

Moscow Alternative Student Government

February 1-9—Two delegates from the Alternative Student Government (ASG) of the City of Moscow in the Russian Federation, arrived to Houston for a series of meetings with local leaders in the areas of government, business, medicine and education. The two – Aleksey Artemov (the Alternate Mayor) and Kirill Ilichev (the Alternate Head of Economy, Foreign Trade and Foreign Relations) – indicated that their visit created an opportunity to further cement the collaborative partnership between their city and Houston, which had been initiated during Mayor Bill White’s visit to Moscow in July 2007.

The ASG is comprised of bright university students (alternates) who are committed to government service. The alternates are assigned to shadow officials in the Moscow City Government and represent them at official meetings or when traveling. Inspired by the ASG model, Mayor Bill White launched the *City Hall Fellows* program upon his return from Moscow.

The delegates had a variety of meetings with high level officials, including **Mayor Bill White, Council Member Ron Green, Harris County Commissioner Sylvia Garcia**, the Mayor’s Directors for Volunteer Opportunities and Education, the U.S. Commerce Department’s Director of the Houston Export Assistance Center, the Greater Houston Partnership’s Senior Vice President for International Business, and the Houston Technology Center’s Director of Client Services. Messers Artemov and Ilichev also conducted site tours and met with representatives of the Texas Medical Center, Rice University, and the Houston Community College System. Finally, the delegates met with members of both the *Mayor’s Youth Council* and the *City Hall Fellows*, two programs with similar goals as the ASG. Ms. Alaina Fielder, Chair of the *Mayor’s Youth Council* noted that “the MYC very much enjoyed meeting with the two Russian visitors. We learned that, although Houston and Moscow are far away from one another, there are similarities between the two.”

Before departing Houston, the delegates also had an opportunity to experience some of Houston’s famous attractions --- they attended a Houston Rockets game at the Toyota Center, toured NASA’s Johnson Space Center, and visited the historic port city of Galveston.



Council Member Jarvis Johnson



February 15-20—Council Member Johnson led an delegation on behalf of Mayor Bill White to Houston’s sister city of Baku in Azerbaijan to strengthen bilateral ties between the two cities. During his visit, Council Member Johnson met with the Azerbaijani Minister of Culture and Tourism to discuss efforts to spotlight Azerbaijan at an upcoming Houston International Festival. Council Member Johnson indicated that Baku has a fabulous culture and history, and that many opportunities exist for future exchanges.

Council Member M.J. Khan



February 17—Council Member Khan met with a 7-member delegation from the Thai Embassy in Washington, D.C., led by Chargé d’Affaires Mr. Damrong Kraikuan, to promote bilateral ties and cooperation between their country and Houston.

Council Member Ronald Green



February 25—Council Member Green met with His Excellency Khasbazaryn Bekhbat, the Ambassador of Mongolia to the U.S. at a special reception celebrating the opening of an exhibit of Mongolian art at the Gremillion Gallery in Houston. The Ambassador’s visit to Houston correlated with the start of the Mongolian New Year, and the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences’ grand opening of the Ghengis Khan Exhibit. Council Member Green welcomed Ambassador Bekhbat on behalf of the City of Houston, and presented him with an honorary citizenship proclamation, naming him an honorary Houstonian and goodwill ambassador.

Mayor’s International Affairs & Development Councils (MIADC)

MIADC--South Asia

February 5—Members met with guest speaker Gilda Ramirez, Small Business Development Director for the Port of Houston, who discussed her agency’s role in helping small businesses. City of Houston Council Member M.J. Khan, who also attended the meeting, asked members to support the Houston-Karachi Friendship Dinner, which will take place on March 2. Members have also been considering a ‘Partners in Trade Agreement’ with the City of Karachi to be signed on March 4. Members also discussed future options for a sister city agreement with the city of Chennai in India.

MIADC--Canada

February 11—Members discussed the prospect of collaborating with MIADC Europe to form a committee to promote the bid for the 2020 World Expo and asked for volunteers. Greater Houston Partnership officials addressed the World Bank’s future presence in Houston. Members of the Business, Life Science, and Arts, Sports and Culture subcommittees discussed upcoming events.

Canadian Club President Jeremy Eves discussed business aspects of the club and encouraged members to join it. Members also discussed the forthcoming visit to Houston of Calgary’s Mayor David Bronconnier in May 2009 to sign a bilateral agreement with the City of Houston.

MIADC--Americas

February 16—Member Alex Giannotti presented the website he had designed for all seven Mayor’s International Affairs & Development Councils (www.MIADC.com). Members were advised to send updates on events and projects to be posted online. The proposed trade mission to Latin America, and a joint networking event with MIADC-Europe on March 4 were also discussed.

MIADC--Europe

February 18—The completed ‘Houston / Europe’ Powerpoint was introduced to members; the powerpoint will be posted online, and distributed to chambers of commerce and partner governments around the world. Updates were given on the planning progress of the City’s trade mission to Europe in June 2009, the status of the World Expo 2020 project and the International Matrix, which compares Houston with other international cities. MIADC Europe will be collaborating with other MIADCs on two upcoming events in March 2009.

International Frontier

Houston is home to many distinguished individuals who are dedicated to the promotion of Houston on the global stage. The featured Houstonian this month is David Leebron, President of Rice University.



David Leebron and Y. Ping Sun

A premier international research institution, Rice University is home to the James Baker III Institute for Public Policy as well as to highly-ranked music, architecture, natural and social sciences, engineering, humanities and business schools. Leading this renowned university is President David Leebron, who left the deanship of the Columbia University School of Law, bringing his wife Mrs. Y. Ping Sun and their two young children to Houston in 2004, to assume the duties of President of Rice in 2004.

President Leebron, who is also on the faculty of the university's Political Science Department, has enhanced the university's international stature through a dramatic increase in collaborative programs with various countries in Asia and Latin America, and has worked in tandem with the Houston Consular Corps representing these countries locally. As part of Rice's efforts to enhance its civic engagement, which includes strengthening ties to the officials of the Consular Corp., the university has expanded existing projects, while developing a number of new projects with local museums, schools and organizations that have both local and international ties.

"Graduates of our institution, regardless of their chosen professions, are more likely to find themselves involved in work that involves other countries and cultures. One of our goals is to increase the number of foreign students at Rice because the diversity they bring enhances the education for everyone. This international network of our graduates better serves students and graduates as they operate in a more global environment. In fact, foreign students in the United States will add each year about \$14.5 billion to our economy," said President Leebron.

Under President Leebron's leadership, Rice University has invested approximately \$850 million in campus construction projects, including two residential colleges to house a 30 percent growth in the undergraduate student body, a new physics building, a new recreation and wellness center and a

10-story research center to enhance Rice's collaboration with the Texas Medical Center.

President Leebron has also been working with several universities in Mexico (the Tec de Monterrey, the University of Monterrey, the Autonomous Technical Institute of Mexico, and the University of the Americas in Puebla) and the University of Arizona in order to establish a bi-national consortium for research and public policy. The goal has been to enable a distinctive community of scholars to carry-out multidisciplinary research on issues of importance to Mexico-U.S. relations and their citizens. While the formal announcement about the consortium is not expected to be made until later this year, prospective members have already been planning working groups for the first year's research agenda, which will focus on U.S.-Mexico border security.

A native of Philadelphia, President Leebron is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, where he was president of the Harvard Law Review during his second year. After graduating in 1979, he had clerked on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Los Angeles and later taught at UCLA School of Law and NYU Law School. He joined the faculty of Columbia University School of Law in 1989 where he was later appointed dean.

President Leebron has also gained substantial international experience while serving as a visiting fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and Comparative Law in Hamburg, Germany, and as Visiting Professor of Law at Bielefeld University, also in Germany. Already a member of the Centennial Committee for Tongji University in Shanghai, China, President Leebron was also presented with France's *Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Merite* in 2006.

In addition to his distinguished academic credentials, President Leebron is the author of a textbook on international human rights as well as numerous articles on international trade, human rights and corporate finance. He serves on the board of directors of the IMAX Corporation and the Greater Houston Partnership.

—By Mary Jane Wakefield

International Partners — Salamanca, Guanajuato

Over the years, Houston has formed enduring partnerships with cities / states around the globe. The featured international partner this month is the city of Salamanca , which is located in the State of Guanajuato in the heartland of Mexico.

Viceroy Gaspar, the Earl of Monterrey, who was originally from Salamanca, Spain, founded the city of Salamanca in 1603. Over the last few years, Salamanca has grown rapidly to become one of its Central Mexico's most important centers for manufacturing, service industries and education. Located in the Bajio region's economic corridor, Salamanca is a center for Mexico's petrochemical industry and is home to the nation's largest refinery, the 11th largest crude oil refinery in the world.

As an educational center, Salamanca is home to the University of Guanajuato, which has made many contributions to the development of agricultural and industrial technologies.

In November 2007, Salamanca's Mayor Jorge Ignacio Luna Becerra led a high-ranking delegation to Houston

to pursue informational exchanges on municipal services with the City of Houston. Over the course of a three-day visit, the Mayor and his team met with various City of Houston officials to discuss city services such as solid waste disposal, recycling and police and fire services. The visit culminated in a signing of a bilateral partnership agreement with the City of Houston in the areas of energy, engineering, manufacturing, environment, education, tourism and culture.

Officials of both cities expect the Agreement to establish a platform for future exchanges, which will further enhance the partnership between the two parties.

—By Mary Jane Wakefield

Opportunities

Education

- Houston Community College: Export Academy (March 11 & 25, April 1 & 15, May 6)
Contact: exportacademy@hccs.edu
- Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce: Teachers Educating Across Cultures in Harmony—Delegation to Qatar and Saudi Arabia
Contact: edu@bilateralchamber.org

Contests:

- Ninth Congressional District of Texas: 2009 Congressional Art Competition
Contact: (713) 383-9234

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Please submit event information to: moiad@cityofhouston.net or by fax to: (832) 393-0859
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International Event Calendar -- March 2009

Date	Time	Event	Venue	Contact
3/2	6:30 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: The Search for Truth In Iraq	The Junior League	www.wachouston.net
3/3	11:30 AM	Asia Society Texas Center: Engaging Iran—Prospects for Expanding U.S.-Iran Exchanges	Intercontinental Hotel	(713) 439-0051
	11:30 AM	University of Houston Women's Studies Program: Table Talk Luncheon	Hilton Americas Hotel	amoore@uh.edu
	12:30 PM	Houston International Protocol Alliance: Houston and Karachi Sister City Signing Ceremony	City Hall Visitors Center	(713) 227-3395
	6:00 PM	French-American Chamber of Commerce: French Speakers After Work Cocktail	Boheme Café and Wine Bar	exdir@facchouston.com
3/4	11:00 AM	Houston Minority Business Council: Seminar—Strategic Funding Resources	Houston Minority Business Center	Terry.williams@hmhc.org
	6:30 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Is there an Emerging Terrorist Threat from Latin America?	Omni Riverway Hotel	www.wachouston.net
	—	Tri County Black Chamber of Commerce: Certification Clinic—Public / Private Procurement and Contract Opportunities	Tri County Black Chamber of Commerce	www.tricountyblackchamber.org
3/5	11:30 AM	Instituto Argentino del Petroleo y del Gas de Houston: Impacts of the Global Crisis in Latin America and its Energy Industry	Renaissance Houston Hotel	www.iapghouston.org
	5:00 PM	Houston Networking News: HNN Expansion Party	Houston Networking News	(281) 778-6661
3/6	7:00 AM	Houston Technology Center: Educational Seminar Series	Houston Technology Center, Conference Center	www.houstontech.org
	11:00 AM	Powerful Women International: Empowerment and Networking Event—Houston Connection	Hotel Indigo	(713) 621-8988
3/11	10:00 AM	U.S. Commercial Service and the Greater Houston Partnership: SPRING Singapore—Opportunities for Houston Companies	Greater Houston Partnership	(713) 209-3104
	11:30 AM	Asian Chamber of Commerce: March Monthly Luncheon	Westin Galleria Hotel	faye@asianchamber-hou.org
	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Pakistan and the U.S.—Common Interests and a Shared Future	The Junior League	www.wachouston.net
3/12	7:00 PM	Pakistan Chamber of Commerce-USA: 13th Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony	Marriott Town Square	sluvfss@yahoo.com
3/18	11:00 AM	Houston Minority Business Council: How to Access Bank Financing	Houston Minority Business Council	Terry.williams@hmhc.org
	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: U.S.-Russian Relations—Pushing the “Reset” Button	Westin Oaks Hotel	www.wachouston.net
3/19	8:00 AM	Global Energy Management Institute: 7th Annual Energy Trading and Marketing Conference	University of Houston, M.D. Anderson Library	ajdave@uh.edu
3/24	7:00 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: 2009 America's Energy Summit	George R. Brown Convention Center	lvalentine@houston.org
3/25	Noon	Brazil-Texas Chamber of Commerce: Luncheon—Petrobras America on the Gulf of Mexico	TBA	ricardo@peduzzi.us

3/25	6:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Kazakhstan—Oil, Gas and Beyond	The Junior League	www.wachouston.net
3/26	6:00 PM	Asian Chamber of Commerce: 14th Annual Asian Chamber of Commerce Gala—Essence of Asia	Omni Riverway Hotel	(713) 782-7222
3/27	6:30 PM	Young Men's Christian Association of Greater Houston: Minority Achievers	Marriott Westchase Hotel	(712) 353-5239
3/30	—	Thompson & Knight Global Energy Services: International Petroleum Exploration Business Management Program	Intercontinental Hotel	renato.bertani@tkges.com
3/31	6:00 PM	Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs: Enhancing the Physical Form of Houston	Texas Southern Univ. Public Affairs Bldg.	www.tsu.edu

International Cultural Events in Houston:

3/2	7:30 PM	Russian Cultural Center "Our Texas": Celebration of Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky, the famed Russian Composer	Russian Cultural Center	russianculturalcenter@gmail.com
3/3	5:00 PM	International Amyloidosis Myeloma Lymphoma Foundation: Sounds of Joy Concert	Wortham Center Cullen Theater	www.iamlf.org
3/6	7:30 PM	Fulbright Association: Fulbright Arts Festival	Univ. of Houston D/T, Wilhemina Cullen Robertson Auditorium	dykmanc@aol.com
3/8	3:00 PM	Russian Cultural Center "Our Texas": Russian Spring Celebration	Volcano Bar	russianculturalcenter@gmail.com
3/12	7:30 PM	St. Thomas High School: Scottish Festival Spectacular Clan Na Gael	Toyota Center	www.scottishfestival.net
3/14	2:00 PM	Royal Norwegian Consulate: Concert featuring Knut Erik Jensen	Univ. of St. Thomas Cullen Hall	(713) 521-2900
3/15	3:00 PM	Museum of Fine Arts: Alexander the Great in Afghanistan—The Mythical Transformation	Museum of Fine Arts, Brown Auditorium	(713) 639-7300
	—	United Russian American Association: Great Russian Literature and Language Festival (through May 24)	Multiple venues around Houston	www.uraa.us
3/20	5:00 PM	French-American Chamber of Commerce and the French Alliance: French BBQ for Francophonie Day	The French Alliance	exdir@facchouston.com
3/26	6:30 PM	Museum of Fine Arts: Cultural Conversation and Rehabilitation in Post-Conflict Afghanistan	Museum of Fine Arts, Brown Auditorium	(713) 639-7300

Events hosted by International Partner Cities of Houston:

3/16-18	Middle East Oil & Gas Show	Dahran, Bahrain	www.MEOS2009.com
4/6-7	U.S. Commercial Service: Asia Pacific Outlook Conference	Los Angeles, U.S.A.	Www.buyusa.gov/Utah/apbo2009.html
6/10-12	Oil & Gas Asia 2009	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	desmond.cheng@mail.doc.gov
5/20-23	China Beijing International High-Tech Expo: 11th CHITEC	Beijing, China	www.chitec.com
6/9-11	GO-EXPO 2009: Gas and Oil Exposition	Calgary, Canada	www.petroleumshow.com