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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

- **\$1.75 billion in Indiana goods bought by Japan each year**
- **\$9.8 billion invested by Japanese companies in the state**
- **43,000 Indiana jobs created**

Those numbers highlight the close ties that Japan's ambassador to the United States, Kenichiro Sasae will celebrate on Thursday, May 22, when he joins Gov. Mike Pence for the annual Japan-America Society of Indiana's Annual Gala. The event begins at 5 pm in the Indiana Roof Ballroom, 140 West Washington Street, in Indianapolis.

"The Hoosier state is very important to Japan," Ambassador Sasae said, noting that Indiana is the only state in the country with three Japan automotive assembly plants: Honda, Subaru, and Toyota. Indiana ranks #1 in the country in per capita investments by Japanese companies.

Japan is Indiana's second largest trading partner and a major importer of its agricultural products, totaling \$393 million (in 2011).

Since 1999, Indiana has had a sister state agreement with Tochigi Prefecture, which shares a common bond in car racing. Tochigi, in the center of Japan's main island of Honshu, has a multi-million-dollar complex that hosts Indy 500 style races.

When the Tohoku Earthquake and tsunami struck in 2011, the Japan-America Society of Indiana raised \$900,000 in relief donations.

"We bridge the oceans from Japan to Indiana with our many relationships," Ambassador Sasae said. "Now we want to continue to work hard and improve and strengthen all of our positive ties."

The Japan-American Society of Indiana's Annual Gala brings together business and community leaders across the Midwest. The Honorable Masaharu Yoshida, Consul General of Japan at

Chicago, and Ichiro Sone, Chief Executive Director of the Japan External Trade Organization's Chicago Office, will also attend.

Ambassador Sasae has represented Japan in the United States since 2012 and is making his first visit to Indiana. Before his assignment to Washington, he was vice minister of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo and has served as Japan's representative for the six-party talks on North Korea.

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Registration for the Gala is available online through the Japan-America Society of Indiana at www.japanindiana.org or through calling 317-635-0123.