

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2012

MEDIA CONTACT:

Megha Swamy
mswamy@sister-cities.org
202-347-8637

Hot Springs Sister City Program receives funding to send four-member delegation to Hanamaki, Japan

WASHINGTON, DC – Hot Springs, Arkansas is one of seven U.S. cities selected by *Sister Cities International* to receive the *Leading Asia: Renewing the U.S. and Japan Sister Cities Network* exchange funding. The funding will enable a 10-day Hot Springs delegation visit to their Japanese sister city, Hanamaki.

Through the *Leading Asia* funding, the sister city program plans to expand the scope of its exchanges to include business development focused on the creative economies identified in Hot Springs' current strategic plan for economic growth. These creative economies include health and wellness, arts and recreation, and quality of place. The Hot Springs-Hanamaki relationship, formalized in January, 1993, currently places emphasis on educational and cultural exchange. The cities have also collaborated on tourism, a vital sector to both economies.

The purpose of the *Leading Asia* exchange funding is to launch programming in the following areas: business development, sustainability, creative economies, and young professional development. In 2011, five cities were awarded funding during the first round.

The *Leading Asia: Renewing the U.S. and Japan Sister Cities Network* is funded by a grant from the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships. The objective of this grant award is to improve and expand existing relationships between the U.S. and Japan. To see the entire list of exchange funding awardees and to learn more about *Leading Asia*, please visit http://www.sister-cities.org/programs/leading_asia.cfm

About *Sister Cities International*

Sister Cities International facilitates nearly 2,000 partnerships in 136 countries on six continents between 600 communities in the United States with similar municipalities abroad. *Sister Cities International* represents citizen diplomats who work tirelessly to promote the organizations' mission of creating world peace and cultural understanding through economic and sustainable development programs, youth and education projects, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

Facebook: [Sister Cities International](#); Twitter: [@SisterCityIntl](#); Website: www.sister-cities.org