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include Yokkaichi, Japan; Manta, Ecuador; Sochi, Russia; Izmir, Turkey; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and Bacolod, Philippines.

The concept of sister cities was launched by President Dwight Eisenhower, who recognized that international relationships needed a grassroots component to supplement the formal, diplomatic role played by the U.S. State Department. Today, there are more than 2,000 U.S. sister cities which are tied to 127 countries. The program is administered by Sister Cities International in Washington, D.C.

The Qingdao relationship began in 1985, and has been responsible for numerous delegation visits between the two port cities, including students and faculty whose trips have been underwritten by the LBQA. In addition, California State University, Long Beach, has an official exchange relationship with Qingdao University, and the Port of Long Beach and the Port of Qingdao are also sister ports.

LBQA also holds several events during the year to help local residents learn about China, including an annual luncheon featuring the Consul General of China, and a Chinese New Year Party. The group raises scholarship funds to support scholarly travel and other activities promoting their mission. More information can be found at www.lbqa.org.

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For Immediate Release

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China Sister City Relationship Reaches New Heights

Four Areas of Cooperation May Deepen Relationship

LONG BEACH, CA Sept 28, 2007- The 2008 China Olympics may bring more Chinese people to Long Beach and may prompt Long Beach and Qingdao residents to visit each other's City as a result of a new expansion of a Sister City relationship with Qingdao, China. The Mayor of Qingdao, visiting Long Beach last week, confirmed his City's interest in learning from Long Beach and increasing the relationship between our two Cities.

This past summer, the government of Qingdao sent a request to the Long Beach-Qingdao Association (LBQA) proposing four areas of cooperation with between our two Cities. Three of the four areas relate to Qingdao's role as the sailing venue/competition for the 2008 Olympics. Long Beach hosted the Olympic sailing regatta in the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 and with the City of Long Beach owning and managing the largest municipal marina in the United States, Qingdao is seeking expertise from Long Beach to ensure the same success at hosting their 2008 sailing venue in 2008. "This proposed new relationship when approved, will provide business opportunities and expertise for the continued development and management of Qingdao's newly developed marina, while increasing sailing events and tourism opportunities between our two Cities in our waterfronts now and in the future. It is our hope new business, education and tourism opportunities will evolve from this agreement, opening financial gains on both sides of the Pacific," said David Zanatta, LBQA President.

The four areas of cooperation requested are:

- Sailing regatta, events and marina management;
- Volunteer cooperation;
- Tourism, conventions and exhibitions;
- Government official training.

In last week's meetings, the LBQA presented Mayor Xia Geng a set of proposals to work with Qingdao in these four requested areas of cooperation. "We proposed a series of actions that would allow Qingdao to take advantage of their tremendous new sailing and tourism infrastructure, built for the Olympics as they work to become 'The Sailing City of China,' " said Mary E. Barton, Ph.D., LBQA Board member.

To do this, LBQA forged partnerships with several leading organizations in Long Beach. These include California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, the U.S. Sailing Center, and Alamitos Bay Yacht Club. "Together, we can help show Qingdao officials—here, or in Qingdao—on how we do things here, either informally or in a formal training program," continued Barton.

"This is an exciting development in our 22-year history as a Sister City," said Larry Uyeda, LBQA Chairman. "We look forward to more interaction between our sister city relationship."

As an International Sister Cities Affiliate, the LBQA oversees one of several sister city relationships for Long Beach. Under the umbrella of Sister Cities of Long Beach, Inc., seven sister city groups foster citizen-to-citizen diplomacy and business development opportunities intended to increase business, understanding and goodwill between the U.S. and other countries. Long Beach Sister Cities