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EXPO 2005 Attendance Tops 10 Million!

The 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan opened on March 25. With a constant stream of attendees since its opening, the Expo broke the 10 million mark on July 4. Attendance for the entire 185-day exposition was targeted for 15 million, and yet the 10 million mark was hit on day 102, a little more than halfway into the Expo. With the tourist season and summer vacation starting in the latter part of July, this stream of attendees is expected to increase.

A celebration was held on July 4 in commemoration of the 10 millionth visitor, and all visitors that came to the exposition that day were eligible for a drawing, with a prize presented to the lucky winners. One visitor was awarded the Russian Federation, Republic of Sakha Prize—the 2-karat Republic of Sakha Diamond—and another visitor received with the World Heritage Prize—a trip to Shirakami-Sanchi, a mountainous region in northern Honshu and one of Japan's World Heritage sites.

Based on the results of a visitor survey conducted in May, 85% of the visitors had a good impression of the exposition, and approximately 80% said they would like to come back for another visit. There have been roughly 300,000 unlimited use tickets sold, and those ticket holders have visited the Expo an average of roughly four times, accounting for about 20% of overall attendance and indicating a high number of repeat visitors. Overall, this Expo is shaping up to be a great success.

A separate survey of foreign visitors was conducted in the early part of June, and the results show that there were 5,302 (or 4.4% of the total) foreign visitors to the Expo on the day of the survey. Within this group, the most visitors came from Korea (19.2%), followed by the United States (18.1%), Taiwan (17.6%), and China (6.9%). Based on estimates of the number of visitors to Japan from overseas, just under 50% of those visitors will come to EXPO 2005. The number of visitors to Aichi Prefecture has also seen a five-fold increase over the 2004 figure of 1,000 people per day.

One reason for the high number of visitors to the Expo is the improvements (*Kaizen*) implemented by the Japan Association for the 2005 World Exposition, based on suggestions from early visitors about food, congestion, and signs at the Expo.

The summers in Aichi are very hot, and keeping visitors cool has been a concern. To address this concern, the Association is taking several steps, including increasing the number of drinking-water facilities, maintaining large shaded areas, and using dry mist technology in many places in the venue. They are also encouraging visitors to come during the cooler evening hours through evening events, discount evening tickets, invitations to see the night view, and other enticements.

At the 137th meeting of the International Bureau of Exhibitions (BIE) on June 24 in Paris, a motion was passed praising and congratulating the Japanese government and the Japan Association for the 2005 World Exposition for the wonderful results of the Expo thus far.

For the remaining three months of the exhibition, the Association will continue to work with the BIE and participating countries to create a safe, enjoyable, and satisfying experience for Expo visitors.

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