

Sister City Annual Report – Zadar, Croatia and Milwaukee, WI

Attention: Chris Lee, Staff Assistant, Milwaukee Sister City Committee

On behalf of the Federation of Croatian Societies, I am pleased to provide the City of Milwaukee Sister Cities Committee, with a report on major activities taken by the Federation since the May 11, 2015 signing of the agreement between Milwaukee and the City of Zadar, Croatia. Our goal for these past six months was to build a platform, a foundation for growing and enhancing a meaningful, long-term relationship between these two cities, one focusing on economic exchange opportunities, educational best practices around critical issues such as water, governmental/civic best practices and cultural exchanges.

Since the signing of the Sister City agreement in Milwaukee on May 11, the Federation of Croatian Societies has been involved in the following activities designed to promote/enhance the relationship between Zadar and Milwaukee. Major activities include the following:

- Formalized plans for a Federation delegation to visit Zadar this summer, a trip that will include invitations to local civic, educational and business leaders to join. In addition, the Federation has invited the Zadar Mayor to visit Milwaukee in July, 2016, to not only visit City Hall and business and educational leaders, but be the Federation's special guest at our annual Croatian Fest celebration in July at Croatian Park.
- Milwaukee Common Council President Michael Murphy, as part of a vacation to Croatia this past summer, visited Zadar and met with local officials. The meeting was arranged with the assistance of Croatian Consul General Dr. Jelena Grcic Polic.
- Federation has met with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Association of Commerce in regard to the MMAC hosting an event highlighting investment opportunities in Croatia and Zadar specifically. In addition, we have met with both the Water Council and UWM regarding sharing of best practices around water. In regard to the University, there is interest from the University of Zadar around exchange of ideas, professors and best practices.
- On the cultural side of the equation, the Milwaukee Croatian Tamburitians (a Federation member) will be featuring music, song and dances from the Zadar region at its 2016 concert and for all 2016 performances. The music and choreography were obtained from Zadar folk lore groups.
- In 2018, MCT will be traveling to Croatia and one of the features will be a shared program in Zadar with local folklore groups.

- Have met with state officials to lay groundwork for a possible trade mission to Zadar and all of Croatia.

As mentioned above, all of these action are designed to build what we hope will be a fruitful and long-lasting Sister City relationship. The Federation remains committed to playing a lead role in this endeavor and will continue to focus on activities and projects that truly grow this effort.

Beyond the meaningful cultural exchange opportunities, we remain convinced that activities surrounding water will be the major driver in this relationship. Both cities, due to their locations on major bodies of water, are rightfully focused on water in terms of economic growth, trade and everyday use. How we can highlight the need for best practice exchanges at governmental, educational and business-related levels, will be the key.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paul Lucas, Board Member, Federation of Croatian Societies, Inc.