

International Award in Memory of Orin F. Nolting



CRAIG G. KOCIAN

ICMA's International Award, established in memory of Orin F. Nolting, recognizes a local government and its chief administrator for furthering the cause of international understanding and cooperation by successfully adopting a program from another country; becoming actively involved in exchanges, sister-city activities, or educational/cultural activities with another country; or establishing a relationship with a local government from another country that resulted in innovative, concrete management improvements. The recipient of this year's International Award is Craig G. Kocian, city manager of Arvada, Colorado.

Craig G. Kocian, city manager of Arvada, Colorado (pop. 103,000), is committed to municipal government's role in building a complete community. Immediately following September 11, 2001, he led the community in conversations about Arvada's place in building a worldwide community, stressing how every city employee and resident, by conscientiously creating opportunities, can see the results of their efforts flourish and spread in extraordinary ways.

In keeping with this vision, Arvada Sister Cities International, a city-created nonprofit corporation, looked at how it might become more involved in building a better understanding of the Islamic world. On August 5, 2002, with Mr. Kocian's encouragement, the Arvada city council unanimously approved a resolution authorizing that a protocol be developed to establish a sister-city relationship with Kyzylorda, a city of approximately 200,000 residents in western Kazakhstan. In September, Sister Cities International (SCI) awarded approximately \$40,000 to each of four sister-city communities to support emergency preparedness programs with their counterparts in Islamic regions. Among the participating sister-city communities were Arvada and Kyzylorda.

Arvada's program was structured around four reciprocal visits of emergency preparedness teams

from Arvada and Kyzylorda. During Exchange One, in fall 2002, the two cities formalized their sister-city relationship at a community signing ceremony in Kyzylorda. While there, the emergency preparedness team conducted training in the Citizen Emergency Response Team and Incident Command System models of crisis management. This involved the medical, law enforcement, educational, fire and rescue, and governmental sectors of the city in a two-day training program, using materials that Arvada volunteers translated into Russian. Forty Kyzylorda professionals were trained to become trainers for the second phase of the exchange, when they would in turn train a group of 200 students and citizens.

The second exchange occurred in March 2003, when officials from Kyzylorda visited Arvada. A citywide concert was held to raise money for children around the world who are still threatened with the active polio-virus. The delegation then attended the National League of Cities Congress of Cities in Washington, D.C., where presentations on the project were made to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of State, the Embassy of Kazakhstan, and SCI.

Exchange Three occurred in July 2003, when three Kazak guests visited Arvada and then attended SCI's annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.

Three conference sessions focused on the lessons being learned from the two cities' emergency preparedness training partnership.

The purpose of Exchange Four, in fall 2003, was to wrap up and evaluate the program. While in Kyzylorda, the Arvada delegation presented the city with a defibrillator and spent a lot of time visiting medical facilities and learning about its sister-city's urgent needs. With clean but sparsely equipped space, the medical community has found it difficult to provide both the level of medical technology for which they are trained and the level of service to which they aspire.

Although the State Department portion of the grant is completed, the delegation's visit to Kyzylorda's medical facilities has led to a new chapter in this sister-city relationship: in November 2003, a community-based partnership, which involves Arvada Sister Cities International, the Arvada Chamber of Commerce, the Arvada Sunrise Rotary and Almaty (Kazakhstan) Rotary Clubs, Project C.U.R.E., and churches, businesses, and civic clubs in the city, began raising money to ship refurbished and surplus medical supplies to Kyzylorda. By summer 2005, \$38,000 had been raised, and with matching funds from the Rotary International's Foundation, the donations to date have purchased approximately \$2 million worth of medical supplies and equipment that have been shipped to the Kyzylorda medical community.

Mr. Kocian's encouragement, support, advocacy, and involvement in the emergency preparedness training and the community partnership that is sending medical supplies to Kyzylorda have been key to their success. His efforts to further international understanding are an inspiration to everyone who knows him. ■