

Adams sets out today for trade tour to Japan

By [Janie Har, The Oregonian](#)

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Mayor Sam Adams departs today on a goodwill trade tour of Japan, armed with signed copies of Pink Martini's latest CD and a mission to woo Mitsubishi to pick Portland to roll out its zero-emission cars.

For Adams, the trip serves as a final international hurrah before the holidays, capping off a turbulent first year that started with a domestic scandal.

Over six days he will do what he's done on trips to Toronto and British Columbia, Taiwan and Brussels this year: pitch Portland as a center of bike fun and sustainable living, a place where any green company should love to stake a spot.

Because -- believe it or not -- the rest of the world happens to think Portland exists just outside San Francisco, Adams said in an interview Thursday.

"It's really hard to do business globally if nobody knows who you are. It's a necessary task of a modern Portland mayor," he said.

"I would say that it is a grueling task. It sounds glamorous; it's not. But I do it because I want this city to be known as the go-to place in the United States for sustainable industries."

The tour, which includes a sister-city visit to Sapporo, comes at an awkward time for the mayor. Two of his commissioners are bickering publicly over arming water system security guards. Unemployment remains stubbornly high and city bureau heads are bracing for yet more trims.

And Adams, who thought he had survived an initial attempt to stage a recall, faces a second effort championed by business leaders who say he has a question mark hanging over his head. Adams confessed in January to lying during last year's mayor's race about a sexual relationship he had in 2005 with an 18-year-old legislative intern.

"It can't be easy doing the work while having this hanging out there, and then he also has to handpick who he's going to go on trade missions with," said Chet Orloff, a historian who teaches urban studies and planning at Portland State University.

For example, travel executive Sho Dozono and Columbia Sportswear CEO Tim Boyle may have made excellent travel partners on a trip where ties to Japan and a track record in global business matter.

Instead, Dozono lost the mayor's race to Adams last year. And Boyle, who in 2001 moved his company out of Portland in protest of the city's high taxes, is backing the current recall effort.

Still, Orloff agreed that as mayor, Adams must travel to bring home jobs. "With globalization, companies are moving all over the landscape and I think it's incumbent upon a mayor to be out there doing that," he said.

Since Adams took office in January, he has left Oregon about a dozen times to attend to city business.

He's visited Chicago, Washington, D.C., and New York on the taxpayers' dime to plead for federal money, talk up Portland and to recruit companies. The other trips were paid by outside conferences or sister-city organizations. In May, for example, he took a four-day trip to Brussels, where he spoke at a bicycling conference and signed the first ever charter to boost cycling in Europe.

"We were the only U.S. city invited to speak," he said.

Adams far outpaces the other commissioners,

On the road again

Portland Mayor Sam Adams has taken about a dozen trips outside the state this year. In some cases, taxpayers picked up the tab, either through the mayor's budget or the Portland Development Commission. In others, conference organizers or sister-city groups absorbed the costs.

March 2-3: San Francisco. Attended green building and investment conference. Cost: Conference organizers are scheduled to reimburse the city for hotel costs.

March 29-April 3: Washington, D.C. Attended U.S. Conference of Mayors. Cost: \$2,706 for the mayor, paid by his office.

April 24: Vancouver, B.C. Spoke at transportation conference. Cost: \$481 for the mayor, paid by conference.

May 10-13: Brussels, Belgium. Spoke at Velo-City European bike conference. Cost: \$2,932 for the mayor, paid by conference.

July 13-17: Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Attended World Games, pitched Oregon beer. Cost: \$6,120, for the mayor and chief of staff Tom Miller, paid by sister city association.

Aug. 9: Chicago. Business recruitment. Cost: \$715 for the mayor, paid by the PDC.

Aug. 14-17: Toronto. Pitched Portland and other cities at world convention of people who

only one of whom has stepped outside Oregon on city business this year. Commissioner Randy Leonard attended a public safety pension conference in Palm Springs, Calif., earlier in the month with two other city employees.

In any case, the other commissioners don't appear to mind.

City Commissioner Amanda Fritz said she is "grateful" for Adams' traveling. He rarely misses City Council meetings and he works early morning and late evening events, she said.

"None of them are pleasure trips, and he does them in a ridiculous time frame," she said.

Adams' predecessor, Tom Potter, was big on sister-city relationships and led a city delegation to Sapporo for the 45th anniversary. But he left the micro-economic wheeling and dealing to others.

Before him, Mayor Vera Katz attended her share of goodwill trips abroad, or went to Washington, D.C., to lobby for money, even though she didn't like to travel. It's critical, she said, for mayors of both cities to participate in sister-city programs.

"We always hoped there would be economic possibilities as an outcome and sometimes we were successful," she said. "Most of the time, it's goodwill."

This time, Adams will meet with Nissan and Mitsubishi auto officials about electric vehicles. He also has a meeting scheduled with Fujitsu and intends to tour Kanagawa Prefecture, which is considered the sustainability hot spot in Japan.

Accompanying him will be his chief of staff, Tom Miller, who often travels with the mayor, and Charlie Allcock, the economic development director at Portland General Electric. Portland State University President Wim Wiewel will meet up with the mayor for one day, when Adams talks to Nissan and Mitsubishi.

The trip will be financed in part by the Sapporo sister-city association and in part by the city.

That sort of triple whammy with the city, PGE and Portland State, said Allcock, is irresistible to businesses deciding where to land abroad.

"One of the things I learned a long time ago is that nothing happens unless there are relationships between human beings," he said.

"At some point, you've got to go over and shake their hand and say hello and get into conversations about what you're interested in."

-- [Janie Har](#)

organize conventions.
Cost: \$4,130 for Adams and Miller, paid by Travel Portland.

Aug. 26-27: New York City. Business recruitment. Cost: \$1,047 for the mayor, paid by PDC.

Oct. 8-10: Minneapolis. Attended "best practices" conference. Cost: \$1,037 for the mayor, paid by PDC.

Oct. 14-17: Washington, D.C. Lobbied delegation and committees for streetcar, sustainability and stimulus money. Cost: \$1,780 for mayor, paid by his office.

Oct. 18-20: Vancouver, B.C. Spoke at a sustainability conference of Canadian leaders. Cost: \$548 for mayor, paid by his office.

Oct. 30-Nov. 6: Tokyo, Sapporo, Japan. Sister-city celebration and trade tour. Cost: \$2,620 for the mayor, paid by the PDC.

Sources: Portland Auditor's Office; Office of Mayor Sam Adams