

## Takigawa holds grand opening Production planned to begin later this summer

By Randy Patrick  
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Takigawa Corporation had more than 50 site offers for its first U.S. location, but when Hiroyuki Takigawa, the company's president, visited Bardstown, he knew he had come to the right place.



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Hiroyuki Takigawa, president of Takigawa Corporation, speaks at a ceremony Wednesday marking the opening of the Japanese company's first American facility in Bardstown.



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Bardstown Mayor Dick Heaton, right, and Nelson County Judge-Executive Dean Watts present a print of Federal Hill at My Old Kentucky Home State Park to Hiroyuki Takigawa, president of Takigawa Corporation, during a ceremony Wednesday celebrating the company's first American facility.



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Singers with The Stephen Foster Drama sing "My Old Kentucky Home" during a ceremony marking the opening of Takigawa Corporation's first American facility in Bardstown Wednesday.



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Gary Vidito plays guitar during a rendition of "My Old Kentucky Home" with singers from The Stephen Foster Drama during the opening of Takigawa Corporation's first American facility in Bardstown Wednesday.



Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin and Takigawa Corporation President Hiroyuki Takigawa participate in planting a Japanese cherry tree at the ceremony marking the opening of the Japanese company's first American facility in Bardstown Wednesday.



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Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin speaks at a ceremony marking the opening of Takigawa Corporation's first U.S. facility Wednesday in Bardstown.



Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, center, alongside Hiroyuki Takigawa, president of Takigawa Corporation, participates with local elected officials and company executives in cutting the ribbon on the Japanese company's first American facility in Bardstown Wednesday.

“Not only the city is beautiful, the people are beautiful,” he said. “That is one of the reasons I chose Bardstown.”

Ken Yamamura, president of the U.S. subsidiary Takigawa Corporation America, also mentioned “the people,” telling listeners at the grand opening of the plant in Nelson County Industrial Park Wednesday morning he considers the employees “the most important factor” in the company’s success.

He said he looks forward to Takigawa becoming the “No. 1 packaging company” in the U.S.

The company has already hired about 30 of the 180 employees it expects to have within the next two years, and some have visited Japan to learn more about Takigawa and Japanese business culture, he said.

The company makes flexible packaging and high-performance film for food products and is investing \$46 million in its 148,000-square-foot Kentucky facility, which is expected to begin production in August.

The grand opening celebration Wednesday included the singing of “My Old Kentucky Home” by “The Stephen Foster Story” performers, the ceremonial planting of cherry trees, which are symbolic of Japanese culture, and a ribbon cutting.

Also among the speakers were Gov. Matt Bevin; Hiroyuki Kobayashi, consulate general of Japan; Bardstown Mayor Dick Heaton, County Judge-Executive Dean Watts, State Rep. Chad McCoy, R-Bardstown; and Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic Development Agency.

Huston, who welcomed and introduced the guests, said the day of the grand opening was two years from when she first met Takigawa, his son and other representatives of the company, and introduced them to local officials.

The next day, from her office in the Welcome Center on Court Square, she saw people getting out of a van, and one of them looked familiar.

“It was Mr. Takigawa, sneaking back into town,” she said, to talk with some clients about their experience of doing business in Bardstown, and so she met him again and told him it was a pleasure.

“Mr. Takigawa,” she said, “welcome to your new Kentucky home. You are family now and we look forward to many years of growing with you and all of your staff and all of your wonderful employees here.”

Huston said Bardstown and Nelson County now have 10 Japanese companies, and the community looks forward to seeing that number grow.

Kobayashi said he was “confident Mr. Takigawa’s investment in Bardstown will be a winning one.”

Huston credited the governor and his administration with being instrumental in bringing Takigawa to Nelson County.

Bevin remarked on how quickly the development had come to fruition, only two years after it was announced and a year after breaking ground.

The grand opening was actually delayed because of the rainy weather and a delay in the delivery of equipment. Machinery is currently being installed.

Bevin said he believes the company's officials will be happy here.

"This is an incredible place," he said. "Good things are happening here in Bardstown."

In an interview after the ceremony, Bevin talked about the special relationship between Japan and Kentucky. There are about 200 Japanese companies here now.

What attracts them, he said, is a "special blend" of Southern graciousness and hospitality and Midwestern work ethic and practicality.

"All of that melds together here in Kentucky in ways that it just doesn't" in many places in the country, he said.

"I think people find it to be a wonderful microcosm of America," he said.