



*Sasakawa USA: The Alliance Working in America Series*

## **Japan-Kentucky Collaboration: Developing the Bluegrass Workforce and Economy**

Co-sponsored by Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, the Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville,  
and the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana  
In partnership with World Trade Center Kentucky and Japan-America Society of Kentucky

**March 7, 2019 12:00-2:00 PM**  
**Hyatt Regency Lexington, Regency Ballroom**  
**401 W High Street, Lexington, KY 40507**

On March 7, 2019, Sasakawa USA, the Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville, the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana, and the World Affairs Councils of America will co-sponsor "Japan-Kentucky Collaboration: Developing the Bluegrass Workforce and Economy." This panel discussion, held at the Hyatt Regency Lexington, will be presented in partnership with World Trade Center Kentucky and Japan-America Society of Kentucky.

Japan is Kentucky's top foreign direct investor, with 191 Japanese-owned facilities operating and creating nearly 46,000 full-time jobs in the state. Kentucky ranks second nationally in terms of the percentage of jobs supported by Japanese foreign direct investment.

For Japanese companies in Kentucky and for educators and state/local authorities who have been actively reaching out to Japan to invite additional investments and job creation, workforce improvement has been a common top priority.

The panel discuss Japan's future overseas investment interests and the kinds of workforce needed in Kentucky to support these investments. The conversation will seek to identify the challenges that Kentucky faces to recruit and train the necessary workforce, and explore how Japanese and U.S. companies, state and local authorities, and educational institutions can work together to address these challenges.

The event is offered as part of Sasakawa USA's The Alliance Working in America (TAWA) program. Sasakawa USA launched The Alliance Working in America (TAWA) series to reach out and engage with regional leaders and influencers in U.S. cities outside of Washington, D.C. on the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance to U.S. interests, both at the regional and national levels. Previous TAWA programs have been held in Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA; and Oregon.



## Program Agenda

*\*Speaker bios below*

12:00-12:30 Registration/Lunch

12:30-12:45 Welcome remarks

**The Honorable Hiroyuki Kobayashi**, Consul-General of Japan in Nashville  
**Ambassador James P. Zumwalt**, CEO, Sasakawa USA

12:45-1:30 A Conversation on “Japan-Kentucky Collaboration: Developing the Bluegrass Workforce and Economy”

*Panelists:*

“Japan’s Future Investment Interests and Opportunities in Kentucky”

**Isamu Wakamatsu**, Executive Director, Research and Information Services,  
Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) New York

“Kentucky’s Perspectives: Workforce Development Challenges and Initiatives”

**Beth Davisson**, Executive Director, The Workforce Center, Kentucky Chamber  
Foundation

“Japanese Business Perspectives and Approaches to Kentucky’s Workforce  
Development”

**Cassidy Cocanougher**, Manager, Regional Engineering & Skill Training Center,  
Hitachi Automotive Systems Americas, Inc.

*Moderator:*

**Ian Mooers**, Director of Training, The World Trade Center Kentucky (WTC-KY)

1:30-2:00 Audience Q&A

## Speaker Bios



**Beth Davisson** is the executive director of the Kentucky Chamber Foundation's Workforce Center. She has served as the Immediate Past President of the Louisville Society for Human Resource Management and is the current Workforce Readiness Co-Chair for the Kentucky Society for Human Resource Management.

Beth has spent the last 10+ years aligning talent to the strategic plans of business. She is a proven workforce strategist and consensus builder, with more than five years advocating for workforce needs in Kentucky and the nation's capital. She earned a bachelor's degree in Integrated Strategic Communications from the University of Kentucky and a Master of Business Administration from Sullivan University. Beth was honored as a "Top 40 under 40" and named a "Top 20 People to Know in Human Resources," by Business First Louisville. She is a graduate of the Leadership Louisville Bingham Fellowship program, focused on "Winning the Talent of the Future," as well as the Talent Pipeline Management Institute with the U. S. Chamber of Commerce. Previous employers include Sullivan University, Greater Louisville Inc. and The Oliver Group.



**Ian Mooers** is the Director of Training for the World Trade Center Kentucky. As the manager of the Center's educational training programs, he provides training solutions to meet the needs of business clients.

Ian comes to the Center with 20 years of experience working in education, community development, and providing business solutions ranging from training to recruitment, and consultation. He served as the Assistant Director of University Career Services at George Mason University, before being selected as the Director for Entrepreneur Programs for the entire University where he worked to connect faculty holding patents to investors and entrepreneurs in the Washington DC region. During his tenure at Eastern Kentucky University, he performed community and business development work across southern and eastern Kentucky receiving five USDA Rural Business Development training grants totaling over 200K to create and preserve jobs in the region. Most recently, he has worked for Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) in Hazard developing training programs in manufacturing and international trade to help companies grow and expand their workforce. At EKCEP, he partnered with Kentucky's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Advantage KY Alliance) to develop an on-site business growth training program with manufacturers to help them avert layoffs and grow operations to expand their workforce. He recently launched an Export Accelerator Pilot Program in partnership with the World Trade Center Kentucky to build awareness of international markets to companies in eastern Kentucky.

Ian holds a Master's Degree in Education and a Bachelor's in Communication. Ian resides in Irvine with his wife Katie, and their two daughters Alise and Nora. He serves locally on the board of the Estill Development Alliance, which is a non-profit dedicated to growing the economy of Estill County.



**Isamu Wakamatsu** is the Executive Director of Research and Information Services at Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) New York. He previously served as the Chief Director of the Research Planning Division and as the Director of the Asia-Oceania Division, both in the Overseas Research Department. Prior to that, he worked as a Senior Economist at JETRO Bangkok. He graduated from the College of International Relations at the University of Tsukuba in 1989 and later spent time in his professional career as an overseas trainee studying graduate-level courses in economics at Thammasat University.



**Ambassador James Zumwalt** became Chief Executive Officer of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA in February 2017. Ambassador Zumwalt was the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Guinea Bissau from 2015 to January 2017. Previously, he was responsible for policy toward Japan and Korea as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of East Asia Affairs. When the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami struck Japan in 2011, Ambassador Zumwalt was serving as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, where he coordinated the United States' support for the Japanese Government's response to that crisis.

During his 36-year Foreign Service career, Ambassador Zumwalt has served in a variety of assignments with a focus on Asia and international economics in Washington, Tokyo, Beijing, Kinshasa, Dakar, and Bissau. In Washington, D.C., he worked in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Japan, Korea, and Philippines desks and also at the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and the United States Trade Representative's Office. He speaks Japanese, French, and some Chinese.

Ambassador Zumwalt received a master's degree in International Security Studies from the National War College in 1998 and a Bachelor of Arts degree in American History and also in Japanese Language from the University of California at Berkeley in 1979. He is from El Cajon, California and is married to Ann Kambara, a retired Foreign Service Officer who is now pursuing a second career in social work.