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Governors Honor Michigan Partnership with Shiga Prefecture in Japan

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TOKYO- Governor Rick Snyder today met with Governor Yukiko Kada of Shiga Prefecture, Japan, to discuss mutual interests in promotion of business investment, tourism and job creation in Michigan and Shiga and protection and preservation of Lake Biwa, the largest freshwater lake in Japan and the Great Lakes, the world's largest group of freshwater lakes.

Observing that the Michigan-Shiga partnership is one of the oldest sister state relationships between the United States and Japan, Governor Snyder said: "For more than 40 years, residents of our two states have fostered personal, educational and economic ties through partnership activities and exchanges involving students, teachers, community members and government officials," he said. "I look forward to exploring ways in which our states can join forces to assure a more prosperous future for all our citizens."

Governor Kada said: "There are many similarities between the industries of Michigan and Shiga, particularly with regards to the growth of our environmental and alternative energy industries. I hope to utilize the networks cultivated thus far through our relationship, such as the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) Alumni Association, to further promote mutually beneficial cultural and economic exchange."

In addition to their active sister state and sister city relationships, which feature exchange programs for junior and senior high school students, Michigan and Shiga also maintain close ties through the Japan Center for Michigan Universities. The 22-year-old collaboration among the two governments and Michigan's 15 state-supported universities is designed to build strong relationships between Japanese, Americans and other nationalities through active learning and participation in language, culture, family life and society via academic programs and cultural exchange activities.

The meeting took place during the 43rd annual joint meeting of the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association and Japan-Midwest U.S. Association on September 25 -27 in Tokyo. Also participating in the meeting were Mr. Kuninori Matsuda, Consul General of Japan in Detroit; representatives from JCMU; Mr. Michael Finney, Michigan Economic Development Corporation President and CEO; and Mr. Keith Creagh, director of the state Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

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