

Signs point to SIA growth

JAPANESE FACILITY'S MAXED-OUT CAPACITY HOLDS HOPE FOR STATE PLANT

By J.K. Wall

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OTA CITY, Japan — It's one Japanese auto plant that lost its mojo — but it may get its groove back.

The Subaru of Indiana Automotive plant in Lafayette, Ind., never quite reached the brightest forecasts set for it at its birth in 1986.

And since most Japanese auto plants in the United States have doubled their initial investments — like Toyota did in 2001 with its Princeton, Ind., plant — many auto experts and politicians have come to expect such golden growth from every new plant.

"It doesn't always work that way," Gov. Mitch Daniels said Wednesday shortly after he visited the headquarters of Subaru's parent, Fuji Heavy Industries.

But there are increasing signs that SIA, as the Lafayette plant is known, still might reach its lofty projections in the next year or

See SIA, Page C2

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KATSUMI KASAHARA / Associated Press

IT'S TEA TIME: Tony Roswarski, mayor of Lafayette, on Wednesday participated in a Japanese tea ceremony at City Hall in Ota City, north of Tokyo. Roswarski and his delegation visited their sister city, which is home to Fuji Heavy Industries. Fuji is the parent of Lafayette-based SIA.