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The Detroit News

Seaweed for breakfast More Metro firms cater to Japanese

By Robert Ourlian
News Staff Writer

The breakfast menu at Novi's Sheraton Oaks Hotel will soon include raw eggs, seaweed, pickles and soybean paste soup.

And that's for hotel guests who don't feel particularly daring first thing in the morning.

It's part of the hotel's program to lure and comfort an increasing crush of Japanese businessmen visiting

Japanese-based businesses in Metro Detroit.

"WE REALIZE there are more and more Japanese businessmen here, and they don't speak good English and they need special attention," said Izumi Suzuki Myers, director of Japanese relations for the hotel. "No hotel was doing that."

Mazda's soon-to-open plant in Flat Rock aside, Japanese businesses in Metro Detroit are mushrooming.

There were just 28 such companies in the Detroit area employing about 670 people in 1980, said Jack Steiner, research director for the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce. Today, there are 106 firms that employ about 10,500, Steiner said.

By the time the Mazda plant Please see **Japanese/4A**



Izumi S. Myers

Orchestra Hall to

Symphony plans 3-week tour of Europe in '89

By Nancy Malitz
News Staff Writer

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra has agreed to move its classical concerts to historic Orchestra Hall on Woodward Avenue in September 1988.

That was a badly kept secret. But this one was well-kept:

The symphony (DSO) will tour Europe in January 1989.

WALTER J. McCarthy Jr., chairman of the board of the DSO and Frank D. Stella, chairman of the board of Orchestra Hall, announce these DSO developments and other Friday following board meetings at both the DSO and Save Orchestra Hall Inc., the parent organization of Orchestra Hall.

The developments are key prov

Japanese Metro businesses gladly greet new clientele from East

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begins production later this year and adds about 7,000 jobs, there will be about 20,000 area workers employed by the Japanese.

"THERE WILL be a lot of other smaller companies that will spring up to service that 7,000," Steiner said.

The growth, Steiner said, represents "a substantial increase in a short period of time." By 1990, there could be 400 Japanese-based companies in Metro Detroit.

The chamber's survey shows most of the current businesses are auto-related, or are involved with international trade. They range in size from one worker to, in the case of Ecorse's Great Lakes Steel Corp., 7,000 workers.

Japan is now the largest foreign investor in the Detroit area, and a third of the new companies — and jobs — to locate in Metro Detroit since 1980 have been Japanese.

BY COMPARISON, there were 38 companies from Canada, 31 from France, 31 from West Germany, 18 from Sweden and 26 from Britain. Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, India, Israel, Italy, South Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland each had fewer than 10 companies.

Steiner said most Japanese businesses coming to Metro Detroit are going to Oakland County, primarily

to Southfield's office towers. But Livonia, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Romulus, Dearborn and Flat Rock each have several.

The upshot is that there are more Japanese visitors to Metro Detroit than ever, and entrepreneurs such as the Sheraton Oaks owners, are looking for ways to cash in.

"There is an increase in flights," said John Zawicki, district sales manager for Japan Air Lines, based in Southfield. Zawicki could provide no figures, but said flights to and from the Orient are on the increase.

"THERE'S A good bulk of business going back and forth — not only from Japan, but from elsewhere in that area."

Officials who deal with Japanese businesses say the reception since 1983, after years of resentment against the Japanese, has been great.

"I had heard people in the Detroit area had very bad feelings about Japanese businesses, and particularly Japanese automobile manufacturers," Myers said. "But it seems those attitudes toward Japanese people are changing quite a bit" as the companies provide jobs for Detroiters.

Seeing opportunity in Japanese business, the hotel last fall hired Myers as an interpreter, hostess and Japanese concierge.

SHE GREETs groups of Japanese guests, sees them to their rooms and arranges for the customary serving of green tea in the guests' quarters.

She provides information printed in Japanese about the hotel and the area, as well as lists of Japanese restaurants in Metro Detroit.

Anthony's Lounge in the hotel serves ice cold Sapporo and Kirin beer for visitors needing a familiar drink, and The Daily Yomiuri newspaper from Tokyo is available.