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Governor ⁸⁶⁶ to meet with Japanese on Millersburg

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Gov. Vic Atiyeh's trade mission to Japan includes a scheduled meeting with Nippon Kokan, the company considering Millersburg as a site for a \$140 million silicon plant.

The Japanese company has not announced whether or not it will build a new American plant, but mid-valley business interests hope a 147-acre site in Millersburg is just what NKK wants. The company also is considering a Tacoma, Wash., site.

The plant would make polycrystal silicon material for microchips and wafers, components of computers. The company would provide about 100 jobs at first and as many as 300 over the next 15 or 20 years.

Atiyeh is in Japan until Oct. 11 to lead both a national governor's delegation and to participate in an investment mission for the Oregon Economic Development Department.

Representatives from the Economic Development Department left this morning to join Atiyeh in Japan, according to Dave Fiskum, deputy director of the department.

An itinerary in the governor's office includes a meeting between the department representatives and NKK of Tokyo on Oct. 6. Another meeting is scheduled Oct. 8 with NKK and both the department employees and Atiyeh.

Fiskum confirmed the planned meetings with NKK but said, "I'm not at liberty to say any more."

The Economic Development Department does not release information about pending discussions with potential Oregon investors.

Nine NKK officials have toured the Millersburg site and the community during two visits, according to Frank Hemenway, president of the Albany-Millersburg Economic Development Corp. One visit was in June and another in August.

Among the activities of the latest tour was a stop at the new North Pointe townhouses in North Albany, according to Kathie Drushella, a real estate broker for ABC Realty. The Japanese men were looking for places to live for three or four top executives, Drushella said. Although the group did not buy homes or indicate the company was definitely coming to the mid-valley, "I think they're pretty serious," Drushella said. She added they were "very impressed" with the townhouses and one man remarked that a closet was bigger than his bedroom in Japan.

Hemenway previously thought the company would be ready to announce a site selection by Oct. 1, but a number of details have delayed a final decision, he said.

He said he couldn't predict when a decision would be made. "We would be very happy if it was made in this calendar year."

He added, "My confidence level has improved lately because of the questions they have been asking. They're getting into pretty fine detail," he said.

