



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPANO DELEGATION WILL SEEK BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN CHINA Members will bring along company portfolios and initiate local high school exchange program

County Executive Andy Spano will continue promoting Westchester as the place for Chinese companies to do business or set up their U.S. operations this week when he leads his fourth trade delegation to the world's most populous country.

Spano and several key members of his staff will leave Thursday for a 10-day trip to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong to meet with Chinese officials and business leaders to discuss opportunities for investment, import/export and joint ventures. They will also be helping to initiate a student exchange and educational cooperation program between Briarcliff Manor High School and a leading high school in Beijing and in Shanghai.

Accompanying Spano on the trip will be Norman Jacknis, chief information officer; Salvatore J. Carrera, director of economic development, and Daisy Yau, director of Asian-Pacific affairs and business development. The trip is paid for by the Chinese government and uses no county funds.

Already one of the U.S.'s top trading partners, China holds great potential for enterprising small and medium-sized firms, especially in the fields of technology and real estate, according to Spano.

"Each time I've gone to China we've been able to build more relationships and establish additional networks. We are continuing to pave the way for companies who want to do business there," Spano said. "This time we've set up meetings with Chinese firms who want to pursue partnerships and will talk to government and trade officials about other joint ventures. A number of our local companies are interested, and our hope is that even more will come on board once they realize the possibilities. "

The delegation is bringing a portfolio of eight small- to mid-size information technology companies that have expressed interest in doing business with their Chinese counterparts. With the help of the Westchester

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County Association’s World Trade Council, members will also take a list of another 25 small-to-midsize companies in various fields that are looking for Chinese business partners. This portfolio will allow for a more targeted match of opportunities for current and future trade delegations.

Another purpose of the trip is for an accompanying delegation of educators from Briarcliff High School to visit two Chinese schools and sign exchange program agreements. The delegation consists of six teachers, Briarcliff Superintendent Frances Wills, High School Principal Jim Kaishian, Trustee John O’Reilly, and Eric Knutsen, the school’s director of technology. They also hope to initiate videoconferencing connections and distance learning between Briarcliff and the schools.

In Beijing, county officials will meet with representatives of the central government Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Science and Technology to get their cooperation in identifying and supporting Westchester-Chinese joint ventures. The county delegation will also be meeting with leaders of a group of IT companies that have expressed a desire to pursue these partnerships and have a specific interest in the products and services offered by small-to-midsize Westchester companies.

“We do the matchmaking between Westchester and Chinese companies. It’s up to them to ‘close the sale,’” Spano said.

The county officials are also meeting with Lenovo – the world’s third largest personal computer company that recently decided to locate its world headquarters in Westchester. They hope to strengthen the relationship between the company and Westchester and to discuss future business possibilities.

In Shanghai the county will meet with government officials in charge of trade and investment, as well as more IT companies, to see how partnerships can be encouraged with Westchester companies, particularly in technology and real estate projects.

In Hong Kong, the delegation will meet with CB Ellis, a worldwide brokerage firm that has offices in Westchester and does business with the county. They will discuss office space and other real estate details of interest to CB Ellis as it presents Westchester to its Chinese clients.

County officials are also meeting with the head of an E-MBA program (online distance learning) to talk about bringing Chinese students to study at Pace University.