

**REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY OF OWENSBORO COMMISSION
TO THE JUDGE EXECUTIVE AND DAVIESS COUNTY FISCAL COURT
TO THE JUDGE EXECUTIVE AND OHIO COUNTY FISCAL COURT
TO THE CHAIR AND GRADD BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND
OWENSBORO SISTER CITIES / REGIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Calendar Year Activities 2007

FOUNDING STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions encourages global understanding between our community and other world communities. The Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions Program will assist government entities with the proper reception of foreign visitors and dignitaries by serving as the community's Office of Protocol; pursue an ongoing mission to inform and educate our community concerning our area's international cultural and business ties and their effects on our community; initiate exchange programs in education, business, professional groups, and the arts; assist government and its agencies in promoting our community's cultural heritage through our Sister City(ies) / Region's relationship; encourage development and expansion of international trade relationships and assist with foreign trade missions; assist community organizations in direct relationships with similar organizations in our Sister City(ies) / Regions and elsewhere in the world, where possible.

Introduction

During 2007, the Owensboro Sister Cities program has been expanded to cover regional counties. A program name change has been instituted to read “Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions”, a further explanation of the scope of each of the three current or expanded relationships is addressed in this report.

We had a total of nine exchange visit subject components and one planning visit encompassing the involvement of sixty - two people. Of these, 13 persons were incoming visitors to Owensboro and 49 were outgoing visitors to the Czech Republic and Japan. This year marks the signing of two new initiatives to found a Sister City / Region relationship between * Nisshin City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan with the City of Owensboro, Daviess County and Ohio County governments, and a further * * Sister Region relationship has been signed between the Green River Area Development District (encompassing a 7 county region in western Kentucky) and the Olomouc Kraj (a 13 county regional government in Moravia, Czech Republic).

* The only Japanese government entity being treated with in Japan is Nisshin-shi (the City of Nisshin), Aichi - ken. On the American side, we are approaching this relationship as a Sister Region involving the governments of the City of Owensboro, Daviess County and Ohio County. The reasoning is both to recognize that three of our Japanese industry regional partners are outside of Daviess County and to recognize the wisdom in being more inclusive in service to and participation of the citizens of the greater region affected by these international companies and global relationships. All three government bodies have financially underwritten the basic administrative support necessary to maintain and promote this relationship during 2007.

The local Japanese owned company, Toyotetsu, has been a major supporter of our Japan initiative from its inception. The Japanese owned companies, Daicel and Ritatsu, located at Bluegrass Crossings Industrial Park in Ohio County, have helped financially in the past and are hoped to assist in maintaining the relationship with Nisshin-shi in the future. The City of Owensboro, for the current fiscal year has voted additional line item funding to help underwrite the Nisshin-shi relationship with the expectation that funding will also be forthcoming from each government entity involved as a matter of equity.

** The Green River Area Development District has signed the agreement with the Olomouc Kraj government. While the Kraj wishes to be kept informed of all exchanges planned within the Kraj, both Owensboro and Olomouc City Mayors are adamant that the existing successful Sister City relationship will continue as it has in the past. While Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions will work with GRADD on proposed exchanges, it will be necessary for GRADD to financially bear the burden of costs involved with GRADD – Kraj exchange activities.

A further development in 2007 was a potential relationship with a city in India, initial discussion had taken place, informally, with members of our resident Indian population, the majority of whom come from Gujarat Province in western India. Both the Peoples Republic of China and India are involved in substantial Asian economic growth. The benefit in dealing with India is that it is both the largest democracy in the world and the world's largest English speaking nation. Due to its history, its societal institutions are somewhat more familiar to us, being underwritten by British law. We can expect that our community's Indian population will help support this initiative if we chose to pursue a relationship. No further action has been taken due to the need to begin activities involving the two new Sister Cities / Regions relationships first.

There is every reason to believe these exchanges will continue to grow in number and participants and promote both the understanding of our citizens and their well being by promoting greater knowledge of our city and region. We will need increased financial, logistical and manpower help if the program is to grow further.

As Executive Director, I believe the timing is right for a community effort to found an "Owensboro Regional International Center". This Center could serve the needs of government, secondary and higher education and the EDC - Chamber of Commerce efforts to project an international presence for Owensboro, as well as, the greater region and serve to orient new incoming foreign national residents. There is no other Kentucky city of any size, which lacks an International Center.

Please take the time to review the report and reflect on our ability to project the City of Owensboro and our region positively in the international community. We believe that we have the most active of the official fourteen U.S. - Czech Sister City relationships and that the breadth of our program reflects well on the Owensboro region with any additional international contacts the city and region makes. Our program has come to the positive attention of the past Presidents of the Czech Republic and the United States (President Havel & President Clinton), as well as, the past U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic (Hon. William Cabaniss).

The Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions program touches the lives of several hundred people involved in our annual exchange activities across both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The program does an exceptional job of carrying out its charged mission. While in the past this program has been solely dependent on support from the City of Owensboro as an official international link with the Sister City of Olomouc, the overwhelming financial support for the program comes from individuals and donations from those businesses and institutions participating in the programs. We can demonstrate at least \$20.00 of community support for each past city budget dollar allocated.

We are very appreciative of the City of Owensboro, Daviess County Fiscal Court, Ohio County Fiscal Court, our Japanese owned industries of Toyotetsu, Daicel and Ratatsu, and Owensboro Community and Technical College for their major support efforts. The program represents a wonderful community partnership combining the efforts of many community institutions, businesses and individuals. There can be little doubt for the need to educate our Kentucky citizens concerning our place in the global community. Whether for citizenship, student growth or workforce development, there is an ever greater demand for providing an international education component for the regional community we serve.

We wish to draw your attention to the recently released Kentucky Chamber of Commerce report, “Great Ideas for Kentucky”. Under the major goal of “Preparing Kentucky to Successfully Compete in the Global Marketplace”, specific mention of encouragement is made of participation in the Sister Cities program. The Owensboro region can take pride in having a program, which is as successful as the Louisville Sister Cities program with its 8 Sister Cities and the Lexington program with its 4 Sister City relationships.

Our thanks also goes to our area colleges: Kentucky Wesleyan, Brescia University and Western Kentucky University for encouraging student and (WKU) main campus Summer Study Program participation, and Owensboro Community and Technical College for granting reassigned Faculty time, which allows direction of this Community Partnership program. We also thank the families who opened their homes, to the hotels for assistance in housing, and to the three area school systems for support of our exchanges of students and teachers. There are just too many people and entities to mention but the program draws on that which our community is known, a shared caring to make visitors feel welcomed.

As representatives of the citizens of Owensboro, we request your continued encouragement and active continued financial support for Owensboro Sister Cities/ Regions and our international efforts to promote our community.

Year 2007 Exchanges and Activities

Nisshin Elementary School Exchange, 2007 – 2008 Academic Year **Activity**

As a result of the exploratory exchange visits and Mayor Sago's visit in 2007, cooperation between the Nisshin Elementary School and Country Heights Elementary School has been initiated. Ms. Stacy Harper at Country Heights has been the lead teacher for this effort. She incorporated lessons about Japan into her curriculum and was assisted by Ms. Akane Shiwa, a student from Tokyo who has now graduated from Brescia University and returned home.

Nisshin Elementary School has approached their students' families to gather information and has invited the Country Heights students' families to exchange letters and small articles to help all the students learn more about each other's life and culture. Country Heights and the Daviess County Public Schools hosted the Nisshin delegation during the October 2007 Exchange.

Hotels, March 2 – 10, 2007 **2 out**

In March, the Executive Director accompanied Mr. Malcolm Bryant to the Czech Republic where we met with Czech companies interested in learning about a proposal to facilitate bringing the Hilton Hotel brand to the Czech Republic. The Czech companies had been vetted by the American Embassy Commercial section in Prague. Visits were made to Olomouc, Ostrava, Brno and Prague for meetings with companies and local government development representatives.

As this was a privately financed activity any questions concerning the findings should be directed to Mr. Bryant. No Sister Cities funds were used in this activity.

Official Nisshin-shi – Owensboro Region Signing, March 30 – April 7, 2007 **9 out**

Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions delegation members participated in the formal signing exchange with the City of Nisshin, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. The new Sister City / Region relationship is a direct outgrowth of the growing investment of Japanese automotive supply owned industries in our region. The City of Owensboro, Daviess County Fiscal Court and Ohio County Fiscal Court are the government entities entering into the official relationship with Nisshin-shi.

The regional Japanese companies of Toyotetsu, Daicel and Ritatsu are major supporters of this new relationship. The purpose of all Sister Cities / Region relationships is to work cooperatively to allow citizens of both areas to learn more of one another's culture and to seek solutions for issues that affect both of the Sister Cities / Regions. We anticipate that we will have the opportunity for many of the same types of exchanges as we have enjoyed over the years with Owensboro's existing Sister City of Olomouc, Czech Republic.

While in Nisshin, the delegates met home office representatives of our Japanese industries and had the opportunity to promote our region while meeting with many Aichi government officials. Approximately 1000 persons were present for the formal agreement signing April 4th in Nisshin.

The nine regional delegates were: Daviess County Judge Executive Reid Haire; representing Ohio County Judge Executive David Jones, was Beaver Dam Mayor, Mary Pate; representing Owensboro Mayor, Tom Watson was Mr. Dale Taylor. Others in the delegation were: Kim Logsdon, Executive Director of Bluegrass Crossings Industrial Centre; Jon A. Lawson, President of the Bank of Ohio County; Kenny Lanham, a Director of Independence Bank; Nick Cambron, Chair of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Michael Fagan, V.P. and Dean at Kentucky Wesleyan College; and OCTC Prof. William R. West, Executive Director of Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions.

Young Artist Program, November 2006 – April 2007

activity

The Owensboro Sister Cities Young Artist Program is coordinated by Ms. Rhonda McEnroe, a well-known local artist. The competitive program is open to all youth, ages 13 – 18. Ms. McEnroe visits the local secondary schools encouraging art teachers to have their students participate in the program. Local Sister Cities winning compositions are entered in international competition with winners announced from ten international Sister Cities. Dr. Petr Šantavý, from Olomouc who was here on a Cardiac Surgeon Exchange and Judge Reid Haire were present to make the local awards for this year's awards at Gallery 412 on April 20th.

In addition to our local prize funds, our winning entrant is eligible to win an additional \$300.00 prize if they are one of the ten Sister Cities International award winners. The program both supports youth artists and is a terrific opportunity to draw attention to our city internationally as winning cities are listed in SCI materials distributed worldwide. The British / Dutch owned company, Unilever is an annual local sponsor of this community youth oriented program.

Cardiac Surgeon, April 17 – May 14, 2007

1 in

Dr. Petr Šantavý, a cardiac surgeon attached to the Palacky University Medical School in our Sister City of Olomouc was hosted by Owensboro Medical Health System and the partner institution of Jewish Hospital in Louisville. Dr. Doug Adams of OMHS initiated the request for the exchange. Dr. Šantavý's parents, also physicians in Olomouc, had participated in past medical exchanges.

Petr came with the endorsement of the Chair of the Cardiac Surgery Department, Palacky University, who wished for observation of hospital operations, as well as, the technical medical skills utilized in the regional cardiac care area.

Summer Study Program, May 21 – June 20, 2007

25 out

This annual private/public higher education partnership is aimed at providing a safe and economical summer overseas study opportunity for our regional community's students. Credit courses and instruction was supplied through Owensboro Community and Technical College as the low cost provider of instruction. During the summer 2007 session, there were twenty-five students participating.

Instructors were: Mr. Monty Helms of OCTC and Dr. Roger Murphy of Western Kentucky University. The program instructors are employed by Owensboro Community and Technical College as Adjunct Faculty members for the summer session.

In addition to their study of Art History, History or Political Science courses, the students were able to travel to Vienna, Austria; Budapest, Hungary; Krakow, Poland; Bratislava, Slovakia and Prague, Czech Republic. The summer program works closely with our Olomouc Sister City connections to provide our students with the exceptional opportunity to learn cross culturally about other global communities in Central Europe.

Caritas, May 21 – June 8, 2007

2 out

Mrs. Pam Wilson, President of Sister Cities, was accompanied by Ms. Greta McDonough, MSSW, Professor of Human Services, to hold discussions concerning a proposed Social Work Exchange to be scheduled in Spring 2008. As a result of these meetings, it was decided that Mrg. Hedvika Dudova would participate as a guest in the on-line Social Work course being taught by Ms. McDonough, beginning in mid-August, 2007. This on-line course is offered through the Owensboro Community and Technical College.

Principals involved at Caritas, Olomouc were: Dr. Martin Bednar, Director of Caritas College of Social Work, Ms. Kveta Princova, Social and Humanitarian Work Department Head, Mgr. Hedvika Dudova, International Projects Coordinator, Mgr. Eva Dohnalova who is interested in learning about immigration issues in the US and multicultural education.

An offer was extended by Mrs. Wilson for Dr. Bednar, Mgr. Princova, Mrg. Dudova, and Mrg. Eva Dohnalova to travel to Owensboro, KY in 2008 to meet with individuals having shared interests and expertise. It was determined that mid-April, between the dates of April 7 and April 20, 2008, would be possible travel dates for this first exchange. Plans call for the visitors to gain exposure not only in Owensboro but possibly also in Louisville and Lexington.

Rotary Governor, June 11 – 14, 2007

2 in

The Rotary International District Governor (District 2240) of the Czech and Slovak Republics, Mr. Roman Gronskey, accompanied by the Rotary District Webmaster, Mr. Vlado Skalsky, who resides in Prague, visited Owensboro from Monday, June 11 through Thursday, June 14.

The two Sister Cities / Rotary guests were on their way to attend the Rotary International Conference held in Salt Lake City June 16 - 20, 2007. As Mr. Gronsky is well aware of the activities between the two cities due to their Sister City status (79 visitors between the two cities in 2006). It was only natural that a courtesy visit be made on the way to the Rotary International Conference. The men were guests of both the Owensboro and Daviess County Rotary Clubs.

Official Olomouc Kraj – GRADD Signing Exchange, June 14 – 22, 2007 10 out

The exchange to sign the formal GRADD – Olomouc Kraj document of cooperation took place, June 14 – June 22, 2007. Members of the delegation signing between the Olomouc Kraj (a region representing 13 counties) and GRADD (representing 7 counties) were members of the GRADD Executive Board of Directors. The GRADD participants were:

1. Hon. Reid Haire, Judge Executive of Daviess County and current GRADD Board Chair
2. Hon. Joseph Jenkins, Judge Executive Union County
3. Hon. Sandy Watkins, Judge Executive of Henderson County
4. Mr. William Markwell, Esq., Commonwealth Attorney for Henderson County
5. Mr. Jiten Shah, Executive Director, GRADD
6. Prof. William R. West, Executive Director, Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions

While in the Olomouc Kraj, the delegation met to discuss projects or cooperation between the regions in such areas as:

- 1) Initiation of broadband internet access
- 2) Promotion and utilization of our multi-jurisdictional industrial parks
- 3) Cooperation with regards to economic development and increased involvement for business and government leaders
- 4) Promotion of cultural opportunities between the two regions
- 5) Expansion of regional assets such as the Bluegrass Music, the Bar-B-Q Festival, Blues Festival etc., to incorporate similar avenues in the Olomouc region
- 6) GRADD would like to find joint agricultural crop production, such as, soy bean, oil, and ethanol products that would be beneficial to both regions
- 7) Transportation infrastructure and promotion of safety on highways
- 8) GRADD has many international manufacturing industries. Proposal to learn more about the international relations in the Olomouc Kraj when dealing with multiple national partners and diverse cultures

Among others, the our representatives met with:

- *Mr. Ivan Kosatík - Governor of Olomouc Region
- *Mr. Pavel Horák - Vice-Governor of Olomouc Region
- *Mr. Petr Polášek - Member of the Olomouc Regional Council
- *Mr. Libor Kolář - CEO of Regional Authority of Olomouc Region
- *Mr. Martin Novotný - Mayor of Olomouc
- Mr. Petr Procházka - Mayor of Jeseník
- Mr. Zdeněk Brož - Mayor of Šumperk
- *Mr. Jakub Durr - Vice-Rector (Vice-President) of Palacký University Olomouc
- *Mr. Bořivoj Minář - Chairman of Economic Chamber of Olomouc Region

* Designates they have visited the Owensboro Region previously through Sister Cities / Regions

Ms. Alexandra McKnight, Press and Cultural Affairs Attaché of our U.S. Embassy in Prague represented the Embassy for the signing ceremony on June 14.

Multicultural Festival, August 18, 2007

activity

This is an annual event held in Owensboro promoting the Owensboro regional ties with the international community. Since the inception of this festival, Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions has had a display handing out materials and teaching about our Sister City in the Czech Republic. In 2007, we had additional displays about the Olomouc Kraj and the new Japanese Sister City of Nisshin-shi. We have requested that our Sister Cities / Regions supply us with occasional promotional materials that we can use at this festival to promote knowledge about tourism and business. We were assisted this year by Mr. Peter Kobella. Peter is a Faculty member at OCTC and is originally from Slovakia. He brought items addressing the Slovak Republic

Tereza Zboril,

1 in

As a result of the 2006 International Scout Exchange, one of the Olomouc region hosting Scouts, wished to come and visit the Scout family that her family had hosted. Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions facilitated this visit although the majority of the arrangements were made directly by the youth family members involved.

Kentucky League of Cities Meeting October 10 - 12, 2007

activity

The Kentucky League of Cities again promoted having Kentucky cities become members of Sister Cities International and begin community relationships with other countries. The Owensboro Sister Cities Executive Director along with the Kentucky Sister Cities State Coordinator presented the concept and acted as a resource to get any interested cities started in the program. The exhibition booth set up at the conference promoted the Owensboro – Olomouc – Nisshin Sister City Region Programs.

Nisshin – shi, October 22 – 26, 2007

9 in

As a result of our region official new Japanese relationship, we received our first working exchange to meet with their regional counterparts.

The following persons and interests were represented by the delegates from Nisshin-shi:

1. Ms. Saeko Kito, President of the Nisshin Cultural Association came to look for cultural and arts exchanges; 2. Mr. Akiyuki Sakai, Assistant to the Provost for International Affairs and Assistant Director of Student Affairs, International Programs from Nagoya University of Commerce and Business; Mr. Takayuki Momiyama, Acting Director of the Office of International Studies and Exchange, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. Both men came representing the seven institutions of higher education in Nisshin to look for Higher Education Exchanges;

3. Mr. Yutaka Shintani, Principal of Nishi Elementary School, came to study schools and look for education exchanges; 4. Mr. Masao Mizuno, Past President of the Aichi Chuo Lions Club came to look for potential Lion's Club and other clubs exchanges; 5. Mr. Teruyoshi Yokoe, Chair of the Owari Higashi District Committee, Aichi Scout Council, Scout Association of Japan met with Scout counterparts; 6. Mr. Kayoko Norimatsu, Vice-President of Nisshin International Association came to meet with Sister Cities counterparts; 7. Mr. Toshimi Nakagawa, General manager of Citizens Environment Department and Ms. Makiko Kobayashi, Coordinator of Public Relationship Division, Public Environmental Department came to represent Nisshin City Hall.

As a result of this visit, the representative group was to return to Nisshin-shi to talk with colleagues to determine proposals for future exchanges between Nisshin-shi and our region. Already a relationship with Country Heights Elementary School will continue and the Nisshin Scouts have invited the Shawnee Trails Council Scouts to participate in the 2009 Aichi Prefecture Scout Camporee.

This exchange would not have been successful without the assistance of Japanese students at Brescia University, University of Evansville and the University of Southern Indiana. The majority of these contacts were supplied through the Evansville, Indiana Sister Cities Program.

Kentucky Sister Cities Statewide Meeting October 19, 2007

activity

This annual meeting was held in Lexington and hosted by our Kentucky Sister Cities State Coordinator and the Lexington Airport. We had the opportunity to give a brief review of the Owensboro Sister Cities / Regions activities highlighting our Summer Study Program. Attending were representatives from several Kentucky cities either having current programs or those wishing to begin new relationships.

We welcome participants at this meeting who wish to learn more about the Kentucky Sister Cities programs. It is a good opportunity to learn about what other Kentucky cities are doing with their Sister Cities.

Olomouc Planning Exchange, Dec 12 – 23, 2007

1 out

It has become habit for the Executive Director to travel to our Czech Sister City at this time of year to both make necessary advanced deposits for our Summer Study Program and to meet with those planning or desiring future Sister Cities / Regions exchanges. Several meetings were held which resulted in potential planning for the 2008 exchanges. The exchange potentials are as listed below.

Planning for 2008:

At present we have the following events and exchanges tentatively planned for 2008 – 2009.

Soccer (Feb. 15 - 31, 2008 had been proposed) - Kraj Exchange **Postponed**

This exchange was suggested during the 2007 Kraj – GRADD signing. Robin Joska & Radovan Dhuly-Smith were key planners. Unfortunately, Club Sigma's (Olomouc) plans included a team visit to New York. Those plans were not developing until it was too late to get reasonable airfare. We will look to reschedule this exchange with the Olomouc Kraj.

Social Work – Caritas, scheduled for April 8 - 17, 2008 **4 in**

Greta McDonough & Pam Wilson are coordinating this exchange.

Summer Study in Olomouc, scheduled May 22 - June 23, 2008) **26 out**

Pam Wilson is coordinating this annual program.

Settle Memorial Church in Czech Republic, scheduled May 22 – May 31, 2008 **10 out**

Bill West is working with this group. Settle formed a “Sister Church” relationship with a small Methodist Church in Jablonne, Czech Republic as a result of Marketa Mylkova's, Exchange Student stay in Owensboro. As Settle UMC was preparing to send a group to visit Jablonne, we encouraged them to visit both Olomouc and Prague.

Hermanek, May 31, 2008 **3 out**

The Bluegrass / Country band Hermanek has extended an invitation to come to Olomouc to help celebrate the band's 25 Year Anniversary. Pam Wilson, Bill West and Larry Mayfield have been requested to be present. Hermanek has been very appreciative of having been twice invited to participate in the Bluegrass Festival or “ROMP” here in Owensboro.

The band members were hosted during both their stays by Dr. Terry & and Mrs. Edie Tyler. During the band's 2006 visit, Owensboro Sister Cities Board Members, most notably, Pam Wilson, Carrie Blackham and Larry Mayfield pitched in to guarantee success of this music exchange. A highlight of the visit was the band's playing at Yellow Creek Park where they were joined on stage by Daviess County Judge Executive, Reid Haire singing select songs in Czech!

Czech Scouts, scheduled June 17 – July 23, 2008 **15 in**

This exchange is part of our ongoing Scouting exchanges conducted every two years between Scouts of the Olomouc region and the Shawnee Trails Council, BSA serving the 35 counties of western Kentucky. Bill West is coordinating as International Representative of the Scout Council. Mirka Jindrová is the Czech Scout leader.

Olomouc Kraj Conference attendance (potential June 2008) **approx. 3 - 6**

Jiten would coordinate for the GRADD region.

Multicultural Festival, August 16, 2008 **activity**

Kentucky League of Cities Booth, October 2008 **activity**

Statewide Sister Cities Meeting, October 2008 **activity**

Olomouc / Kraj Tourism in Czech Rep., Vienna, Krakow (Oct. 10 - 19, 2008). **10-20**

We are proposing to take a general tour / shopping group to Praha, Olomouc, Vienna, Krakow in October 2008. This is a self pay group of 10 – 20 persons. We have asked Connex and CK Pressburg to give us a proposal. The Olomouc agency would be responsible for complete arrangements for the transportation after arrival in Praha, lodging, entrance fees, and meals during the travel and would coordinate with us concerning lodging in Praha.

Other potentials:

City of Olomouc Mayoral Exchange, October 2008 **unknown**

Hecjin Secondary School Exchange (Fall 2008) - discussing interest, potential timing

Palacky University Chorus (proposed June 2009 or later) **approx. 20**

Owensboro Symphony and Kentucky Wesleyan College will host in Owensboro.

Nisshin Scouts, August 2009 **7 out**

Owensboro Sister Region Scouts have been invited to participate in the Aichi Prefecture Scout Camporee gathering of some 2000 Japanese and international Scouts. Beginning planning is being discussed.