



State of New Mexico *Office of the Governor*

Governor Richardson Announces Opening of New Mexico Japan Trade Office

New Office of International Trade to implement new strategies

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SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today announced that the New Mexico Japan Trade Office is officially open. The Trade Office is located in the Invest Japan Business Support Center in the Akasaka region of Tokyo, a central business district. The Office will provide the State of New Mexico and New Mexico businesses help with navigating the second most technologically powerful economy in the world. Plans to open the trade office were initially announced during the Governor's trade mission to Japan last summer.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to attract significant foreign expansion to New Mexico and to open the Japanese markets to our companies," said Governor Bill Richardson. "We continue to globally send the message that New Mexico is open for business, and we will continue to aggressively pursue opportunities to diversify investments and attract new businesses."

Hideji Kurihara will run the New Mexico Japan Trade Office. He served as the Director of the North Carolina Japan office from 1994 - 2002. New Mexico's 2005 contract with Mr. Kurihara will cost under \$50,000.

While working for North Carolina Mr. Kurihara was involved in bringing several major manufacturing companies to North Carolina, including a Honda automotive group supplier manufacturing plant (500 people), a Toyota supplier manufacturing plant (950

people) and a leading pharmaceutical company manufacturing plant (300 people) among other deals.

His plans for New Mexico include targeting automotive related, energy and technology related companies for investment into New Mexico. Mr. Kurihara also plans to create a network for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to support their export activities.

“Our trade office in Tokyo will help New Mexico companies increase business in Asia, particularly Japan, which will lead to more good jobs in our state,” said New Mexico Economic Development Department Secretary, Rick Homans. “In addition to helping us export New Mexico products, our trade office will assist in developing more joint projects in the fields of homeland security, renewable energy, and nano-technology.”

Japan’s industries are among the largest and most technologically advanced in the world. They are always looking for opportunities to acquire or invest in new and niche technologies, which New Mexico has in abundance. In 2004, New Mexico exported a total value of \$43.5 million in products to Japan, which was a \$9.7 million increase from 2003. Computers and electronic products accounted for 22% of 2004’s export value.

The new Japan Trade Office is part of the international strategy of the Economic Development Department for the State. In addition to opening the Japan Trade Office, the Office of International Trade will become operational July 1, 2005. Senate Bill 35, approved by the 2005 New Mexico Legislature, created the Office of International Trade and provided \$180,000 to fund its operation.

Currently, an International Trade Coordinator, Danielle Duran, is spearheading the opening of the Japan Trade Office along with several other projects. As announced by the Governor in the summer of 2004, New Mexico will be sponsoring “New Mexico Day” on July 27, 2005 at the World Expo in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. Working with the Department of Tourism on this project is just one example of the way in which the new Office of International Trade will continue to work with other departments and agencies throughout the State. With the support of the Governor, and by using his international connections and visibility the Economic Development Department plans to continue to move into the international market to export products, attract investment, and promote New Mexico as the center for a new generation of technologies, products and companies.