

# Springfield Chamber Signs Cooperation Agreement with Mexican Chamber

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Tlaquepaque National Chamber of Commerce have signed an agreement to work together to create business connections between members of both Chambers. Leaders of the two Chambers met on May 5 in Springfield during a three-day visit by a business delegation from Tlaquepaque - our community's sister city in Mexico.

Discussions centered on plans to establish exchanges between staff and volunteers of the two Chambers, and develop a system to match members with business opportunities in Mexico. The sister city relationship between Springfield and Tlaquepaque has been in place since 2003. Numerous exchanges in the fields of arts, culture, sports and music have already been established. Additionally, two Springfield Rotary clubs have developed formal partnerships with the Rotary clubs in Tlaquepaque.

The Chamber connection between Springfield and Tlaquepaque will add a business and economic development dimension to the existing sister city relationship. Mexico has become the second leading export market for products made in Missouri. Over the past five years, Missouri exports to Mexico have increased by 68 percent to \$1.15 billion in 2005. Located adjacent to Guadalajara in the State of Jalisco, Tlaquepaque is a strategic distribution point for a large section of Mexico. The city is renowned for the arts, crafts, handmade goods and home furnishings made there.



Luis Gerardo Montaña Ruiz, secretary of the Tlaquepaque Chamber, signs the cooperation agreement as other officials of the two Chambers look on.

Pictured from left: Jim Anderson, president of Springfield Chamber; Héctor Montero Arana, president of Tlaquepaque Chamber; Mike Briggs, chairman of Springfield Chamber; Rafael Lara López, director general of Tlaquepaque Chamber; and Gabriel Gutiérrez Franco, board member of the Tlaquepaque Chamber.

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