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2016 ANNUAL JAPAN-AMERICA SOCIETY OF NORTH CAROLINA (JASNC) CONFERENCE WITH DISTINGUISHED PRESENTERS INCLUDING JAPAN CONSUL GENERAL TAKASHI SHINOZUKA HELD IN RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK (RTP), NORTH CAROLINA

RTP, North Carolina - April 25th 2016 - The newly formed Japan-America Society of North Carolina (JASNC) held its first annual Meeting in Raleigh on April 25. The society, privately founded and financed as a non-profit organization, has a simple but important goal; to promote mutual understanding between the citizens of North Carolina and Japan. JASNC Founding Board Chairman, Dr. Tracy Tsuetaki said “At a time when the economic relationship between Japan and North Carolina is strong and very beneficial to both parties, we want to build people-to-people ties. We have seen this work in other states and, given the great start today in RTP, we are certain that we can deepen the relationship between North Carolina and Japan though the programs we will offer here.”

JASNC is part of a nationwide network of Japan-America Societies. It is the 37th member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies (NAJAS). NAJAS President Peter Kelley said, “The Japan-America Societies are a unique, private network of local groups which build the U.S.-Japan relationship at the grassroots level. We are delighted to welcome JASNC into NAJAS.”

This year’s conference was held at the North Carolina Biotech Center and featured opening remarks by Consul General of Japan in Atlanta, Takashi Shinozuka, and the Honorary Consul General of Japan in North Carolina, David Robinson. Consul General Shinozuka stated “I would like to congratulate JASNC for holding its first annual meeting with so many prestigious speakers, and I fully support JASNC in strengthening the people-to-people ties between Japan and North Carolina in every field. I welcome JASNC as the 37th and youngest member of the great family of the National Association of Japan-America Societies, wishing all the best in its coming activities.” Presenters for the annual conference included Ms. Irene Hirano Inouye - President of the U.S.-Japan Council, Mr. Peter Kelley - President of the National Association of the Japan America Societies, Dr. Morgan Pitelka - Director of the Carolina Asia Center at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Mr. Atsushi Yamakoshi - Executive Director of the Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) USA, and Mr. Toshiyuki Yokota - President, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) New York, and Mr. Takeshi Yoshida, Program Director for the Grassroots Exchange and Education at the Japan Foundation.

Following the formal conference program, a reception was held at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences where Mr. John E. Skvarla, III, Commerce Secretary of North Carolina stated “North Carolina’s relationship with Japan is strong and vital to our economy, providing more than $2.5 billion in investment in our state over the last decade. We welcome and support the aim of the new Japan-America Society of North Carolina to deepen and strengthen our ties with this important international partner.”

Dr. Tracy Tsuetaki, Chairman of JASNC, thanked sponsors for this year’s conference and reception which included CBC Americas Corp, Cherry Bekart, JP Morgan, NC Biotech Center, and Williams Mullen. “We are fortunate to have the support of our sponsors, corporate and individual members. JASNC will continue to provide top-notch programs which will provide further education and build relationships between Japan and North Carolina for many years to come”. The mission of JASNC is implementing, by itself or through collaborations with others, a series of programs, events, cultural, educational, policy and other initiatives that reach out to and actively engage our communities, increase interaction among Japanese and North Carolinians, and provide useful information and resources to the public regarding NC-Japan organizations, relations and exchange.

JASNC offers sponsorship opportunities and a variety of rewarding membership options for individuals, families and businesses. Please see the JASNC website at www.jasnc.org to learn more about the benefits of becoming a JASNC member or sponsor.