Japanese-American community here. As of October 2019, there were 9,276 Japanese citizens. And this number has been increasing, which is a very good sign," said **Consul General of Japan in Denver Midori Takeuchi**, whose office oversees the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Having celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, the Japan America Society (JAS) of Colorado has seen its membership double since the launch of nonstop flights between

Denver International Airport and Tokyo Narita Airport in 2013.

"Because of the nonstop flight, existing Japanese investors have expanded their operations and many startups have seen the benefits of setting up shop in the Denver Metro Area," said **JAS Colorado Executive Director Claudine Locascio**.

Highlighting the advantages of the state, **Colorado Gov. Jared Polis** said: "Colorado is one of the best places to do business. We work hard to keep unemployment low, grow our technology sector, develop a talented and educated workforce and ensure our state is business and innovation friendly. These are values we share with Japan."

"We enjoy a strong partnership with Japan, our fourth-largest trade partner. Currently, we have about 14 Japanese FDI projects and about 50 Japanese companies that account for more than 7,000 high quality, high-paying jobs. We look forward to growing that number and continuing our mutually beneficial relationship," Polis added.

Unknown to many, Utah has nurtured a strong relationship with Japan. Trade between the two has more than doubled over the past five years and, as of 2017, was valued at \$811 million. With both sides displaying an edge in innovation, the aerospace, life sciences and energy sectors have attracted the most attention from investors.

"There are always opportunities for additional collaboration between Utah and Japan, particularly in the areas of innovation, trade partnerships, technology collaboration and cultural exchange. Our state experienced record-breaking international success in trade numbers by looking beyond our borders and encouraging direct foreign investment in our great state," said **Utah Gov. Gary Herbert**, who led a successful trade mission to Japan last September.

Wyoming, while mostly known as the least populous state, is also the 10th largest in America by area. With an abundance of energy resources, Wyoming produces 15 times more energy than it consumes, making it the biggest net energy supplier among all the states.

Meanwhile, Nevada has also seen a rise in the number of companies wanting to relocate to the state.

"The cost of doing business in California is the biggest factor why companies relocate here. They realize that they do not necessarily lose their speed-to-market advantage. A majority of relocation decisions rests on northern Nevada's strategic location. Our trucks can deliver goods to 60 million inhabitants within a day's drive," **Northern Nevada Development Authority President and CEO Robert Hooper** said.

Home to Los Alamos National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratories, innovation is embedded in the culture of New Mexico. In the southern part of the state is the world's first purpose-built commercial spaceport—Spaceport America. With Virgin Galactic as its anchor tenant, the spaceport can accommodate both vertical and horizontal launches.

"We are the birthplace of innovation. We do things differently and that's the identity of New Mexico. Under the leadership of the Governor Michelle Grisham, we have focused on investing in clean energy, film and TV, infrastructure and education," said **New Mexico Economic Development Department Division Director Mark Roper**.

Famous for its natural beauty and tourist sights, Arizona has created waves in the technology and educational sectors. Institutions like Tech Parks Arizona, overseen by the University of Arizona, have set up incubation spaces targeted solely at small-to-mid-sized businesses.

With strong support and encouragement from their government, more Japanese companies have realized the compelling need to tap overseas markets to achieve long-term growth and have had to work more closely with American universities, companies and local economic development groups to develop research and recruit talent.

Another development in the United States welcomed by SMEs and startups is the rapid growth of fab labs (or fabrication laboratories), which offer personal and small-scale digital fabrication. This "maker movement," which is spreading across the world, is beginning to take root in the Southwestern states.

"I invite many to come and find out the beauty of the region. Every state has a distinct character, and it will truly open your eyes to what the country has to offer," said **Takeuchi**.

## CITY OF AURORA: A GREAT HOME FOR BUSINESSES



The Anschutz Medical Campus and Fittsimons Innovation Community in Aurora, Colorado, are advancing patient care, education and biomedical research and technology through collaboration and innovation.

One of the main urban centers in Colorado, Aurora is the third most populous city in the state and the 54th most populous in the country. Because of its business-friendly policies and many amenities, the city continues to attract investment, remaining the fastest-growing area in Metro Denver since the recession a decade ago.

"We make it a priority to create an environment conducive to business. A few years ago, Amazon built a 500,000-square-foot facility with 500 employees here. They were so impressed with how Aurora did business that less than a year later, they added a million-square-foot facility and brought an additional 1,000 new jobs based on their experience here, not just on our reputation," recalled then-Mayor **Bob LeGare**.

"Aurora offers a lot more than what other cities can with land, water and a predictable, efficient way of doing business being just some of our advantages. We also have ideal proximity to

numerous major transportation corridors and the fifth-busiest international airport in the country. A lot of companies find it very attractive to do business here, where there are fewer developmental hurdles and plenty of opportunities," LeGare added.

In November, LeGare and city team, determined to attract more Japanese businesses to the region, formed a trade mission to Japan to strengthen the city's global network and met with key officials from Osaka, Yamagata, Kyoto and Hyogo, as well as medical and bioscience universities and research centers there.

"With Aurora's thriving, multibillion dollar medical and bioscience enterprises at the Anschutz Medical Campus and the Fittsimons Innovation Community, we see amazing potential to develop partnerships with Japanese businesses. You can rest assured that we will continue our relationship with Japan" he said.

→ [www.auroragov.org](http://www.auroragov.org)

## DEN: SOARING HIGHER, REACHING FARTHER



The airport's iconic roof is meant to resemble both Colorado's snow-capped mountains and Native American teepees.

Having handled 69 million passengers in 2019, **Denver International Airport (DEN)** has remained one of the five busiest airports in the United States. Among the 20 busiest airports in the world for several years, the sprawling hub is well positioned to become a major global hub.

"We really benefit from the visionaries of the past, like Federico Peña, our previous mayor, who pursued the goal to build this airport. His vision for Denver back in the 1980s was 'Imagine a Great City.' Looking back, DEN has become part of building and growing that great city," **Vice President for Air Service Development Laura Jackson** said.

In 2018, DEN inaugurated five new international routes and allocated \$3.5 billion to update and improve Jeppesen Terminal, increase the number of gates in anticipation of growth in passenger traffic and, under its DEN Real Estate arm, to develop the surrounding 16,000 acres for commercial use. The project also involves the development of the 348-acre smart city Peña

Station NEXT, in partnership with Panasonic Enterprise Solutions.

The nation's largest airport by land area, DEN is the hub for three U.S. carriers: United, Frontier and Southwest. In June 2013, United launched nonstop flights between Denver and Tokyo, the demand for which has since risen more than 60 percent.

"Our efforts since 2013 have been to grow the demand between Denver and Tokyo. As of today, United's nonstop Denver-Narita service remains our only nonstop connection to Asia, so it's very important to us that it continues to be successful. That flight links us with Japan, one of Colorado's most important trading partners. We will continue to proactively invest in the Japanese market to build upon the strong foundation we have established over the past decade," Jackson said.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, DEN has become the largest contributor to Colorado's economy, generating around \$26 billion in economic benefits every year. → [www.flydenver.com](http://www.flydenver.com)

## THE MOVE TO CLEANER ENERGY IN WYOMING

The **Wyoming Infrastructure Authority (WIA)** was set up in 2004 to facilitate the development of infrastructure and technologies related to the electricity industry in the state. Because of that mandate, it plays a vital role in supporting, advocating, and promoting the responsible and sustainable use of Wyoming's energy resources.

"We are looking at our energy exports, such as building new plants and increasing opportunities to export coal primarily to Asian countries, and supporting the development of new technologies in the energy sector to help



Wyoming Infrastructure Authority Executive Director Jason Begger

carbon management, capture, sequestration and utilization," **WIA Executive Director Jason Begger** said.

"While we recognize that Wyoming has abundant fossil energy resources, we need to promote those technologies, especially now that society is looking for low carbon sources of energy," he said.

In line with those objectives, Begger visited Japan twice in September to seek like-minded Japanese companies looking to



invest in Wyoming. On his first trip, he was a guest of Japan Coal (JCOAL), which hosted a Clean Coal Day event. During his second visit, he attended the Post-Combustion Carbon Capture Conference in Kyoto.

Having recently formed partnerships with JCOAL and the Kawasaki Heavy Industries, WIA is determined to contribute to the state's economic growth with the help of Japanese expertise and investment. → [www.wyia.org](http://www.wyia.org)

## TECH PARKS ARIZONA: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SUCCESS

Overseen by the University of Arizona (UA), **Tech Parks Arizona** is a well-developed ecosystem that gathers researchers, entrepreneurs and businesses to develop new technologies, assist in the growth of technology companies and contribute to the regional economy.

"Within Tech Parks Arizona, we have the UA Tech Park at Rita Road. We also have the UA Center for Innovation, which is Arizona's longest continuously operating incubator," said **Associate Vice President Carol Stewart**, who has more than 20 years of experience running tech parks.

"The UA Tech Park at The Bridges is our newest development and it will have spaces for education and commercial use. Our top priority is recruiting companies with connections to UA to locate here," Stewart said.

To attract new companies to Tech Parks Arizona, Stewart and her team are tapping into UA's wide network.

"We have 10 micro campuses around the world, as well as Japanese programs at UA" she said.

"We want to make global companies successful. That is why we run a customized soft-landing program for international companies called Global Advantage. We invite Japanese companies to explore U.S. market opportunities using Tucson, Arizona as an entry point. The respect Japanese companies have for their business partners is very similar to what exists in the research park and university, so the alignment works well," she said.

Japan and Arizona's connections in space are also taking shape.

In a mission led by UA, NASA launched in 2016 an unmanned spacecraft on a seven-year mission to gather samples from Benu, an asteroid that may collide with the Earth in the future. The OSIRIS-Rex mission is headed by Dante Lauretta, a professor at UA whose three major degrees



The UA Tech Park encompasses 1,345 acres and has 2 million square feet of space for high-tech offices, R&D, and laboratory facilities.

include one in Japanese, which he believes proved valuable when he worked with colleagues in the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

→ [techparks.arizona.edu](http://techparks.arizona.edu)



## HOW TESSENDERLO KERLEY INC. IS REVOLUTIONIZING AGRICULTURE

**Tessengerlo Kerley Inc.**, a part of the Tesserlo Group, is driven by a bold, inspiring vision — to ensure that life on our planet continues to thrive by helping create a world that makes the most of its resources. This vision entails growing more food than ever before, using water as intelligently as possible, tackling the global shortage of natural resources and creating value from biosubstrates.

The company fully understands what is happening around the world and is finding ways to build a business for



Tessengerlo Kerley Executive Vice President Russel Sides

realizes that it must do things differently.

Behind everything the Tesserlo Group does lies a simple philosophy: "Every Molecule Counts." This tagline defines its unique attitude to sustainability and practical innovation and encompasses the power of an idea or action, however small, to change the world.

In continually striving to find more sustainable solutions, the Tesserlo Group aims to minimize its ecological footprint while maximizing the

contribution of its products toward building a greener economy. It offers various products and environmentally friendly solutions, where in it typically reclaims and transforms byproducts from other industries.

Whether it is in the products and solutions or the way in which they are produced, at the heart of all the businesses of the Tesserlo Group is its commitment to care for the planet and its resources because every molecule counts. → [www.tkinet.com](http://www.tkinet.com)

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### PAHRUMP: 60 MILES WEST OF LAS VEGAS, 180 DEGREES DIFFERENT

As Nevada prepares to reopen its tourism office in Japan this year after more than a decade of inactivity, several towns and cities across the state are gearing up for an influx of Japanese tourists and investors.

An hour from Las Vegas, the town of Pahrump is becoming a very popular destination for outdoor activity enthusiasts and those looking for a tranquil getaway.

"We like to tout Pahrump as '60 miles west and 180 degrees different' from Las Vegas. As a rural community, visitors who want to venture outside of Las Vegas will get a small-town, rustic feel. That's why we call ourselves the base camp to adventure," Pahrump Tourism Director Arlette Ledbetter said.

Pahrump is known for hosting various events throughout the year: its chili cook-offs, an annual hot air balloon festival, jazz concerts in Petrack Park and wine tastings at Pahrump's many wineries. The town also has an abundance of hotel rooms that cater to every sort of traveler, as well as recreational vehicle sites and all-terrain vehicle trails for road-tripping tourists.

Visitors can also experience seven different ecosystems just an hour away from Pahrump, ranging from Death Valley National Park on one extreme up to Mount Charleston on the other, which has made the town a favorite base camp for adventurers.

Ahead of the opening of the Nevada



TOWN OF PAHRUMP

The town of Pahrump in Nevada offers various events to please any kind of visitor.

tourism office in Japan, Pahrump is getting ready to welcome Japanese visitors with open arms and an assurance that they will have a safe, unforgettable adventure in the area. ■

→ [www.VisitPahrump.com](http://www.VisitPahrump.com)

### SLC AIRPORT: OFF TO GREATER HEIGHTS

Located just 5 miles east of downtown Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) is ensuring its status as a global aviation hub by constructing a modern airport that will serve and grow with the region for decades to come.



SLC AIRPORT

Headed by CEO Bill Wyatt (left), Salt Lake City Airport is undergoing a multibillion dollar expansion and is due to open a new terminal later this year.

The airport currently serves more than 26 million passengers a year with facilities that were designed half a century ago. Management is now building an entirely new airport.

"The airport really has grown faster than originally expected, its design was intended to serve half the passengers that we annually get. The SLC Airport's existing structures have served its patrons well, but we think it's about time for a new age of airport design," SLC Airport CEO Bill Wyatt said.

The \$4 billion renovation project will yield a state-of-the-art facility with one large, central terminal and two linear concourses joined by a passenger tunnel, with more space and conveniences to give passengers a world-class airport experience.

The new airport also emphasizes sustainability with a lot of intentionality on green energy use.

"Building a new terminal complex is a massive undertaking, but the result will be well worth the effort," Wyatt said.

The facility is being built in two phases, with the first expected to be unveiled by September 2020 and the second in 2024. ■

→ [www.slcairport.com](http://www.slcairport.com)

### NO END IN SIGHT FOR UTAH'S ECONOMIC RUN

Utah's economy is on a roll, with no signs of slowing down. While the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development is unsurprisingly pleased with the state's performance, it's also optimistic that the momentum will continue for many years to come.

"We were named the No. 1 state for entrepreneurship by Forbes magazine, which said we are the best place to start a business. We also have the strongest middle class in America. We continue to receive tremendous accolades as our economy advances at an incredible rate," said Val Hale, executive director of the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development.

When asked what contributes most to Utah's economic upswing, Hale said: "First and foremost, Utah is a very business-friendly state. We have a relatively low tax rate, and we are easier to navigate when it comes to regulations," also highlighting the governor's policy of minimal intervention.

"Our governor's slogan is, 'I want to keep the government off your back and out of your wallet.'"



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert

And businesses love that type of attitude. So, that has been the foundation of it," Hale added.

Moreover, Utah has an abundant supply of top talent regularly entering the workforce.

"Our colleges and universities turn out exceptional graduates. Some international companies don't look farther than the West and East U.S. coasts, so they're missing out on a tremendous opportunity in Utah. We still have a relatively low cost of living and a skilled bilingual workforce," he said. ■

→ <https://business.utah.gov>

### REZZIMAX PAIN TUNER PRO: SIMPLE RELIEF FOR A MILLION ACHES

Having suffered chronic neck problems and other health issues for several years, licensed physical therapist Sharik Peck and his wife Cheryl were on a mission to find an effective and natural cure for chronic pain.

"We could not find the perfect device that could help us and other people feel better. We knew what it needed to do. We just could not find one in existence already. Because of that, approximately six years ago, we began creating our own," Sharik recalled.

After much research, the couple developed Rezzimax Pain Tuner Pro, a handy device that uses resonance to alleviate chronic bodily pain and even stress, anxiety and depression. It incorporates ancient Eastern Asian medicine principles for acupuncture sites, meridians, chakras and *gua sha* fascia techniques with Western modern scientific frequencies.

"I came to realize that carefully calibrated vibrations applied to specific areas of the nervous system that enhance vagus nerve tone helps heal individuals from stress, encourages improved recovery and pain disappears," Sharik said.

This year, the couple wants to market the Rezzimax Pain Tuner Pro around the world, starting with Japan, where they hope it



REZZIMAX

Sharik Peck

will become popular because of its shared principles with East Asian and Western medicine.

"We would love to find the right group to work with that recognizes the potential of our simple device to help millions of people, as well as help improve their quality of life as they age," Cheryl said. ■

→ <https://rezzimax.com/>



REZZIMAX

Rezzimax Pain Tuner Pro



### NEW MEXICO: DISCOVER THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES



CITY OF LAS CRUCES

The iconic recycled roadrunner sculpture overlooks the thriving city of Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Surrounded by 496,000 acres of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, Las Cruces is the second-largest city in New Mexico and among the fastest-growing urban centers in the United States.

"We are the economic engine of southern New Mexico. We are investing heavily in commercial and residential real estate and creating a safe community for our people to live and work in," said Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagishima, the first American of Japanese descent elected mayor in New Mexico.

Las Cruces is among the nation's leading locations for aerospace research, testing and development. It is home to NASA's White Sands Test Facility, New Mexico State University's Physical Science Laboratory and Spaceport America, the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world.

The city forms part of the Borderplex Region, which includes El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez in Chihuahua, Mexico, which is the seventh-largest manufacturing center in North America.

Las Cruces and its surrounding areas contribute immensely to New Mexico's role as one of the nation's largest pecan producers. The Mesilla Valley is a major producer of cotton, corn, chili peppers and hay.

With an average of 320 days of sunshine, Las Cruces is also a vibrant city rich in culture and cuisine, and a popular destination for art lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

"Whether for business or for leisure, Las Cruces is a preferred destination. A lot of people come here to visit and they don't want to go back. We've had a lot of people just fall in love with the place," Miyagishima said. ■

→ [www.las-cruces.org/](http://www.las-cruces.org/) [www.lascrucesvb.org](http://www.lascrucesvb.org)

### NEW MEXICO'S FREE SOFT LANDING PROGRAM HELPS FOREIGN SMES ENTER THE US

While many large foreign companies have the resources to hire local lawyers, in-house experts and site selection consultants to help them navigate America's complex legal and regulatory structure, many foreign small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not have access to the necessary support that allows them to easily set up operations in the United States. New Mexico wants to address this discrepancy.

Even more overwhelming to foreign SMEs is the geographical size of the country and the distinction between federal and state authorities. While these SMEs recognize that the United States is the world's largest consumer market and that their presence in the country could be extremely lucrative, many of them give up on the idea of establishing American operations, daunted by the unknown.

New Mexico launched the ABQ-Copilot Program to provide foreign SMEs with vital information on how to set up operations in the state. Interested investors choose from an a la carte menu of topics they want addressed, such as U.S. business formation structures, executive transfer immigration options, international taxation, as well as logistics and supply chain issues.

These potential investors then get a customized, multiday agenda that includes free meetings with lawyers, brokers and any other experts who can address each of their specific concerns. They also get a free business matchmaking service to maximize their time in the state. Interested investors only need to shoulder travel and lodging costs.

While many foreign SMEs may not know where in the United States to locate, New Mexico is keen to show why it must be on top of their list. ■

→ [www.nmtradealliance.org](http://www.nmtradealliance.org)



NM TRADE ALLIANCE

New Mexico Trade Alliance President Randy Trask

