

Gov. Walker: Departs Saturday for trade mission to Japan, South Korea

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Eight-day trip to focus on attracting investment to Wisconsin, boosting state exports

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker will leave Wisconsin on Saturday for an eight-day trade mission to Japan and South Korea aimed at encouraging continued foreign investment in Wisconsin and helping state companies develop business partnerships in both countries.

“With a significant increase in exports in the first half of 2017 and global companies like Foxconn and Haribo deciding to invest in Wisconsin, our international profile is higher than it has ever been before,” Governor Walker said. “This trade mission will build upon that success by helping state companies reach new markets and by letting companies in both countries know that Wisconsin is open for business.”

Governor Walker will lead a 22-member delegation that includes Mark R. Hogan, secretary and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC); Katy Sinnott, vice president of International Business Development for WEDC; and 13 executives from eight Wisconsin companies. During the trade mission, the company executives will engage in personalized, one-on-one meetings with potential business partners coordinated by WEDC’s authorized trade representative network in each country. Governor Walker and WEDC leaders will take part in separate, private meetings with companies to discuss expansion or investment opportunities in Wisconsin. The governor also will meet with key government leaders in both countries, including Japan Prime Minister Shinzō Abe, South Korea Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, and Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon. The trade mission coincides with the 49th joint meeting of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association (MWJA), which includes Japanese corporations that have direct economic ties to the Midwest or are interested in developing them. The association is chaired by Yuzaburo Mogi, honorary CEO and chairman of the board of the Kikkoman Corp., whose North American corporate headquarters is in Walworth County.

Highlights of the trade mission include:

- Governor Walker will attend the MWJA conference in Tokyo from Sunday through Tuesday morning. The governor will make remarks during the opening ceremony and participate in meetings with other Midwest governors, and Japanese officials and business leaders.
- In both countries, Governor Walker will lead “Opportunity in Wisconsin” events with about two dozen executives of companies interested in establishing or expanding operations in the U.S. The companies will learn about opportunities to expand their businesses in Wisconsin and the benefits of investing in the state.
- Governor Walker and WEDC officials will meet with leaders of the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Institute of Science and Technology (DGIST) in Seoul to discuss possible future collaboration in the energy sector.
- Governor Walker and Secretary Hogan will meet with Governor Morita Kensaku, the leader of the Chiba Prefecture in Japan, which has been Wisconsin’s “Sister State” since 1990. The leaders will discuss ways to strengthen ties between the two sister states – particularly in the area of water technology.
- Governor Walker will meet with representatives of Wisconsin-based RPRD Diagnostics and Orient Bio, a leading biotechnology company based in South Korea, to discuss possible collaboration efforts.
- In Seoul, Governor Walker will give a presentation to members of the Korean International Trade Association about the opportunities that exist in Wisconsin.
- Governor Walker and WEDC staff will present members of the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry with an overview of the state’s key business advantages, including its central location, strong workforce and history of innovation.
- Before returning to Wisconsin, Governor Walker and WEDC leaders will take part in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Korean War Memorial in Seoul. The governor will lay a wreath at the memorial’s Peace Plaza in honor of the U.S. and Wisconsin troops who gave their lives during the Korean War.