

Mayor Signs Important Agreement With Chinese City Friendship Pacts Important Step for Trade

Mayor Tom Leppert today signed a “Friendship City Agreement” between Dallas and Qingdao, China. The pact is considered a key step to increasing trade and business ties between the two cities.

“These agreements are extremely important for the Chinese,” said Mayor Tom Leppert. “It formalizes relationships our two cities have spent years building, but it also indicates that trade and business between Dallas and Qingdao cities are moving to a new level.”

Qingdao’s Mayor Xia Geng signed the agreement for his city during a formal ceremony attended by the Mayor’s China Trade Delegation, a group of Dallas city and business leaders. Through a translator, Mayor Xia said the agreement would boost communication and dialogue.

During the ceremony, Mayor Leppert praised city officials including Councilmember Ron Natinsky, who over several years have cultivated a strong relationship with Qingdao.

“When they see Dallas officials have come not once, not twice, but time and time again over many years, they realize Dallas is a partner for the long haul,” said Mayor Leppert.

Following the ceremony, the Mayor hosted the delegation to a formal dinner, where officials spent a good part of the evening visiting around the long table toasting one another and exchanging business cards, an important piece of business etiquette in China.

Qingdao is a major seaport, naval base and industrial center in Northern China. Qingdao was one of the first Special Economic and Technology Development Zones (SETDZ) created by the Chinese government, and it is a vibrant center for foreign investment and international trade.

Qingdao is also home to the Hisense, a major electronics and appliances manufacturer. The Mayor’s trade delegation toured the Hisense showroom, which included the latest in flat screen televisions as well as major kitchen appliances. The Mayor would like to see a Hisense manufacturing facility established in the Southern Sector.

The Friendship City Agreement with Qingdao is one of two that Mayor Leppert will sign on this trip. By establishing stronger ties with important Chinese business and trade centers, the Mayor hopes to boost trade and tourism between Dallas and China, invite Chinese investment and manufacturing, and lay the groundwork for attracting a direct flight between China and DFW International Airport within two years.

Earlier Monday morning, Mayor Leppert, Councilmember Ron Natinsky, and DFW’s Executive Vice President for Marketing Joe Lopano met with top officials at China Eastern Airlines in Shanghai. Mayor Leppert was encouraged by the talks.

“Clearly, we laid out a strong economic case for China Eastern,” said Mayor Leppert. “This is a long process, but I certainly walked away from the meetings feeling we got off to a very good start.”

[See photos of the Visit – next page](#)

Photos — Trade Delegation's visit to Qingdao, China



Mayor Leppert & Mayor Xia signing the Friendship City Agreement



Hisense Officials show the delegation views of Qingdao from the corporate headquarters rooftop garden



Councilmember Jerry Allen, Mayor Leppert, Councilmember Tennell Atkins and Councilmember Ron Natinsky at Tiananmen Square, Beijing



Mayor and Mrs. Laura Leppert at Tiananmen Square, Beijing



Hisense Corporate Showroom tour