

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Rockford to Host Illinois Sister Cities Annual Conference *Event Highlights Economic and Cultural Benefits of International Partnerships*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2013

ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Sister City Advisory Commission announces it will host the 15th annual conference of the Illinois Sister Cities Association (ISCA) on April 19-20 in Rockford. The conference brings ISCA members together to network and discuss strategies on how Sister Cities can build deeper relationships and maximize the benefits of international partnerships.

The event kicks off on April 19 at 7 p.m. with an evening banquet featuring global cuisine from the region's nine Sister Cities, networking and a cultural program at the Coronado Performing Arts Center, 314 N. Main, Rockford. The conference from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on April 20 at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 200 Bell School Rd., features speakers who will address a variety of topics from economic development to celebrating community diversity.

The keynote speaker is Mary Kane, President and CEO of Sister Cities International. From her deep understanding of global affairs, politics and business, Kane will share ideas and strategies for building deeper and sustainable relationships with Sister Cities around the globe. She will highlight various education, development and advocacy programs that help strengthen the Sister City international network. Prior to joining Sister Cities International in 2011, Kane served as the former executive director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Secretary of State for Maryland. Additional speakers include local philanthropists Pam and Jim Keeling who will discuss the Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza and Sister City Garden, as well as building a culture of peace and understanding. Speakers from Lidköping, Sweden will close out the conference by discussing how Sister City relationships can serve as economic development tools.

The U.S. Sister City program aims to increase global cooperation, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic activity through international partnerships. These relationships help spur trade and tourism as well as encourage educational and humanitarian efforts.

Rockford's current Sister Cities are:

- Brovary, Ukraine
- Changzhou, China
- Borgholm, Sweden
- Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- Ferentino, Italy
- Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan
- Taszár, Hungary

The ISCA represents nearly 50 communities with about 90 Sister City relationships in 40 countries. It is the fourth-largest Sister Cities association in the country.

Visit www.gorockford.com for more information about the conference and to register to attend.

RACVB is a private, non-profit organization established in 1984 to champion efforts to promote the Rockford Region as an overnight visitor destination. The RACVB adds wealth to the region's economy by investing in marketing programs that grow tourism. www.gorockford.com

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