



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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BY

THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

Title: USA Visit

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By: First Minister of Wales, The Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM

During the recess I visited Washington and New York to promote jobs, investment and tourism. The USA is the largest single investor into Wales and tens of thousands of employees rely on some 300 American firms currently investing here. The USA is also the largest individual country market for Welsh goods and services. Links between Wales and America stretch right back to before the birth of the USA and those links continue today through commerce, culture, education and tourism.

In Washington I launched, jointly with Congressman Morgan Griffith, a Friends of Wales Caucus on Capitol Hill, the seat of the US legislature. The Caucus is chaired by Congressman Griffith, whose family originate in North West Wales, and has already attracted more than a dozen members. It will serve to provide a platform for raising the profile of Wales in Washington and for developing our interests in the USA. I am grateful to Congressman Griffith for his commitment and continuing friendship towards Wales.

I met bi-laterally a series of companies in the aviation and defence sectors. These include Lockheed Martin, Airbus, BAe and Raytheon. We discussed current and potential investment plans and issues. Those companies already investing in Wales reported very favourably on their Welsh workforce and underlined the importance they attach to strong relations with Government. I was particularly encouraged to hear of the strong emphasis they place on relationships with the local HE and FE sectors.

To mark St David's Day in Washington I hosted a reception alongside HM Ambassador, Sir Peter Westmacott, and used the opportunity to pitch to a wide audience the benefits of Wales as a place to invest, work, study and visit.

I was privileged to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. I was pleased to be accompanied in this duty by Major Ed Hill of the Welsh Guards who is currently stationed in the US.

In New York I met DTCC/ Avox, which employs 220 people in Wrexham, to discuss investment plans. Avox provides global services supporting data integrity for international banking transactions, part of Wales' growing financial services sector. We agreed that discussions will continue on further potential job investment in Wrexham.

Following a meeting with senior officials at the New York Stock Exchange I was granted the privilege of ringing the opening bell to mark the start of business on the trading floor. The NYSE was decked out in Welsh branding to mark the visit. I was particularly pleased to open trading at the NYSE – it generates a level of publicity in the global financial community that money simply could not buy. It also sends out a signal that Wales is fully part of the global financial community and that this is recognised on Wall St, the heart of the global economy.

Dylan Thomas' association with New York is well known and I launched the American part of the centenary activities. This includes an app which has been prepared to lead tours around various landmarks in New York associated with the poet. I hosted a reception for guests from the business and cultural communities which included a premiere performance of a piece of music composed to mark Dylan's life played by the former Royal Harpist, Claire Jones. I was very pleased to meet Hannah Elis, Dylan's granddaughter, who has played an outstanding role in helping to promote the centenary.

The relationship between Wales and the USA is strong and multi-faceted. In business terms, the USA is of primary importance to our economy and will remain a top priority nation for us. Many people from Wales have contributed to American life in many different ways, and that is no less true of today's generation than in the past. Wales continues to have much to offer to the United States and I will use every available opportunity to promote this vital relationship.