

Iowa Sister States

Newsletter

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In This Issue

Anniversary Gala

Hebei Working Group

Hebei Performance Troupe

Upcoming Events and Meetings

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Hebei "WorkingGroup"

From January 15-18, 2006, a four-person delegation from Hebei visited Iowa. The delegation had two goals. First continue its collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), initiated during a visit to Hebei in June 2005 by Mary Hansen, director of the department. Second, to learn about options for improving the quality of Hebei's dairy herds through arrangements with Iowa businesses. The first group, Mr. Zhang Xueliang, Assistant Consultant of Foreign Affairs Division of the Health Department of Hebei Province and Ms. Yang Yuhong of the Hebei Foreign Affairs Office spent their time in the Des Moines area. They met with the leadership of IDPH, toured the Polk County Public Health Department, the Visiting Nurses Association and Mercy Hospital. Cyndi Chen, Iowa Sister States Board President hosted the group at her home for an authentic Chinese dinner. The delegation also met with Terry Branstad, President of Des Moines University, which is exploring possibilities of a sister university relationship in Hebei. The delegation also witnessed a demonstration of the Disaster Medical Assistance Team.

The second group, Mr. Li Dianhua, General Manager of the Fu Yan Dairy in Handan and Mr. Zhang Jianmin, Assistant Consultant of the Animal Husbandry Administration of Handan, participated in a schedule developed by Kit Spangler and Ron Orth, ISS volunteers. Interpreting was volunteered by Savannah Bao. The delegation visited Westwood Embryo, Inc. in Waverly to learn about the business of embryo transplantation. They then visited

the Dairy Center at Northeast Iowa Community College at Calmar where they saw the programs designed to teach students the latest techniques in dairy farm management. The delegation stayed overnight in Dubuque where they attended a dinner arranged by Dick Landis, an ISS volunteer. Handan is Dubuque's sister city in Hebei Province, so it was appropriate that the delegation was able to make the acquaintance of Ray Buol, Mayor of Dubuque and other city and academic officials. The delegation also visited Swiss Valley Farms, a milk processing plant in Dubuque and Lyon Jerseys, a working, family-owned dairy farm in Toledo.

The delegation expressed its satisfaction at the excellent schedule and Iowa Sister States wants to extend its appreciation to the hard working volunteers who made this possible.

~Phil Latessa, ISS Executive Director

UPCOMING EVENTS/MEETINGS

Phil, along with several others, will be traveling to Malaysia on March 3, as a part of the Sports Exchange delegation. While there, he will be joined by Terengganu Committee Chair Janet Heinicke to travel to Terengganu in hopes of strengthening and renewing our sister state relationship. Phil will return on March 15th.

March 10th

The Merida English Library is going to be celebrating its 10th Anniversary in Merida this day. Paulie and Bob Williams will be there for the celebration. The Yucatan Committee and ISS will be sending a certificate of recognition to Merida in response to this wonderful milestone. Upon the return of Paulie and Bob, the Yucatan Committee intends to discuss other ways to recognize the anniversary.

March 15th

Cherkasy Committee Meeting at 4:30 at IDED/ISS offices

March 17

Strategic Planning from 9-12 at Village Bean

March 17

Nancy Brady and George Morteo will be traveling to Merida to participate in the second phase of the 911 Training Project the Yucatan committee has been working on. They return to Iowa on March 26.

March 18

Phil, Paolo Bartesaghi, and Frank Trumpy will take a delegation to Veneto, Italy. The delegation will be led by Lt. Governor Sally Pederson, DMU President Governor Branstad, and other members of DMU's faculty, Chef Robert Anderson, Polk County Supervisor EJ Giovannetti, and Kelly Halsted from IDED. Phil will return on March 26.

Connecting Chinese and Iowan Teenagers

A performance troupe of 40 people (10 adults and 30 teenagers) from a high school affiliated to Renmin University of China, Beijing, visited Des Moines, Iowa, from February 1st to 5th. As many as 27 Iowan host families opened their houses to welcome those guests.

During their stay in Iowa, they visited the freshman high school of Valley Southwoods. They sat in on the classes and interacted with Iowan teenagers about the school, their life, and the culture. Their professional level of performances, especially the American-style Cheerleader's dance, amazed all the Valley High students who were watching.

"It was a great honor to host them, and it was very pleasant how the entire afternoon went," Phyllis Staplin, the Curriculum Director commented. She continued in her e-mail to ISS, "The best part of the afternoon was having the students interact with each other in the conversation." Staplin asked ISS to let her know "when another delegation will be in this area," and will "welcome them openly in the district."

The visiting troupe also visited Drake University and performed at the Historical Building Friday morning, February 3rd and Saturday night, February 4th.

~Will Zhang, ISS Hebei Committee Chair

ISS Anniversary Gala Highlights

The night of the ISS Anniversary Gala was enchanting. There were about 65 in attendance for a wonderful evening of laughs, amazing food, and wonderful entertainment and speakers.

When everyone arrived at DMACC's Conference Center they were greeted with hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine. Many of the people that attended had not seen in each in many years, and so it was a nice time for people to get reacquainted.

Not only did the event give people a chance to catch up with one another, but it was also a chance to see (and hear) some wonderful entertainment. David Crabbs, a classical guitarist, performed 2 pieces and captivated the audience. The Italian American Cultural Center sent us 6 terrific dancers that performed twice. There was lots of clapping for their enthusiasm and ability.

It was also an evening full of memories. Mary Lawyer, Director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development, was our first speaker of the evening and she talked about her appreciation of the relationship IDED has with ISS. Governor Branstad spoke about his many ISS travels and involvement with many ISS projects and about his upcoming trip with ISS to Veneto. Governor Ray gave an inspirational talk about why he is committed to the work of ISS and how proud he is of the citizens of Iowa for their support of the international community. Sarah Lande, former Executive Director of ISS, gave us a hilarious trip down memory lane. Sarah showed to all her dedication and love for ISS and its volunteers. Cyndi Chen ended the evening telling us about her path to Iowa and how she became involved with ISS. Cyndi reminded us that ISS has had some wonderful accomplishments to be proud of, but that the future is very bright for ISS as well.

Chef Robert Anderson and his ICI students did a fantastic job that evening. The food was wonderful. In fact, the beef was so good that my dad sought out Chef Anderson to tell him that the meat was "perfect". (this is no small feat-it is difficult to impress an old farmer...) Not only was the food amazing, but the service was exemplary. The students were attentive and personable.

All in all, the evening was a tremendous success. That evening we first displayed the ISS 20th Anniversary Booklet. Everyone that attended was given one of the booklets, and we have some available in the office. If you would like one, let me know and we will send you one.

Please keep an eye out for information about more events that will happen throughout the year to celebrate our 20th Anniversary.

Thank you to all who attended and participated in the ISS 20th Anniversary Gala.

~Kim Johnson, ISS Program Director

