



National Lieutenant Governors Association

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LT. GOVERNORS MAKE HISTORY WITH MISSION TO CHINA

A group of the nation's lieutenant governors will make an economic development and humanitarian mission to China October 5 – 12, 2008. The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) mission is the first of its kind and will include meetings with high-ranking officials and a visit to earthquake affected cities.

“The NLGA mission will take place days after the People's Republic of China's 59th anniversary, which coincided with their 30th anniversary of reform,” said NLGA Director Julia Hurst. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said on the country's September 29, 2008, anniversary that China will continue to “stick to reform and open up, promote social harmony and strive for new achievements in building a moderately prosperous society.”

“At this moment in history, U.S.-China trade is at historic highs and an increased level of dialogue exists,” said Hurst. “China just hosted the Olympics and the United States Census Bureau reported in July that China is the second largest trading partner of the U.S.,” said Hurst. The lieutenant governors of Alabama, Connecticut, Kansas, Nevada, and Wisconsin will participate in the mission. Lieutenant governors are the second highest-ranking officials in every state and are first in line of gubernatorial succession.

“China is a rising economic and diplomatic power, of great strategic importance to the United States,” said NLGA Chair Wisconsin Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton. “The states will have a critical role to play as the U.S. China Strategic Economic Dialogue plays out with specific local implementation over the next ten years.”

“This mission is an opportunity for lieutenant governors to promote their states, while making important contacts within China's economic and political sectors for the future,” said Hurst.

The agenda includes three days in Beijing, one day in Chengdu, one day in Mianyang, and two days in Shanghai. The lieutenant governors will meet with Vice Premier Zhang Dejiang, Vice Minister of Commerce Ms. Ma Xiuhong, officials of the Pudong Economic Development Zone, the mayors of two earthquake stricken cities, and other officials. This mission includes an exchange on conservation of endangered species and natural habitats in relation to the Chinese Panda Research Center, also an example of educational tourism.

The trip is hosted by the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) through work with the People's Friendship Organization and the People's Republic of China. The mission is the first time the People's Republic of China has initiated and fully funded a multi-state delegation of this kind.

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