

For Immediate Release

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“Bridges to Japan” Exhibit highlights Japanese culture, strong ties to Indiana

Robots, Japanese cuisine with deep-fried sushi, a Japanese garden, sumo wrestlers all at “Bridges to Japan”

INDIANAPOLIS – The new “Bridges to Japan” exhibit in the International Pavilion, also known as the Grand Hall, will show Indiana State Fair visitors what the Japanese culture is all about, as well as the many connections between Indiana and Japan.

“Japan has been one of Indiana’s strongest economic and cultural partners for many years and it is appropriate that we recognize that relationship in the first exhibit of its kind at the Indiana State Fair,” said Governor Mitch Daniels, who has led five jobs missions to Asia since 2005.

This year, in what is expected to be an annual international exhibition, the 154th Indiana State Fair will showcase Indiana’s relationship with one of its closest partners, the nation of Japan. The International Pavilion/Grand Hall, an 8,000 square foot building located on the Fair’s Main Street, is devoted to the in-depth exploration of Japan and its connections with Indiana.

“The Indiana State Fair, as the state’s largest event, is proud to host this great exhibit,” said State Fair executive director Cindy Hoyer. “More than 900,000 people over 17 days will be able to see exactly how Japan has become one of our most important international partners with this incredible mix of displays, food, information and demonstrations.”

The exhibit honors the fair’s goal of being a platform for education and showing visitors the strong ties between Indiana and Japan and in particular, Indiana’s Japanese “sister state” Tochigi (pron. Toe-chee-gee) Prefecture.

“Indiana is the only state in the U.S. with three Japanese auto assembly plants, with 220 Japanese facilities in Indiana employing more than 43,000 Hoosiers, making Japan the clear front-runner among the state’s international partners. We’re honored that Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels has designated Japan as the first featured country in the new international theme at the Fair,” said Theresa Kulczak, executive director of the Japan-America Society of Indiana. “With the number of visitors to the Fair, the Exhibition is expected to be one of the largest attended Japanese events to take place in North America this year.”

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The “Bridges to Japan” exhibition, organized by the Japan-America Society of Indiana, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (State of Indiana), and the Indiana State Fair, through the generous support of many companies and organizations, will appeal to a broad range of visitors who will visit the State Fair for two and a half weeks, from August 6-22. “Bridges to Japan” will feature traditional and contemporary components, a variety of performances and activities, and displays on the relationships between Indiana and Japan, such as the importance of the Japanese manufacturing presence, sister cities, educational exchanges, and the history of the Japanese in Indiana.

The exhibit features traditional Japanese customs such as tea ceremonies, Japanese calligraphy, sumo wrestling, and a myriad of music and dance performances. In addition, representatives from Tochigi Prefecture and guests from the Japanese sister cities of Carmel, Lafayette and Shelbyville will discuss the numerous connections between Indiana and Japan.

Once inside “Bridges to Japan” guests will pass through a bamboo forest and garden or cross over a koi pond on a traditional Japanese bridge. Japanese architectural styles will be readily apparent with a traditional inn featuring tatami (pron. tuh-tommy) mats and a Japanese stage. An area devoted to contemporary Japan will help visitors delight in the fun of Japanese pop culture. Some of the programs and demonstrations scheduled for the stage include:

- Masaji Terasawa (pron. muh-sah-jee terra-sow-uh), the popular Candy man who makes intricate candy sculptures and entertains audiences of all ages
- Martial arts demonstrations
- A gourd painter craftsman from Japan (opening weekend)
- Taiko (pron. ty-koh) – traditional Japanese drum performances
- Bunraku (pron. bun-rah-coo)– Japanese puppet theatre
- Sumo wrestlers from Japan (opening weekend)
- An open audience-participation fashion show featuring Japanese pop culture (Cosplay) and the comic Japanese band Peeland-Z

The exhibit also features daily appearances of the top-ranked Japanese robots, including Wakamaru (pron. wok-uh-mah-roo), a communication and performance robot, and Paro-chan (paw-ro chan), a therapeutic seal pup. I-Fairy, a receptionist robot that recently made headlines when it conducted a wedding in Japan, will also make special appearances.

Other special “Bridges to Japan” features fairgoers won’t want to miss are:

- A Japanese food corner offering traditional fare including Japanese pork cutlets, Japanese noodles, green tea ice cream and sushi (including a new “deep-fried sushi” specialty) provided by popular local Japanese restaurants Ocean World, Sakura and One World Market.
- A large-scale replica of a Tochigi Inn where guests will be able to participate in hands-on activities while sitting on tatami mats.
- A display of the Shinkansen bullet train with the topography of Japan passing by at 200 mph
- A marketplace where visitors can purchase Japanese mementos to remember their trip “overseas”

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For more information on the daily schedule of activities, as well as on Japanese culture and the country's relationship with Indiana, visit the [Japan-America Society of Indiana](http://www.japan-america-society-of-indiana.org) Web site. Yoroshiku! "We hope to see you there!"

"Bridges to Japan" is foursquare friendly! Make sure you check in when you reach the exhibit and leave a review. You can also find us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/japanamsocin> or become a fan on our Facebook page at <http://bit.ly/9wEyWV>.

The "Bridges to Japan" Exhibition is sponsored by a host of corporate partners and organizations, including: Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana; AISIN, Eli Lilly and Company, Honda Manufacturing of Indiana, Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Cummins, Delphi Corp., Duke Energy, Indiana Packers Corp., Kikkoman Corp., NTN Driveshaft, TOA (USA), Toyota Industrial Equipment Manufacturing, and the United States-Japan Foundation.

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About Japan-America Society of Indiana (JASI)

Founded in 1988 by community, business and academic leaders, the [Japan-America Society of Indiana](http://www.japan-america-society-of-indiana.org) (JASI) is a not-for-profit cultural, educational, and business-support organization which serves as a bridge of friendship between the people of Indiana and Japan. The Society is supported by a diverse membership of individuals, families, businesses and academic institutions. Annually, the Japan-America Society of Indiana reaches more than 10,000 individuals through its programs, outreach activities and services. The Japan-America Society of Indiana is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies, headquartered in Washington D.C., which includes over forty societies nationwide.

About Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC)

Created by Governor Mitch Daniels in 2005 to replace the former Department of Commerce, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation is governed by a 12-member board chaired by Governor Daniels. Mitch Roob serves as the chief executive officer of the IEDC. For more information about IEDC, visit www.iedc.in.gov.

About Indiana State Fair (ISF)

The Indiana State Fair is the state's largest multi-day event attracting more than 900,000 people annually. Nationally recognized for offering the best in entertainment, showcasing youth, interactive agriculture education programs, premiere facilities and a variety of unique, fun foods, the Indiana State Fair has been an annual tradition for generations of Hoosiers since 1852. Admission is \$7 in advance, \$8 at the gate – kids 5 and younger are free. For more information, please visit www.indianastatefair.com.

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