4 | The Japan Times | Tuesday, February 28, 2023

(Sponsored content)



SHIFTING TO HIGH GEAR

s the world returns to normality fol- be announced," DiBella added. lowing the protracted COVID-19 pandemic, the southeastern United States has seen sharp growth in the number of new businesses coming to the region. For Florida, Georgia and North Carolina, the transition was smooth, if not because of a collective will to succeed, then due to the deeply ingrained hospitality the South is famous for.

"We are looked upon as a good business site. Our political leaders are extremely interested in helping our industries grow. So when a project comes along, whether it's an expansion or a new project, our political leadership is very aggressive in supporting that growth for both its immediate and future potential," said Norris Tolson, president and CEO of the public-private recruitment agency Carolinas Gateway Partnership.

Building on that openness, the southeastern states are also adept at maintaining their ties with government agencies and business partners. Among the oldest and most stable relationships are those with Japanese companies.

"We want our relationship with Japan to grow because it is a very important trade relationship. Our international partners have a tremendous impact to our economy. Japan is one of our top investors and we want to see our relationship advance further. We are here to expand each other's economies and not only our own," said Enterprise Florida Deputy Secretary of Commerce Laura DiBella.

"We are a safe place to invest in. Florida is seen as among the least risky environments and that is why we are seeing so much investment happening in our state right now. I do not see that changing. And over the next several months to the next year, you'll see an incredible amount of in-

The importance of nurturing the close relationship between Japan and the United

States is shared by many on the other side. "I believe in the people-to-people relationships. Business and economic development would not be possible without the personal connections we make with people from around the world, from Georgia and from Japan. You'll never know who you'll meet and what new opportunities will open up, whether on a business, pro-

fessional or personal level. Start small and it will lead to better things," said Japan-America Society of Georgia Executive Director Yoshi Domoto. Florida, Georgia, and North and South

Carolina are forecasting an extremely good year as more companies announce expansion plans and government agencies streamline processes to open new businesses.

"Japan is truly a great ally and very important economic partner of the United States. Japan has consistently been the largest foreign direct investor overall of the United States and ranked one of our top foreign direct investor countries here in Florida," said Southeast-Japan Association in Florida Executive Director Dave Miller Woodward.

On the other advantages of the South, the Consul-General of Japan in Atlanta, Kazuyuki Takeuchi, said, "Our region can always be a home to the Japanese, whether for their companies or their families, because of our excellent climate and the warm Southern hospitality. All four states also have infrastructure that (is) excellent for their businesses."

For Georgia, the profile of Japanese investment is impressive, not only for its size but for its breadth.

"We've got every sector from agriculture, vestment coming to Florida that has yet to food processing, biomedical, aerospace,

automotive, construction equipment, ag ricultural equipment and everything in between. The economy of Georgia in a lot of ways is a microcosm of the U.S. Our economy as a whole very closely mirrors the makeup of the U.S. economy. That lends itself to Georgia being an attractive place, not just for Japanese investment in one particular industry, but really across the spectrum," said Georgia Department of Economic Development's Japan Office Managing Director Joseph Huntemann.

For more than 50 years, the southeastern states have been pursuing fresh investment and new business, including the expansion of operations, never losing sight of the long-term benefits for the companies, the state and its residents.

"For companies looking at this market, especially those that are dynamic and constantly looking for growth, our culture is a close match. We're a natural partner because of our excitement. We might be punching above our weight but it's also because we care. We're not driven just by our metrics or how many businesses we recruit in a day. We're building an ecosystem. We want to make sure that we get the right partners, that they complement each other and that we create room for future growth," said Pasco Economic Development Council President and CEO Bill Cronin.

That broad and long-term vision is what has attracted many Japanese companies, who value commitment and trust.

"We appreciate the investment that the community gives back to us, for us. We are extremely proud of the amount of people that we support. People's lives have benefited significantly. There are also millions of people across our network that support our ability to do this, and that is a powerful part of our partnership," said Fujifilm **Diosynth Biotechnologies President and** CEO Martin Meeson.

PROFESSIONAL LITIGATORS WIN CASES FOR JAPANESE COMPANIES

Licensed to practice in Georgia and other states, KITAGAWA & EBERT is one of the few American law firms that wins difficult disputes for Japanese business clients in federal and state court trials and arbitrations throughout the USA.

The California-based law firm represents many prominent Japanese clients throughout the United States and has lawyers licensed in California, Georgia, Texas, New York, Michigan, Nevada and Alabama, including lawyers who are among the very few lawyers in the USA who are admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Japanese businesses entrust us with complex business litigation matters and for guidance on business legal risk management. Japan headquarters often engage us directly to win sensitive and complicated matters," said Partner Lisa Kitagawa, who is the third of only four American lawyers to have graduated from Kyoto University and also attended Tokyo University. Partner James Ebert, who also attended Kyoto University, is a lawyer and a California certified public accountant.

"In the USA, only 1% of civil cases go to trial, so very few U.S. lawyers have actual trial and arbitration experience. We have won trials and arbitrations against some of the largest law firms in the USA," she added.

"We are respected for our winning strategies and ability to communicate

LIFE SCIENCES CORRIDOR BOOMING IN NORTH TAMPA BAY AS MOFFITT BUILDS GIANT MEDICAL CITY IN PASCO COUNTY

Florida's health care and life sciences industries are growing at a record pace and companies focused on medical research, health product development and manufacturing are locating to Pasco County, just north of Tampa.

The location lends itself to the opportunity to build and grow state-of-the-art facilities close to Tampa International Airport, major universities and interstate freeways, while staving near new communities that are attracting a workforce with the advanced skill sets required in the life sciences industry.

These attributes played a role in the Moffitt Cancer Center's decision to build a 775-acre (313-hectare) research, development, manufacturing and office park in Pasco County in close proximity to Tampa's quickly developing

persuasively and effectively with clients, of technology, and understanding of U.S. lawyers, judges and arbitrators. We skillfully ness disputes. We also have a busy transacnavigate through complex business matters so that our clients succeed and win," she also said

KITAGAWA & EBERT is a Japanese bilingual business practice that excels at legal strategy and technology in its legal research, efficient analysis of documents and evidence, and litigation procedures. Other Japanese bilingual lawyers lack actual litigation or trial experience, and do not have an understanding of U.S. history, politics and business culture, according to Kitagawa.

KITAGAWA & EBERT's mastery of technology enabled it to expand its Japanese clientele despite the pandemic. The firm represents prominent Japanese clients in a broad spectrum of industries, including energy, technology, automotive, food, logistics, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, real estate, finance, investment, entertainment, the internet and international transactions.

rience, Japanese bilingual team, skillful use

Speros FL as the name of the planned glob-

al innovation center. Given that the region's

workforce pipeline is augmented by more

than 20,000 graduates annually, it is no sur-

prise that Moffitt chose Pasco. The move af-

firms similar decisions made by international

health care companies such as Touchpoint

Medical and fast-growing start-ups like

Pasco Economic Development Council

President and CEO Bill Cronin is looking for-

ward to the many benefits that will arise from

technology developments and collaborations

that will grow out of this. This will make room

"There will be a lot of other innovations,

"With our firm's extensive business expe- KITAGAWA & EBERT Partners Lisa Kitagawa and James Ebert





and Japan cultures, we win complex busi-

tional business practice in contracts, corpo-

rate, real estate, employment, international

and other matters. We understand the com-

plexities of doing business in the USA and

provide experienced business strategies,

including risk management, for our clients'

success," Kitagawa said.

 \rightarrow http://www.japanuslaw.com

Baymar Solutions is one of many businesses in Pasco County's rapidly growing life sciences and manufacturing industry.

for Japanese companies, especially those in pharmaceuticals. It is very important for the center to have partners that are willing to do clinical trials on the spot and work together," Cronin said.

 \rightarrow https://pascoedc.com

"Around 2014, we were able to get into confectionery maker has seen its best-sell- mainstream channels like Costco, CVS ing soft candy HI-CHEW become a huge hit Pharmacy and Walgreens. That's why we need to set up a factory here in North As of 2022, the company said American Carolina," he added.

MORINAGA TASTES SWEET SUCCESS IN THE U.S.

There is much to celebrate for 124-year- has been with the company for more than



FORT LAUDERDALE: A GROWING COMMUNITY FOR EVERYONE

Bravado Pharmaceuticals.

this development.

consumers have been consuming close to 5.5 million pieces of the fruit-flavored chewable candy every day, or almost 2.1 billion pieces every year.

among millions of Americans.

United States 15 years ago, the top Japanese

old Morinaga. Since setting up shop in the 30 years.

Teruhiro "Terry" Kawabe, Morinaga's Chief Representative for the USA and President CEO of Morinaga America Inc., attributes HI-CHEW's popularity to the wide variety of flavors (more than 200 around the world) and its unique texture, achieved through its own technology.

pandemic — Morinaga America is looking to expand its U.S. operations.

"When we started here in 2008, our distribution was limited to Asian supermarkets, like Mitsuwa Marketplace and Tokyo Central. When HI-CHEW became more accepted by American consumers, we distributed it to local supermarkets. That boosted our sales volume in the country," said Kawabe, who

Another huge factor in its success were Morinaga's partnerships with Major League Baseball teams.

On the next moves for Morinaga America, Kawabe disclosed plans to introduce more flavors of HI-CHEW. Last February, it introduced Chargel, an energy gel made with no caffeine, gluten, artificial sweeteners or highfructose corn syrup.

"Right now, we have 25 products and over 30 flavors available in the U.S, and we are Because of growing demand — notwith- continuously adding unique flavors to our standing a price increase and the COVID-19 growing portfolio. We have also launched products with less sugar and want to develop more products that cater to more people. like vegans. We want to satisfy the varying tastes of our consumers," Kawabe said. \rightarrow https://morinaga-america.com





Representative for the USA and President CEO of Morinaga America Inc.

MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Over the last few years, residents of Fort the world and strengthen its brand as an inclu-Lauderdale welcomed the improvements happening in their communities. The call for continuity, according to the mayor, beckoned.

"I saw a vearning in the community to continue with the changes that were occurring in our city amid the high popularity that we enjoyed," recalled Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis, who was first elected in 2018 and reelected in 2021.

Known as the nation's swimming capital, Fort Lauderdale has hosted swimming and diving competitions for decades and is home to the International Swimming Hall of Fame. The completed renovation of the city's Aquatic Center has garnered international acclaim as the city now boasts the first permanent 27-meter dive tower, one of the tallest in the world.

Well connected to the rest of the globe, thanks to the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, the city has developed new residential areas, including dozens of luxury high-rise condominiums by the beach. The ongoing building boom hopes to attract people from around

FORGING THE FUTURE OF GREEN ENERGY IN THE U.S.

As countries around the world reduce their hydrocarbon consumption, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) has opened its Center of Excellence for Energy Transition Solutions at Mitsubishi Power Americas, headquartered in the United States. Market analysis indicates that the U.S. is currently poised to lead the world in transitioning toward clean, decarbonized energy.

"By having the Center of Excellence located in the United States, we will have additional resources and clear focus to lead the global transition towards clean energy," said **Mitsubishi Power Americas President and CEO Bill Newsom**, who recently reorganized the company's business portfolios to focus on two areas: core power generation and energy transition to enable rapid growth to support the energy transition.

The core power generation business of Mitsubishi Power Americas consists of hydrogen-capable gas turbine combined cycle power plants, aero-derivative gas turbines, new equipment manufacturing, repairs, and original equipment manufacturing and non-OEM services.

"Our core business is strong, and we continue to be a global leader in heavy-duty gas turbine market share for the calendar year 2022. This is due, in large part, to MHI's investment in Advanced Class technology, which

sive community. "We are creating a downtown called Flagler Village. There are a lot of investments in com-

mercial spaces, office spaces and residential housing. For those very reasons, we are on a path towards significant growth. We are creating an environment of hospitality wherein all people feel comfortable,"Trantalis said.

"I've also made it a point to go on a number of overseas trips to visit places far away from our home simply to acquaint people with Fort Lauderdale. I think Japanese investors will find it extremely beneficial for them to look at Fort Lauderdale as a significant investment opportunity," he added.

Reaffirming the city's successful growth program, several companies have begun moving to the city, including financial services companies and a major Hollywood studio.

"Fort Lauderdale was recently ranked the second-best place in the entire country to start a new business. It is our priority to continue that narrative, ensure the diversity of our



Because of its business-friendly policies and zero-income-tax regime, scores of families and companies have moved to Fort Lauderdale.

employment, continue to attract investments, and improve quality of life," Trantalis said.

"But we also want to ensure that quality of life is not compromised by growth. We will continue to invest in infrastructure in order to build a safe and secure environment for anyone who wishes to live here," he added. \rightarrow https://www.fortlauderdale.gov



ess to marinas, boatina facilities, hotels, resta enities, and the central business district, the Downtown Helistop is your connection to Fort Lauderdale, South Florida, and beyond

FOR EFFORTLESS TRAVEL TO FORT LAUDERDALE, VISIT WWW.FLYFXE.COM

FILE 🛛 🙋 CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

CREATING A CHANGE IN POWER

As a leading innovator in power generation during this critical time for the power industry, Mitsubishi Power is the right partner to offer end-to-end solutions. From accelerating net zero to providing fast-track mobile power, together with our customers, we are creating a change in power.

Learn more at power.mhi.com



provides improved fuel efficiency and higher-output gas turbines. We also thoroughly validate our technology at T-Point 2, a grid connected gas turbine combined cycle power plant, to ensure the highest quality. Our service businesses provide technology upgrades that allow existing assets to integrate with intermittent renewables and extend the overall

life of the power plant," Newsom said. The energy transition portfolio comprises businesses that are accelerating the pace of decarbonization, including hydrogen infrastructure, photovoltaic (PV) solar development, electrolyzers, and lithium-ion battery storage technology.

"On the energy transition solutions side, we are developing and deploying technologies that will enable the power industry to reach net-zero no later than 2050. We are creating a partnership ecosystem to scale technologies. For example, in partnership with Magnum Development, we are developing the Advanced Clean Energy Storage Hub in Delta, Utah, which is the world's first utilityscale green hydrogen production, storage and transport facility," Newsom said.

Mitsubishi Power Americas remains committed to providing the technologies and solutions needed for customers to achieve netzero carbon emissions by 2050 economically and in line with the U.S. government's target.



Mitsubishi Power Americas President and CEO Bill Newsom

Newsom stated that his team can deliver on its commitment with the help of the right partners and a steady flow of advanced technology from MHI.

"By bringing the team together, we can innovate and accelerate the pace of the energy transition. We can leverage our various strengths, diverse backgrounds and different approaches to solve our customer's challenges. Together we will create a clean, affordable and reliable energy future," he said. → https://power.mhi.com/regions/amer/

Produced by: GLOBAL MEDIA POST

www.gmipost.com

MIDREX TECHNOLOGIES: PEOPLE AND THE PLANET COME FIRST

Midrex Technologies Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Japan's Kobe Steel, attributes its 50-year longevity and success to a well-established culture of prioritizing people — from its employees and partners to its suppliers and customers.

"Our purpose is to love and serve others," said Midrex President and CEO Stephen Montague, adding, "I get strange looks when I say that, but I make no apologies about our purpose. There's a greater purpose to what we do than just business. We believe in people, as well as profits. We have to please our shareholder and take care of our people at the same time."

The 250 teammates of Midrex Technologies have designed and built nearly 100 MIDREX® Direct Reduction Modules in 21 countries worldwide, with an additional two on the drawing board. Its patented direct reduction technology improves the lives of millions of people around the world by contributing to environmental and economic sustainability and supporting various nonprofit organizations and charities.

MIDREX Direct Reduction Technology plays a leading role in the decarbonization of the

global steel industry. It is highly flexible in regard to reductant sources, iron oxide feed, and product discharge options. Plants can be configured to operate using 100% hydrogen (MIDREX H2[™]) or start with about 60% hydrogen by reforming natural gas while hydrogen is increased over time (MIDREX Flex™).

As it commemorates the 40th anniversary of its acquisition by Kobe Steel, Midrex Technologies is grateful for the trust shown by its parent company throughout their relationship.

"Kobe Steel has been an incredible shareholder. The steel industry usually goes through its ups and downs, and many parent companies don't have the patience for that. When the market swings, Kobe Steel has always shown a deep understanding that ups follow downs. They get it. Their patience, along with their willingness to let Midrex manage its business while holding

Midrex Technologies Inc. CEO Stephen Montague

us accountable, has worked really well," Montague said. \rightarrow https://www.midrex.com



GDEcD: GEORGIA'S HOTLINE FOR JAPANESE INVESTORS

If anyone appreciates the importance of being easy to reach, it must be Georgia's zle, but we holistically try to bring together all Department of Economic Development. It was the main reason for the agency's success with Japanese investors.

"We really do want to maintain lines of communication. We want to meet all their needs." said Joseph Huntemann, managing director of the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Japan Office, about his primary mission to attract more Japanese investment to the state.

"This office has been very focused on bringing over foreign direct investment and continues to do so. Ninety percent of my day-to-day still involves working with companies that invest from here. Whether it's their first time, or their second, third or fourth expansion, this office's role is about bringing an inbound investment, helping existing industries to continue to invest and succeed," Huntemann explained.

Since it opened in Tokyo in 1973, the office has searched for leads on Japanese companies looking to invest in Georgia, qualified them and assessed their objectives and requirements. For the viable prospects, the office provides information on potential sites, relevant incentives, and vital connections with local development authorities.

"We don't just look at one piece of the puzpieces of economic development through the office. I would like to find a way to really carve out and dedicate a big piece of this office's task load to simply caring for these Japanese companies because our existing industries and our existing investors are family. They're the people we have to take care of first," Huntemann said.

For nearly 50 years, the tireless commitment of GDEcD's Japan office has paid off profoundly. The portfolio of Japanese investment in the state has grown increasingly diverse. Beginning with customers in agriculture and food processing, the list of Japanese investors now includes companies in the biomedical, electric vehicle and aerospace sectors.

"Japan is a place that's very close and dear to my heart. I have seen how our community thrived in Japan and Georgia and the fascinating ways in which many individuals came together to build something greater than them. The groundwork is there. Whether things get stormy or whether it's smooth sailing, we stick with our companies and with our long-term relationships. None of that will change anytime soon," Huntemann said. \rightarrow https://www.georgia.org



Joseph Huntemann, managing director of the Georgia Department of Economic Development's **Japan Office**



KURAOKA CLINIC: PROVIDING COMPLETE CARE FOR EVERYONE

After many years practicing internal medicine in the United States, Maki Kuraoka Rheaume ful

launched, The Lakes at Green Valley, a 230-hectare mixed-use development in metropolitan Atlanta, is now fully occupied, having attracted many Japanese

AUTHORITY: WATCH THEIR SPACE In the 16 years since it was

GRIFFIN-SPALDING DEVELOPMENT



bition to start her own clinic in 2010, starting in Atlanta, Georgia, before expanding to Dublin, Ohio, and Dallas, Texas.

Educated in Japan and the United States, Rheaume pointed out that while all her staff are bilingual, Kuraoka Clinic succeeded because of its positive impact on the local community and its dedication to provide personalized and comprehensive care to ev-

ery patient in a relaxing, Maki Kuraoka Rheaume, M.D. stress-free environment

"I love talking to and taking care of my patients. I always have a positive energy and love creating good relationships with patients. I know moving to a new country is difficult, and I want to bring comfort to those living abroad by giving them a familiar environment with this clinic," Rheaume said.

"Recently, I focused on mental health issues. Many diseases are clear-cut, making them easily treatable. However, mental health care is much more intuitive. I am working hard to establish relationships with a good support group to effectively treat mental health issues," she added.

To build upon a holistic approach to medicine, Rheaume recently opened a medical spa with the latest equipment.

"I want to assure all the Japanese who come to the United States that Kuraoka Clinic is here for whatever health issues they may have. Many Japanese expats who have gone back to Japan still keep in touch with us through messages and letters," Rheaume said.

"I am grateful to have received thanks from previous patients and would like to believe I have impacted them in a positive way. I want to continue my role in this community for the rest of my life," she said. 🔲 ightarrow http://www.kuraokaclinic.com

companies looking for highly developed infrastructure, easy access to transportation links, vibrant communities and environment-friendly development plans.

> "We have basically sold out The Lakes at Green Valley and have no more land. Our priority now is to try to get more land to offer. We still get a lot of interest in our community. We have people that still call and hope we have space left in the eco-park. We want them to know that the store is open even if the shelves are empty," said Griffin-Spalding Development Authority's **Executive Director David** Luckie.

> The GSDA has stepped up its efforts to acquire more land and "put stuff back on the shelf" so that people continue to come to Griffin-Spalding. It is also prioritizing workforce development because present and potential investors want to have assured access to skilled workers. Another priority will be developing a sister city relationship with a city in Japan.



Griffin-Spalding Development **Authority Executive Director David** Luckie

"We're working on promoting Japanese culture in our community. We have been working closely with Japanese consulate-generals. We would like to develop that sister city relation-

ship because it will also bolster our relationship with Japanese companies. While we continue nurturing our relationships with companies here, we also look forward to developing relationships with new companies. We do not plan to have our shelves empty for long, and are continuing to go after Japanese investments," Luckie said. \rightarrow http://www.gsda.net/



