

Left to right:
TPS President Ray O'Connor, Koji Suzuki, President of Topcon Corporation, and George Yoshino, Topcon Director and Senior Managing Executive Officer cut ribbon at dedication.

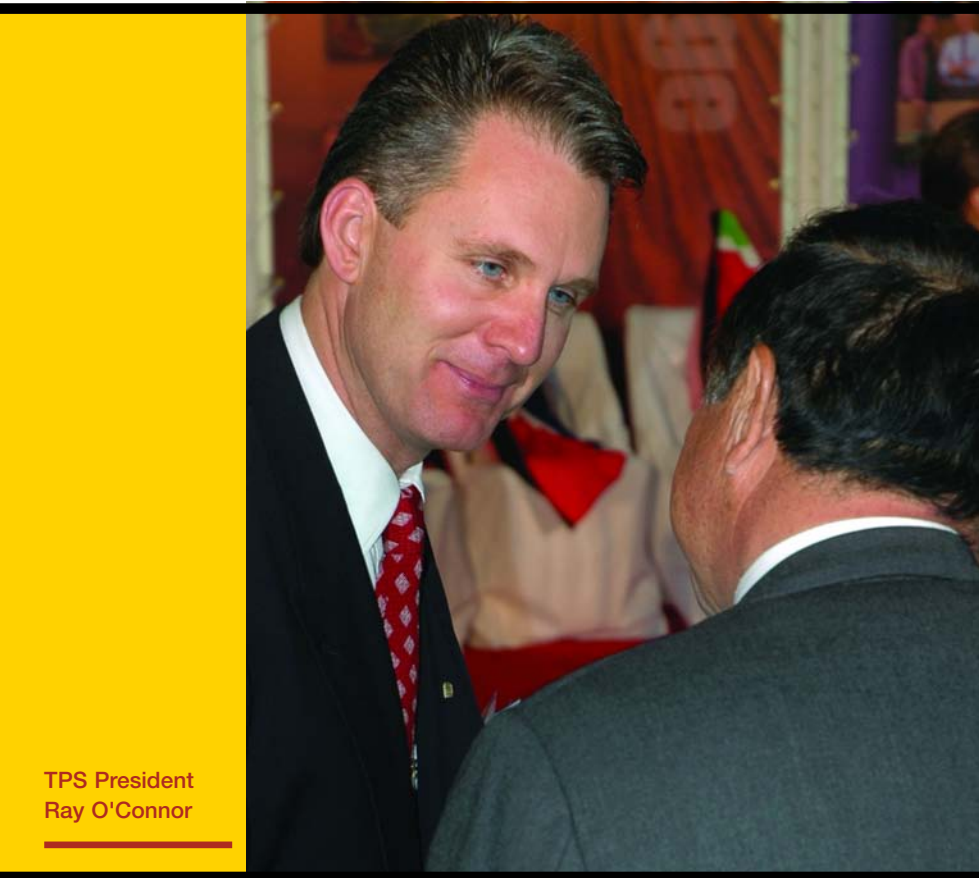


Topcon's New Digs

In a ceremony rich with culture and tradition, nearly 300 people gathered to celebrate the grand opening of Topcon's new 68,000 square foot facility in Livermore, California. Located just miles from its previous location in Pleasanton, Topcon purchased the new building in late 2003, and has since been building out the space to accommodate its 200+ employees in the Livermore branch.

Master of Ceremonies was Rick Davidson, former owner of Advanced Grade Technology (which Topcon purchased for its machine control technology in 1994). Davidson introduced Livermore mayor Dr. Marshall Kamena and State Assemblyman Guy Houston. Both politicians made a point of thanking Topcon for keeping quality, high-tech jobs in California.

>> By Marc S. Cheves, LS



TPS President
Ray O'Connor

Davidson introduced the lead speaker, Mr. Koji Suzuki, President of Topcon Corporation, who heralded Topcon's success around the world. Suzuki discussed the company's new objective, TM-1, which means "Time to Market Number One." As an example, Suzuki offered Topcon's new Millimeter GPS product.

Following Suzuki was George Yoshino, Director and Senior Managing Executive Officer. Yoshino was the President of Topcon America in the Paramus, New Jersey office, prior to the creation of Topcon Positioning Systems (TPS) in 1996. Subsequently, TPS was moved to Pleasanton. In response to Mayor Kamena's and Assemblyman Houston's comments Yoshino stated: "To be number one in the world, you must be number one in the United States. And to be number in the U.S., you must have the very best people and technology resources. That is why Topcon loves California."

Topcon officials take part in the Kagami Wari ceremony.



O'Connor makes
Kampai toast in
sake masu.



In his keynote address, TPS President Ray O'Connor expressed his gratitude to the employees and dealers for making it happen. O'Connor pointed out that employee turnover is very low within Topcon, and that the company grows its managers from within. O'Connor, originally from Ireland, spent his early career in the United States in Arkansas with AGL, a laser company. In previous conversations I have had with O'Connor, he told me that Arkansas was a good place to bring up a family (he has three children), and the family atmosphere at

Topcon is an outgrowth of both O'Connor's philosophies and Japanese philosophies.

Next on the program was a heartwarming blessing of the building by Father Terry O'Malley, followed by a traditional *Kagami Wari* ceremony in which three large barrels of *sake* were broken open with large wooden mallets. The breaking of the barrel lid signifies the start of a sacred ceremony, a special occasion or a new beginning. The splashing forth of the sake reputedly brings good luck and blessings to all at the occasion.

The sake and alternate beverage were served in a *sake masu*, a small wooden box cup, and everyone joined in a toast of "*Kampai!*" which is believed to bring blessings of health, happiness and prosperity to all who partake.

Following the ceremony guests were treated to a tour of the new building, already a beehive of activity (see photos in previous article). The enormous warehouse and shipping area still has room to grow.

Company history reveals that Topcon's path is similar to many Japanese companies that entered the U.S. market, focused on attaining or exceeding the current quality level in the market, then established a lead in the market. Certainly this is true about many of Topcon's survey products. Its GPS and machine control products are manufactured in Livermore and shipped all over the world. Also housed in Livermore is product development and engineering, which works in concert with 160 Topcon engineers and employees in Moscow. Yoshino admitted that Topcon is not number one all over the world . . . yet. O'Connor continues to look ahead, predicting that in the near future, even the new building will be outgrown. *A*

Topcon's new building in Livermore, CA.

