



MINUTES

International Relations Committee of the Legislative Council

April 9, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Daryl Beall, Chairperson
Senator Dennis H. Black
Senator Nancy J. Boettger

Senator Gene Fraise
Senator Larry McKibben

MEETING IN BRIEF

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- I. Procedural Business
- II. Legislative Trip to Turkey
- III. Iowa Department of Economic Development Activities
- IV. Exchange Activities With Thailand



International Relations Committee of the Legislative Council

I. Procedural Business

Call to Order. Chairperson Beall called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. on April 9, 2008, in Room 24 of the Statehouse. The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Quorum. An insufficient number of members were present to constitute a quorum. The members present heard presentations from and engaged the invited speakers with questions and comments. The members deferred taking any official actions.

II. Legislative Trip to Turkey

Chairperson Beall discussed the use of regular out-of-state travel funds allocated to House and Senate members for the legislative trip to Turkey being organized through the Iowa Dialogue Center and by official invitation of the country of Turkey. House members requested and were given permission by the House Administration and Rules Committee to submit claims through House leadership for travel expense reimbursement relating to this legislative trip.

Dennis Prouty, Director of the Legislative Services Agency, reported to the Committee members that the two funds allotted to the Committee every two years—the gifts fund and the hosting fund—have not traditionally been used for Committee members' traveling expenses.

Senate Committee members discussed how to seek travel expense reimbursement and decided to file requests as usual through Senate leadership.

Two groups of legislators will be traveling to Turkey. The first group will be going to Turkey in late July. The second group will likely be traveling in October.

III. Iowa Department of Economic Development Activities

Overview. Ms. Kathy Hill, Business Development Division Manager of the International Office of the Department of Economic Development, detailed some of the international trips and related events that the department has planned in the coming months.

Upcoming Events. Upcoming events include:

- On May 6 and May 8, Mr. Joseph Salazar, Trade Policy Officer for the Western Hemisphere Free Trade Agreement Task Force, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, will be in Des Moines. The time and location of his speeches have not yet been determined.
- On May 13, the department is hosting the Global Iowa Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in West Des Moines. The conference is presented for Iowa companies that are engaged in exporting or want to engage in exporting as well as companies and communities that wish to support exporting.
- From May 16 through May 25, the department is conducting a trade mission to China. From June 15 through June 21, the department is conducting a trade mission to the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. Event details, market information, and application information for both trade missions are available at



<http://www.iowalifechanging.com/intlevents/>. Ms. Hill encouraged the Committee members to participate in trade missions in order to assist in recruiting business for Iowa and to experience hands-on the process for establishing international connections and promoting trade.

IV. Exchange Activities With Thailand

Mr. Sursee Rodari was invited by Chairperson Beall to speak about establishing a sister state or sister city relationship between Iowa and Thailand. Mr. Rodari told the Committee members that he came to Iowa in 1972 as an exchange student and thereafter became a United States citizen. Mr. Rodari noted that Thailand and Iowa have similar cultures—both are friendly and generous.

Senator Black told the Committee members that an organization that he works with, Newton OPEN, is pursuing sister city status with a town in northern Thailand.

Mr. Dinh VanLo, Executive Director of Tai Village, Inc., also spoke to Committee members. He thanked all Iowans for their support and friendship and for helping many Thais settle in Iowa. He mentioned the Tai Village being built in the Des Moines area. He said there are 8,000 to 10,000 ThaiDams residing in the Des Moines area now.

Ms. Hill told the Committee members that Thailand ranks in the top 20 of Iowa's exporting locations. She suggested that perhaps Iowa and Thailand could formalize their relationship and various connections with a memorandum of commerce rather than through the sister state or sister city approach. Ms. Hill mentioned that Iowa has such a memorandum with an Indian university. This kind of agreement encourages relationships on many levels.

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