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## Sister Cities Association of Springfield receives funding to send four-member delegation to Ashikaga, Japan

WASHINGTON, DC - Springfield, Illinois is one of seven U.S. cities selected by Sister Cities International to receive the Leading Asia: Renewing the U.S. and Japan Sister Cities Network exchange funding. The funding will enable a 10-day Springfield delegation visit to their Japanese sister city, Ashikaga.

The Springfield-Ashikaga sister city relationship, formalized in 1990, is based primarily on cultural, educational, and governmental exchanges. Through the Leading Asia exchange funding, Springfield will develop planning options in key areas of interest including, agriculture, fitness, nature, and festivals to assess the viability of business or sustainable development projects, especially those targeting young professionals and creative economies.

The purpose of the Leading Asia exchange funding is to launch programming in the following areas: business development, sustainability, creative economies, and young professional development. In 2011, five cities were awarded funding during the first round.

The Leading Asia: Renewing the U.S. and Japan Sister Cities Network is funded by a grant from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships. The objective of this grant award is to improve and expand existing relationships between the U.S. and Japan. To see the entire list of exchange funding awardees and to learn more about Leading Asia, please visit http://www.sister-cities.org/programs/leading\_asia.cfm

## About Sister Cities International

Sister Cities International facilitates nearly 2,000 partnerships in 136 countries on six continents between 600 communities in the United States with similar municipalities abroad. Sister Cities International represents citizen diplomats who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and cultural understanding through economic and sustainable development programs, youth and education projects, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

Facebook: Sister Cities International; Twitter: @SisterCityIntl; Website: www.sister-cities.org