

Tulsa Welcomes Rotary Leaders from 13 States

By **DEL DREYER**
President

If you see some unfamiliar faces around the city this week, extend a warm Tulsa welcome. They might be visiting Rotary leaders from across the country.

September 9-13 we welcome 400 past, current and incoming Rotary district governors to Tulsa. These top Rotary leaders from 13 states will be here for training and sharing ideas how to grow local clubs, improve our communities, and continue Rotary's great international humanitarian work, like eradicating polio, improving education and providing fresh, drinkable water.

Tulsa was selected to host 2009 Rotary Zones 30 & 31 Institute because we are recognized as a city of volunteerism, great hospitality and a strong Rotary spirit.

There are 14 Rotary clubs in the Tulsa area and each contributes to the fabric of the community. Mentoring students in at-risk schools, immunizing youngsters, planting trees, initiating community improvement projects, sponsoring special events – you'll find Tulsa Rotarians everywhere making Tulsa better.

Southside Rotary just dedicated Biscuit Acres, the first bark park in south Tulsa, located in Hunter Park. Bixby Rotary created the annual BBQ and Blues Festival. The Rotary Club of Tulsa sponsors a water well drilling program in Nicaragua every year. Rotary District 6110's Medical Supplies Network, based in Tulsa, collects no-longer-needed medical equipment and regularly ships container loads to third world countries at no cost to the hospitals and clinics on the receiving end.

In 2015, Rotary Club of Tulsa will celebrate its centennial, and Rotarians have raised \$700,000 for a downtown Rotary Plaza, comprised of five bronze sculptures by artists Jay O'Meilie and David Nunneley. We expect this Rotary landmark will draw visitors and only enhance Tulsa's reputation as a caring and giving community of volunteerism.

Because of Tulsa's strong Rotary spirit and improving downtown facilities to welcome large groups, Tulsa was asked last year to submit a bid to host the 2015 Rotary International Convention. Local Rotarians, along with the Tulsa Metro Chamber Convention & Visitors Bureau and Mayor Kathy Taylor, worked together on a proposal to host 20,000 delegates for a week.

Competing with cities like Sao Paulo, Mexico City and San Antonio, Tulsa was by far the smallest host city asked to bid. While we didn't have adequate public space at this time – even with the BOK Center and new Convention Center – Tulsa is on track for competing for prestigious national and regional events, like the one this week.

We extend a warm welcome to Rotary International President-elect Ray Klinginsmith and 400 community leaders to the Rotary Zones 30 & 31 Institute. Enjoy your time here and please take some time to discover Tulsa's Art Deco treasures, world-class museums, shopping and restaurants.

We're proud to be Tulsans and Rotarians, and we are happy to show off our community.

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