

Local

Chicago Delegation Heads To Russia To Spur More Business, Cultural Ties

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CHICAGO (STMW) – A delegation representing World Business Chicago (WBC) and Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI) is traveling to Moscow April to establish relationships with Russian companies and spur new business development opportunities. Their trip, from Saturday to Thursday, is in conjunction with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's (CSO) performance at the Moscow Conservatory April 18 and 19, a joint release from Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office, World Business Chicago and Chicago Sister Cities International said.

The delegation's partnership with the CSO for this trip marks the first time that WBC has partnered with a cultural institution to explore international business opportunities. Building upon the increased cultural awareness of Chicago that the CSO's performances will facilitate, WBC and CSCI will promote Chicago as a desirable location for Russian businesses and strengthen Chicago's sister city ties with Moscow, the release said. The group will discuss Chicago's business advantages with area companies, in addition to promoting the Moscow Sister City Committee's upcoming Green Building Business Forum that will take place June 13-14 in Chicago.

"Promoting Chicago outside the United States is a key focus of my administration," Emanuel said. "This effort and others like it will show everyone else what we already know – that Chicago is the most American of American cities and a jewel for the world to enjoy."

While in Moscow, the delegation plans to meet with companies and business organizations, including IBS Group, the Russian Green Building Council, Delovaya Russia, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, OPORA Russia and the Moscow AmCham (American Chamber of Commerce), the release said.

In addition to the meetings, the delegation will host a dinner and presentation on Chicago's business advantages to Moscow business leaders, including 50 green building companies, at the residence of the U.S. Minister Counselor for Commercial Affairs, John McCaslin. Guests will then join the delegation to attend the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's performance at the Moscow Conservatory that evening.

Delegation members include: Samuel C. Scott III, chairman, Chicago Sister Cities International and board member, World Business Chicago; Leroy R. Allala, executive director, Chicago Sister Cities International; Dennis Vicchiarelli, managing director, World Business Chicago; Tom Bartkoski, director of international business development, World Business Chicago; Aleksandra Efimova, president, Aleksandra Enterprises, Inc. and chair, Moscow Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International; and Arthur George, partner, Baker & McKenzie and business co-chair, Moscow Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International.

Approximately 50 Chicago-area companies have a presence in Russia, and there are a number of Russian steel companies with operations in the Chicago metropolitan area. The Chicago Customs District reported \$273 million in goods exported to Russia in 2011, primarily in machinery/computers, medical/instruments, and electronics, the release said. Chicago imported \$99 million in goods from Russia in 2011, primarily in iron and steel, rubber, and machinery/computers. Total trade between Chicago and Russia accounted for \$373 million last year, according to the release.

Chicago has shared a Sister City relationship with Moscow since 1997.

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