

# Lawrence is invited to establish second sister city link in Japan

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Masaaki Ikeda said he hopes his boss, Yohei Kono, a member of the lower house of the Japanese Parliament, some day will visit Lawrence.

And after this summer, Kono will have a valid reason to include Lawrence on a U.S. visit itinerary: A city in Kono's district, Hiratsuka, Japan, will become Lawrence's second sister city in September.

Carol Shankel, who chairs Lawrence's Sister City Advisory Board, made the surprise announcement of Lawrence's new sibling Monday while guiding Ikeda on a tour of the city. Ikeda, district assistant to Kono, is in Lawrence for a three-day visit as part of a monthlong trip sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency.

Shankel recently returned from a visit to Hiratsuka, which is in the Japanese prefecture of Kanagawa. While there, she was feted by the Hiratsuka City Council, which extended an invitation to Lawrence officials to visit in September to formalize a sister city agreement.

LAWRENCE'S first sister city relationship, with Eutin, West Germany, was formalized in October 1989.

"We're very pleased this relationship with Hiratsuka will be formalized," Shankel said.

The Lawrence Sister City Advisory Board targeted Japan as

an ideal country in which to seek a sister city when it first was formed in 1986. Sister cities relationships open up avenues for cultural, educational, social and economic exchanges between cities.

Hiratsuka, a city of 242,000, is about 60 kilometers southwest of Tokyo. It is home to Tokai University, a private school with an enrollment of more than 25,000 students, and is developing a high-technology branch of Kanagawa University, which will accommodate 6,000 students.

IN ASSOCIATION with the formalizing of ties between the two cities, Shankel said activities are being undertaken:

— A "Friends of Hiratsuka" group is being formed in Lawrence by an executive committee of the Sister Cities Advisory Board. The group includes Fumio Kuribayashi, a Kansas University graduate student from Kanagawa Prefecture. One of the first duties "Friends of Hiratsuka" will undertake will be a private drive to raise funds to send Lawrence Mayor Shirley Martin-Smith to Hiratsuka in September.

— A group of 15 junior high and high school students from Hiratsuka will visit Lawrence in August.

Ikeda, through an interpreter, said Hiratsuka and Lawrence do share similarities: both are university cities, both yearn for economic development, and both

share a concern for environmental problems.

ON MONDAY, Ikeda met with a number of civic and business leaders, including the Douglas County Commission, City Manager Mike Wildgen and Lawrence Chamber of Commerce President Gary Toebben. He also attended a luncheon meeting of the Lawrence Rotary Club.

Ikeda said that on his return to Japan, he will tell Kono about his visit in Lawrence and will urge him to try to visit the city on one of his coming trips to the United States.

Kono, a 24-year member of parliament and a member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, is rumored to be in line to be prime minister of Japan.

