



PRESS RELEASE

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English Synopsis from the Article in the "Sudostschweiz"

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Technical College Begins Exploring Possibilities in Florida

Rapperswil-Jona and Sarasota are scheduled to become partner cities. For the Technical College of Rapperswil (HSR) this could open new perspectives

At the Rapperswil train station, Mr. Hermann Mettler (Rektor HSR) and Alex Simeon (Prorektor HSR) greeted on Wednesday the Swiss Consul General from Atlanta, Mr. Andreas Maager.

This was a visit for both parties to become better acquainted, said Rene Faessler, the initiator of the meeting. As a strong driving force in the Sister Cities Project between Rapperswil-Jona and Sarasota, Faessler in May founded the Swiss Association "Sister Cities Rapperswil-Jona-Sarasota" He is absolutely convinced that both cities will profit from closer relationships,

Florida Study Program

The hope of the two representatives of the Technical College would be a close contact with the Universities in Sarasota, as well as a working relationship with

the State University of Florida. Mettler could imagine a two- way exchange program with interested institutions. It is a bit early for concrete projects, and the Wednesday meeting was to begin to explore ideas and make personal contact.

Where is home to Geberit?

Maager, as General Consul is expert at making contacts, as this is his main priority within his current position. The Sister City project is very interesting,” first while it is concrete and secondly because both cities have many points in common” he noted.

The mother of Mr. Maager comes from Rapperswil so he knows the city and area very well. In Sarasota, the Consul General intends to promote to local businesses the advantages of Rapperswil. “Both cities are home to some sizeable firms and between them I would like to create a working business network.”

He mentioned that companies such as Geberit in America are well known. “When I say to a business manager in Florida that Geberit’s home office is in Rapperswil-Jona they are very surprised” With this partnership initiative, this will surely change.

Surprising Parallels

Another very surprising fact is that both cities are “Circus Cities”. Based in Sarasota are several Circuses including a Circus School and Museum. These were created by the Ringling Circus dynasty, which has an Elephant Park with over 100 animals. “Similarly, the Family Knie have as the Ringlings, an affinity for elephants”, said Rene Faessler, who will be soon traveling to Florida to promote the initiative. “One must speak with the right people” he said.

City President, Erich Zoller would like to advance slowly with the project “A city partnership must grow at the grass roots level, this cannot be directed from above, downwards and referred to the partnership initiatives of Aalborg in Denmark and Bagno di Romagna in Italy which have been disappointing.

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