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Gov. Evers Hosts "Opportunity in Wisconsin" Networking Breakfast in Tokyo

Event Features UW Alumni in Japan

TOKYO — Gov. Tony Evers hosted more than 75 University of Wisconsin alumni, international business leaders, and dignitaries at the “Opportunity in Wisconsin” networking breakfast in Tokyo on Tuesday.

The breakfast was intended to highlight opportunities for collaboration between Japan and Wisconsin. Attendees included executives from Wisconsin-based companies doing business in Japan as well as Japanese-owned firms with operations in Wisconsin.

Joining Gov. Evers were executives from Johnson Controls International, Iris Ohyama, Promega, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and GE Healthcare.

“Companies like these, as well as the companies taking part in our trade mission, exemplify the commitment of Wisconsin businesses to quality and innovation,” Gov. Evers said.

Visal Leng, president of Johnson Controls Asia Pacific, was one of the Japan-based business leaders to meet with Gov. Evers at the breakfast.

“I was delighted to meet with Gov. Evers and the Wisconsin delegation in Tokyo today. It was very exciting to hear the governor’s priorities for Wisconsin’s continued development and its ties to Japan. As a multinational company that started from Milwaukee more than 130 years ago, we are proud of our Wisconsin origins and are committed to supporting its development in Japan and across the world.”

Much of the state’s commitment to innovation comes from the strength of its educational institutions, the governor said. Wisconsin is recognized as a leader in promoting real-world applications for the latest academic research.

“There’s a name for this type of academic collaboration—it’s called the Wisconsin Idea, that the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state, and that the fruits of research at the University of Wisconsin benefit all residents of the state,” he said.

One new partnership is in the area of freshwater science, the governor noted. Earlier this year, all 13 UW System campuses formed the Freshwater Collaborative, an initiative that brings together students and researchers to work on issues ranging from drinking water contamination to invasive species.

Three UW System officials are taking part in the trade mission: UW-Platteville Chancellor Dennis Shields, UW-Platteville Vice Chancellor Rose Smyrski and UW System Vice President of Corporate Relations and Economic Engagement David Brukart.

The governor also participated in the Midwest U.S.–Japan Association (MWJA) Conference, which concluded Tuesday, and met with Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Shinsuke Sugiyama.

On Tuesday evening, the governor and members of the trade delegation attended a dinner hosted by Kikkoman honoring more than 50 years of ties between the company and Wisconsin. Kikkoman's plant in Walworth was the first Japanese-owned production facility established in the U.S.

Gov. Evers thanked the company and its chairman, Yuzaburo Mogi, for its long support of Wisconsin and the MWJA. Mogi is stepping down as chairman of MWJA this year.

The governor is leading a 28-member delegation that includes 13 business leaders from nine Wisconsin companies. The trade mission concludes on Sept. 14.

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