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THOMAS MORE  
UNIVERSITY

## RUSSIAN LEADERS EXAMINE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY

*Rotary, Thomas More, ORSANCO, NKY Chamber hosting foreign delegation*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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COVINGTON - The Open World Leadership Center, an agency of the U.S. Congress, will send a delegation of Russian water quality management professionals to Northern Kentucky from Friday, Sept.

27, to Saturday, Oct. 5. The delegation consists of five professionals and will be accompanied by a bicultural facilitator and an interpreter.

While in Northern Kentucky, the Open World program participants will be hosted by Rotary Club of Covington as well as ORSANCO, (Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission), Thomas More University and The Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

"ORSANCO is excited to share our Ohio River Basin Watershed Management knowledge and experience with the Open World Russian delegation," said ORSANCO Executive Director Richard Harrison. "We are also eager to gain insight on their approach to Watershed Management."

Prior to their arrival in Northern Kentucky, members of the delegation completed an orientation in Washington, D.C. The Russian delegates had policy meetings with three members of Congress: Rep. John Yarmuth, Kentucky's Third Congressional District; Rep. Thomas Massie, Kentucky's Fourth Congressional District, who represents Northern Kentucky; and Rep. Bill Johnson, Ohio's Sixth Congressional District.

While in Northern Kentucky, delegates will collaborate on best practices for watershed management and stay in the homes of local residents who serve as hospitality hosts.

Organizations and facilities the delegation will visit include the Thomas More University Biology Field Station, where Ohio River water will be sampled, SD1 - which manages Northern Kentucky's stormwater and wastewater - the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Aquatic Research Facility and the Boone County Conservation District.

"This unique opportunity, provided by Rotary International, to exchange ideas, share best management practices and explore potential collaborations is extremely valuable to all of us here in the Greater Cincinnati area who work in the areas of watershed management," said Chris Lorentz, Director of the Thomas More Biology Field Station. "Thomas More University and our Biology Field Station are extremely excited and grateful to be a part of this endeavor."

The delegation will also experience and sample slices of Northern Kentucky culture, including a riverboat lunch cruise on the Ohio River, dinner at Thomas More University and a cocktail hour at the New Riff Distillery hosted by the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

"When any foreign delegation comes our region, the Northern Kentucky Chamber is always their first call," said Debby Shipp, the Chamber's vice president of Business Growth and International Trade. "As the leading business organization in our region, we welcome the opportunity to connect this international delegation with our region's business leaders and stakeholders."

### **Covington Rotary Club**

On December 21, 1920, the Rotary Club of Covington, Kentucky received its Charter, and will celebrate its 100th Anniversary in December of 2020. The club has a long history of service above self. Almost immediately, the club adopted as one of its principal purposes the promotion of welfare of children. In February of 1922 the club would present a plan for a program to benefit crippled children at the upcoming Rotary District convention.

In the spring of 1922 the club, along with other groups and individual supporters, created a free health clinic for Covington school children. In January of 1923, a meeting was held with other Rotary Clubs for the purpose of forming a “Crippled Children’s Society,” to aid crippled children throughout the state. In the summer of 1923 the club conducted a two week camp for Kenton County crippled children.

For many years, surgical care of crippled children in Kentucky could only be performed in Lexington or Louisville, but in April of 1946 a new Orthopedic center was opened at St. Elizabeth Hospital, meaning that no children would have to be transported to other places for treatment. The Kentucky Post reported on the event and said: *The unit is the realization of an idea conceived a quarter of a century ago by the Covington Rotary Club....*

On June 7, 1932, as part of the national celebration of George Washington’s birthday, the club dedicated a portion of Devou Park as Rotary Grove. The service held in memory of departed Rotarians is believed to be unique in that it is the only one of its kind held in a dedicated grove, where a tree has been planted as a living memorial to long-serving deceased members.

The contributions of the club to the local community are many and varied, but are not restricted to domestic needs. In June of 2000 the club held a fundraiser to raise \$10,000 to help provide safe and clean drinking water for residents of two communities in Africa. The money raised from the event was to provide residents of Toamasina, Madagascar and the children at the Lubasi Orphanage in Zambia with drinking water free from bacteria caused by poor sanitation facilities in these communities. Specifically, the money was used to build a total of 500 sanitary latrines and wells in Madagascar and Zambia. The club raised \$12,000, \$2,000 more than its goal.

We change lives. Our commitment as Rotarians to be involved in international affairs is demonstrated by our active participation in the Rotary International Youth Exchange program. Since the fall of 2014, each year we have sent one or more worthy students from a Covington high school to a foreign, non—English speaking country by our participation in District 6740’s Youth Exchange program. Our students have gone to Spain, Germany, Turkey, the Czech Republic, France, Poland and Brazil, with all expenses paid by the club.

Thus, our participation in the Open Worlds program is just one more aspect of our club’s determination to help bring about peace in the world.

### **Open World’s 20<sup>th</sup> Year**

Founded in 1999 by Congress, the Open World Leadership Center maintains a vast network of more than 29,000 alumni in strategic countries including Russia, Ukraine, and others in the Balkans, Caucuses, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Open World supports legislative diplomacy efforts for Members of Congress by conducting exchanges that establish lasting professional relationships between emerging leaders and their U.S. counterparts. Program participants are provided with extensive exposure to American politics, accountable governance, and citizen diplomacy, while being home hosted by American families. To learn more about the Open World program, please visit [www.openworld.gov/](http://www.openworld.gov/)

## **ORSANCO**

The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO), was established on June 30, 1948 to control and abate pollution in the Ohio River Basin. ORSANCO is an interstate commission representing eight states and the federal government. Member states include: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. To view a list of current commissioners, click here: [ORSANCO Commissioners](#). ORSANCO operates programs to improve water quality in the Ohio River and its tributaries, including: setting waste water discharge standards; performing biological assessments; monitoring for the chemical and physical properties of the waterways; and conducting special surveys and studies. ORSANCO also coordinates emergency response activities for spills or accidental discharges to the river, and promotes public participation in programs, such as the Ohio River Sweep. To request a brochure or more information about ORSANCO, click here: [Request Publications](#). ORSANCO is located at 5735 Kellogg Avenue (about one mile west of I-275) in Cincinnati, Ohio.

## **Thomas More University**

## **Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce**

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