



# **Governor welcomes Keidanren delegation to Illinois**

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*Japanese*

*Delegation Stops in Chicago During Midwest Tour*

CHICAGO – As part of a brief investment tour of the USA, Keidanren, the Japan Business Federation, visited Illinois on May 14-15, to tour the area's innovation ecosystems and meet with members of the Chicagoland business community. Governor Bruce Rauner hosted the delegation, along with business leaders, at an Executive Breakfast on May 15th at the Metropolitan Club.

"Illinois shares a vibrant partnership with Japan that is stronger than ever with more than 630 Japanese companies employing more than 44,000 Illinoisans," Governor Rauner said. "We are

thankful to Keidanren and for Intersect Illinois' commitment to fostering these important networking events to promote partnerships that bring long-term benefit to our state."

KEIDANREN is a comprehensive economic organization with a membership comprised of 1,340 representative companies of Japan, 109 nationwide industrial associations and 47 regional economic organizations. Its mission as a comprehensive economic organization is to draw upon the vitality of corporations, individuals and local communities to support corporate activities which contribute to the self-sustaining development of the Japanese economy and improvement in the quality of life for the Japanese people.

"The partnership between Japan and the United States is the most important relationship Japan has with any country in the world," explained Kunio Ishihara, Chair of the Committee on U.S. Affairs and Keidanren Counsellor. "We are grateful to Governor Rauner and Intersect Illinois for the opportunity to meet with state legislators and corporate executives to exchange views on further strengthening US-Japan relations, and to encourage continued support for Japanese companies expanding their operations in the Illinois region."

Intersect Illinois, the private non-profit dedicated exclusively to increasing Illinois' competitiveness for job creation and investment, organized the event, along with additional support from sponsors Biggins Lacy Shapiro & Company, Crowe Horwath LLP, Cushman & Wakefield, EY, JLL, KPMG, and Masuda Funai. Speakers at the event will include Masuda Funai President Thomas McMenamin and Masuda Funai Principal George Kobayahsi, State of Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, Committee on U.S. Affairs Chair and Keidanren Counsellor Kunio Ishihara, the Consul-General of Japan in Chicago Naoki Ito, and Intersect Illinois President Andria Winters.

"Our economic relationship with Japan remains vital," said Illinois Department of Commerce Director Sean McCarthy. "We are grateful for their investment and commitment to our state. We will continue to work together to find ways to strengthen our relationship to create opportunity, investment and good paying jobs across Illinois."

The working relationship between the state of Illinois and Japan dates back more than 140 years and includes an office in Japan. Illinois ranks 4th among the 50 U.S. states in imports from and 4th in export to Japan. Japan is also the 4th largest import market for Illinois products. The Executive Breakfast focused on continuing the positive impact of this relationship and exploring additional opportunities to strengthen economic development ties, before the Keidanren delegation broke to visit UI LABS and Capitol One Chicago Digital Lab for a tour of these facilities.

"These two spaces are impressive examples of Illinois' thriving innovation ecosystem in both the manufacturing and financial sectors. By exposing foreign and domestic business members to the endless possibilities and assets that Illinois has to offer, Intersect Illinois is able showcase how the state is right for a company's next opportunity," stated Intersect Illinois President Andria Winters.

## About INTERSECT ILLINOIS

Intersect Illinois works in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Focusing on the state of Illinois' economic development efforts, Intersect Illinois was established as a private entity with greater flexibility to actively pursue prospects, and market this great state.

Video of the event can be found on the Illinois Office of Communication and Information website. Please contact Allie Bovis or Eleni Demertzis if you have difficulty locating the website.

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