

Gov. Evers: Evers, state business leaders depart today for trade mission to Japan

Posted on Friday, Sep 6, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON – Governor Tony Evers will leave Wisconsin today for a nine-day trade mission to Japan where he will meet with Japanese leaders, visit the headquarters of Japanese-owned firms doing business in Wisconsin, and help promote state exports.

“Japan and Wisconsin have a longstanding relationship and deep ties,” Governor Evers said. “I look forward to renewing those relationships, learning more about our Japanese partners, and increasing opportunities for Wisconsin businesses.”

The governor will lead a 28-member delegation that includes First Lady Kathy Evers; Tricia Braun, chief operating officer of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC); Dennis Shields, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and Rose Smyrski, Vice Chancellor for University Relations/Chief of Staff at UW-Platteville; David Brukardt, vice president of corporate relations and economic engagement for the University of Wisconsin System, and 13 executives from nine Wisconsin companies.

The delegation will head to Tokyo first, followed by meetings in Yokohama and Chiba City. In Tokyo, the governor will take part on Monday and Tuesday in the annual Midwest-Japan Association Conference, which runs from Sunday evening through Tuesday night. He will also meet with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and members of the Wisconsin Alumni Association and host the Opportunities in Wisconsin Breakfast during that portion of the trip.

Later in the week, the governor will meet with executives from several major Japanese corporations with business operations in Wisconsin, including Komatsu,

which is building a major new facility along Milwaukee's riverfront; Kikkoman, which launched its first overseas manufacturing facility in Walworth more than 45 years ago; and Fujifilm, which owns Madison-based Cellular Dynamics. The governor is tentatively scheduled to meet with top officials of the Japanese government, including representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

The governor will also travel to Chiba City, located in Chiba Prefecture which is Wisconsin's sister state in Japan. He will meet with his counterpart, Governor Kensaku Morita, and the Chiba Board of Education to learn more about Japan's educational system.

WEDC staff will coordinate the trip and will assist participating businesses in forging relationships with their peers in Japan. WEDC prepares a customized Japan market assessment specific to each business, arranges business-to-business meetings, and provides transportation and translators for the session.

"Japan represents a market that cannot be ignored for Wisconsin," said Katy Sinnott, vice president of international business development for WEDC. "This is a mature market where opportunities come from developing and sustaining personal relationships, so face-to-face contacts are essential. Governor Evers' presence as head of the delegation adds to the prestige of the delegation."

Japan is the fourth-largest market for Wisconsin exports. Top exports include industrial machinery, which grew 44% in the first quarter of this year; medical and scientific instruments; electrical machinery; and prepared meat and seafood products. The state exported \$735 million worth of goods to Japan in 2018; although exports declined from 2017 to 2018, they rose 11% in the first quarter of 2019 over the same period last year. Agricultural exports grew 21% last year.

###