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www.gmipost.com

A STEADILY GROWING PARTNER FOR JAPAN

Within the Southeast United States, Japanese companies have found several attractive investment destinations, namely Georgia and North Carolina. Meanwhile, South Carolina and Virginia have also given their neighboring states some stiff competition by offering favorable investment conditions.

GEORGIA: OLD, RELIABLE PARTNER

For the sixth straight year, Georgia, cited for its excellent infrastructure and workforce, headed the Top Business Climate list of Site Selection magazine last November. But, for several years, the state has remained first choice for Japanese companies, like YKK, Toto and more than 600 others, all of which employ thousands of local residents.

"Georgia, the center of the Southeast USA region, has the two great seaports of Savannah and Brunswick. At the core of the state is also the world's busiest airport, which easily connects Georgia to any part of the country and the world," **Consul General of Japan in Atlanta Takashi Shinozuka** said.

Headed by recently appointed general manager, John Selden, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is undergoing a 20-year development program — ATLNext — designed to increase passenger capacity, replace facilities and improve its design.



JETRO Atlanta Chief Executive Director Takuya Takahashi

Apart from location and infrastructure, the state's competitive advantage is the quality of the workforce. The government takes pride in its world-acclaimed training program, Georgia Quick Start, which is part of the Technical College System of Georgia.

Kubota, Rinnai, Toppan Interamerica and several other Japanese companies have availed of this program to further develop their employees.

"Anyone can see that the relationship is strong and will continue to be so. Investments will continue to come here because of its welcoming government, great infrastructure and talented workforce," Shinozuka said.

Director of Global Commerce of the Department of Economic Development Scott McMurray pointed out that the strong relationship between the state and Japan was a result of many years of work.

"We have always prioritized Japan and see it as one of our main partners. In fact, Georgia is celebrating the 45th anniversary of our office in Tokyo, the state's first overseas office. This is a testament to the commitment we have toward our Japanese partners," McMurray said.

And, further raising its profile among Japanese business, the city of Savannah will host the Southeast United States Japan Conference in October.

North of Georgia, the states of North Carolina and South Carolina are trying to catch up in the race to attract more foreign investment, particularly from Japan.

"We're seeing the relationship of these states with Japan strengthening," said **JETRO Atlanta Chief Executive Director Takuya Takahashi**, whose office oversees the states of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama and Tennessee.

Shinozuka also pointed out: "When you take a look at North Carolina and South Carolina, the number of Japanese companies has not been as large as in Georgia. But according to our statistics, the number of Japanese-affiliated companies in these two states has almost doubled in the past 10 years."

NORTH CAROLINA: CENTER OF RESEARCH AND CAR SUPPLIERS

Among North Carolina's biggest advantages, Charlotte Douglas International Airport offers daily one-stop flights to both Tokyo and Osaka. Business travel between the state and Japan is expected to grow sharply once the airport's \$2.5 billion expansion is completed.

Currently, the Charlotte metropolitan area is increasingly becoming a lucrative investment location for Japanese. There are 80 such companies based in the area, among which are car parts suppliers, like NGK Ceramics USA and Seiren North America.

"We established our base in North Carolina in 1988 and we are still here today. We have been happy with our experience, and have become committed in helping the state attract more Japanese companies," said **NGK Ceramics President Steve Dailey**.

Just fresh from celebrating its 30th anniversary in North Carolina in 2018, NGK Ceramics will mark another milestone, the centenary of its Japanese parent company, NGK Insulators Ltd., this year.

The state is also actively promoting its so-called Research Triangle, an area that connects three of its major research universities: North Carolina State University, Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Advanced manufacturing and research-oriented industries are capitalizing on this resource of knowledge.

Situated alongside the Research Triangle is the Piedmont Triad, which consists of the cities of Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point. **Honda Aircraft Co.** selected the area for its base of operations because of its location and growth prospects.

"We identified the East Coast of the United States as the center of the world's business jet market. We are able to run our business efficiently from this location. We chose

Greensboro, NC because of its airport's future growth potential, skilled workforce and quality of life. And, as in the rest of the state, there is strong support from the state and local business partners," explained **HondaJet President and CEO Michimasa Fujino**.

North Carolina's Honorary Consul to Japan David Robinson is enthusiastic about the current trajectory of the state's relationship with Japan.

"We already have strong Japanese names in the state — AW North Carolina, HondaJet, Toshiba. With the available talent that they can still discover here, we're ready to welcome more investment from Japan," Robinson said.

SOUTH CAROLINA: WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITIES

Not lagging behind its neighbors, South Carolina has presented a lot of promise for Japanese business, particularly in Greenwood, where Japanese giant Teijin just broke ground for its \$600-million carbon fiber plant. Just across the road is Fujifilm, which has undergone various expansions since its first opening in 1988, including the most recent investment in 2018.

"Fujifilm has been here with us for 30 years. Its most recent expansion is worth noting because it diversifies the product offerings in Greenwood," said **Greenwood Partnership Alliance CEO Heather Simmons**.

While upstate South Carolina is more industrialized, other areas in the state have seen an influx of fresh Japanese investment. Aiken County, southwest of the capital Columbia, is home to Bridgestone Americas, the county's largest employer.

"We hit a home run in 1997 when Bridgestone came. They were looking for a pro-business, non-union area, and found a good fit with us," said **Will Williams, president and CEO of the Economic Development Partnership of South Carolina**, which covers the counties of Aiken, Edgefield, Saluda and McCormick.

On the coast, the metropolitan area of Charleston is positioning itself as a leading logistical hub in the southeastern United States. With the deepest port in the south Atlantic and other competitive advantages, Charleston is looking to attract more Japanese investors.

"Six Japanese companies currently call Charleston home. Showa Denko Carbon has been our long-standing partner and also serves as our community's ambassador," said **Michael Graney, vice president for global business development of Charleston Regional Development Alliance**.

"The Charleston area is certainly growing. We would like more Japanese to be our partners in this journey. For Japanese investors eyeing the United States for opportunities, start in South Carolina. We welcome you here in Charleston!" Graney added.

"We were formed in 1988 because of the growing presence of Japan in the state," said **Japan America Association of South Carolina (JAASC) Chairman Satoru Ogawa**.

JAASC Co-chairman Craig Lundgren added: "Today, we are here to help support the Japanese community as they find a home in South Carolina."

VIRGINIA: EAGER FOR JAPANESE PARTNERSHIPS

While Virginia is home to many companies from around the world, the southwest region of the state wants to form stronger ties especially with Japan, according to **Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facility Authority**, which is promoting its New River Valley Commerce Park.

Board Chair Mary Biggs explained: "Relationship-building with Japanese companies takes a lot of time and effort, but it's very rewarding. It gives us time to understand how their companies do business, so we are better prepared to provide assistance when they locate here."

Outside of business, the educational sector is seeking to deepen ties with the world's third-largest economy.

Sweet Briar College (SBC) President Meredith Woo points out her school's culture complements Japanese culture very well.

"We produce very good women engineers, which the Japanese will find interesting. Apart from that, our campus is not only safe, but also considered one of the five most beautiful campuses in this country," Woo said.

SBC already has a sister relationship with Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, but wants to widen its network of institutional partnerships in order to develop more relevant academic programs. ■

FUJIFILM, TEIJIN FIND A HOME IN GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA

Having persuaded two large Japanese multinationals to establish operations in the community, **Greenwood County** in South Carolina has strengthened its case as an ideal investment location, whether they be from Japan or elsewhere.

Generating over \$1.14 billion worth of investment and 1,142 jobs since 2013, Greenwood County provides investors with abundant water supply, ample building sites and good infrastructure.

"Our business-friendly environment and high utility capacities have been instrumental in attracting large international companies," **Greenwood Partnership Alliance CEO Heather Jones** said.

Since moving to Greenwood County in 1988, Fujifilm Manufacturing USA has spent a total of \$2 billion to improve its operations. Moreover, in time to mark its 30th anniversary this year, the Japanese affiliate announced a new \$3.9 million expansion of its local facility.

Fujifilm's presence in Greenwood County has spurred the steady growth of the community, which influenced another Japanese company, Teijin Carbon Fibers, to build a new \$600 million carbon fiber production facility. This was the largest single investment in South Carolina in 2016.

"We are very appreciative of the positive impact Fujifilm and Teijin have on the community. Greenwood is happy to be their home, and we are dedicated to supporting them as they continue to grow their U.S. operations in the future," Jones said. ■

→ www.partnershipalliance.com



Teijin Limited breaks ground on its new facility in June 2018.

DOUBLE MILESTONE FOR NGK CERAMICS USA

Since its founding in Mooresville, North Carolina, in 1988, **NGK Ceramics USA** has expanded more than 15 times over the last 30 years. One of eight subsidiaries in the Ceramics Products Division, the company makes ceramic substrates for catalytic converters, which clean the exhaust emissions of cars and trucks.

The Japanese parent company NGK Insulators Ltd., selected North Carolina for its site because of the state's location near other players in the same industry and the proximity to raw materials used in the product.

"We chose this location because of its strategic fit with our operations. And as we celebrate our 30th year here, I can confirm that North Carolina has been essential to our success," said **NGK Ceramics USA President Steve Dailey**, who has been with the company from day one and has seen staff grow from three to 900.

"The journey NGK Ceramics USA had is astounding. It took us two years before we finalized our process and started selling products. Now, we recently produced our 300 millionth substrate," Dailey also said.

Apart from North Carolina's business-friendly environment, talented workforce and good quality of life, NGK Ceramics USA also attributes its success to the vote of confidence from its parent company, which is celebrating its centenary anniversary in 2019.

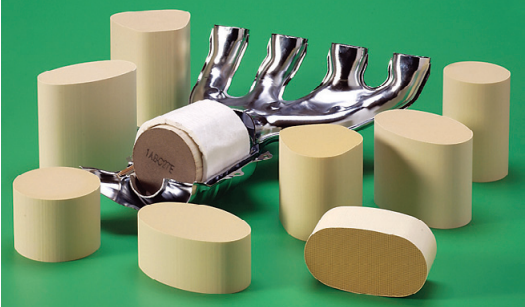
"I'm the first non-Japanese president in this division of NGK. The trust that they gave me to run this facility is something that I'm grateful for," Dailey said.

As the market for ceramic substrates continues to grow because of stricter global emission standards, NGK Ceramics USA remains dedicated to developing better products.

"We are now seeing a new substrate, called the gasoline particulate filter. It is expected to enter the U.S. market by 2025. Our aim is to convince our headquarters that we are the logical place to make that new product," Dailey said.

"We are continually strengthening our people, products and systems as the industry evolves. We're ready to leap into the future to continue our success story for the next 30 years," Dailey added. ■

→ www.ngkceramics.com



Ceramic substrates made by NGK Ceramics USA



NGK Ceramics USA's head office in Mooresville, NC

HONDA AERO RAISES BAR ON JET ENGINE TECHNOLOGY

Honda Aero, Inc., a subsidiary of Japanese car maker, Honda Motor Co., and the engine supplier of business jets, such as the HondaJet, manufactured by Honda Aircraft Company, has redefined jet engine technology by providing engines that enable aircraft with best-in-class speed, efficiency and the smoothest and quietest rides.

The engines are made for GE Honda Aero Engines, a U.S.-based joint venture between Honda Aero and GE Aviation, and sold to Honda Aircraft, maker of the HondaJet, and to other aircraft companies. Honda Aero attributes its success in the United States to the decision to establish operations in Burlington, North Carolina.

"We chose this location in order to be closer to one of our key customers. Honda Aircraft is only half an hour away from us. We're also in the center of a major traffic zone for small business jets. This is essential for our growth as we increase our manufacturing and service capabilities," **Honda Aero, Inc. President and CEO Atsukuni Waragai** said.

As orders grow for the HondaJet, Honda Aero has increased its delivery of engines over the past years. At the same time, the company wants to expand its customer base for its products and services.

"We are consistently pushing the boundaries with our innovative products. With our recent expansion



Honda Aero, Inc. President and CEO Atsukuni Waragai

to manufacture parts in-house, we are ready for more customers. Honda Aero is ready to be the leader in small jet engine manufacturing," he said. ■

→ www.gehonda.com

HONDA Honda Aero, Inc.

CATALER NORTH AMERICA: CLEARING THE AIR

A supplier of automotive giants such as Toyota, GM and Subaru, **Cataler North America Corp. (CNA)** is one of the leading manufacturers of automotive exhaust catalysts. These state-of-the-art catalysts clean automotive exhaust and, as a result, reduce toxic substances in the air that millions of Americans breathe.

"Our catalysts are able to turn harmful substances, such as carbon monoxide, into harmless ones, like clean water or air. Through this purification process, CNA contributes a great deal to the preservation of the global environment," **President Nakaba Tamura** said.

While it is dedicated to constant innovation, CNA also puts equal importance on contributing to the local community. Currently employing more than 300 people and undergoing

multiple expansions since its establishment in 2002, CNA plays a large part in Lincolnton's development. In 2017, CNA received the Industry of the Year Award from the Lincoln Economic Development Association in recognition of its corporate social responsibility activities.

"I believe that we have a give-and-take with the local community. A big part of CNA's success is due to the great workforce present in the Lincoln area. We thank the community for its constant support in helping this company thrive," Tamura said.

Producing 10 million catalyst units per year, CNA is focused on improving its products further and ensuring its growth across North America. In producing 20



Cataler North America Corp. President Nakaba Tamura

million catalysts annually, the Cataler group makes a significant contribution to clearing the air around the world. ■

→ www.cataler.co.jp/en



LINCOLN COUNTY NC: PARTNERSHIPS DONE RIGHT

Located just 40 minutes from one of the fastest growing cities in the United States, **Lincoln County** in North Carolina is among those low-profile investment areas across the United States that are becoming more visible in highlighting their advantages.

"Our proximity to Charlotte and Charlotte Douglas International Airport is one of our key strengths. We also have a low cost of doing business, a skilled workforce and an attractive quality of life. Lincoln County is just as fun as any big city, but without the traffic and expenses," **Lincoln Economic Development Association (LEDA) Executive Director Cliff Brumfield** said.

Because of its small size,



Lincoln County is able to address the needs of companies quickly and efficiently. It also formed the Industrial Managers Association to lend additional support to existing industries and foster good working relationships.

Among its most significant achievements was persuading Cataler North America to set up operations in the county. In 2017,

LEDA gave the Industry of the Year Award to Cataler for its contributions to the community.

"Cataler really sets the bar for corporate citizenship. It's overwhelming to see how much it has invested in this community. Nothing goes beyond what Cataler has done for Lincoln County," he said.

Thankful for Cataler's presence, Lincoln County hope to attract more Japanese companies to the area.

"Japanese companies are dedicated to be active members in their community. We would be happy to foster more relationships with them," Brumfield also said. ■

→ www.lincolnedea.org

THE GROWTH PROSPECTS OF NIDEC ELESYS AMERICAS CORP.

With a global network of more than 300 companies in 43 countries, Nidec Group designs and manufactures a comprehensive range of motors — from small ones found in computers to large ones used in manufacturing equipment.

Within the group, Nidec Elesys develops, manufactures and sells automotive safety systems, such as electronic control units (ECU) for electric power steering and vehicle stability assist systems, as well as pioneering technologies, like advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) for Honda and other OEMs.

Its American subsidiary, **Nidec Elesys Americas Corp.**, has made huge strides in producing for the North American automotive market, winning several awards for excellence in quality and delivery along the way.

"Believing that we can contribute to society by creating safer, more comfortable mobility, we strive to exceed all customer expectations and ensure that we are providing the best products possible," **Nidec Elesys Americas Corp. President Toshihiko Kono** said.

As technology in the automobile industry grows more advanced and mar-



Nidec Elesys America's headquarters in Suwanee, Georgia

ket demands grow stricter, the company has increased investment in research and development. It believes that innovative products for the electrification of vehicles and autonomous vehicles will result in loyal customers and business expansion.

Aiming to be the world's best in "everything that spins and moves," Nidec Group is confident it can design next-generation drive technologies that will meet the ever-evolving demands of the modern world. ■

→ www.elesys-na.com

→ www.nidec-elesys.com

→ www.nidec.com

BRIDGESTONE FINDS A HOME IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Because of its pro-business policies and growing workforce, many investors have chosen to set up operations in the **Aiken, Edgefield, McCormick and Saluda Region** of South Carolina, located only a two-hour drive away from major cities, like Charleston, Atlanta and Charlotte.

The region's largest foreign investors have come from Japan, among them automotive parts makers Aiken Precision Technologies and Newman Technologies. But the area's flagship investment has to be Bridgestone Tires, which opened its first production facility in Aiken County in 1997.

In 2011, Bridgestone expanded its facility by an additional 470,000 square feet to meet the rising demand for passenger car and light truck radial tires. Then, in September 2011, the Japanese giant announced the construction of a new 1.5 million-square-foot plant in Aiken to produce its off-road tires.

Bridgestone's two projects have a total value of \$2.2 billion, the largest capital investment made by a single company in the history of South Carolina. Having marked more than two decades of operations in the region, the company received a citation from the Economic Development Partnership for its contributions to the community.

"Every Bridgestone plant manager was awarded Ambassador for Economic Development by the SC State Department for Commerce," **Economic Development Partnership President and CEO Will Williams** said.

Last year, the two Bridgestone plants were accepted into the South Carolina Environmental Excellence Program because of efforts to expand their recycling, conservation and community support programs.

"Our Japanese companies have been a great addition to our local community. We're very grateful of their presence," said Williams, who is working to attract more Japanese companies to the burgeoning region.

"Rest assured that the same level of care and service we have given to our present Japanese tenants will be accorded to future Japanese investors," he added. ■
→ www.edpsc.org



Sage Mill Industrial Park in Aiken County

AFL: THE WORLD'S LEADING CONNECTOR

AFL began as a joint venture between Tokyo-based Fujikura Ltd. and the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) in 1984 to manufacture fiber-optic ground wires for U.S. utility companies from its base in Duncan, South Carolina.

With the steady growth that came through the diversification of its products and services over two decades, Fujikura acquired full ownership of the company in 2005.

Having just marked its 34th anniversary, AFL boasts a clientele that includes the country's largest companies in the telecommunication, energy and enterprise sectors. Today, North America accounts for 70 percent of AFL's business.

"AFL has developed a unique structure by combining the best parts of both Japanese and American business cultures. Now as a member of the board, I'm honored to be granted another opportunity in contributing to Fujikura's success," said **President and CEO Jody Gallagher**, who has been with the company since the start and is the first non-Japanese board member of Fujikura.

AFL Vice Chairman Satoru Ogawa underscored the importance of the company's activities to Fujikura's long-term future and expressed Gallagher's ability to make that valuable contribution.

"Fujikura's international presence is essential to the company's growth. Our trust in Jody's leadership shows how important these markets are to us," Ogawa said. To ensure its long-term success, AFL is committed to providing innovative product solutions coupled with exceptional customer service and support. ■
→ www.aflglobal.com



AFL CEO Jody Gallagher



CHARLESTON: PERFECTLY POSITIONED FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS

Named the best city in the United States and Canada by "Travel + Leisure" magazine, **Charleston** in South Carolina is a popular destination for foreign investment. With more than 180 multinational firms operating in the region, the community currently ranks ninth among U.S. metro areas for foreign direct investment.

One of the factors attracting these investors is Charleston's strategic location. The metro region is home to both South Carolina's busiest airport (Charleston International) and North America's most productive and efficient seaport.

"We're halfway between New York and Miami. One-third of the U.S. population resides within 500 miles of Charleston. This provides great access to the entire Southeastern U.S., which is critical for our aerospace, automotive and logistics sectors," said **Michael Graney**, **Charleston Regional Development Alliance vice president of Business Development**.

While South Carolina is becoming an increasingly popular location for Japanese investment, several companies such as Showa Denko Carbon, Sun Chemical, Ricoh, Shimano, and TBC Corporation have already well-established roots in Charleston. In fact, Japan is among the top five trading partners of the region, which excels in the aerospace, automotive, information technology and life sciences sectors.

To further accommodate Japanese investors and executives in the region, Charleston has implemented a Global Fluency Initiative to better serve the growing Japanese community.

"We launched a specific welcoming guide — CharlestonCommunityGuide.com — for our international residents so that they have a better understanding of the resources available to them here in Charleston. We want to connect with our Japanese community and make them feel at home," said Graney. ■
→ www.crda.org/international/jp/



TRUE SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY IN CONYERS-ROCKDALE

Located less than half an hour drive from downtown Atlanta, **Conyers** is a small city that has benefited from its proximity to the state capital, the third-fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States.

Conyers' most popular attractions are the Georgia International Horse Park, Monastery of the Holy Spirit, the Veterans War Memorial and Big Haynes Creek Nature Center. But at its heart is Historic Olde Town Conyers, a unique shopping and dining center that showcases the city's southern heritage.

The city's diverse community and good quality of life have attracted many domestic and foreign companies, including LioChem Inc., a subsidiary of Toyo Ink Manufacturing, which marked its 30th year of operations last year.

"We are very happy to reach this milestone with LioChem. They have been a great support to the local community and we are excited to continue our relationship with them," said

Conyers-Rockdale Economic Development Council (CREDC) Executive Director Marty Jones. CREDC is determined to maintain good relations with its existing investors to ensure their continued growth.

"It's important for us to make sure that those companies get the help that they need as they expand. We want to be good partners," Jones stressed.

True to its Southern hospitality, Conyers welcomes more people to visit, whether be it for business or pleasure.

"We're a diverse, dynamic, and distinct community. We welcome everyone to see what we have here," **Conyers-Rockdale Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Fred Boscarino** said. ■
→ www.credcga.org
→ www.conyersga.com



The Conyers-Rockdale Economic Development Council office

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE: MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC TRANE HVAC US

A joint venture between Ingersoll Rand and Mitsubishi Electric US, **Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US LLC (METUS)** was formed in 2018. Less than a year old, the company has claimed a strong position in the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) sector in the United States and Latin America.

"The joint venture was formed in order to continue our momentum in the vibrant US HVAC market. Our goal is to provide the best possible personal comfort for our customers. We want to improve people's living and working conditions through our products," **METUS President and CEO Atsuhiko Yabu** said.

METUS expects the market to increase significantly in the next decade because of growing interest in the high-performance systems needed for zero energy infrastructure.

"In order to increase the comfort standards of people nationwide, we need to continue our positive impact in our own homes and buildings. Mitsubishi Electric aims to become a global, green company that enriches society with technology," Yabu said.

METUS also believes in being active citizens of the local community. It regularly supports various charitable causes in the Suwanee region, one of them being the annual Mitsubishi Electric Classic, a golf tournament on the PGA Tour Champions that selects a number of beneficiaries of cash donations. ■
→ www.metahvac.com



Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC President and CEO Atsuhiko Yabu

NEWTON COUNTY: GEORGIA'S MAGNET FOR JAPANESE INVESTMENT

With a working population of 2.2 million located just 40 minutes outside of metro Atlanta, **Newton County** has attracted big name companies, both local and foreign, such as Facebook, General Mills, Becton Dickinson, and Michelin.

The largest Japanese investors, particularly Bridgestone Golf, Nissinbo Automotive Manufacturing, and Takeda, are predicted to provide a total of 2,000 jobs by the end of 2019.

Established in 1992, Bridgestone Golf was the first Japanese company to locate in Newton County. Ever since it moved its operations from Japan to Covington in 2014, the maker of premium golf balls has become a significant contributor to Bridgestone's global operations.

Meanwhile, Nissinbo

Automotive Manufacturing marked its 20th year in the area last year with the announcement that it will spend \$72 million to expand its Covington plant. Takeda, the newest arrival, made the move to Newton following the \$59 billion takeover of Shire Pharmaceuticals, the largest foreign buyout by a Japanese company.

With those recent developments, **Covington Newton Office of Economic Development's Vice President David Bernd** has promised to lend more support to those investors: "Newton County is honored to have the presence of such great Japanese companies in our community. We are dedicated to being their partners as they continue to grow." ■
→ www.selectnewton.com



MICHIKI MORGAN WORLDWIDE: BRIDGING CULTURAL GAPS IN BUSINESS

In today's global market, companies must be able to respond faster and more effectively to constantly changing conditions. And for companies with overseas operations, like Japanese firms in the United States or American companies in Japan, the need for rapid action causes another challenge.

Often, those companies find out that their management strategies and the company culture, while effective back home, have not produced the same level of success outside the country. While they continue to globalize and recognize the critical importance of localizing their organization and work culture, they lack the expertise internally to achieve successful results.

"Many companies underestimate the challenge of working across different cultures and motivating people. These things do not organically happen. Leaders need to be strategic and intentional," said **Michiki Morgan Worldwide CEO Nozomi Morgan**, whose firm works with executives to communicate more effectively with local employees to reduce friction caused by cultural differences.

"Companies are people. If



Michiki Morgan Worldwide CEO Nozomi Morgan

those people can't collaborate and work effectively with each other, then your ability to grow as a company is limited," Morgan said.

Michiki Morgan Worldwide has built an impressive portfolio of industry-leading clients.

"The market is unforgiving today. When your company operates in multiple countries with a diverse workforce and customers, the ability to work seamlessly is no longer an option. If you don't respond quickly and efficiently, you'll be left behind," said Morgan, who regularly travels between Japan and the United States to provide strategic consulting to the heads of multinational companies. ■
→ www.michikimorgan.com

JOINING CULTURES FOR GLOBAL GROWTH

With a history of more than 200 years, U.S.-based **Scovill Fasteners**, located in Georgia, has earned a reputation as one of the world's largest manufacturers of high-performing apparel and light industrial fasteners.

With teams located across the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe, the company is known for customer partnership, service and expertise from fastener design and delivery to application.

Acquired by Japanese-owned Morito Co., Ltd. in 2014, Scovill Fasteners is well positioned to serve a wider range of customers, many of them in the fashion apparel, industrial fabrics and medical industries.

"Together, we are a more diverse and efficient supplier for our customers. We bring value to both ends of the spectrum in an integrated state, as opposed to being separate entities," **Scovill Fasteners CEO Craig Stoudt** said.

With its strong foothold in the U.S. market, Scovill Fasteners is an important component for the Morito Group's global growth. Its new business structure, which aligns to both American and Japanese cultures, allows the two companies to focus on a long-term product strategy.



Scovill Fasteners CEO Craig Stoudt

"We may be at opposite sides of the world and be of different cultures, but both companies share very similar beliefs and goals. The four years that we've been a part of the Morito Group have been very prosperous because of this. We look forward to continuing our growth with them in the many years to come," Stoudt said. ■
→ scovill.com



GRIFFIN-SPALDING ATTRACTS MORE JAPANESE GIANTS TO INDUSTRIAL PARK

Since the conception of The Lakes at Green Valley, Georgia's first and only "eco" industrial park, a decade ago, **Griffin-Spalding Development Authority (GSDA)** has solidified the county's status as a preferred destination for Japanese investors.

"Prior to this, we were able to attract a couple of Japanese companies such as Sumika and Hoshizaki in our other parks. Our relationship with them early on made us realize the value of recruiting Japanese companies, and we have been targeting them as partners since then," said **GSDA Executive Director David Luckie**.

The 570-acre mixed use development has attracted the likes of Otsuka Chemical, Toppan USA and Marukan. Last year, Rinnai opened its first U.S. manufacturing plant in the park, filling up six of the 11 designated industrial sites. With those latest developments, the investors at The Lakes at Green Valley are all Japanese.

Last year, Luckie, along with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, paid a courtesy call on Rinnai's senior officers in Japan during a trip to attend the Southeast U.S.-Japan Conference. He is planning more visits as a gesture of appreciation to the other GSDA's Japanese partners and hopes to fill the rest of the unoccupied sites with Japanese investors.

"Building the relationships with our Japanese companies is very important to us. We want to be lifelong partners as they continue to grow in our community. We have built a community here that Japanese can call home," said Luckie.

"Of course, this would not be possible without the support and confidence that existing investors have placed in us over the years along with the great assistance from the State of Georgia's Department of Economic Development," he added. ■
→ www.gsda.net/home.html



NRV COMMERCE PARK: BUILT FOR THE FUTURE



Virginia's first commerce park stands on 4 million square meters of build-ready land situated near vital transport infrastructure.

Situated in Virginia's New River Valley in the western part of the state, NRV Commerce Park offers more than 4 million square meters of build-ready land for companies wanting a strategic location along the U.S. East Coast. Aside from having industrial-scale infrastructure, the park boasts an on-site 60-megawatt solar energy farm for its tenants.

Owned by Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facility Authority, NRV Commerce Park is easily accessible. It is beside a four-lane divided highway and only 5.6 km from U.S. Interstate 81. Also, the U.S. Foreign Trade Zone 238 and International Port of Entry 1412 at the adjacent New River Valley Airport serve the park, which can accommodate buildings up to 204,000 square meters in floor area.

"The authority has created a forward-thinking, certified industrial park to attract the next generation of businesses in a strategic location," **Chair Mary Biggs** said.

Offering a well-rounded environment for residents and a source of high-level talent, the NRV Commerce Park is within a 30-minute drive from Virginia Tech, Radford University and New River Community College.

With a reputation for fostering friendly communities that have earned numerous awards and citations, New River Valley residents will surely welcome new companies to the region. ■
→ www.nrvcommercepark.com



Sweet Briar College President Meredith (third from left) Woo with students

SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE: FORMING THE WORLD'S WOMEN LEADERS

Set on 3,250 acres in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, women's liberal arts college **Sweet Briar College** has remained unwavering in its mission to prepare women for the workplace and guide them to become responsible global citizens.

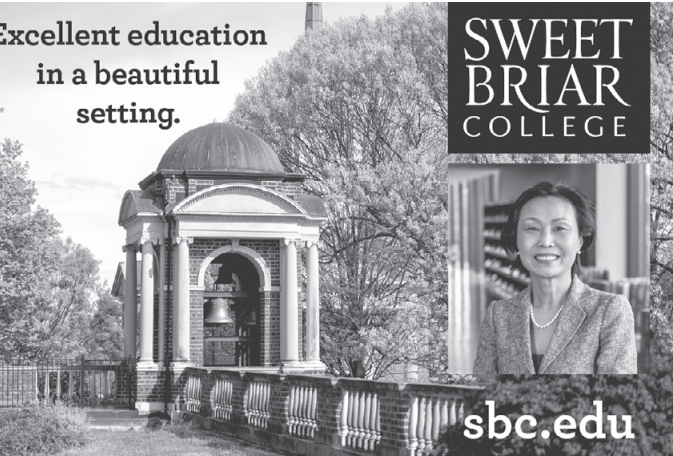
Throughout its 118-year history, Sweet Briar has provided its students with an open learning environment that nurtures problem-solving skills. The college is also one of just two women's colleges in the country with a fully accredited engineering program. The 2019 U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges Rankings named Sweet Briar one of the most innovative schools in the country.

"Our engineering program is small, but it is wickedly good. Its track record in employment is nearly 100 percent," said **SBC President Meredith Woo**, who spent her high school years in Tokyo and served on former President Bill Clinton's Commission on U.S.-Pacific Trade and Investment Policy.

As Japanese manufacturers continue investing in the United States, specifically in the southeastern states, Sweet Briar wants to strengthen links with the manufacturing industry and provide it with highly qualified graduates.

Already with long-running ties with schools in Japan, like Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, SBC wants to form new partnerships with more Japanese schools and organizations. It is confident that its affordable tuition and modern liberal arts curriculum will keep SBC among the top choices of high school graduates everywhere.

"Sweet Briar's changes to its curriculum and tuition model were strategic. We based them on the college's existing areas of excellence in order to set the institution apart and make it relevant for the 21st century. Our institutional innovations are intended to prepare women leaders to innovate and provide their own solutions to global problems," Woo said. ■
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