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**ALBUQUERQUE SISTER CITIES FOUNDATION WINS SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL'S INNOVATION AWARD FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

WASHINGTON, DC – Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation (ASCF) has won the Sister Cities International (SCI) 2017 Innovation Award for Economic Development for a city with a population over 500,001. The Sister Cities Innovation Award for Economic Development recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding community and individual sister city programs that promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation.

To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Albuquerque's first sister city relationship with Sasebo, Japan, ASCF embarked on one of its most ambitious collaboration efforts to date by leading a Mayoral delegation to Sasebo that promoted economic development and cooperation. Five companies from Albuquerque were selected to meet with business officials in both Japan and Taiwan to promote international trade, and Mayor Richard Berry met with the heads of two Japanese-based companies (Canon and Sumco) to thank them for establishing roots in Albuquerque and to encourage them to expand across New Mexico. The Central New Mexico Community College also participated in the mission to establish ties with Nagasaki International University to create exchange opportunities for students in the Hospitality and Tourism Program. The successful visit by the delegation has reaffirmed the Albuquerque-Sasebo relationship and ASCF anticipates several new international trade deals to develop as a result of the exchange.

SCI's Annual Awards are awarded in several categories including Best Overall, Innovation (Arts and Culture, Economic Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and Youth and Education), and Volunteer of the Year. Award winners will be honored at the Lou Wozar Diplomatic Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 15 during SCI's 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference in Virginia Beach, VA.

SCI's 61<sup>st</sup> [Annual Conference](#) events, which include a [Youth Leadership Summit](#) and a [U.S.-Russia Mayors' Summit](#), will take place in Virginia Beach, VA from July 12-16, 2017. The events will bring together hundreds of the most influential global leaders in diplomacy, foreign affairs, policy, business, and innovation. Elected and municipal officials, business leaders, youth delegates, and citizen diplomats will discuss this year's theme "Global Communities for World Peace," building on President Eisenhower's initial vision of creating a more peaceful world by building global relationships through communities.

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**About Sister Cities International**

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for 500 member communities with over 2,000 partnerships in 145 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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