



April 2020

President's Greetings

Happy New Mexico Spring!

Our world, country, and community are experiencing the impact of COVID-19. We are learning different ways to stay connected with our family and friends. ASCF has engaged in approaches to reinforce the bridges between Albuquerque and its Sister City through WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, Zoom, emails, and letters. We are finding our Sister Cities are experiencing very similar issues. We are all concerned for the welfare of community residents and first responders.

We encourage our members who have developed Sister Cities friendships over the years to reach out to them. Let's reinforce Sister Cities International's values and mission to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.

This month begins a new way to connect with our members. We have a new "Building Bridges" series. The first featured city is Rehovot, Israel. This will be a Zoom Meeting with a password and will be sent in an email to you. I look forward to seeing you in the Zoom Meeting.

Kind Regards,
Pamela V. Feather
ASCF President

president@albuquerque-sister-cities.org

January - ASCF International Tea

It was good to the members who attended the 2020 ASCF International Tea. Everyone enjoyed the different teas and food from the 10 Sister Cities. We had wonderful entertainment from the various Chinese dance groups. Here are a few pictures for you to enjoy:





February - Mexico-US Sister Cities Summit

Highlights of the El Paso 2020 Mexico-US Sister Cities Summit by Richard Buckler:

The 2020 Mexico-U.S. Sister Cities Mayors' Summit, held from February 26 – 28 in El Paso, Texas, was the fourth in Sister Cities International's series of bi-national summits, designed to strengthen sister city relationships in key countries. With the timely focus this time on Mexico-U.S. cooperation the Summit featured a host of speakers and special guests with years of experience in business, government, and diplomacy. The summit was attended by over 15 mayors from the two countries, as well as municipal officials, business leaders, academics, civic leaders and citizen diplomats—approximately 220 in all. The format, however, was bi-national in its design with two host cities: El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Attendees were able to participate in receptions on both sides of the border which included a fantastic night of food and entertainment in Juarez.

During the Summit, attendees discussed the issues of the day, shared best practices, and heard from several top leaders in each relevant field. To maximize time-spent, breakfast and lunch treated attendees to keynote speakers, while two tracks were offered during the day featuring either an Economic Development focus, or a more Cultural and Community Development theme. Particularly helpful was the informative panels used to give attendees multiple perspectives.

Texas Secretary of State Ruth R. Hughs shared her perspective both as a keynote speaker, and as a panelist in the Economic Development track. She spoke on NAFTA—it's successes and shortcomings, and

how the new U.S. Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) is still being fine-tuned and must address some of the gaps, such as the ramifications of Digital Technology. Joined on a panel by Mayra Maldonado (Hunt Institute), Alan Russell (TECMA), and Juan Flores (Port San Antonio) a common theme began to emerge, namely, the importance of private citizens, business leaders, and community activists to tell government what is needed. Attendees learned that the role of government is to build in flexibility. In the USMCA, such flexibility panelists believed should include a review process that can adjust policies as needed. Such flexibility, speakers pointed out, can help navigate the unknown when unexpected issues, such as the Coronavirus, arise.

Albuquerque's former Consul of Mexico, Mauricio Ibarra, greeted attendees in his new role as Consul General of Mexico--El Paso. The Honorable Maria Eugenia Campos, Mayor of Albuquerque's sister city of Chihuahua, Mexico—was a keynote speaker. Mayor Campos emphasized that the economic interconnection between our two countries remains the biggest issue to address, requiring all parties to adapt to the changes occurring on the federal level.

Leroy Allala, Sister Cities International's new CEO, and former head of the Chicago Sister Cities program emphasized that friendship is the basis of such flexibility, declaring that the Summit allows us to “showcase the importance of binational friendship and collaboration between Mexico and the United States and reinforce the importance of community-to-community relations that inform, enrich, and strengthen bilateral dialogue.” Mr. Allala emphasized what other speakers and attendees were discussing: with over 159 partnerships between Mexico and the United States, the resources of citizen to citizen diplomacy from both communities are yet to be tapped to its fullest.

The Mayors' Plenary Panel led by Former Tulsa Mayor, Roger Randall, gave an interesting perspective on such partnerships from a Mayor's view. The panel consisted of the Honorable: Dee Margo (El Paso), Ron Nirenberg (San Antonio), Armando Cabada (Ciudad Juarez), Ken Miyagishima (Las Cruces), and Raul Peralez (City Council San Jose, CA).

Mayor Margo cited long-standing connections in the Paseo Del Norte corridor (i.e Las Cruces, El Paso, and Juarez area) that go back over 100 years before the United States became a nation. Some of those connections have been Business centered, but there are plenty of cultural/family ties too. The Mayor invited all people, especially politicians, from across the United States to come visit El Paso/Juarez to see how the people of our two countries have figured out how to work together from the 16th century to the present.

Mayor Miyagishima mentioned how he was born into a family whose father was Japanese and mother, Mexican. He himself married into a family from Juarez. Councilor Peralez described how San Jose's partnership with Dublin, Ireland also has developed connection with Mexico.

Roger Randall asked the panel about their thoughts on the new U.S. Mexico Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA) versus the years under the prior NAFTA. Mayor Margo cited the thriving cross-border economy between El Paso and Juarez, that employs thousands of workers—showing the intricate connection that worked under NAFTA and which should continue to flourish under USMCA. With six bridges facilitating the longest border city in the U.S., the daily crossings are now close to: 22,000 pedestrians, 35,000 cars, and 2,500 cargo trucks.

Mayor Cabada agreed with Mayor Margo. Speaking in his native Spanish, he cited such statistics as the real measure of the success of NAFTA/USMCA that paints a different picture than what U.S. citizens often hear concerning drug cartels and the like.

Sister Cities International Chairman Mayor Ron Nirenberg re-emphasized the need to always focus on immigration policy in a bi-lateral manner, in order to see continued economic success in the future. Councilman Peralez added that San Jose has filed some lawsuits to challenge some of the U.S. policies that seem designed to hurt those very relationships.

All the mayors/councilman agreed: we need to reject the rhetoric of isolation if for no other reason such policies go against hundreds of years of citizen to citizen exchanges, something Sister Cities especially champion.



President Pam Feather, Richard Buckler, and Alma Solis.

Chihuahua Mayor Campos with Chair Alma Solis

April – Rehovot, Israel – Building Bridges Series

We will host a ZOOM session that includes participation of the water education engineer that works with us in Rehovot (or Rechovot). He will talk about the Rechovot school we are going to work with as well as his rainwater harvesting projects in Israel and other parts of the world. We may be joined a teacher from the Sarid school in Rechovot.

Malcolm and Leora Siegel

Co-Chairs, Albuquerque/Rechovot Sister City Program

Rehovot@albuquerque-sister-cities.org

COVID-19 – Pictures, Letters and Comments from Sister Cities

Chihuahua, Mexico from Alma Solis

Chihuahua - Mayor Campos showing people how to wash their hands.



Guadalajara, Mexico from Ernesto Garcia

I have been in constant contact with my Guadalajara Sister City colleagues and they inform me their state and local governments are taking very strict measures to combat the Corona virus. Unfortunately, many other states within Mexico have been slow to respond and I believe Mexico in general may be hit severely. My colleagues to date are in good health.



Dear Mayor Tim Keller:

With the spring season and warming weather, I hope you are doing well.

Since the COVID-19 began spreading throughout the world in January this year, the pandemic has become increasingly severe. Faced with the arduous tasks undertaken by our medical community, threat to public health and safety, and anxiety about economic stagnation and decline, let us work together to strengthen our faith and fight this formidable pandemic.

Taiwan is working hard to control the pandemic, and currently, there is no confirmed case in Hualien City. Hualien City has adopted the measures of body temperature measurements and wearing face masks in public places. We have also stepped up education on reducing meetings, hand washing and personal hygiene. Our residents are united in fighting against the pandemic. I hope that we can encourage each other and together prevent the spread of the virus so that the pandemic can soon be alleviated.

We await the end of the pandemic. Once daily normalcy returns, we are eager for your visit to facilitate exchanges and continue to develop our friendship.

Warmest Regards,

WEI CHIA-HSIEN

Mayor of Hualien City

March 27, 2020

兰州市人民政府

31st March, 2020

To: Mr. Timothy M.Keller
Mayor of city of Albuquerque, New Mexico
USA

Dear Mr. Keller,


With the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, American epidemic is still continuing. Albuquerque is also facing a huge challenge to curb the spread of the epidemic. On behalf of Lanzhou Municipal people's Government and the people of Lanzhou as well as in the name of myself, I would like to convey heartfelt sympathies to Albuquerque Municipality and people over the epidemic.

The people of Lanzhou who have experienced the epidemic empathize with you. At this difficult time, we firmly support the government staff, medical staff and related personnel of Albuquerque Municipality who are fighting the virus at the front line of the epidemic, and pay high respect to them.

I expect that Albuquerque Municipality and people overcome difficulties and control the spread of the epidemic as soon as possible. Sincerely hope that the friendship between the two cities will be further enhanced and pragmatic cooperation will be deepened to benefit the people of the two cities.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Zhang Weiwen)
Mayor

Lanzhou Municipal People's Government

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Sister Cities Interesting Facts

Guadalajara, Mexico by Ernesto Garcia

Guadalajara is the capital of the state of Jalisco. The land of Mariachis and Tequila! Guadalajara is a leader in high technology and the state of Jalisco is known as the California of Mexico due to its high-tech reputation in engineering and software development, leading edge manufacturing, and an excellent university system. Excellent medical care and reasonable prices along with the Mediterranean climate here makes this a very desirable location for tourists from all over the world, and for many from the U.S. to establish a second home or simply make the move permanently.



Helmstedt, Germany by Nathan Young

Our sister city Helmstedt has a very interesting history. After the Peace of Augsburg was signed in September 1555, in the Holy Roman Empire, rulers were able to choose between Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism as the official state religion. Helmstedt at the time was in the state of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel which had chosen Lutheranism. On October 15th, 1576 the Juleum University was founded in Helmstedt. It was named after Duke Julius and provided a Lutheran based education. It had four main focuses: theology, law, medicine, philosophy and had a liberal art program. In 1592, the great auditorium Juleum Novum was built. The university motto was: "EX forti dulcedo", or "Out of the strength of knowledge the sweetness of wisdom derives." The university shut its doors in 1810. Today, since 1994, the Juleum Novum auditorium holds the "Helmstedt university days" every September where renowned academics provide presentations and hold discussions with the public. The themes of discussion are usually related to the division and reunification of Germany.

Last July, the Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation sent 11 Albuquerque students to Helmstedt. There, they had the honor of performing in the Juleum Novum auditorium with 12 students from Helmstedt under the direction of Albuquerque public school music director Samuel Nesbitt. We will be visiting the historic Helmstedt University on our next trip to Helmstedt.



Calendar

April – Building Bridges Series featuring Rehovot, Israel

Contact Malcolm Siegel Rehovot@albuquerque-sister-cities.org

May – Building Bridges Series featuring Alburquerque, Spain

Contact Alberto Solis alburquerque@albuquerque-sister-cities.org

End of June – Annual ASCF Meeting –Date and time TBD

July – Save the dates July 8-10 -2020 SCI Annual Conference & Meeting | Virtual Video Conference. This conference was originally scheduled to be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. While we hope this venue can still have some participation, the meeting will also feature the election of long-time New Mexican--Carol Robertson Lopez—into the position of Chair Person of the Sister Cities International Board.

Congratulations Carol! For more information on Carol, go to <https://sistercities.org/people/carol-robertson-lopez/>.