

Greetings

I am pleased to celebrate the publication of the 49th (2004) edition of “Visual Introduction of Hokkaido Industry,” which began in 1956 as “Hokkaido Industry Diagrams.” I am truly grateful that this brochure has proven to be useful for people in various fields both inside and outside of Hokkaido as a basic reference for understanding the status of industry in Hokkaido through figures and graphs.

The recent years have observed signs of recovery of Hokkaido’s overall economic conditions. The long spell of very hot weather and the Athens Olympics last summer contributed to the growing trend of consumer spending such as continuing strong sales of home electric appliances. A slight increase in production also has been seen. Although the prospects of the future economic development remain unchanged in general, there are concerns about the rising costs of primary materials and crude oil.

Amid these circumstances, the Hokkaido Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry is endeavoring to enhance the competitiveness of the Hokkaido economy by creating new industries. Specifically, we are promoting the Hokkaido Super Cluster Promotion Strategy focused on information technology (IT) and biotechnology industries and the Hokkaido Green Business Promotion Program for environment-related businesses. The Hokkaido Industry Reinforcement Program, implemented in March 2004 to reinforce existing industries which sustain local economy and employment, has three objectives - revitalization of the creation industry, support for development of local brands and establishment of tourism-based venture businesses. Under this program, we are strategically fostering competitive local industries by promoting networking and alliances.

We hope that this brochure will be extensively used as a reference to understand the current status of the Hokkaido industries and as a promotional and advertising material both inside and outside of Hokkaido. Your frank comments and suggestions on this brochure are welcome.

Lastly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to people and organizations for their kind cooperation in collecting numerical and other data herein. Your continued instruction and support will be highly appreciated.

November 2004

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