



Southeast U.S./Japan &
Japan - U.S. Southeast
Associations

**44th Annual Joint Meeting of the
Southeast U.S./Japan Association and the Japan-U.S. Southeast Association**

**JOINT STATEMENT
NOVEMBER 18, 2022**

The Southeast U.S./Japan Association and the Japan-U.S. Southeast Association held their 44th Annual Joint Meeting in Orlando, Florida at the Rosen Shingle Creek Orlando Hotel from November 16-19, 2022, with the theme of “Continued Success Through Partnership and Innovation for a Sustainable Future.” SEUS Chairman Mr. Eric Silagy and Japan Chairman Mr. Masaaki Tsuya presided over the meeting with some 350 registered delegates, spouses, guests, and observers representing the Southeast U.S. and Japan. The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor of Florida, served as the official host of this year’s joint meeting, and Secretary Dane Eagle of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity as well as Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd also actively participated in this year’s joint meeting program.

The SEUS delegations were led by The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor, State of Florida; Mr. Greg Canfield, Secretary of Commerce, Alabama Department of Commerce, State of Alabama; Mr. Pat Wilson, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Economic Development, State of Georgia; Mr. Bill Cork, Chief Economic Development Officer, Mississippi Development Authority, State of Mississippi; Ms. Machel Baker Sanders, Secretary of Commerce, State of North Carolina; Mr. Harry M. Lightsey III, Secretary of Commerce, South Carolina Department of Commerce, State of South Carolina and Mr. Stuart McWhorter, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development, State of Tennessee.

Other distinguished guests in attendance included: His Excellency Koji Tomita, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States; The Honorable Kazuhiro Nakai, Consul General of Japan in Miami; The Honorable Mio Maeda, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta; and The Honorable Yoichi Matsumoto, Consul General of Japan in Nashville.

Chairman Silagy noted during the opening session: “Florida is truly pleased to again have the once in a 14-year honor and privilege to host this prestigious annual joint meeting. True to the theme of this year’s 44th Joint Meeting, we feel strongly that we are indeed building on four decades of progress and once again coming together to renew existing friendships and establish new ones that will further expand the economic, trade, investment, tourism, cultural, educational, and friendship ties between our great region and the great nation of Japan.”

Plenary session addresses were given by: Mr. Nobuhiko Sasaki, Chairman of the Japan External Trade Organization; and Senator Mel Martinez, Chairman of Southeast U.S. and Latin America, JP Morgan Chase & Co. Topics addressed included the current state of the Japan and U.S. economies, current bi-lateral foreign policy issues, and the impact of the mid-term elections in the U.S. on trade.

The luncheon keynote address was given by His Excellency Koji Tomita, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States. In his remarks, he summarized the current state of U.S.-Japan relations, emphasizing the importance of continued strength in the alliance particularly in the areas of security and foreign direct investment. He noted that Japan is the top Foreign Direct Investment country for many of the Southeast United States.

Two sets of concurrent panel sessions were held in the afternoon of Friday, November 18, and provided attendees the opportunity to ask questions and share ideas.

Panel session one on the topic of “The Present and Future of Automotive and Manufacturing” was moderated by Mr. Dane Eagle, Secretary of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and included presentations by: Ms. Crystal Stiles, Executive Director Development, Distributed Technologies and Mobility, Florida Power and Light Company; Mr. Brent Burns, President and CEO, JM Family Enterprises, Inc. (parent company of Southeast Toyota Distributors); Mr. Christopher P. Reynolds, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Resources, Toyota Motor North America; and Mr. David Gustafson, VP, Commercial Manufacturing, Bridgestone Americas, Inc.

Panel session two on the topic “Logistics, Trade, and How “Friendshoring” Can Fix the Global Supply Chain” was moderated by Mr. Michael Rubin, President and CEO, Ports Council, and included presentations by: Ms. Laura DiBella, Florida’s Deputy Secretary of Commerce; Ms. Alice Ancona, SVP & COO, World Trade Center Miami, Inc.; Mr. Mike Winkler, North America Purchasing Division Head, Vice President, DENSO International America, Inc. and Mr. John Cason, Executive Director, Procurement, Bridgestone America, Inc.

Panel session three on the topic of “Taking Off: How Aviation/Aerospace is thriving in SEUS and Japan” was moderated by Dr. P. Barry Butler, Ph.D., President, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and included presentations by Mr. Frank DiBello, President & CEO, Space Florida; Mr. Kevin Thibault, Chief Executive Director, Greater Orlando Aviation Authority; Mr. Ross Leggett, Executive Officer, Deputy Senior Vice President, Route Marketing, Japan Airlines; and Ms. Andrea Davis, CEO, Bridgestone Aircraft Tire (USA), Inc.

Panel session four on the topic of “Renewable Energy: Carbon Neutral Energy Solutions featuring Sustainable and Resilient Strategies” was moderated by Dr. Alexander Cartwright, Ph.D., President, University of Central Florida and included presentations by Ms. Lauren Sher, Senior Director of Decarbonization, Florida Power and Light; Mr. William A. Newsom, Jr., President & CEO, Mitsubishi Power Americas, Inc.; Mr. Takajiro Ishikawa, Executive Vice President, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd./ President, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America, Inc.; and Mr. Yoichi Mineo, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Washington Office, Marubeni America Corporation.

The Meeting adjourned with an announcement that the 45th Annual Joint Meeting will be held in Tokyo, Japan and is tentatively scheduled for October 2023. The exact dates and venue will be announced by early next year once details are confirmed. Closing remarks were made by The Honorable Yoichi Matsumoto, Consul General of Japan in Nashville, The Honorable Mio Maeda, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta, Japan co-chair, Mr. Masaaki Tsuya, and SEUS/Japan co-chair Eric Silagy. A closing dinner with cultural entertainment with remarks by Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd, followed the formal adjournment, and delegates had the option to participate in an invitational golf tournament.