



# VIEWS & VISIONS

A publication of Bowles Rice LLP

Fall 2014



## Creating Economic Opportunity Requires Vision

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller, IV  
United States Senator

Senator Jay Rockefeller has proudly served the people of West Virginia for over 40 years. He first came to West Virginia in 1964 as a 27-year-old VISTA volunteer, serving in the small mining community of Emmons.

In 1966, he was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates and to the office of West Virginia Secretary of State in 1968. Senator Rockefeller served as President of West Virginia Wesleyan College from 1973 to 1976. In 1976, he was elected Governor of West Virginia, and was re-elected in 1980. In 1984, he was elected to the United States Senate, and re-elected in 1990, 1996, 2002 and 2008.

Senator Rockefeller is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. He is also the Chairman of the Health Care Subcommittee on Finance; and a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He also serves on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Senator Rockefeller graduated from Harvard University in 1961 with a B.A. in Far Eastern languages and history.

The years of hard work, of thousands of miles traveled across oceans, of trade missions and dinner meetings and phone calls and letters – they all came down to a young man from St. Albans, West Virginia.

His name is Matt Oliver.

A little more than 15 years ago, Matt carefully filled out a job application. He and his wife were just starting their family and working hard to make ends meet. They had heard that a major new manufacturing plant was coming to Putnam County. Matt was hopeful but cautious. He had heard 350 jobs were available and he knew they would be in high demand.

He was right – 25,000 people applied for those 350 jobs. But through every step of the hiring process, Matt's wife told him to just do his best, maybe say a prayer or two, and see how far it got him.

Matt Oliver has gone pretty far in the years since becoming one of the first team members of Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia.

**I wanted to do something big for West Virginia that would create jobs and invest in the future of our state's economy**

**Matt's story began** many years before he filled out a job application – many years, in fact, before he knew what he wanted to do with his life.

I made my first visit to Japan as a U.S. Senator in 1986. It was during this trip that I had the honor of formally meeting Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda, chairman of Toyota Motor Corporation. As West Virginia's governor, I had opened the West Virginia Development Office (WVDO) in Japan with the goal of strengthening economic



*Matt Oliver, one of the first TMMWV team members, and Senator John D. Rockefeller*

ties between our state and Japan. Within a year, the relationship was strong enough to start serious talks about doing business together.

I wanted to do something big for West Virginia that would create jobs and invest in the future of our state's economy. Everyone knew Toyota. It's a huge company, and brilliantly run. They were looking for an overseas market, and I had a match for them. I had to get one of these plants. It became my mission.

For a solid decade, I led multiple trips to Japan and welcomed Toyota officials to West Virginia. I made countless phone calls and held meetings between the Japanese and our state. I was determined to make this happen.

In 1996, we proudly announced that Toyota had chosen Buffalo, West Virginia, as the site of a new engine plant to produce 4-cylinder Corolla engines. Standing in front of a backdrop of schoolchildren who were waving Japanese and West Virginia flags, we broke ground in a wide open cornfield in September of that year. Then, in a remarkable turn of events, while the plant was under construction, Toyota announced it would build a second factory at the same site to produce V-6 Camry engines.

To date, Toyota has expanded its West Virginia plant seven times. The result: jobs for West Virginians from 47 of our 55 counties.

It's because of Matt Oliver and so many hard-working West Virginians like him that the Toyota engine manufacturing plant has expanded consistently since it opened in 1998. What started as a \$400 million project has grown into a \$1.2 billion investment – the second-largest industrial investment in our state in the past 50 years – with employment now at 1,200.

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**The Honorable W. Gaston Caperton, III**  
Former Governor of West Virginia

As Governor, I had the good fortune to work closely with Senator Rockefeller on many initiatives for West Virginia. The Senator's international stature and profile have opened doors across the globe for West Virginia, and he has helped open the world to West Virginia.

Among other things, Senator Rockefeller was instrumental in our ability to open a trade office in Nagoya, an action which has conferred a huge strategic advantage on West Virginia in recruiting jobs and investment from Japan. Thanks to Senator Rockefeller, Toyota, Wheeling-Nisshin, KS of West Virginia, NGK and many other international businesses have invested in West Virginia, and generated jobs for West Virginians. We are forever indebted to Jay for his service to our state, and I am grateful for his friendship.



*Photo courtesy of U.S. Senate Press Photographers' Gallery*

**The Honorable Joe Manchin, III**  
United States Senator

More than 50 years ago, a young and aspiring John D. Rockefeller, IV traveled through our majestic mountains, rumbling rivers, winding roads and backcountry trails to southern West Virginia and found himself in the small town of Emmons – a place where, although he didn't know it at the time, he would begin to plant his roots and never look back. True to West Virginians' innate character, all who met Jay welcomed him upon his arrival and embraced him as one of their own.

Since then, Jay has adopted West Virginia's distinct charm, hospitality and warmth, and has led a life of devoted public service. His contributions to the Mountain State and to this country know no bounds.

I will also never forget how Jay bestowed the same kindness toward me that West Virginians had shown him all those years ago when I first arrived in Washington, D.C. The transition from Governor to a United States Senator was different and challenging, and I cannot thank Jay and his staff enough for offering support and guidance as I became acclimated to the Senate and to Washington, D.C.

Jay's ambitions to make a difference, coupled with his leadership abilities, foresight and passions, have helped improve the lives of countless West Virginians and Americans. I join our West Virginia community in thanking Jay and his wife, Sharon, for their years of service and dedication to the great state of West Virginia.



That's just part of the picture. The ripple effect of Toyota's decision to come to West Virginia is as strong as ever. Hundreds of West Virginians are producing products for Toyota at Japanese companies across the state, including Diamond Electric, Nippon Thermostat and NGK Sparkplugs, to name just a few.

### Bringing Toyota to West Virginia

**required vision.** It required us to look at the big-picture potential for business development and growth in our state. I didn't know Matt Oliver when I opened the WVDO office in Nagoya, Japan,

but I knew so many others like him, all across West Virginia, who wanted the opportunity to work hard and give their families a better future.

Toyota is just one part of that big picture. We can trace the ties between Japan and West Virginia all the way back to my studies in Japan in the 1960s. While there, I learned the Japanese are rooted in their land. They are hard-working. Their history is filled with stories about overcoming adversity. And when I came to West Virginia, I found the same cultural milieu. It's

why I knew a business relationship between Japan and West Virginia could be so successful.

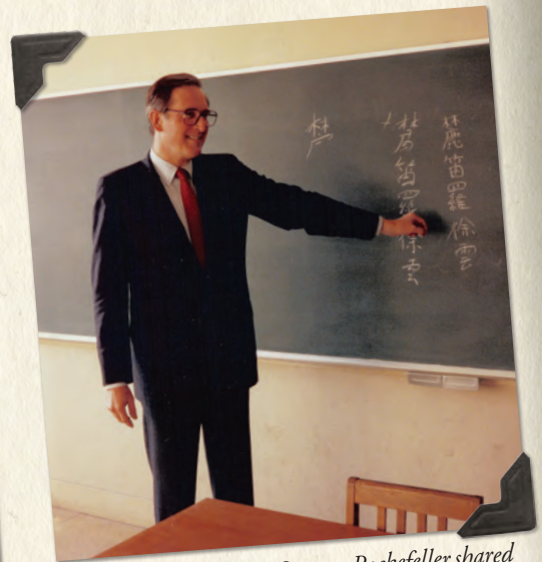
So, in 1978, I made my first attempt to forge a partnership between a Japanese company, Nisshin Steel of Japan, and a West Virginia company, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. In 1986, this created Wheeling-Nisshin in the Northern Panhandle. It was the first Japanese investment in the state and the first joint venture between private businesses based in Japan and West Virginia.



*Senator Rockefeller, second from right, visits Japan as part of a 1995 trade mission conducted by Discover the Real West Virginia Foundation.*



*Senator Rockefeller meets with team members at Okuno International's manufacturing plant in Prichard, West Virginia.*



*During a 1987 event, Senator Rockefeller shared his familiarity with the Japanese alphabet.*



In April 1994, NGK Spark Plugs opened its doors in our state. NGK offered the type of highly advanced manufacturing jobs we needed to grow and diversify our state's economy.

The floodgates are now open with 30 countries operating businesses in our state – like Kureha (Japan), Gestamp (Spain) and Allevard Sogefi (Italy). West Virginia has truly become an international destination for business.

**Matt Oliver had vision.** He saw a crowded field of applicants for those first 350 jobs

at Toyota Motor Manufacturing-West Virginia. He didn't let that stop him. There was too much at stake. He wanted to raise a family and give them a bright future. He wanted a part of the American dream.

As we look to West Virginia's future, we can be proud of the vision Matt Oliver had and all he has accomplished.

I have always believed that our actions must be guided by the larger impact they'll yield in the future. We must continue working, planning and acting *now* for

the West Virginia we want in 10 years, 50 years, and even her next 150 years. ♡



*Senator Rockefeller was among state and local leaders who welcomed representatives of Kureha PGA LLC during a 2008 event in Charleston, West Virginia.*



*Senator Rockefeller, second from left, attended the groundbreaking of the NGK Spark Plugs (U.S.A.), Inc. plant in Sissonville, West Virginia in 1994.*



*Senator Rockefeller congratulating Toyota Motor Manufacturing West Virginia on the production of its 10 millionth unit in 2013.*