

Press Release

For Immediate Release 07/08/2009

Leadership Mission To Israel for Community Leaders

Events in the Middle East have been influencing U.S. foreign policy since the seizure of American commerce ships by the Barbary pirates in 1784. Today the region is dominated by the topics of nuclear proliferation, domestic unrest, and terrorism. In order to gain a first-hand understanding of this part of the world, the Jewish Community Foundation in conjunction with the America Israel Friendship League (AIFL), is sponsoring its second educational mission to Israel for community leaders of the Greater Prescott area. In 2007, the Foundation and community leaders participated in a pilot project to experience AIFL's dynamic, in-depth program that explores the importance of Israel's democracy in the Middle East. Up until that time, this type of Leadership Mission had been reserved exclusively for groups such as the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Council of Churches, national journalists, and prominent Middle East scholars. The community leaders who participated in the 2007 Mission considered the trip so important they encouraged the Foundation to undertake another Mission for 2009. Because of the support of these prior delegates and AIFL's enthusiastic assistance, a second Mission to Israel will occur in October 2009.

Local leaders traveling on the 2009 Mission are: Ken Bennett, Arizona Secretary of State; Steve Pierce, Arizona State Representative, District One; Karen Fann, immediate past-Mayor of the Town of Chino Valley; Brad Fain, partner of Fain Signature Group; Steve Walker, Executive Director of Yavapai College Foundation; Jason Gisi, president of Gisi Enterprises, Inc.; Mark Peterson, principal of Desert de Oro Foods, Inc.; Kenton Jones, Attorney and Municipal Judge of the Town of Chino Valley; Dave Cavan, Chairman of Cavan Real Estate Investments; and Tracey Horn, founder, Helken & Horn Advertising Agency, Inc.

In addition to visiting the important Holy sites of the Sea of Galilee, the Temple Mount, and 'Via Dolorosa', the delegates will tour the leading universities, and the major museums of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. To understand the political importance of the region, mission delegates will meet with government officials, recognized scholars in Middle East affairs, and experts in terrorism. Other highlights of the trip will include interaction with members of the Knesset, Israel's legislative governing body, a visit with an Israeli Supreme Court Judge, and a meeting with the new Mayor of Jerusalem. The eight-day trip promises to be a once in a lifetime opportunity for the delegates to gain valuable information about this event-making region.