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Prime Minister Abe Gives Keynote at TICAD VI in Kenya

In his speech, Prime Minister Abe, learning lessons from the Ebola outbreak in Africa, expressed his determination to work with African leaders for strengthening response to public health emergencies and for achieving universal health coverage, which will subsequently contribute to the prevention of and preparedness for health crises from times of peace. Further, Prime Minister Abe emphasized that Japan will collaborate with African countries to construct resilient health systems – especially by facilitating policy and system reforms and human resources development.

Read more, [here](#).

To learn more about TICAD, click [here](#).



Parliamentary Vice-Minister Takisawa leads "Fukushima Study Tour"

On August 25 (Thu.), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized "Fukushima Study Tour" to visit the Fukushima Renewable Energy Institute, the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) and other sites in Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture and invited members of diplomatic corps in Tokyo, 12 diplomats from 10 countries participated and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mitsuru Takisawa led the delegation. This initiative was supported by AIST, Koriyama City and Fukushima Prefecture, and the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy.

This tour is designed to introduce and publicize the progress made in Fukushima with regard to expanding the roles of renewable energy and building modes for the realization of a hydrogen society, in line with "The Fukushima Plan for a New Energy Society" (see note) that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced during his visit to Fukushima in March this year. The delegation also visited the sites in Fukushima that symbolize the reconstruction of the region as well as the international friendship between Fukushima and the world.

Read More, [here](#).

Sister Cities International 60th Anniversary

Sister Cities International just celebrated its 60th anniversary with the first Sister Cities International Annual Conference. Founded in 1956, SCI's goal is to promote citizen diplomacy and fostering friendships between different communities around the world.

Ambassador of Japan to the U.S. Kenichiro Sasae hosted a reception honoring SCI's 60th anniversary. Ambassador Sasae praised SCI as one of the most important organizations working to promote the Japan-U.S. friendship.

Japan has more sister cities with the U.S. than any other nation, Alaska currently has eight official sister city relationships with Japan. The first Japan-Alaska sister city was established in 1989 between Anchorage and Chitose in Hokkaido.

To learn more about Sister Cities International and Japan-Alaska sister cities, visit their website [here](#). Information about the Japan-Alaska sister cities can also be found on our website, [here](#).

2016 Japanese Summer Festival

On August 6, the Consular Office of Japan and the Japanese Society of Alaska hosted the 5th annual Japanese Summer Festival at UAA Cuddy Hall, Consul Makoto Izakura, UAA Chancellor Tom Case, and Chief of Anchorage Police Department Chris Tolley gave welcoming remarks.

The festival included judo and budo performances, sumo wrestling, and Japanese food vendors. The Consular Office of Japan hosted an origami table and allowed visitors to try on yukata, a casual summer kimono.

To see photos and videos from this year's festival, visit the Japanese Society of Alaska's [Facebook page](#).

"Spirited Away" 15th Anniversary Screening

Anchorage's Bear Tooth Theater is hosting a screening of "Spirited Away" to celebrate the film's 15th anniversary. "Spirited Away" is an Academy Award-winning film from Hayao Miyazaki, one of the most famous animated filmmakers in history.

"Spirited Away" is a wondrous fantasy about a young girl named Chihiro who discovers a secret world of strange spirits, creatures and sorcery. When her parents are mysteriously transformed, she must call upon the courage she never knew she had to free herself and return her family to the outside world.

To find showtimes and purchase tickets, visit [www.beartooththeatre.net](#).



Interview with Mr. Tom Rueter

Tom Rueter first visited Japan as a high school student. After returning from Japan, he came to Alaska, where he spent 15 years working as a tour guide, firing coordinator, and interpreter focusing on Japanese.

For the past 25 years, Tom Rueter has been working as a steamship agent in Alaska. Through his work, Mr. Rueter has met many people stationed in Alaska working in the airline, fishery, and trading industries, including some Japanese companies. Mr. Rueter has visited Japan more than 20 times and says there is always something new to learn about Japanese society and culture.

**When did you first become interested in Japan? How was your first experience in Japan?**

I became interested in Japan as a high school student in 1969. I wanted to go to the World Jamboree for Boy Scouts at Asagiri Kogen in the Shizuoka Prefecture.

I first visited Japan in July 1971 for three weeks. I had not studied Japanese before going to Japan, so language was the biggest challenge in the beginning. My first Japanese word was "kikoku", which proved to be a fitting response for many questions I answered.

While I was camping, there was a typhoon and we had to evacuate the camp. I expected Japan to have lots of farms with flooded rice fields, so I was surprised by the urban development at the time. I enjoyed learning about Japanese history and the temples and shrines from many different areas.

After returning from Japan, I applied for the local Keni-Kabara Sister City Exchange program for high school students. I traveled back to Japan in April 1972 and stayed for a year in Kabara (now part of the city of Tamab) in the Hyogo Prefecture.

Read the full interview, [here](#).

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