



***Press Release***

Office of Economic Development

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SAN JOSE-EKATERINBURG SISTER CITY PROGRAM TO HIGHLIGHT CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS FROM RUSSIA**

SAN JOSE, CALIF., June 20, 2011 -- The City of San Jose and San Jose State University (SJSU) will welcome photographers Sophia Nasyrova and Denis Tarasov to San Jose as part of a Sister City exchange between San Jose and Ekaterinburg. The photographers will be honored with a City Council Commendation at the June 21 Council meeting and with a reception later that day at 6 p.m. on the 17<sup>th</sup> Floor of San Jose City Hall.

In March 2011 the U.S. Consulate General in Ekaterinburg in partnership with the City Hall of Ekaterinburg and Museum of Photography "Metenkov House" in Russia, and City Hall of San Jose and San Jose State University in the United States, launched the Sister Cities Artistic Project ***Ekaterinburg and San Jose Through the Eyes of One Another***. The goal of the project is to represent two cities through the art of photography performed by American artists from San Jose in Ekaterinburg, and Russian photographers from Ekaterinburg in San Jose.

In May, three American photographers - Robin Lasser, Adrienne Pao and Brian Taylor visited Ekaterinburg. The two Russian photographers from Ekaterinburg, Sophia Nasyrova (amateur category) and Denis Tarasov (professional category) were selected for the project by means of photography contest titled ***Photograph the City!*** conducted in Ekaterinburg from March-May 2011. The contest was held in two categories: professional and amateur. Professional photographers were invited to send in their

portfolios to the contest organizers and the winner was selected by the jury, which included representatives from the U.S. Consulate in Ekaterinburg, including U.S. Consul General Michael Reinert, Public Affairs Officer Kimberly Williams, Photography Museum Director Raisa Zorina, Photography Exhibits Curator Artem Berkovich, SJSU professors Robin Lasser and Bryan Taylor, and Adrienne Pao, a photographer and educator from San Francisco.

The amateur contest was held on the Consulate General's Facebook page and had two phases: during phase one Ekaterinburg citizens submitted up to three images and an online voting took place. Ten semifinalists, who had received the largest amount of votes, were asked to send in their portfolios to the contest organizers, and the winner was chosen by the same jury.

"I would like to thank the U.S. consulate in Ekaterinburg and the City of San Jose for giving us the opportunity to better the relationship between the two sister cities. I am very excited to host two photographers that were selected to come to San Jose," said Larissa Brener, the manager of the San Jose-Ekaterinburg Sister City Program.

#### **ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Sophia Nasyrova is 3rd year student of Yekaterinburg Academy of Contemporary Arts, Yekaterinburg, Russia. Her photographs can be viewed here at <http://500px.com/SofiaNasyrova>

Denis Tarasov's is a professional photographer bio and pictures can be seen on his site [www.denistarasov.com](http://www.denistarasov.com)

#### **ABOUT THE SAN JOSE-EKATERINBURG SISTER CITY PROGRAM**

San Jose established its sister city affiliation with Ekaterinburg, Russia in 1992. Located east of the Ural Mountains, Ekaterinburg is 30 kilometers west of the Europe-Asia continental divide. Russia's fourth largest city with a population of 1.3 million people, Ekaterinburg is a key industrial center and transportation hub. Ekaterinburg is the capital of the Ural Federal District and the Sverdlovsk Oblast (equivalent to a U.S. state). Ekaterinburg is a key trading center and transportation hub for Europe, central Asia and Siberia. Founded in 1723, Ekaterinburg is named for Peter the Great's wife, Catherine. The city was known as Sverdlovsk from 1924 to 1991, in honor of the leader of the Bolshevik Party. Ekaterinburg is home to the Urals Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and its 18 institutes and research facilities. Several of Russia's leading universities are located in Ekaterinburg and the Urals region. Ekaterinburg is a leading center for the performing arts. Its opera, theatre and symphony have produced some of Russia's leading artists. Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first President was from Ekaterinburg, and served in government in the Urals prior to his appointment in Moscow. There were several exchanges of San Jose and Ekaterinburg delegations in the 1990s and programs to facilitate collaboration in education, sports, music, dance, journalism, and economic development. San Jose State University organizes 2-4 week academic programs in San Jose for Russian business professionals.

**ABOUT THE CITY OF SAN JOSE'S OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The San Jose Sister City Program is managed by the City of San Jose's Office of Economic Development (OED). Part of the San Jose Office of the City Manager, OED catalyzes job and revenue growth, assists business success, connects employers with trained workers, and enhances cultural amenities. For more information, please visit, [www.sjeconomy.com](http://www.sjeconomy.com).

**ABOUT THE CITY OF SAN JOSE**

From its founding in 1777 as California's first city, San Jose has been a leader, driven by its spirit of innovation. Today, San Jose stands as the largest city in Northern California and the Capital of Silicon Valley—the world's leading center of innovation. The city, the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the U.S., is committed to remaining a top-ranked place to do business, to work and to live. For more information, visit, [www.sanjoseca.gov](http://www.sanjoseca.gov).

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