

April 29, 2012

Japan honors Senator Lamar Alexander

On April 29, the Government of Japan officially announced that the **Honorable Lamar Alexander**, current United States Senator and former Governor of Tennessee, will be honored with a prestigious decoration, **the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star**, in recognition of his abiding service and dedication to Japan-U.S. friendly relations. The decoration will be conferred by **His Majesty the Emperor of Japan**.

The Order of the Rising Sun was established in 1875 as the first national decoration awarded by the Japanese Government. The decoration is bestowed upon individuals who have made significant contributions to positive relations between Japan and her friends and allied nations. Senator Alexander is recognized primarily for his outstanding contributions to promoting economic relations and mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

As Governor of Tennessee (1979-1987), Mr. Alexander traveled to Japan many times, working tirelessly to attract Japanese manufacturers to the state during a period of heightened tension between the two countries over trade. His visionary move resulted in Nissan's decision to locate its first North American plant in Smyrna. Bridgestone, Komatsu, and many other leading Japanese companies soon followed, helping to boost the state's economy and forging unique friendships between the peoples of two distinct cultures in the process.

Senator Alexander's commitment to easing Japan-U.S. economic tensions and promoting international community is reflected in his 1986 book, ***Friends, Japanese and Tennesseans: A Model of U.S.-Japan Cooperation***. Today, over 170 Japanese companies call "The Volunteer State" home. Japanese investment accounts for more than half of all Foreign Direct Investment in Tennessee and supports nearly 35,000 jobs for its residents.

Senator Alexander's dedication to and interest in Japan did not end with his gubernatorial tenure. While serving in the U.S. Senate, he played an important role in bringing Nissan North America's headquarters to Franklin, TN. More recently, Senator Alexander co-sponsored a Senate resolution expressing its deepest condolences to the victims of March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Senator Alexander began his prestigious career in public service as a legislative aide to Senator Howard H. Baker, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan. He is a former President of the University of

Tennessee (1988-1991) and a former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (1991-1993). He is currently serving his second term in the U.S. Senate. The senator is married to Honey Alexander; they have four children and five grandchildren.

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