**Japan presents West Virginia’s Senator Rockefeller with high honor**

U.S. Sen. Jay Rockefeller was presented with one of the highest honors the Japanese government can bestow on a non-national. The Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun was awarded to the senator in a formal ceremony held in Washington D.C. in February. The award recognizes Rockefeller’s decades of work to strengthen and promote the economic and cultural relationship between the two nations. The event in the Japanese Embassy was hosted by Japanese ambassador to the U.S., Kenichiro Sasae.

In the 1950s, Rockefeller spent three years in Japan as a college student attending the International Christian University in Tokyo. As West Virginia governor and later as U.S. senator, Rockefeller played a pivotal role in attracting more than 20 Japanese companies and thousands of jobs to the state. Among the Japanese businesses investing in West Virginia are Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia (Buffalo), NGK Spark Plugs (Sissonville), Diamond Electric (Eleanor), Kureha PGA (Belle) Hino Motors Manufacturing USA (Williamstown) and Okuno International (Prichard).

Before the award ceremony, the Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation and the West Virginia Development Office co-sponsored a luncheon to bring together executives and friends from around the state and Japan.

Rockefeller has announced plans to leave the U.S. Senate at the end of his fifth term in 2015.