

**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 2008

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 2008 we had a total of ten exchange visits subject components and one planning visit encompassing the involvement of sixty - eight people. Of these, 29 persons were incoming visitors to Owensboro from the Czech Republic and Japan and 39 were outgoing visitors to the Czech Republic and Japan. For those new to elected government offices, 2007 marked 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 and 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.

Again, for those newly elected to government office, 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 relative size, which lacks an International Center.

The President’s of our post secondary institutions are interested in recruiting increased numbers of international students to study in our community (a growth industry?). In order to make this possible, we will need increased community infrastructure to assist these international visitors (transport, communication, advice and assistance in making contacts in the community, etc.). Owensboro Community and Technical College is currently planning this expansion ability for their campus programs. Brescia already serves some 70 international students. Dr. King at KWC is also very interested in promoting in this direction.

Please take the time to review this 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 U.S. Ambassadors to the Czech Republic and Japan.

The Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions program touches the lives of several hundred people involved in our annual exchange activities on both sides of 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 Government entities, as an official international link with the Sister Cities, 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 individually 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.

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**Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions
Current Exchange / Activities for 2008**

1. Incoming - Soccer (Feb. 15 - 31, 2008 proposed)

Kraj – GRADD Exchange

Unfortunately, the Sigma Club Soccer (Futbal) Exchange **had to be cancelled**. United Soccer of Owensboro and Kentucky Wesleyan College were prepared to both host the Sigma Olomouc team members / coaches and set up a number of “scrimmage” games for the Olomouc team. The Sigma team plans to coordinate their trip with a visit to New York was not able to be arranged in time to make the exchange possible. Owensboro stands ready to reschedule this exchange at a later date. We have requested sufficient forward planning time to make arrangements. **Mr. Robin Joska & Mr. Radovan Dhuly - Smith** were key planners in coordinating arrangements on the respective sides.

2. Activity - Annual Young Artist Program (Fall 2007 - Spring 2008)

This annual Sister Cities International program has been run successfully for several years, in large measure, by the efforts of Sister Cities and Regions Board Member and local artist, **Ms. Rhonda McEnroe**. Unilever Best Foods has been the major sponsor over the years. The program is open to all Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions youth ages 13 – 18. GRADD hosted the award ceremony in Spring 2008 at their offices.

3. Incoming - Social Work – Caritas (April 8 - 17, 2008)

We are encouraging and assisting in the development of cooperation between the Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions SACS accredited institutions of higher education and Caritas – Vyšší odborná škola sociální, Olomouc. We have had contact with Caritas since 1998.

During summer 2007 a visit by **Ms. Greta McDonough, MSW**, representing the Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) Social Work Program, was made to Caritas to explore cooperation between Caritas and the Owensboro region Social Work Programs of study.

This first exchange visit allowed representatives from Caritas to monitor an online Social Work class taught through OCTC during the 2007 - 2008 academic year. The visit also resulted in a collaboration agreement leading to a reciprocal exchange visit by representatives of Caritas to Owensboro in April 2008.

The three Caritas representatives were hosted by **Drew and Jeannette (OSCAR Treasurer) Ward**. These initial exchanges have led to discussions for further cooperation in cross cultural online learning for both Czech and American students, opportunities for the exchange of students and faculty members, as well as, joint Social Work field experiences.

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4. Outgoing - Summer Study in Olomouc (May 22 - June 23, 2008).

This is our annual program, which takes some two dozen college or university students to Olomouc for a month long study stay. We have run this program for a decade. The students have their own professors, paid by OCTC for the summer session. All participants must be registered for at least one of the three courses offered. Coordinated with their study, students travel to Vienna, Budapest, Krakow, Bratislava and Prague. We are hopeful to be able to find increased interaction with Czech students at Palacky University. We work with the Czech business partners on making arrangements for this program. **Pam Wilson**, the elected President of Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions coordinates and accompanied the group to Olomouc.

5. Outgoing - Settle Memorial Church in Czech Republic (May 22 – May 31, 2008).

As a result of having one of our past Olomouc students at Kentucky Wesleyan College, Settle Memorial Church in Owensboro has formed a “Sister Church” arrangement with a small Methodist Church in Jablonne, Czech Republic. We worked with the Settle group of eight persons in order to have them also visit the Olomouc area.

We view this as a good way to promote more people learning about the Olomouc region. The group paid their own lodging and meal expenses while traveling in the Czech Republic (they were hosted in Jablonne). Both the City of Olomouc and the Olomouc Kraj hosted a tour of the city and Kraj, respectfully, as the visitors came specifically because of our Sister City / Sister Region relationship. **Bill West** worked with this group and accompanied the group to Olomouc and in Prague.

6. Incoming - Czech Scouts (June 21 – July 18, 2008)

This is a continuation of a partnership begun in 2000 between Scout groups in both regions. In 2000 and 2004 Czech Scouts have visited Owensboro, and Kentucky. In 2002 and 2006 Scouts from the Shawnee Trails Council (serving 35 counties in Western Kentucky) have visited the Olomouc region. We hosted the 15 Czech Scouts (males and females) for one month in summer 2008, the reciprocal exchange is tentatively scheduled for 2010. The Buffalo Trace (Evansville), Bluegrass (Lexington) and Lincoln Heritage (Louisville) Councils, BSA hosted the Czech Scouts during their tour of Kentucky. Transportation assistance was made possible through 1st Christian and Settle Churches. **Bill West** coordinated and accompanied the group through out Kentucky. **Ms. Mirka Jindrová** was the Czech Scout leader.

Junak, the national Czech Scout organization sent an award of appreciation to Bill for promoting the five Scout exchanges between American and Czech Scouts over the years.

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7. Incoming – Palacky University Chorus (fall 2009 exchange proposed)

Dr. Diane Earle and Maestro Nicholas Palmer have discussed making arrangements to host the Palacky University Chorus. Dr. Earle and Mr. Palmer are associated with the music program at Kentucky Wesleyan College and with the Owensboro Symphony. We will encourage further discussions as to goals, possible arrangements to be made here and timing of this exchange. The Palacky University Choir Director is in agreement that we will aim for a 2009 exchange in order to have sufficient lead-time for planning and making arrangements. Owensboro Symphony and Kentucky Wesleyan College would host here. Ms. Earle met with **Ms. Mirka Jindrová**, the lead soprano while she was here with the Czech Scout Exchange.

8. Incoming - Kraj (NARC presentation with GRADD in June 2008) Kraj – GRADD Exchange

GRADD Executive Director and Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions Board member, **Jiten Shah** had proposed that the Olomouc Kraj participate in the NARC (National Association of Regional Councils) conference in Des Moines, Iowa. The purpose of the proposed exchange was to allow GRADD and the Olomouc Kraj to make joint presentations at the conference aimed at discussing the new regional government cooperation.

Mr. Shah and GRADD was in contact with both the Olomouc Kraj and NARC making arrangements. We would have expected a visit of the Kraj representatives in the region previous to the June conference. Due to flooding in the Midwest during the time of the conference this **exchange was cancelled**.

9. Outgoing - Czech Language Compatriot's Course, July 24 – Aug. 2, 2008

As a result of our long standing relationship with the Czech Republic our **Executive Director, Bill West** was given a full grant to study Czech language the summer in a course offered through Charles University in the east Bohemian town of Dobruska. Professor West was recommended for the grant by the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C. Sixty four persons from 27 nations were represented.

10. Activity - Multicultural Festival, August 16, 2008

This annual event is held in Owensboro to promote the Owensboro regional ties with the international community. Since the inception of this festival, Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions has had a display handing out materials and teaching about our Sister City in the Czech Republic. In 2008 we had additional displays about the Olomouc Kraj and the new Japanese Sister City of Nisshin. **Pam Wilson** acted as Coordinator and was assisted by Sister Cities Board members.

11. Incoming - Hejcin Secondary School Exchange (September 19 – October 6, 2008)

This is a continuation of a series of exchanges we have conducted with Hejcin Gymnazium over the years. The exchange brought a group of six students and their teacher, **Ms. Magda Kralova** to stay in Apollo High School student host homes for a period of two weeks while our schools were in session. The Olomouc students attended classes in our four high schools, as well as, visited sites of historical or cultural significance. **Ms. Kelley Fallon**, Sister Cities and Regions Board Member and teacher at Apollo High School, acted as coordinator for this exchange.

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12. Outgoing – State Tourism Promotion / Sister Cities Exchange to Japan (Sept. 22 – Oct. 2, 2008)

We worked with our Sister Cities State Coordinator and the Kentucky Tourism Cabinet to plan an exchange trip to Japan. The purpose was twofold: 1.) Along with the five Kentucky cities having Japanese Sister Cities and the state tourism folks, we were represented at meetings in Japan with representatives of Japanese tourism. 2.) A visit our Sister City of Nisshin-shi. Only those from our Sister Region (Owensboro, Daviess County, Ohio County) would visit Nisshin. The other Kentucky participants, at the same time, visited their Sister City. **Bill West** was our only representative and accompanied this group.

13. Activity - Kentucky League of Cities Booth, October 17 – 18, 2008

This conference is held once a year and gathers all Kentucky cities at the conference where they learn about various programs to help in running their city services. Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions helps with the Kentucky Sister Cities booth. The result is that our program and our Sister Cities and Regions are promoted throughout Kentucky. The Kentucky League of Cities believes that more Kentucky cities should become involved in having international “Sister Cities”. Promotional materials from Olomouc, the Olomouc Kraj and Nisshin-shi are also handed out at this conference to interested elected officials stopping by the booth. **Bill West** has carried this activity with the SCI State Coordinator over the years.

14. Incoming - Chubu University Daiichi High School, October 21 – 27, 2008

Principal, **Mr. Hideaki Fujimoto** and office staff member, **Mr. Takeshi Okajima** from Chubu University Daiichi High School, 425, Hosobasama, Sanbongi-cho, Nisshin, Aichi, 470-0101, Japan visited our four area high schools to discuss cooperation opportunities. Student email exchanges between Daiichi and Apollo High School students has already taken place over the previous academic year. Principal Fujimoto is very interested in forming a “Sister High School” relationship. We also discussed the possibility of having a Japanese language teacher come to Owensboro to be shared as a resource between our educational institutions.

15. Activity - Statewide Sister Cities Meeting, Oct. 7, 2008

Once a year the Kentucky Sister Cities gather to report on activities of their program. Our program is always one of the strongest, most active Sister Cities reporting. We are the only program in our region having Czech Republic ties and one of five Kentucky cities having Japanese ties. This year’s meeting was held in Danville, a new Sister City member city.

16. Activity - Kentucky World Trade Day, November 5, 2008

We have been invited to present an exhibit at this annual event sponsored by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. **Bill West** represented our program exhibit for us.

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17. Outgoing - Caritas Social Work Exchange, November 5 – 13, 2008

An exchange visit was scheduled for **Ms. McDonough** to again visit Caritas in Olomouc from November 5 through November 13, 2008. She was accompanied by **Ms. Pam Wilson**, President of Owensboro Sister Cities and Regions. Ms. Wilson's purpose in visiting was to assist Caritas and OCTC in coordinating plans, which may call for Sister Cities' and Regions assistance for logistics.

While the goal will be to allow cooperation with several Owensboro region institutions of higher education, OCTC will be the lead institution in working directly with Caritas. Ms. McDonough will coordinate the effort on behalf of the college and she has the support of the college administration to pursue further Social Work cooperation opportunities.

18. Incoming - Library Exchange, Nov. 10 – 18, 2008

The Olomouc Regional Library Director, **Ms. Lenka Prucková** was hosted by the Daviess County Public Library. This was the third library exchange between the two cities. Daviess County Librarian, **Ms. Debbie Mesplay** coordinated with her department heads and board members to plan for the exchange. The reciprocal exchange is tentatively scheduled to take place in 2009. Ms. Prucková was hosted by library employees, **Jarrod McCarty and Leslie Byrne**.

19. Incoming - Secondary Schools Debate Contest

Kraj – GRADD Exchange

The Olomouc Kraj Office of Secondary Education made a new proposal in December 2007. This proposal would involve student debate contests in both the Olomouc Kraj and the GRADD secondary schools. Three winning teams will have three top debaters, and a coach come to the GRADD region to compete with the winning debaters here. This would be a great opportunity for the Kraj – GRADD region relationship. It will be complicated here as GRADD has no direct role to play in the school districts so all participation would be voluntary. I feel confident that we will have the involvement of the four Owensboro high schools and we can promote the idea among the other counties' high schools in the GRADD region. The key on our side will be finding two or three key teachers who will promote and coordinate the contests. **Jiten Shah** would coordinate for GRADD.

20. Activity - IT regional wireless information

Kraj – GRADD Exchange

Jiten Shah has been in contact with the Olomouc Kraj about their request for further information concerning the GRADD wireless program. Specifically, The Kraj requested information concerning how the general logistics of this program are to be carried out, the recruitment of companies participating in this public, private partnership, what the role of the public versus the private sphere is, how the program proposes to be funded, what the contracts call for and, in general, how it all proposes to work.

Mr. Shah communicated this information by way of a presentation made by Mr. Reid Haire, GRADD Past Chairman, concerning the program.

Projected 2009 Sister Cities and Regions (OSCAR) Potential Exchanges

Out Late June **Hejcin Secondary School Exchange** **Kelly Fallon**

This exchange is the sixth in the series of secondary exchanges we have had with Hejcin since 1998. Apollo students had hosted Hejcin students in the fall of 2008.

Out Spring 2009 **Caritas Social Work** **Greta McDonough**

This is a continuation of the Olomouc Caritas cooperation begun as early as 1997. Plans are for regional higher education partners to work to provide online learning opportunities, as well, as on location field experiences here and with Caritas in Europe. OCTC has taken the lead in this initiative. The cooperation is to be handled by the institutions with Sister Cities supplying only advice and logistical support where requested.

Out May 21 - Jun 23 **Summer Study in Olomouc** **Pam Wilson**

Our annual Summer Study Program in Olomouc will again have Dr. Roger Murphy teaching history and political science courses and our President teaching a psychology course this summer. Students visit Vienna, Bratislava, Krakow and Prague during their month in Central Europe.

In Undetermined **Palacky University Chorus** **Diane Earle, et. al.**

Discussion on having this exchange began two or three years ago. Success is dependent on cooperation of the KWC music program and help for home hosting. This exchange would bring in around 35 chorus members.

In October 2009 **Olomouc Mayoral Exchange** **Bill West**

Tentative plans were made for a Mayoral Exchange to follow the election of Owensboro's new mayor. Past Mayor, Tom Watson, although being a supporter of Sister Cities and having acted as host to our Japanese Sister City Mayor, was unable to travel to either Sister City. With Mayor Payne's term of office we will plan to both host our Sister City Mayors and arrange for the Mayor to visit the two Sister Cities during the four year period. The Olomouc Kraj will also send representatives during this exchange.

In Undetermined **Olomouc Kraj Economic Stimulus Initiative** **Jiten Shah**

The Olomouc Kraj has sent a proposal to take a serious look, with dedicated manpower to potential economic cooperation between the Kraj and GRADD. Meetings have been held with GRADD, EDC and Daviess County Fiscal Court representatives. We believe our end can utilize existing manpower with this assignment. Coordination would come through GRADD.

In Undetermined **Olomouc Kraj Soccer Exchange** **Robin Joska**

Previous plans had fallen through. This exchange remains a possibility but no new proposal has been received from SIGMA, the football (soccer) club of Olomouc.

Out Undetermined **Daiichi High School** **DCPS**

Daiichi has approached one of the four area high schools that the Principal visited in the fall, to be a "Sister High School". This relationship would call on the schools to seek cooperation and exchanges involving all aspects of high school life. No date has been set for the formalizing of relations or the beginning exchanges.

Out August 2009 **Scout Exchange (in doubt)** **Bill West**

We are the only American Scouts invited to be part of the 60th Anniversary celebration of Scouting in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. To date, however, we have received no inquiries of interest in attending. The plan calls for 4-6 Scouts to tour in Nagoya, have homestays in Nisshin and attend the Camporee.

Out Undetermined **Library Exchange** **Debbie Mesplay**

The Olomouc Library has extended a reciprocal exchange invitation for a representative from the Daviess County Library to be hosted in Olomouc. Currently no definite plans have been set.