

Remarks

by

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Washington DC

On the Occasion of the Establishment of Sister-City Relations

Between the State of Pohnpei and the City of Neosho

08 July 2008

Neosho, Missouri

Mayor Birdsong

Governor Ehsa

Distinguished Guests

Fellow Citizens of the FSM

Friends of the State of Pohnpei

I bring warm and cordial greetings from the FSM Embassy in Washington DC, particularly from His Excellency Yosiwo George, the newly accredited FSM Ambassador to the US. The Ambassador asks that I convey his sincere regrets that, due to prior commitments that require his presence in Washington, he is unable to join us in person today. But recognizing the importance of this event for Pohnpei and Neosho, as well as for the overall bilateral relationship between our two countries, he has dispatched me to Neosho to stand in his stead.

And indeed - Mr Mayor, Mr Governor, Friends - I am enormously pleased to be with you today to witness and celebrate with you this historic occasion. I am all the more happy in noting that, to the best of my knowledge, this is the very first relationship of its kind ever to be established between an FSM state or local community and a city on the US mainland - or even in the entire American political family.

For this reason I congratulate and pay my highest compliments to the Mayor and the Governor for their vision and determination to consummate this historic relationship. Neosho and Pohnpei are now a model to be emulated; the Mayor and the Governor, along with their people, have shown to us the critical importance of having a healthy people-to-people exchange as a core element in our overall government-to-government relations. This relationship is a testimony that it is possible for individual citizens and communities on both sides to contribute and make a difference.

This is why we in the FSM Embassy support the establishment of the special friendship between the people and communities of Pohnpei and Neosho; it is a friendship that is very much consistent with the letter and spirit of the relationship between our two countries as reflected in the Compact of Free Association.

I am sure the Mayor and the Governor have ideas as to how to further nurture and strengthen the sister-city relationship. It is not my intention to interfere in the plans but to offer the assistance of the Embassy whenever appropriate.

Again, on behalf of Ambassador George and in my own name, I congratulate the Mayor and Governor and the people of Neosho and Pohnpei, especially those who were involved in the conceptualization of the idea and its consummation today. Congratulations indeed.