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**Nanao, Japan Delegation in Monterey to Celebrate
20-year Sister City Relationship
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MONTEREY, Ca. – The Monterey Peninsula- Nanao Friendship Association, the City of Monterey and other partners are gearing up to celebrate and welcome the 20th year of a sister city relationship between Monterey and Nanao, Japan. Twenty Four delegates from Nanao will visit Monterey in September to commemorate the long-standing friendship; a friendship that includes business, educational, and local government partnerships. Involvement between the Monterey Peninsula and Nanao chambers of commerce, Monterey and Carmel Rotaries, the Jazz Festival and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) have all benefited from and strengthened this enduring connection.

Mr. Nobuyuki Magura, Chairman of the Monterey Jazz Festival in Noto, Chairman of Nanao-Monterey Friendship Association and Chairman of Junior Wings student home stay program Association will lead the delegation that includes Nanao City executives, managers, corporate planners and public relations professionals from the City of Nanao. During their four-day visit to Monterey, the group will attend tours, receptions and presentations hosted by Monterey Mayor Clyde Roberson and local tourism professionals. They will attend the Monterey Jazz Festival, visit Cannery Row and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, Del Monte Center, and the Farmer's Market at Old Monterey Marketplace. They will also have opportunities to tour 17-Mile Drive and Carmel. A highlight will include a 20-year commemorative event at the Sister City Park along the Monterey Recreation Coastal Trail.

“The twenty year relationship between Monterey and Nanao exemplifies what a success such a cultural exchange can foster,” said Mayor Clyde Roberson. “Both cities and so many fellow organizations have benefitted, including young students who will help keep the friendship growing for decades.”

“Residents of Nanao have learned so much from the Monterey Peninsula over the last 30 years. The Monterey Peninsula has been a leader in many different areas, including in the tourist industry and in community development,” said Mr. Tim Ashida, the group’s coordinator and executive with A.K.K. Associates in Glendale, Calif. “Now it is tremendous that the fellow citizens and friends of Monterey can visit Monterey and learn something very valuable that our other Nanao groups have been experiencing over the last three decades. It is my personal joy, also, that I can introduce how magnificent Monterey is to those who have never been to the city before.”

A Strong, Long-lasting Association

The Monterey-Nanao relationship dates back to 1986, when a group from Nanao first visited Monterey to study the city’s economic drivers. Like Monterey, Nanao is a coastal community that repositioned itself as a tourist destination after its fishing industry diminished. Several delegations visited California in the following years, and local Rotary clubs and non-profit organizations got involved in hosting and leading presentations.

By the mid-1990s, the two communities signed a formal sister city agreement and a group of volunteers came together as the Monterey Peninsula-Nanao Friendship Association to coordinate cultural and business exchanges. Since 1995, more than 750 Nanao residents have visited Monterey; some 320 professionals and youngsters from Monterey have toured Nanao. Students from Walter Colton School regularly travel to Japan through the affiliation, as do student groups associated with Rotary International and the Junior Wings program and young musicians from the Monterey Jazz Festival’s all-star bands.

Building Communities

In addition to launching a jazz event inspired by the Monterey Jazz Festival, Nanao leaders have carried out other projects based on lessons learned in Monterey. The community constructed a wharf that now draws tourists to its restaurants and shops. After touring the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, leaders built their own hospital on a hill overlooking the city.

While business connections are key, the cultural component of each exchange also leaves a lasting impact.

“The City of Monterey has had a long standing relationship with the City of Nanao in Japan. In that period of time there have been over 750 visitors that have come from this Sister City,” said former Monterey Mayor Dan Albert. “ This year we will be celebrating the official twenty year relationship. During these many years, many friendships have been made and better understandings between the two cultures have developed.”

While visiting Monterey, the group will stay at Casa Munras Garden Hotel and Spa, a member of the Inns of Monterey (www.innsfmonterey.com) a long term supporter of the Monterey Peninsula-Nanao Friendship Association. The Inns of Monterey is a collection of four uniquely designed boutique hotels, each providing an environment committed to personal and attentive service.

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Note to editors: To arrange interviews and photos with members of the Nanao delegation, including Nobuyuki Magura or coordinator Tim Ashida, or participating Monterey hosts, please contact Randy Venard at 831-658-2333