

Chiba: New Industrial Prefecture

By Arata Hidetomo

Keiyo Industrial Belt and Port of Chiba

The Tokyo Metropolitan Area has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity as a result of the rapid economic expansion of Japan since the 1960s. In those years, basic and materials industries such as steel and shipbuilding were the prime movers of Japan's economic growth, resulting in the establishment of a gigantic coastal industrial belt.

The Keiyo Industrial Belt was established in a land-filled area extending from Ichikawa City to Futsu City via Chiba City and Ichihara City. As one of Japan's largest industrial belts, it accommodates the Kimitsu Works of Nippon Steel Corp., the world's largest steel manufacturer, Kawasaki Steel Corp.'s Chiba Works, an advanced urban-type steel which features extensive material- and labor-saving technologies, Idemitsu Kosan Co., Ltd., the second largest wholesaler of petroleum in Japan, Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd. which is in the process of a globalization drive, Tokyo Electric Power Co., Inc., the world's largest private-sector power company, Tokyo Gas Co., Ltd. which has the world's largest LNG storage base in Sodegaura, and other major Japanese corporations. In addition to these coastal belts, many other companies have recently established their manufacturing plants in interior industrial parks in Chiba Prefecture. As a result, even after the Japanese government's implementation of measures for the nationwide redistribution of factories, industrial production in Chiba Prefecture ranks eighth largest in terms of Japan's total industrial output.

A total of 44 foreign companies has so far established production facilities in Chiba Prefecture. There are 23 companies from the United States, including IBM and Applied Materials Japan, and 15 European companies such as BMW of Germany and CIS Diagnostic of France. In response to a steady increase

in the number of foreign companies establishing a base there, Chiba Prefectural Government has developed the Internationalization Promotion Plan under which it is working to expand international exchange activities.

On the map, you will see that about half of Tokyo Bay belongs to Chiba Prefecture. This is the Port of Chiba, with the largest water area in Japan, handling a greater volume of cargo

than Kobe, Nagoya or other Japanese ports. In addition, the Port of Chiba has cheaper port fees than the other ports in the Tokyo Bay area, i.e. Tokyo and Yokohama. Equipped with a state-of-the-art container terminal, the Chiba Central Wharf serves ships sailing regular container routes to South Korea (Pusan), Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and other Southeast Asian nations.



Keiyo Industrial Belt

IBM Japan, Ltd.

In July 1991, we established our presence as a comprehensive information base in order to participate with Makuari New City on its way to becoming an international information metropolis of the 21st century.

As our information society becomes more complex and diversified, we have upheld Vision 21 as a service company. Under this vision, we are engaging in development and manufacturing from a global business perspective. At the same time, we are capitalizing on our technological and

human assets around the world in order to promote more effective use of information in society. In this manner, we are determined to support Japan in fulfilling its international responsibilities and create a sound and affluent society.

We expect that Makuari New City with its aim of being an "International Stage for Humans, Technology and Information" will continue to take great steps forward as an information gateway linking Japan with the rest of the world. We are convinced that such progress will be of benefit to all the people of Chiba Prefecture.

"The Chiba Industrial Triangle Concept"

The so-called "Triangle Concept" is an indispensable element of Chiba Prefecture's industrial strategy for the future. Officially named the "The Chiba Industrial Triangle Concept," the 'triangle' in question refers to Makuhari, Kazusa and Narita. With Makuhari Messe, a center for human exchanges, products and information, the Makuhari area has been working to establish for itself an identity as an international business area. The Kazusa area is committed to developing cutting-edge technologies, as exemplified by DNA research. The Narita area can also capitalize on Narita Airport, Japan's gateway to the world, and is striving to establish a base for international physical distribution in addition to handling international passenger traffic. This municipal plan calls for balanced growth as well as further devel-

opment of the prefecture's industrial structure.

To make full use of what these three bases have to offer, the development of transportation networks is indispensable. The construction of highways is therefore in full swing, and these will connect Narita with Makuhari, Makuhari with Kazusa and Narita with Kazusa. When these highways are linked to the Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line, the entire Chiba Prefecture will be integrated into the greater Tokyo metropolitan transportation loop network. Once this is achieved, Chiba's potential in transportation will be improved dramatically. Furthermore, it is the prefectural government's strategy that the effects of these development efforts will benefit all of Chiba Prefecture.



New Tokyo International Airport (Narita Airport)

Along with the "Triangle Concept," the prefectural government plans to develop the northern part of the Higashi Katsushika area in the northwest of Chiba Prefecture into a 2-million person residential community serving as a new core metropolitan area. Because a population of 1.3 million is concentrated in this area, the Outer Tokyo Loop Road and the Joban New Railway Line are under construction in order to promote greater exchanges and cooperation.

Furthermore, the University of Tokyo is building a new campus in Kashiwa City in order to locate graduate school programs and research laboratories there. The prefectural government is also working to open the "Tokatsu Techno Plaza" (tentative name) in 1998. To support the transformation of small and medium-scale companies into R&D-oriented companies, the projected facility will be equipped with R&D, training and technological exchange facilities. Through collaboration with universities and research institutions, furthermore, the "Tokatsu Techno Plaza" will assist the take-off of venture businesses which are expected to play a leadership role in the 21st century.

After a little over ten years since its inception, the "The Chiba Industrial Triangle Concept" is now in the final stage of implementation to bring about positive effects throughout Chiba Prefecture.

BMW Japan Co., Ltd.

In 1991, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of our foundation, we relocated our head office to Makuhari. While other prospective locations were considered, we decided on Makuhari for the following reasons. Firstly, we were already operating two facilities in Matsudai, Chiba Prefecture—namely the New Car Service Center and Parts Center. Secondly, the conditions offered by the prefectural government under its future plan were favorable to our needs.

Before moving to Makuhari, our offices were dispersed around the center of Tokyo. Over time, we had become more aware of problems related to communications and rental costs on a long-term basis. In addition, we had considerable difficulty securing adequate space to meet the requirements of our expanding business. Even when we were able to find enough space, the overall cost/perfor-

mance did not meet our expectations. These factors also prompted us to relocate our head office operations.

In considering relocation, we reflected on our then-current situation. As a newcomer to the Japanese market, we felt that we needed to create a head office as a landmark on the occasion of our 10th anniversary here.

After moving to Makuhari, the biggest advantage for us was improved access. Receiving visitors from abroad was made much easier by our proximity to Narita Airport. Employees were also able to take advantage of commuting in the opposite direction, which means less-crowded trains. While there initially was a problem of distance from the business information center, we are now fully utilizing information and communications capabilities and will shortly eliminate this problem.

There are certainly some problems associated with Makuhari New City. In our case, however, it represents a perfect match with our needs.