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Message from Consul Masatoshi Sato



Mr and Mrs. Sato waiting to welcome guests at the Emperor's Birthday reception

Dear valued readers of the newsletter "Japan Now",

The year 2017 is almost behind us. My wife and I are very pleased to note that Alaska and Japan have enjoyed strong bonds of friendship. In our several months in Anchorage, we were also very glad to learn that so many people across the state have a keen interest in Japan and Japanese culture. Earlier this month, we also received a warm welcome of Alaska's natural wonder; when we drove in Kenai Peninsula, one moose leisurely crossed the road, inducing me to stop our car.

This year's highlight of the U.S.-Japan relations is no doubt President Trump's visit to Japan in early November. Golf diplomacy between Donald Trump and Shinzo Abe attracted so much attention. President Trump and Prime Minister Abe reaffirmed that the robust Japan-U.S. alliance is the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. Indeed, I believe Alaska-Japan partnership has growing strategic importance in the light of recent developments in Asia and the Pacific – in particular, the issue of North Korea.

President Trump and Prime Minister Abe are not the only ones who have supported the invaluable friendship between Japan and the United States. Political, economic and community leaders like you are the ones who have been making every effort to deepen the friendship between Alaska and Japan. I'm deeply grateful for that. I would like to ask you for further support for making the bonds of friendship even stronger.

We wish you good health and happiness over the coming year.

Masatoshi Sato
Head
Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage

Emperor's Birthday 2017 Reception



On Wednesday, December 13, Consul Masatoshi Sato hosted a reception in honor of His Majesty the Emperor Akihito's birthday. The birthday of the current reigning Emperor is a national holiday in Japan. Emperor Akihito celebrated his 84th birthday on December 23.

More than 150 guests attended the reception at the Hotel Captain Cook in downtown Anchorage. Distinguished guests included Alaska leaders in various fields, local Japanese community leaders, and United States military personnel, many of whom have been stationed in Japan.

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Prime Minister Abe with UN Secretary-General Guterres (Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Prime Minister Abe Meets with the Secretary-General of the United Nations

On December 14, Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, held a meeting with H.E. Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), in Tokyo. After the meeting, Prime Minister Abe and UN Secretary-General Guterres held a joint press announcement, followed by a lunch hosted by Prime Minister Abe. After welcoming Secretary-General Guterres in his first visit to Japan as UN Secretary-General, the two discussed North Korea, UN reform, and other global issues.

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2017 Year in Review



Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Training Squadron band performs for students at Central Middle School of Science



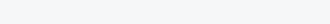
University of Alaska Anchorage String Ensemble performing Japanese music at Colony Middle School

In 2017, the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage undertook multiple efforts to further strengthen Japan-Alaska relations. This year's highlights include:

- Eight Alaskans were sent to Japan to participate in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program
- The 30th anniversary celebration of Ketchikan's sister city relationship with Gero/Kanayama
- Going to six schools across the Anchorage and Mat-Su to share Japanese culture and history with students
- The visit of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force to the Port of Anchorage
- The visit of a delegation from Akita, Kana's sister city. [Click here to watch a video of the annual Kanto Matsuri \(pole lantern festival\) in Akita](#)

For more information and photos from this year's Consular Office activities, [please visit our website](#).

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