



## JLGC UPDATE

# JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER AT THE 2005 NCSL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

by Stephen Fasano  
JLGC Senior Researcher



*Masthead: The Tsuwabuki, or Farfugium, blooms in late autumn or early winter in Japan. It is often cultivated as the undergrowth of a Japanese garden. In the language of flowers, it signifies modesty.*

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) held its 2005 Annual Meeting and Exhibition in Seattle, Washington. Founded in 1975, NCSL promotes legislative service as one of democracy's worthiest pursuits. A bipartisan organization, NCSL membership is comprised of the legislators and staffs of the nation's states, commonwealths and territories. NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues. Just as important is its role as an effective and respected advocate for the interests of state governments before Congress and federal agencies.

For the past thirteen years, the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) has attended the NCSL Annual Conferences as an exhibitor offering information and written materials about Japan and Japanese local government. Through its exhibit, JLGC is able to present its programs and services, including the popularly successful Japan Exchange Teaching Program (JET). JLGC also sponsors international study programs and supports sister city and sister-state relationships.

Hundreds of people stopped by the JLGC booth. Many visitors talked about their personal and business experiences and the relationships between their home states and Japan. Others were just curious about JLGC and Japanese local government and wanted to learn more about the services and

programs offered by JLGC. Often, as a result of engaging in conversation, new relationships are formed and information exchanged.

The Japanese local government officials who have attended these yearly conferences over the years have benefited greatly by interacting with state government officials absorbing relevant and useful information about how state governments work and how public policy is created.

This year the NCSL conference was held in sunny downtown Seattle, Washington. More than 5,000 delegates attended and were treated to a diverse menu of educational lectures and panel discussions on important, hot button, state issues. This year's event theme was "Strong States, Strong Nation" focusing on the prominence and power of states in the federal system.

Highlighting the event were prominent guest speakers. Microsoft founder and CEO Bill Gates urged state legislators to strengthen elementary and secondary education systems in order to keep the United States competitive and to attract bright minds to their states. Mr. Gates discussed the past and future of technology; research and development; and Web security among other issues but consistently focused on education. He stated: "there's no more important topic for the future of the country."

Mr. Gates also spoke about global health and learning and focused on how the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is helping to fund programs that will promote better health and learning throughout the world.

Other notable speakers included: Uwe Reinhardt; James Madison, Professor of Political Economy at Princeton University who spoke about health reform and health care systems; and Mara Liasson, political correspondent, shared her ideas on the politics of balance and power at the event's closing plenary session.

On a lighter note, after the close of each business day, delegates were treated to special events, including state receptions and a visit to Safeco Field to watch a baseball game featuring the hometown Seattle Mariners.

Year after year, in city after city, JLGC staff members learn a little more about American government and culture. The NCSL conference provides the opportunity for them to network among fellow professionals allowing for a sharing and exchange of information. In addition to the personal satisfaction experienced by my colleagues, the Annual Meeting and Exhibition provided desirable exposure that has and will continue to enhance and foster JLGC's activities as a bridge that serves to connect Japanese local governments with their counterparts in the United States and elsewhere in the world.



*JLGC staff members, wearing the traditional Happi, speaking with visitors at the 2005 NCSL annual conference.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
<b>JLGC UPDATE</b>	
Japan Local Government Center at the 2005 NCSL Annual Conference	1
<b>JETAA ACTIVITIES</b>	
2005 JET Alumni Association International Conference	2
<b>DESIGNATED CITY</b>	
The Flowery City, "CHIBA"	3
<b>SPECIAL FEATURE</b>	
The Japan Hall of Fame on Exhibit at the International Museum of Surgical Science	4
<b>SPECIAL FEATURE</b>	
One-Hundred Fifty-Two Years Later – A Goodwill Visit to Commodore Perry's Home Town; Newport, Rhode Island	5
<b>PREFECTURE TODAY</b>	
"Okinawa Rising" – An Attractive Tourist Destination	6
<b>JLGC UPDATE</b>	
National Governors' Association Annual Meeting in Des Moines, Iowa	7
<b>JAPAN TODAY</b>	
Experience from New York	8

## 2005 JET Alumni Association International Conference

by Matthew Gillam  
JLGC Senior Researcher



*Conference participants*

The various JET Alumni Association chapters from around the world held their tenth, and last, annual conference in June of this year. Besides being the last of the annual conferences, it was also unique in being held at two different venues in two cities over the course of five days. The opening sessions were held in Nagoya, in conjunction with the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, on June 10th, 11th, and 12th. The final sessions were held in Kobe on the 13th and 14th, in conjunction with activities commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin / Awaji Earthquake.

Ever since the first conference was held in New York in 1995, the JET alumni have been grappling with a variety of perennial issues, including funding, communication, organization bylaws, member services, and projects and goals for the organization. It is the first of these, funding, that has increasingly constrained the ability of the Japanese government to support large-scale international conferences and has led to the adoption of what has been dubbed by some a “five-year plan” for them, with full conferences every five years, possibly in Japan, and smaller annual meetings in between. The beginnings of this have been seen in the last two years, where the ninth annual conference was held in New York (again) in February 2004, followed by a smaller scale international

meeting in Portland in November, which helped lay the groundwork for the big conference in Japan this last June. A full-scale conference includes representatives from 12 to 14 countries, including both country representatives and at least one representative each from the roughly 42

chapters currently recognized by JETAA International, as well as the JETAA International Executive Officers (who may or may not be country or chapter reps, too), and observers from MOFA and CLAIR. All this means that a full international conference, with somewhere between 50 and 60 alumni representatives, can be quite a large and expensive undertaking – besides being a huge logistical burden for whatever chapter agrees to host the event. The new international meeting format will consist of only the country reps, executive officers, and government observers, without the large contingent of chapter reps.

The two central accomplishments of the conference were the adoption of bylaw amendments that will make it possible for the country reps to vote on behalf of their chapters at international meetings and conferences, and an agreement to create a new online information and communication resource known as CMS (Content Management System). In recognition of the indispensable role played by the Internet now, a job description was also approved for an official Webmaster position, to serve as a non-voting member of the International Executive Board, under the Secretary. And finally, a provisional status of Associate Member

was approved for new chapters that are just getting going.

As always, new executive officers for the coming year were voted in during the final parliamentary session, and sub-committees were formed to continue working on the projects discussed during the conference. Leadership for the coming year includes New Zealand’s Peter de Valda as Chair, the UK’s Alison Bond as Vice Chair, Cindy Pitkin from Australia as Secretary, and Michael Barrett from the US as Treasurer.

The last conference event, after the parliamentary session was called to a close, was a cooperative art workshop, where the conference participants (alumni and government representatives) were split into teams with students from Fukiai High School in Kobe and members of the Memorial Volunteer Western Japan Chapter (earthquake survivors) to create collages celebrating international exchange and understanding. The alumni, being old pros at this kind of activity, worked well with their lively group of students and volunteers, creating some very impressive collages, which were then displayed in the city for everyone to enjoy. It was an appropriate end to this year’s gathering, underscoring the potential for JET participants to build on their experience and continue contributing to strong, productive grass-roots ties between Japan and their home countries.



*One of the genki collage teams*



# The Flowery City, “CHIBA”

by Masanori Sato  
Assistant Director of JLGC



*Toshikeikan Citizen's Festival  
at center of the city, Chuo Park*

## As The Flowery City

Chiba City is situated approximately 40km east from the center of Tokyo and 30km from Narita International Airport and comprises 6 wards: Chuo, Hanamigawa, Inage, Wakaba, Midori and Mihama.



*Chihana-chan  
It is a fairy of  
an Oga lotus.*

Geographically friendly and with a benevolent climate, Chiba City is a modern and progressive city, yet it retains its historic and rural charms. Chiba City is known as “The Flowery City” in Japan because it is blessed with high precipitation and warm

climate which encourages the blossoming of beautiful flowers throughout the year. Celebrating “The Flowery City” a number of activities relating to flowers throughout the city are promoted. Citizens recently created the world’s largest flower garden on land adjoining Takasu Kojima Park in Mihama. Other flower projects highlight the sense of

seasons in the major parks within the city. In 2004, with the cooperation of citizens, daffodil bulbs were planted in Hanashima Park in Hanamigawa.

The city flower is the Oga Lotus. The Oga Lotus is an ancient variety of lotus that was germinated and cultivated by the late Dr. Ichiro Oga, from seeds excavated at an archaeological site on the Hanamigawa River. As a source of pride and an archaeological wonder containing the mysteries of the ancient world, the Oga Lotus was made the official flower of Chiba City.

The city’s image as “The Flowery City, Chiba” is promoted throughout Japan and the world character “Chihana-chan” was chosen by popular vote and is the city’s logo. The city is committed to beautification and works closely with the citizens and the corporate sector on various projects.

## Serving as a “business center” in the capital region

Chiba City continues to develop as a business center within the capital region. Specifically, the Makuuari New City in Mihama, one of the largest urban development project areas in Japan, has a beautiful urban landscape and is worthy of the moniker “Futuristic and International City”. The New City is a thriving international business complex where many Japanese and international businesses have decided to establish their headquarters. Costco is a prime example of a conglomerate that expanded their operation into the center and many customers from the city enjoy shopping there.

The New City contains many attractive recreation facilities. Makuuari Messe, is a famous international convention center and holds international trade shows and conferences. The Chiba Marine Stadium, is the home of the Chiba Lotte Marines baseball team. The stadium is used for many outdoor concerts as well.



*The Oga Lotus*

Chiba City is bristling with a variety of business activity centered around the sports, and commerce industries in the new city center, Soga in Chuo. The city is moving ahead with the construction of the Chiba City Soga Sports Park. The Soga Stadium, with a seating capacity of 18,500, will be the home of a professional soccer team, JEF United Chiba.

The Flowery City, Chiba extends a warm welcome to you. You will be able to enjoy a modern bustling city and at the same time be able to relax and smell the flowers. For more information go to:

<http://www.city.chiba.jp/index-e.html>



*The Makuuari New City*

# The Japan Hall of Fame on Exhibit at the International Museum of Surgical Science



by Maki Tomikawa  
Assistant Director of JLGC

On a rainy day, to the north of downtown Chicago, a lot of people including Japanese medical doctors gathered on March 19, 2005 in a historic lakeside mansion. The occasion was to celebrate the new exhibit, "Japan Hall of Fame" which is in the International Museum of Surgical Science (IMSS).

IMSS is a unique museum which displays artifacts from the 4000 years of history of surgical science. It is housed in a four-story, elegant, 1917 lakefront mansion in Chicago.

Dr. Max Thorek founded the International College of Surgeons (ICS) in 1935 and through his efforts, donations of objects and artwork from many of the national sections of the ICS, individual surgeons and collectors, and other institutions were collected. It was opened to the public as the IMSS on September 9, 1954 with the mission of enriching people's lives by enhancing their appreciation and understanding of the history, development, and advances of surgery and related health issues. It houses 22 exhibit galleries and over 7000 medical artifacts spanning centuries of worldwide medical history, from acupuncture to X-ray therapy. There are over 600 sculptures, paintings and prints, primarily portraits of individuals and historical depictions of specific procedures and medical events.

The new exhibit, "The Japan Hall of Fame", opened at the IMSS on March 19, 2005. Japanese surgeons have exported many great medical advances around the world, pioneering such surgical frontiers as ultrasound, anesthetics and surgical stapling. The exhibit honors some of



*Historic Home: The exterior of the mansion*

the greatest Japanese surgeons including Komei Nakayama (1910-2005) who created a sutureless lifting method of surgery for esophagocardial cancer, and Seishu Hanaoka (1760-1835) who perfected anesthesia which benefited some 153 breast cancer patients.

At the beginning of the ceremony, the president of the IMSS board explained the history of IMSS and introduced the board members to the audience. Then the Consul General of Japan from Chicago, praised Chicago and congratulated the IMSS on the opening of the new exhibit. The president of ICS and Japanese professors also gave presentations. The mayor and delegates of Naga town where Seishu Hanaoka was born, came to celebrate this event. The mayor gave background information about Seisyu Hanaoka's history and donated a plaque related to Seisyu Hanaoka to IMSS. Most of the attendees remained at the museum after the ceremony and enjoyed the exhibit, reflecting on this very interesting aspect of medical history.

Some of the artifacts such as an Austrian saw with a reversible blade, scalpel blades and urinary catheters, and paintings which illustrated the development of surgery, frightened me but I was surprised to learn that some of the medical tools had already been developed in the Roman era and I was impressed to discover that many



*Seishu Hanaoka and his mother who are taking care of his wife, Kae, who volunteered to help him.*

modern tools are just modifications of tools developed a long time ago.

IMSS not only exhibits amazing collections of artifacts and paintings, but also offers educational opportunities for students. The most impressive program is "Amputation Demonstration" which allows students to experience first-hand, the way amputation surgeries were performed before the discovery of anesthesia and before germ theories were posed. I think this program is useful for students who may be seeking medicine as their future career.

IMSS continues to add exhibits and I would like to visit the museum again and see these new exhibits.

For more Information: <http://www.imss.org/>



*Inside of IMSS*



# One-Hundred Fifty-Two Years Later – A Goodwill Visit to Commodore Perry's Home Town; Newport, Rhode Island

by Tamaki Yoshida  
Assistant Director of JLGC



My hope and dream was realized on July 15, 2005 when I was able to visit Newport, Rhode Island the home of Matthew Calbraith Perry. One hundred fifty-two years have passed since he came to Yokosuka, my home town, with his black ships, opening Japan to the world.

My first impression of New Port reminded me of the small town America I had read about in books and viewed in movies. Standing on the seashore and breathing in the bracing salt water air I suddenly realized that Commodore Perry breathed the very same air. I recalled the "butterfly effect"; that if he had not made the journey to Japan, I would not have a reason for being in Newport. I experienced a sense of destiny that I should have this one in a million chance to travel from Yokosuka to visit his home.

I arrived in Newport to attend the 22nd Annual Newport Black Ships Festival representing the Mayor of Yokosuka and to offer congratulations to the Mayor and citizens of Newport. The opening ceremony of the festival was held at Touro Park. Many prominent citizens, dignitaries and representatives from Japan and the United States were in attendance. Japanese speakers included; the Honorable Mitsuru Kitano, Minister for Public Affairs, Embassy of Japan; the Honorable Masuo Nishibayashi, Consul General of Japan in Boston; the Honorable Kiyoshi Iketani, former Mayor of Shimoda and myself. Speakers representing the United States included the acting Governor of Rhode Island; the Honorable John Trifero, Mayor of Newport and Captain Robert McLaughlin, Commanding Officer, Naval Station, Newport. Although I practiced English diligently to prepare to speak in front of an audience, I forgot an important element when giving a talk. I needed an ice-breaker to grab the audiences' interest and attention.



*Tamaki Yoshida speaking to the distinguished guests and citizens of Newport*

After listening intently to the previous speakers it became apparent. I picked up on comments made referring to America's national past time, baseball, specifically New England baseball which means the Boston Red Sox. Of course living and working in New York City, one cannot help being a New York Yankees fan –so I decided to have a little fun with the audience.

During my introduction, I mentioned that I am a

New Yorker and an ardent New York Yankee baseball fan but that I was a little nervous speaking in front of so many people who cheered for the Red Sox. I said Newport is Red Sox territory and although their team is leading the American League East Division, I expected that to change by the time I returned to New York City.

Fortunately, the audience accepted my comment with laughter and good spirit and at that moment I felt that I had indeed made a lasting imprint and fulfilled my dream.



*Council member Ms. Colleen McGrath, center, with her mother, Kathy and her daughter, Lauren*

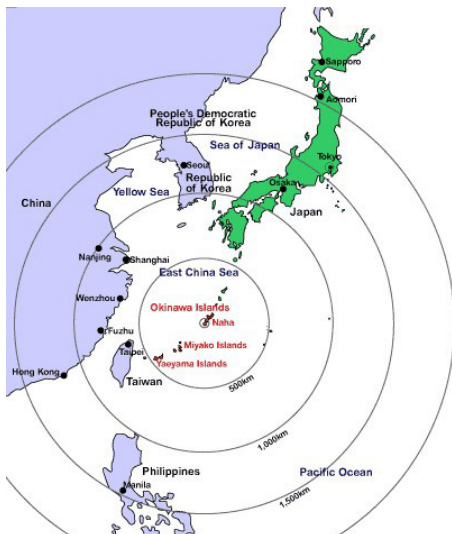


*Sunset over Newport Harbor*

# “Okinawa Rising” – An Attractive Tourist Destination



by Takao Aharen  
Assistant Director of JLGC



Okinawa is located southwest of Japan, and is comprised of 160 large and small islands (of which 49 are populated). The prefecture spans 1000 kilometers of ocean east to west and 400 kilometers north to south. Geographically separated from Japan, Okinawans developed their own distinct dialect and cultural traditions. Okinawa’s warm climate, sub-tropical vegetation and beaches as well as its exceptional arts and handicrafts, attract visitors. Known for their gracious hospitality, Okinawans are friendly people who welcome everyone. In fact they have a popular saying: “Ichariba-chode” which translated means “once we meet we are as brothers and sisters”.

## Culture

“Unique” is the best word to describe Okinawan culture. As an independent country, the Ryukyu Kingdom lasted until the 19th century (1879). During the “era of great trade” from the 14th to the 16th century, Okinawa prospered due to its favorable geographical location and brisk maritime trade with China, Korea, and other Asian countries. As a result, Okinawan culture evolved, and is presently reflected in its traditional crafts and performing arts. Okinawa has a rich history. The Shuri Castle remains, Nakagusuku Castle ruins and other historic remains were added to the Register of World Heritage Sites as “The Castles of Ryukyu and Related Sites” in 2000.

## Longevity

Okinawan cuisine contributes to the longevity of the Okinawa people. The Okinawan diet is well-



Shuri Castle (Photo provided by Okinawa Commemorative National Government Park Office)



Ryukyuan Dance

balanced; rich in protein and vegetables and along with an unhurried pace of life and temperate climate contribute to their longevity. Elderly people in Okinawa to this day refer to their food as “Kusuimun” or “Nuchigusui” meaning “medicine” or “medicine for life”.



Okinawan Food

## Japan’s Southern International Gateway

Okinawa was recognized as a major convention destination when it welcomed the world leaders at the G8 summit in 2000. Since then, Okinawa has hosted many world events, most recently the Inter-American Development Bank meeting held in 2005 at one of Okinawa’s most beautiful resort convention

areas. There are two prefectural convention centers: Bankoku Shinryokan and Okinawa Convention Center. Okinawans are known for their wonderful hospitality ingrained with the spirit of their ancestors and embodied by the term ‘Bankoku Shinryo’, meaning the “bridge among the nations”.



Bankoku Shinryokan  
<http://www.shinryokan.com/e/top.html>



Okinawa Convention Center  
[http://www.oki-conven.jp/index\\_e.html](http://www.oki-conven.jp/index_e.html)

For more information:

<http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/english/>

Okinawa Prefectural Government

<http://www.ocvb.or.jp/>

Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau



# National Governors' Association Annual Meeting in Des Moines, Iowa



by Seth B. Benjamin  
JLGC Senior Researcher

2005 was the National Governors' Association's (NGA's) 97th annual meeting. The venue this year was Des Moines, Iowa. As many people are aware, the NGA is one of the oldest associations of elected officials in the United States and each year, in the summer, the governors get together to discuss and exchange views in a bi-partisan way. Director Hida, assistant directors Masahiro Nagumo and Takahiro Hino, and senior researcher Seth B. Benjamin attended from the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC). Once again, we were most fortunate to have Mr. Kimitake Kuze, now a newly retired member of Japan's House of Councillors, join the meeting.

As we have mentioned before, each year at the annual meeting the incoming chairman of NGA selects a theme, known as the chairman's initiative, which he will then pursue throughout the ensuing year of his chairmanship. For the 2004-5 year, NGA chairman Governor Mark Warner (D-Virginia) wanted to challenge the governors to rethink how they viewed the American high school. His initiative was called "Re-designing the American High School". Perhaps, the most important aspect of this initiative was to make the high school relevant to the 21st Century. So, in Des Moines, at the conclusion of his initiative, NGA chairman Governor Warner presented for the meeting a hands-on demonstration of what current high school seniors thought about their schooling experiences. This was the backdrop to a report that was unveiled to the governors at the meeting, called *A Profile of State Action to Improve America's High Schools*.

One of the successes of the NGA chairman's initiative was announced at the meeting by Governor Warner. As he made clear at the press conference, Governor Warner said that, if the states were going to be serious about improving the American high school and making it relevant to the 21st Century, then there had to be agreement on the information that the states used to determine

the success or failure of their high schools. So, he was pleased to tell everyone present that 47 governors and 12 associations had signed a compact to reach a common definition for their high school graduation rate. Simple though this may sound, it was a big step forward for the states. As Governor Warner commented, "As chairman of NGA, I have made it my priority to raise national awareness about the urgent need to improve America's high schools and make them more challenging and relevant to student needs. However, without better data, our efforts will fall short. Because of the inconsistent quality of state data on graduation and dropout rates, many states cannot account for the status of their students as they progress through high school and beyond. The historic compact we signed today will help address this problem".

There were many other highlights to the meeting, not least of which was the excellent hospitality of the host state, Iowa. One such



*Governor Pataki of New York Addresses a Plenary Session on Global Education Issues*

event was a mini version of the Iowa State Fair. That fair is world renowned and the subject of a famous musical film, called, appropriately enough, *State Fair*. One cannot forget to mention the keynote speech given by New York Times columnist, Thomas Friedman, who spoke on the ideas behind his new book, *The World is Flat*. Again, dovetailing with the theme of the meeting, he was challenging the governors to think about the global nature of economic competition in today's world. Thus, schooling reform was all the more important to face that challenge.

At the end of the meeting, the Association chose its new chairman, Governor Mike Huckabee (R-Arkansas) and vice-chairman, Governor Janet Napolitano (D-Arizona). It is a tradition of the association to alternate between Republican and Democrat governors for the position of chairman. Governor Huckabee launched his initiative, which he called "Healthy America: Wellness Where We Live, Work and Learn".

Since we were fortunate to have Mr. Kuze attend the meeting, JLGC was able to meet many of the governors and continue its fruitful relationship with the National Governors' Association staff. Also, at the splendid evening events, there was a great opportunity to meet the governors' staff from many different states. All in all, it was a most successful meeting for JLGC.



*Governor Huckabee of Arkansas plays guitar with popular 1970s rock band REO Speedwagon*

## Experience from New York



by Masashi Takahashi

Administrator of Ports and Harbors Development and Promotion Division,  
Miyagi Prefecture Government  
(Former Assistant Director of Japan Local Government Center)

Visitors from the United States or former JET's who were stationed in Miyagi should know *kamaboko*, a fish cake made of fish paste and thickened with starch. Perhaps they have indulged in *gyutan*; sliced beef tongue, grilled and seasoned with salt. But do they know how these ingredients were imported and the role Sendai port plays in the process?

Sendai port is the gateway to Miyagi Prefecture, home to about 2.3 million people (including 1 million in Sendai city) making it the largest city in the Tohoku region. The Tohoku region spreads out over six prefectures and Sendai port handles imports and exports of commodities such as rubbers, manufactured and electronic goods, and the ingredients used to make *kamaboko* and *gyutan*.



Masashi Takahashi, translating for ship captain

After being stationed in New York, I returned to Miyagi prefecture in 2005 and my present job assignment requires me to support the promotion and expansion of Sendai port. My major role will be to expand the direct container routes to the north east coasts of the United States and Europe. The Tohoku region is still a bit distressed economically and I am concerned that this will make my job a little more complicated. It may be difficult to forge ahead with marketing plans that will attract container services and increase Sendai port's visibility as a viable entrance into the region of Japan that it serves.

While in New York City, however, I was

able to improve upon my English language abilities so I am in a good position to serve as translator when my manager meets executive members of shipping companies or ship captains who make Sendai their port of call. During my two year stay in America,

I honed my negotiation skills through interviews with American and Canadian business and government officials. I believe my experience in New York will prove to be a valuable asset when conducting public relations and preparing marketing strategies for the Port of Sendai.

Before working at JLGC, I was responsible for handling public relation matters for Miyagi Prefecture but had little experience in promoting effective public enterprise. My experiences in New York taught me a different way of approaching problems and implementing solutions. Motivation is a big part of the American spirit and I feel that some of that has rubbed off which will allow me to perform at a higher level. My goal will be to create and put into effect a method whereby Sendai port will increase import and export transactions by means of international exchange efforts. Miyagi Prefecture has a very successful sister state affiliation with the State of Delaware, primarily aimed at promoting and cultivating exchanges while fostering an understanding of the need to promote and expand relationships to further their economies.

It's now six months since I have returned to Japan. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to live and work in New York.



JCX departing Sendai port to the west coast of the United States

I learnt a great deal about the importance of quality public service in the United States. I studied and witnessed new cutting edge innovative management practices as well as some good old fashion management models that some call relics. The knowledge acquired from my New York experiences will certainly help me in my endeavor to work toward Miyagi prefecture becoming fully internationalized.

### Featured in this issue:

