

## JAPANESE INDUSTRY AND POLICY NEWS JANUARY 2016

### LEGISLATION AND POLICY NEWS

#### **METI Starts Open Data Demonstration for the Revitalization of the Service Industry**

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced on December 14 that it started a demonstration project for creating a database for travel-related information and the behavior of domestic and international tourists. This project aims to improve productivity in the service industry and to create new service enterprises and businesses.

Specifically, tourism-related data including the behavior of domestic and international tourists will be integrated and disclosed as open data.

This project is expected to create opportunities for new services and businesses, and to accelerate data utilization at public organizations including administrative agencies.

[http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1214\\_02.html](http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1214_02.html)

#### **METI Compiles Roadmap for Net Zero Energy House (ZEH)**

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) published on December 17 the results of the ZEH Roadmap Review Panel's studies in order to achieve the goals concerning ZEHs specified in the Basic Energy Plan. ZEH is a house whose annual net consumption of primary energy is zero.

The Basic Energy Plan, approved by the Cabinet in April 2014, stipulates the political goal of aiming to realize the ZEH concept in newly-constructed public buildings by 2020 and achieve average net emissions of zero in newly-constructed buildings by 2030.

In order to create a roadmap toward the abovementioned goal, METI set up the ZEH Roadmap Review Panel to verify and discuss the current situation and challenges surrounding the ZEH concept and the direction of efforts needed to respond to such challenges. METI also published on the same day the summary report of the Net Zero Energy Building (ZEB) Road Map Review Panel.

[http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1217\\_01.html](http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1217_01.html)

<http://www.meti.go.jp/press/2015/12/20151217003/20151217003-1.pdf> (The

result of the ZEH Panel's studies in Japanese)

[http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1217\\_02.html](http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1217_02.html)

### **First GI Protected Products Announced**

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) announced on December 22 that the Geographical Indication (GI) protection was accorded to seven locally produced agricultural products.

This is the first registration of Japanese produce since the Act for Protection of Names of Designated Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Products and Foodstuffs Act (GI Act) entered into force on June 1, 2015.

The first seven items registered as Japanese GI on December 22, 2015 are as follows:

Aomori cassis, Tajima Beef, Kobe Beef, Yubari Melon, Yame Dentou Hongyokuro (green tea), Edosaki Squash, Kagoshima Tsubo-zukuri Black Vinegar

According to the MAFF, evaluation on newly applied products will be made approximately every month.

[http://www.maff.go.jp/e/japan\\_food/gi\\_act/register.html](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/japan_food/gi_act/register.html)

[http://www.maff.go.jp/e/japan\\_food/gi\\_act/pdf/gi\\_pamph.pdf](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/japan_food/gi_act/pdf/gi_pamph.pdf)

## **SURVEY AND BUSINESS DATA**

### **Annual Foreign Visitors Hit Record High**

The number of foreign visitors to Japan in 2015 reached 19.74 million which is more than a 6 million increase from the past record of 2014, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) announced on January 19.

The number of visitors, increasing partly due to a weaker yen which encourages tourists to visit, comes close to the Japanese government's target of 20 million visitors from overseas by 2020 when the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held. JNTO also attributed the rise in the number of foreign travelers to relaxed visa requirements for tourists from some Asian countries.

Country-wise, Chinese tourists were most numerous with 4.99 million. British (258,500 persons), French (214,300 pers.) and German (162,600) tourists were top 3 from Europe.

[http://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/news/press\\_releases/pdf/20160119\\_1.pdf](http://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/news/press_releases/pdf/20160119_1.pdf)

## **Imported Vehicle Sales Down 2.2% in 2015**

According to the Japan Automobile Importers Association (JAIA), sales in Japan of new imported vehicles, including those built abroad by Japanese automakers, declined 2.2 percent from a year earlier in 2015 to 328,622 units. Sales of foreign-brand vehicles also recorded a decline of 1.6 percent to 285,496 units, while those of Japanese-brand cars dropped 5.8 percent to 43,126 units.

By brand, Mercedes-Benz ranked first with sales of 65,162 units, up 7.1 percent from a year earlier. Volkswagen came in second with 54,766 units, recording a 18.8 percent drop from the previous year.

<http://www.jaia-jp.org/wp-content/uploads/private/201512NewCarNews.pdf>

## **COMPANY NEWS**

### **Promoting a Modal Shift Aiming at Reducing CO2 Emission and Mitigating Shortage of Truck Drivers**

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced on December 11 that the Japan Weather Association (JWA), Nestlé Japan Ltd. (Nestlé Japan) and KAWASAKI KINKAI KISEN KAISHA, LTD. (K LINE KINKAI) agreed to promote a modal shift to proceed with measures for the realization of energy conservation and against shortages of human resources such as truck drivers in the logistics sector.

It concerns a modal shift from trucking to other means of transportation such as coastal shipping for which an accurate long term weather forecast is indispensable.

These three entities will utilize technologies developed through the Project for Reduction of Food Loss and Waste and High Energy-Efficiency Logistics through Improving the Accuracy of Demand Predictions and the Project for the Promotion of a Modal Shift through Improving the Quality of Transportation in Coastal Shipping as a part of the fiscal 2014 Next-Generation Distribution System Establishment Project conducted by METI.

[http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1211\\_03.html](http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/1211_03.html)

### **Delivery of the MRJ Airplane Will Be Delayed**

Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. (MHI) announced on December 24 that the companies would change the delivery schedule of the Mitsubishi Regional Jet (MRJ) from the second quarter of 2017 to approximately one year later.

According to the companies, the first test flight in November and the subsequent flight tests have confirmed the basic characteristics to be satisfactory. However, they also have recognized several issues as they attempt to accelerate the development. In order to tackle these issues and address the necessary steps to complete a better-integrated aircraft, overall schedule was revised, they said.

[http://www.mrj-japan.com/press\\_releases/news\\_151224.html](http://www.mrj-japan.com/press_releases/news_151224.html)

### **ANA Group and Vietnam Airlines Agreed Business and Capital Partnership**

The ANA Group, a holding company of All Nippon Airways, and Vietnam Airlines, have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the ANA Group to acquire a stake in Vietnam Airlines of approximately 8.8% worth 2,431 billion Vietnamese dong (US\$108 million) on January 12.

The partnership is expected to provide for the ANA Group and Vietnam Airlines to take advantage of the increasing demand for air services in the Asian market, in particular, the Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam group of countries.

The ANA Group will dispatch one member to the board of Vietnam Airlines and will also provide Vietnam Airlines with operational and management knowhow to help support service quality.

This is a partnership between different alliance members while ANA is a member of the “Star Alliance”, Vietnam Airlines is a “Sky Team” member.

Vietnam Airlines currently operates 66 flights weekly on ten routes between Japan and Vietnam. ANA operates fourteen flights weekly on two routes.

Implementation of the partnership is subject to necessary approvals being obtained from the Vietnamese government authorities.

<http://www.anahd.co.jp/en/pr/201601/20160112.html>