

Midwest U.S.-Japan / Japan-Midwest U.S. Associations' 54th Annual Joint Meeting
Joint Statement
September 10, 2024

The 54th Annual Joint Meeting of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association and Japan-Midwest U.S. Association convened in Columbus, Ohio, Sunday, September 8 through Tuesday, September 10, 2024. Approximately 375 representatives from the Midwest U.S. Japan and attended the meeting. Active discussions centered on the main theme “Building an Ecosystem for Innovation, Growth & Sustainability.” The conference was co-chaired by U.S. Chairman W. Gordon Dobie, Partner of Winston & Strawn and Japanese Chairman Takeo Inokuchi, Honorary Advisor, Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Co., Ltd.

Robert Koepcke, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State and Shigeo Yamada, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America delivered keynote speeches. Yusuke Shindo, Consul General of Japan in Detroit and Jun Yanagi, Consul General of Japan in Chicago gave guest speeches.

The Midwest-U.S. delegation included Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb, Lieutenant Governor of Kansas David Toland and representatives from American Honda Motor, Canon Healthcare USA, Honda Research Institute USA, Cirba Solutions, Ohio Life Sciences, Cincinnati Children's, Forge Biologics, Austin Consulting, Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, Kokosing Industrial, Miller Valentine, Intel, JobsOhio, Columbus State Community College, Yaskawa America, Inc., Center of Science and Industry (COSI), and Columbus Partnership.

The Japanese delegation included Shiga Governor Taizo Mikazuki, Saitama Governor Motohiro Ono, Gunma Governor Ichita Yamamoto, as well as representatives from Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd., ANA HOLDINGS INC., FIRSTSTAR Healthcare Co., Ltd., Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. and Daifuku Co., Ltd.

The meeting discussed sustainability of our unique water resources in the Midwest and Japan and the desire for a day to acknowledge that importance.

The meeting discussed the potential for controversy and the importance of our two Associations continuing to foster greater cooperation, friendship, and strong economic ties between the Midwest States and Japan.

Since 1967, the Annual Joint Meeting of the two associations has served as the principal forum for trade and investment discussions between the Midwest-U.S. and Japan. Panel discussions centered on the theme of “Sustainability Mobility – EV, Hydrogen and SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel)” in the first session, “Life Science – Global Innovation for a Healthier Future” in the second session, and “Creating, Attracting and Retaining the Talent of Tomorrow” in the third session.

Regarding sustainable mobility, delegates from the Midwest U.S. and Japan gave presentations on the latest innovations and successful cases of business-to-business cooperation. They also engaged in a lively exchange of opinions on future challenges and ways of resolving them.

Regarding life science, which is important for the future of humankind, opinions were exchanged on technologies, equipment, and the utilization of data. Delegates from the Midwest U.S. and Japan made comments on approaches to and the importance of innovation in this field.

With regard to talent, the delegates exchanged opinions on the approaches and initiatives of corporations. In addition to initiatives regarding how to create and attract future talent, as well as further enhance work satisfaction, comments were made on wide-ranging innovation education.

At the conclusion of the conference, delegates from the Midwest U.S. and Japan reaffirmed their commitment to bolster bilateral trade and investment through mutual cooperation based on the strong trust cultivated over the years.

Delegates agreed to meet in Tokyo, for the 55th Annual Joint Meeting scheduled for September 7-9, 2025.