

Maryland sets up trade missions

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By Ted Shelsby

Maryland officials will travel to Japan, Western Europe, Canada and other parts of the United States during the current fiscal year in a \$2.5 million effort to attract new business to the state.

In releasing details of the state's marketing plan for the fiscal year that began July 1, James O. Roberson, secretary of economic and community development, said trade representative would make two trips to Japan and two to Europe to solicit new investment in the state.

He said Governor Harry Hughes is expected to participate in at least one of the foreign mission, a two-week European tour slated to begin on May 9.

The trips abroad are in addition to at least seven planned trade missions to other U.S. cities including a possible visit into the heart of the Sunbelt.

In response to past criticism from companies already here, Mr. Roberson said his department will also seek to work more closely with these firms, which traditionally account for about 80 percent of all new industrial growth.

Saying that contact with local compa-

nies is probably more important than the foreign missions, the secretary said new emphasis is being put on the department's office of business liaison, the segment of the state agency that works with companies already based in the state.

He noted that Gordon Byrd had recently been appointed director of business liaison and is currently in the process of building up his staff.

Mr. Byrd said yesterday that it is his aim to meet with the chief executive of every large company in the state at least once every year. If he does, this would be in contrast past policies.

A spokesman for Black and Decker Manufacturing Company, one the state's largest concerns, said earlier this week that the company had not been visited by the department in over 12 years. Over this period, he said, the company located two new manufacturing outside of Maryland.

A third plant was scheduled for another Southern state, he said, but management decided to overrule the advice of its site selectors and build instead on Maryland's Eastern Shore near Easton. During all of this expansion, he said, "the state never actively pursued us."

Although he could not deny some shortcomings in past, Mr. Roberson said yesterday that he, himself, had met with Black and Decker within the past several months.

Concerning the search for new businesses in an area of the country that has been very successful in luring industry away from other parts of the nation, Mr. Roberson said the department is thinking strongly about a trade mission to Dallas.

He said the final decision on the mission, which was omitted from the copies of the marketing plan supplied to the press yesterday, has not been made yet, but hinted strongly that it would likely come about.

"We are going into the Sunbelt and try to reverse what has been happening," he said. He noted that Dallas has the nation's third largest concentration of corporate headquarters of firms with sales over \$10 million.

He said the state would be looking at Dallas-based firms that appear "to have a void in this area."

Other U.S. cities to be visited include: Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, See MISSIONS, A19, Col. 3

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Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New York.

Fulfilling a campaign promise, Governor **Hughes** has given economic development and the luring of new business to Maryland a high priority. The \$2.5 million budgeted for this year's efforts is about the same as last year but up from \$700,000 the year before Governor **Hughes** took office.

The search for new business will center around high technology companies and firms involved in the health and medical equipment industry.

Mr. Roberson said it was hard to measure the success of **trade missions**, that the results of an effort may not show up until three years after an initial contact.

While he said he did not expect any major moves into the state in near future, the secretary ruled Maryland out as a possible site for a much talked about Datsun truck plant. He said the department had contact with Datsun this week and the Japanese firm indicated that it will likely locate its U.S. plant somewhere in the Southeast or in the Great Lakes region.