



MAYOR

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TO: Website Readers
FROM: Mayor Steve Ponto
DATE: December 23, 2010
RE: Visit to our Sister City, Seligenstadt, Germany

Those of you who joined in our Fourth of July celebrations this year know that a delegation from our "Sister City," Seligenstadt, Germany, participated in the festivities. Our German guests marched in our Parade and also the Chairman of Seligenstadt's Sister City Committee, Thorsten Bonifer, spoke to the crowd assembled for the Ice Cream Social in the Civic Plaza.

In October, twelve of us from Brookfield visited Seligenstadt to further promote our Sister City relationship. The trip was organized as a "Wine Tour" and each participant was responsible for his or her own expenses.

Our group flew from O'Hare Airport to Munich, Germany arriving on Sunday, October 10th. We were met by a delegation from Seligenstadt in a very modern bus. Together, we went to the City of Bolzano in the Alps of northern Italy for three days of vineyard tours. We then bused to Seligenstadt, Germany for a four day stay. Seligenstadt served as our base of operations for more vineyard tours. In each instance, the tours were led by very knowledgeable people and were very detailed and informative.

The last day of the trip included a tour of Seligenstadt with some time to shop. There was a reception at City Hall late in the afternoon with the American flag flying next to the German flag. At least two hundred people attended. The reception featured live music, brief speeches, guest book signings, and champagne. We then had supper in Seligenstadt's ancient monastery, where a men's choral group from Seligenstadt dressed as monks and entertained us with Gregorian chants and other music.

I was deeply impressed by the warmth of our German hosts and their desire to build a relationship on many levels with Brookfield. The relationship between our cities started with high school student exchanges, and has grown with citizen delegation visits. We hope some day there will be economic ties between us. Fundamentally, though, our Sister City relationship is based on citizen to citizen friendship and a desire to promote international understanding.

Brookfield's Sister City Committee, which is headed by Harry Farchmin, is planning another delegation trip to Seligenstadt in June of 2011. Please contact Harry either directly or through my office if you would like to become involved in Sister City activities. It is a very worthwhile experience.



**Begrüßung durch Erste Stadträtin Claudia Bicherl anlässlich des Besuchs des
Bürgermeisters Steven Ponto und einer Delegation aus Brookfield in Seligenstadt
am 16. Oktober 2010, 16.30 Uhr, im Rathaus**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

friends of the German-American partnership.

Together with the chairman of the city council Christian Krueger, I welcome you wholeheartedly to Seligenstadt's city hall. I would especially like to welcome the mayor of our American sister-city Brookfield, Mr. Steve Ponto and wife Mary Annette, along with his delegation.

In addition, I would also like to welcome:

- Retired Undersecretary of State, Mr. Bernd Abeln,
- Dr. Ingrid Gräfin zu Solms Wildenfels,
- our city councilmen,
- my colleagues from the magistrate ,
- members of the advisory board for Youth and Foreign Relations,
- the board of the European Friendship Committee as well as the ladies and gentlemen of the Committee Brookfield, especially the chief organizer of this visit to Germany, Mr. Thorsten Bonifer and his wife,
- our long-time and close friend Mrs. Nicole Jusserand from our French sister city Triel,
- the representatives of SeligenStadtmarketing GmbH Seligenstadt,
- our 2 musicians: Sven Garrecht und Simon Seipel,
- and last but not least the loyal members of the Press

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

In December 2008, when the city of Seligenstadt officially became a sister-city to Brookfield, under the watchful eyes of many guests from both cities, it was the beginning of a new partnership, yet at the same time an important building block and giant leap forward for the cultural understanding between Germany and the USA. In the past almost 2 years, this partnership has steadily grown through various continued encounters and meetings, especially between the schools, and has forged this partnership into a steadfast and loyal alliance.

The wine trip for our friends from Brookfield is additional proof that there is a close bond between the people of both cities.

Although, truthfully, I have to admit that the first contact between residents of Seligenstadt and the new continent took place 165 years ago. The partnership between the two cities is long overdue, even if, according to the history books, the first people from Seligenstadt didn't land in Brookfield, but rather went straight to New York.

What was the impetus for the emigration out of Seligenstadt back in the mid 19th century? Lack of industrialization, bad crops and harvests, few job opportunities as well as increased impoverization was reason enough for many resident of Seligenstadt to start a new life across the pond.

"The fertile soil and mild, healthy climate, that is neither too hot nor too cold.....offers emigrants more advantages than any other location, to turn his efforts into successful harvests". These are the words that a Frankfurter emigration-specialist named Alexander Scheidler used to wet Seligenstadt's residents appetites to leave their homeland; and in his descriptions referred to Perry County, apparently one of the prettiest areas of Tennessee.

Back then, the hardship in Seligenstadt must have been so great, that even the Seligenstadt town council, under the leadership of Mayor Goy, during a special session on April 29, 1846, authorized financial aid to all who wanted to emigrate and needed assistance. The result was that 114 men, women and children (at the time more than 3% of Seligenstadt's residents) added their names to the emigration list that was posted at the town hall. The passage London - New York, which brought its own set of challenges, took 5-7 weeks and cost 60 guildens for a passenger over the age of 12.

Today, the flight from Brookfield to Frankfurt takes a mere 8 hours, ideal conditions and terms to establish a partnership between the cities, one that we have today and one that most certainly would not have been possible 160 years ago.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you can see, our nations are bound by a long history, one that this relatively new partnership between our cities and these most recent get-togethers will carry forward.

To that end, I wish nothing but the best for the future of the partnership between these two cities and for those responsible, the courage and confidence to accept the challenges that lie ahead. I wish you all a wonderful and enjoyable stay with us in Seligenstadt. May further meetings be the fruitful soil that lets the friendship between Seligenstadt and Brookfield grow.

Remarks of Mayor Steven V. Ponto

Reception
Seligenstadt City Hall
October 16, 2010

Shortly after I became Mayor of the City of Brookfield, I received a congratulatory letter from Mayor Dagmar Nonn-Adams together with a book. The book was full of beautiful photographs of your historic city. I was very impressed with the sites of Seligenstadt as well as the exceptional photography. It is a thrill for me and my wife, Mary, to be here and see all the wonders of Seligenstadt first hand. This is our first trip to Germany and we sincerely hope there will be more such trips in the future.

The people in our communities have much in common. The largest ancestry group in Wisconsin is German composing over 42% of the state's population. Germans settled throughout Wisconsin but the greatest concentration is in the Milwaukee area, of which Brookfield is a part. My step-grandfather's last name was Zastrow, and when he was small boy in Kaukauna, Wisconsin his family spoke German – not English - in their home. This was true of many Wisconsin families in the early 1900s.

We also appreciate the differences in our communities. I understand that Seligenstadt is one of Germany's oldest towns and its roots go back well over 1,000 years. Brookfield was long an agricultural area and only developed as a city in the second half of the twentieth century. In fact, Brookfield was incorporated as a City in 1954 and, in the 56 years since then, has only had five Mayors. I am number five. I hope it is a long time before Brookfield has its sixth Mayor.

Today, and through this trip, we are celebrating the Sister City relationship between Brookfield and Seligenstadt. It is interesting to note that our respective counties, Waukesha and Offenbach, are also Sister Counties. Further, our respective states, Wisconsin and Hesse, are also Sister States.

We hope to build a relationship with you on many levels. Our young people have visited Seligenstadt and I met some of your young people who visited Brookfield just last month. We greatly enjoyed the visit by a delegation from Seligenstadt this summer during the week of our July 4th – Independence Day – celebrations. Your delegation from Seligenstadt marched in our Parade and Thorsten Bonifer spoke to the crowd afterward in our Civic Plaza. This display of international friendship added a new dimension to our festivities.

Perhaps in the future citizens from our two cities will have business ventures together. The man who lives across the street from me in Brookfield owns a company, Woodway USA, which makes very high quality treadmills for exercising. His company has a plant in Weil am Rhein, Germany. I understand there is talk of possibly brewing your local beer in Brookfield. This would certainly be appropriate. The Milwaukee area is well known for its breweries. In fact, Milwaukee is known as "Beer City" and our professional baseball team is called the Brewers – reflecting that heritage.

Fundamentally, our Sister City relationship is based on friendship and the desire to promote international understanding. If you have occasion to visit Brookfield, please come to our City Hall. When you walk in the main entrance which is a two story clock tower, you will see the banner of Seligenstadt and the banner of Hesse. When you go to our main conference room, you will see it is named the "Seligenstadt Conference Room." Inside you will see many items from Seligenstadt on display including a photograph of Mayor Nonn-Adams and my predecessor as they signed our Sister City Agreement.

In my office, I have a desk calendar and coffee cup from Seligenstadt as well as the book your Mayor gave me with the photos of your City.

In short, you will feel right at home in our City Hall and you will be very welcome. Please think of Brookfield as your home in America. We will think of Seligenstadt as our home in Europe.

God bless our two cities and the friendship between them.

Danke shoen.









