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**HEADLINE:** Seeking ties with Asian businesses, Schaefer delegation to visit Far East

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**BODY:**

An upbeat Gov. William Donald Schaefer left yesterday on a two-week trade mission to the Far East, saying he wanted to create more jobs for Marylanders and to foster closer ties with Asian businesses and governments.

"My purpose is . . . to open up markets from Asia to Maryland," said Mr. Schaefer, who is heading a 61-member delegation of state government, education and business leaders.

Mr. Schaefer said he also expects the mission -- which coincides with an Asian tour by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra -- to further "goodwill."

"You go over and create friendships. Trust, understanding -- all of this is very important," the governor said shortly before the group boarded a plane at Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

The delegation will express appreciation to companies already doing business in Maryland, in addition to seeking out new commercial ventures, Mr. Schaefer said.

"We will go over and thank people," he said. "In Asia, that's particularly well-thought-of."

The cost of the mission -- which includes trips to Korea, Taiwan and Japan -- will be approximately \$ 250,000 for state and local officials, according to Marilyn J. Corbett, spokeswoman for the Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development. Business leaders are paying their own way, she said.

Mr. Schaefer, in the final months of his eight-year tenure, denied suggestions that the trip is, as he put it, a "free ride."

"One of the important things to me is to work until the last day," he said. "I get paid until the last day."

Among those accompanying Mr. Schaefer is Baltimore Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke. He is taking part in only the first

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leg of the trip to Korea, and is scheduled to return to Baltimore Thursday.

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