

**MIAMI DADE SISTER CITIES PROGRAM
GOODWILL MISSION TO ASTI, ITALY**



SEPTEMBER 8 TO SEPTEMBER 14, 2006



END OF MISSION REPORT



*Official Banner for the Palio di Asti
presented to the Palio Winner*

Background:

To celebrate the twenty one years of a vibrant Sister Cities relationship between Miami Dade County and the Province of Asti, Italy, Miami Dade County Commissioner and Chair of the Jay Malina International Trade Consortium (ITC), Natacha Seijas led a nineteen member delegation to Asti to celebrate the Festivale delle Sagre. This festival honors the wine and food harvest in the province with a parade representing each of the forty-eight towns and villages in the province and celebrates the harvest by offering a food and wine festival in the Campo Del Palio. The festival concludes with the famous Palio di Asti where all of the neighborhoods in the City of Asti run a race dating back to medieval times to celebrate the successful completion of the annual harvest.

In 2005, a delegation of government and private sector representatives visited Miami-Dade County and extended an invitation to come to Asti during the province's food and wine festival to reciprocate the warmth and hospitality extended to them during their visit to our community. Emma Tibaldeo, who represents Asti in our Sister Cities Coordinating Council worked with a committee of the Council to prepare the visit. Members of the committee included Council vice Chair Shelly Fano, and Council members Laurice Hunter Scott, and Eva Swift. Together with members of the ITC Sister Cities staff, the committee developed an agenda, contacted its counterparts in Asti, worked with the local Italian Consulate, established prices, and planned the visit to Asti from September 8 to September 14, 2006. (See Appendix I).

ITC staff released a registration form for the trip in the spring of 2006 and established a registration deadline of July 20, 2006 for delegates to register. A total of 19 members representing government, education, and business sectors registered as program participants. (See Appendix II). On August 31, ITC staff along with Emma Tibaldeo conducted a briefing for all program participants to discuss the agenda for the trip, to provide background information on local customs and practices, and to distribute the airline tickets and other relevant trip information.



*Official Banner of the
City of Asti, Italy*

Program Summary:

In Asti the Miami Dade delegates were met by representatives of the provincial government and were officially welcomed by Mr. Roberto Marmo, who is the President of the Provincial Assembly of Asti. Commissioner Natacha Seijas introduced the members of the delegation and expressed on behalf of the delegation her appreciation for the invitation to the important festivities of the province.

Miami Dade delegates participated as official guests of the province in the Spilata della Sagre—the Farmers' Parade and were seated in the official stand reserved for local dignitaries. The parade which highlighted the most important activities of each of the villages and towns of the province also had vignettes of typical village life. Maurizio Rasero, who is the elected Commissioner from the province responsible for special events and the Sister Cities Program accompanied the delegation and served as official host for the parade activities.

The Village of Mongardino hosted the delegates in the Campo del Palio. Mongardino is one of the towns participating in the food festival. Over 400,000 persons from all over Italy and Europe gathered to participate in the day long tasting of the food and wine from the farms and vineyards of Asti. Delegates met with and discussed the details of organizing the event with representatives of the village government and the private sector organizers, who raise funds throughout the year to underwrite the costs of the project. The Miami-Dade delegation presented a plaque of friendship to the authorities of Mongardino.

At the request of Commissioner Natacha Seijas, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Director, Vivian Rodriguez held a number of meetings with the organizers of the parade and food event to gather information for a possible similar project in one of our Miami Dade regional parks.



Typical float in the Farmers' Parade—representing one of the villages whose specialty is cheese making.



The delegation visited the oldest Nougat factory in Asti—Torrone Barbero located in the heart of the city of Asti. To this day, it manufactures nougat by hand. It is the oldest nougat factory in the Piedmont region of Italy. Delegation members were given a tour of the factory and observed first hand the making of this famous Asti delicacy. Commissioner Seijas presented Davide Barbero, the fifth generation owner of the factory, with a Certificate of Appreciation.

The official welcome to Asti took place on Monday, September 11 at the provincial assembly hall with the presence of representatives of the Italian government, provincial elected and appointed officials, local elected officials, representatives of the chamber of commerce and of the local economic development agencies, as well as key representatives of the private sector. Provincial Assembly President, Mr. Roberto Marmo presided over the ceremonies and welcomed Commissioner Seijas and the delegation on behalf of the people of Asti. President Marmo in his welcome speech also alluded to the 9/11 victims and expressed his solidarity with the American people.

President Marmo also recognized Emma Tibaldeo for her contributions and for her efforts in strengthening the bonds of friendship between Miami-Dade and Asti.

Of particular interest to the delegation was the sculpture gracing the back wall of the provincial assembly hall sculpted by local artist Paolo Lizzi. A replica of that sculpture was donated by the Province of Asti to Miami Dade County in the year 2001. The sculpture also by Paolo Lizzi graces the fountain at the entrance to the Stephen P. Clark Center.

Dr. Ana Cruz, who is chair of the Business Administration Department at Miami Dade College, had meetings with representatives of the University of Asti School of Business to explore possible ties between that university and Miami Dade College.



President Marmo and members of the Asti Provincial Assembly welcome the delegates.



Commissioner Seijas and Council vice Chair Shelly Fano presented an official plaque and a clock to Asti Provincial President, Roberto Marmo. Also in the picture, is the Prefect of Asti. He is the representative of the Italian government in the Province. Similar presentations were made to the Prefect and to the President of the Municipal Council of the City of Asti.

The delegation took a tour of the historic center of the City of Asti, which at one time was a totally walled-in fortress. Maurizio Rasero led the delegates to a tour of the Church of St. Secondo, a Romanesque structure which was built in honor of the Patron Saint of Asti, a Roman soldier named St. Secondo. In the church, the delegates viewed the banner for the Palio di Asti which was to be presented to the winner of the Palio. Each year the banner is made anew, but it must always have at its center the figure of St. Secondo, who is considered the protector of Asti.

Later that day, the Bishop of Asti, the Most Reverend Francesco Ravinale, hosted the delegation at the Episcopal Palace. Bishop Ravinale expressed his delight at meeting such a distinguished group from Miami-Dade County and led a discussion on the history of Asti. Members of the delegation had an opportunity to tour the Episcopal Palace and to discuss our local history and Miami's diverse culture.

The delegation also visited one of the oldest wineries in Asti—the Bava winery which is located in Cocconato where the delegation was hosted to dinner by representatives of the winery as well as by representatives of the province and members of the private sector who had visited Miami in 2005. During this event, Commissioner Seijas offered a toast honoring the more than 21 years of friendship between Asti and Miami-Dade County.

On September 12, the delegation traveled to other parts of the province of Asti to participate in an exhibit of local produce harvested in the area. Asti Provincial Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Mrs. Palmina Penna gave the delegation a tour of the famous Castello del Bubbio where delegates met with local growers and community leaders. Mrs. Penna also took the delegates on a tour of a local vineyard which produces organic wine.



Commissioner Seijas and Council vice Chair Shelly Fano presented Bishop Ravinale with a clock on behalf of the people of Miami-Dade County. In turn, the Bishop gave Commissioner Seijas a book containing the history of the Church in Asti.



Miami-Dade County delegates in the Castello del Bubbio.

The Province of Asti hosted the Miami-Dade delegates at the Gener Neuv Restaurant, one of the most famous restaurants in the Piedmont region of Italy. The owners of Gener Neuv had visited Miami in 2005, and in appreciation for the hospitality our community extended them during their visit here, they hosted the delegates to dinner in honor of the twenty one years of friendship between Miami-Dade and Asti. The Vice President of the Asti Provincial Assembly Giorgio Musso, and members of the Assembly, Giovanni Spandano, and Domenica Demetrio, as well as Vittorio Quaglia, the provincial administrator, joined Asti sculptor, Paolo Lizzi, and representatives of other civic institutions in the event. Miami-Dade delegates had an opportunity to learn more about the civic and cultural institutions of the Province and to discuss the many features which make Miami-Dade County a unique community. Commissioner Seijas extended an invitation to visit Miami-Dade County and celebrated the warm bonds of friendship which have so strongly developed over the years with the people of Asti.



Commissioner Seijas presented the owners of the Gener Neuv Restaurant with a plaque of appreciation; . She also received the banner from Asti Rotary Club. Picture with Commissioner Seijas, Provincial Commissioner Maurizio Rasero and members of the Milano Scala Rotary Club.

Provincial Commissioner Maurizio Rasero took the delegates on a tour of the historic center of the city of Torino, site of the 2006 winter Olympics.

There, Miami Dade College President, Dr. Eduardo Padron had meetings with representatives of the University of Torino where he also met with the Vice President of the university to explore possible ties and academic exchanges between that historic university and Miami Dade College.



The famous flag throwers of Asti gave a beautiful presentation of their historic flag throwing prowess whose history goes back to medieval times. Commissioner Seijas extended an invitation to visit Miami-Dade County and requested Miami Parks Director, Vivian Rodriguez to work with ITC Director Tony Ojeda to coordinate the project. In this picture, she is accompanied by Emma Tibaldeo and Asti Sister Cities Program Chair, Rolando Doglione.

At the conclusion of the trip, the Miami-Dade delegation hosted a farewell dinner at the Castello di Costigliole for the authorities representing the national government of Italy, the Province, and the City of Asti. Representing the Italian government was the Vice Prefect of Asti, and representing the Province of Asti, were Asti Commissioners Maurizio Rasero and Domenica Demetrio. The Mayor of Asti, Vittorio Voglino, was represented by the President of the Asti Municipal Council. Rolando Doglione, who is the Chair of the Asti- Miami-Dade Sister Cities Program, and the Chief of the Province of Asti Fire Department, Dottore Pietro di Martino represented the administration of the province. Also attending were representatives of the educational and civic institutions in Asti.

The Castello di Costigliole is administered by a non for profit entity, the Italian Culinary Institute for Foreigners (ICF) that trains students from all over the world in the cuisine and wine of the Piedmont region where Asti is located. Members of the administration of the ICF joined the delegates for the farewell dinner. The ICF students who assisted with the dinner preparation also served as hosts. The students were from Japan.

Commissioner Seijas recognized the outstanding efforts of Emma Tibaldeo in organizing all the events in Asti, and she presented Mrs. Tibaldeo with tokens of our appreciation for her many contributions in strengthening the ties between Asti and Miami Dade County. Commissioner Seijas offered a toast expressing her appreciation and that of the entire Miami Dade delegation for the hospitality, warmth, and friendship offered by the representatives of the people of Asti, and she again extended an invitation for them to visit Miami-Dade in the near future.

Before adjourning for the evening, the Director of the Asti Fire Department, Dottore di Martino presented Commissioner Seijas with the official coat of arms of the Asti Fire Department and declared her an official godmother of that service in recognition of her many efforts of behalf of firemen and women in Miami-Dade and in Asti.



Asti Fire Department Director Dottore Di-Martino presented Commissioner Seijas with the official coat of arms of the Asti Fire Department. Also pictured the President of the City of Asti Municipal Council, Maurizio Rasero and Emma Tibaldeo.



Commissioner Seijas presented a token of appreciation to Emma Tibaldeo for her efforts in organizing the mission to Asti.

Conclusions:

The Miami-Dade Sister Cities goodwill mission to Asti, Italy served to further cement the very strong bonds of friendship that exist between our two communities, and it celebrated twenty one years of uninterrupted friendship and cooperation. The mission, which consisted of representatives of government, education, and the private sector from Miami-Dade County expanded its understanding of the culture and way of life in Asti; and took full advantage of the opportunity to meet with key representatives of government, education, and industry to further project Miami-Dade County as an international community with cultural and economic ties not only to Italy but to other cities throughout the world. The friendships which in some cases were established, and in which in some other cases were further strengthened will last a lifetime and will serve to promote better understanding and further cultural exchanges between the people of Asti and the people of Miami-Dade. In this small measure our delegates served as citizen ambassadors spreading good will and understanding which in the long run will serve to make us all better citizens of our community, our nation, and of the world. The mission to Asti certainly met the principles and objectives established by Sister Cities International.



Representation of the Farmers' Parade at the Festivale della Sagre.



Budget:

The Asti Committee set a registration fee of \$ 1,620 for single occupancy and \$ 1,520 per person for double occupancy which included airfare, lodgings, transportation, and most meals. The Committee also set a \$950 land package for participants who made their own air reservations. A total of 18 participants purchased the entire package, and one participant made his own air travel arrangements. A total of nine participants registered in single rooms, and a total of 10 participants registered in double rooms.

Revenues:

I. Airfare Collected from Mission Participants:		
Airfare for 18 passengers (1 passenger made own airfare arrangements)		<u>\$ 17,324</u>
II. Participant Hotel and Registration Fees Collected:		
For Hotel Accommodations	<u>7,690</u>	
Registration Fees of Mission Participants	<u>4,346</u>	
(passenger who made own air arrangements paid registration fee of \$ 500.00)		
	Total Revenues:	\$ 29,360

Expenditures:

I. Airfare paid for Participants:		
Airfare for 18 participants		<u>\$ 17,324</u>
II. Hotel Accommodations paid for Participants:		<u>7,690</u>
III. Other Expenses:		
Dinner Reception at ICIF	1,925	
Camera Batteries	88	
Flowers	<u>102</u>	
	2,114	
	Total Expenses:	\$ 27,128

\$ 2,232

Net gain for the Sister Cities Trust Account:

The net gain of \$ 2,232 has been credited to the Sister Cities Coordinating Council Trust Account for Council programs.

APPENDIX I

Registration



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SISTER CITIES PROGRAM

Mission to Asti, Italy

September 8 to September 14, 2006

Registration

You are invited to participate in an official, educational and cultural mission to the city of Asti, Italy. Asti is a province in the Piedmont region of Italy. Its capital is the city of Asti, which lies in the plain of the Tanaro River.

Like most of Italy, Asti is rich in history, culture and culinary delights. The Province is well known for its gastronomical specialties that characterize the richness and variety of typical Italian fare and cuisine that are world famous. Asti also manufactures heavy agricultural equipment, tapestries and designer clothing.

This trip will coincide with one of Asti's most important regional festivals and we will also tour many of the great historical and cultural venues in Asti and the surrounding communities.

Ancient Map of the City of Asti, Italy



Delegation to Asti, Italy September 8-14, 2006

Tour Package Includes:

- Round-trip Airfare Transportation Miami-Milan
- 5 nights hotel accommodations
- Airport transfers and ground transportation
- Official Meetings with Cultural, Educational and Government Officials
- Breakfasts and most Meals
- Closing night dinner
- Tour of Turin

Total Mission Costs:

\$ 1520 Double Occupancy, per person
\$ 1620 Single Occupancy

LAND PACKAGE ONLY: For those participants wishing to use frequent flyer miles
\$ 950.00

**Full Payment must be received by: July 20, 2006 to be an official delegate. All delegates must register through this process to be part of the official delegation.
(See registration form for details)**

Airline:

Delegates will be flying on Alitalia Airlines.

Hotel Accommodations:

A local 3-Star hotel in Asti.

Entry and Departure Requirements

A passport is required for citizens of the United States of America. Citizens of other countries, even if they are permanent residents of the United States should check with ITC staff to find out if a visa is required.

For further information please contact:

Ms. Mayda Rescendi

Tel: (305) 375-5280 or the general ITC number at: (305) 375-5808

E-Mail: resc@miamidade.gov

Web Site : www.miamidade.gov/itc

Participants agree to hold the ITC and Miami-Dade County harmless and indemnify from any errors and omissions. The ITC also reserves the right to cancel or postpone the mission with reasonable cause.

APPENDIX II
Mission Participants

ASTI MISSION PARTICIPANTS

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|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Commisioner Natacha Seijas | Miami-Dade County Commissioner, Dist. 13 and ITC Chair |
| 2. Mr. J. A. Ojeda, Jr. | Executive Director of the ITC |
| 3. Ms. Margarita Esquiroz | Judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court, State of Florida |
| 4. Ms. Esther Fano | Vice Chair of the Miami-Dade Sister Cities Coordinating Council |
| 5. Mr. Alexander Gonzalez | ITC Board of Directors |
| 6. Ms. Mirtha Gonzalez | |
| 7. Mr. Miguel Chamah | Argentis Group |
| 8. Mrs. Aurora Fernandez Chamah | |
| 9. Dr. Eduardo Padron | President of Miami Dade College |
| 10. Mr. Allan Rosenbaum | Miami-Dade Sister Cities Coordinating Council |
| 11. Mrs. Judith Rosenbaum | |
| 12. Ms. Martha Carreras | Letty Enterprises |
| 13. Ms. Vivian Donnel Rodriguez | Director of Miami-Dade County Parks Department |
| 14. Mr. Bruce John D'Auria | |
| 15. Dr. Ana Cruz | Miami Dade College |
| 16. Ms. Laurice Hunter-Scott | Miami-Dade Sister Cities Coordinating Council |
| 17. Mrs. Emma Tibaldeo | Miami-Dade Sister Cities Coordinating Council |
| 18. Mr. Roberto Reboso | |
| 19. Ms. Mayda Rescendi | Miami-Dade County Sister Cities Staff |

