

## Coffee with the Mayor

### Ser 6

My daughter and grandson were in town two weeks ago from Portland, OR helping us move into the new house. Their assistance was much appreciated plus enjoyable family time. Knowing my enjoyment of coffee she brought her favorite coffee from home, a brand called Stumptown, local to Portland! She may make it a little stronger than I prefer but I will say it's good! Can't beat good coffee with the daughter, especially when the daughter provides it.

In continuing what Mayor Wilkes started I was invited by the Radius Organization to attend a meeting with representatives from the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and the recently appointed Consul-General of Japan. The original meeting was scheduled for January at the hotel in French Lick but was rescheduled to February. Several Mayors from surrounding communities were invited to attend a formal dinner in their honor. Both leaders of the Japanese organizations spoke that evening of the value and scope of Japanese companies currently located in Indiana and the potential for more investment. It was obvious by their presentations that Japanese companies are looking for locations in Indiana in which industry could be located.

The next morning at breakfast it was the mayor's turn to discuss their communities' positives and strengths and answer their questions. It was at this breakfast before the session began that I presented each with a gift provided by Ms. Todds' high school class, a T-shirt designed by her students having an outline of Indiana with Linton in large letters. See the included photos. Two of the four members immediately put the T-shirts on and all were very appreciative of the gifts. Some of the positives of our community I was able to convey were the outdoor opportunities available, the availability of locations for industry and the central location to larger municipalities. Each Mayor or Local Economic Development representative provided information on their respective location.



Left: Mr. Nemoto and Mr. Hashimoto, JETRO

Right: Ms. Sakamoto and HON Mr. Yanagi, Consulate-General

I did make it known that I had been to Japan several times, traveling as far north as Misawa and as far south as the island of Okinawa. These trips allowed me to observe firsthand the culture of the Japanese society and workforce. Ask me sometime about a typhon and the story that exemplifies the Japanese society. I was also asked to expound on my involvement of support to the relief efforts for the tsunami that occurred off the coast of Japan. In direct support of those relief efforts, I was called to active duty as a reserve officer to the Pacific Fleet headquarters in Hawaii. From there I oversaw efforts to deliver much needed supplies to affected areas and address concerns around support to the damaged nuclear power plant. This information was well received by the Japanese representatives.

During the one-on-one discussions, I learned the Mr. Hashimoto, the business development director from JETRO, had been to Linton at the request of Mayor Wilkes. He was very impressed with the community at the time. We discussed the possibility of him and the new JETRO CEO Mr. Nemoto of coming to Linton again in the near future and they agreed to work on a timeframe for the visit. Both the JETRO office and the office of the Consul-General, Mr. Yanagi, are located in Chicago. It was also discussed about visiting their offices to further work on the schedule and availability.

I'm not sure where this is headed or how successful it will be. I do know Washington, IN was the first nearby community to have a Japanese company locate in their district. This has been a proven success for both Washington and the Japanese company. I plan on continuing working with Japanese, a task started by Mayor Wilkes, in promoting Linton as a viable option. I do know if we are to be successful in being selected as a site for any company, not only Japanese, we must have available housing and a reliable workforce.

This is a postscript in support of the Park Board - **We are updating the masterplan for the city parks and would appreciate your input by taking an online survey listed below:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/33FTFD2>