

*A Brief History of the Sister City Relationship between
Newberg, Oregon and Asago City, Japan*

April 2011

The City of Newberg entered into a sister city agreement with Wadayama, Japan on July 30, 2000. The suggestion came about as a result of a student exchange program and a very successful long-term relationship between Chehalem Valley Middle School and Wadayama Junior High School.

During the Old-Fashioned Festival of 2000 a delegation from Wadayama, including the Mayor Tsuneichi Koyama, visited Newberg for the signing ceremony. Mayor Chuck Cox represented the City of Newberg. The agreement pledged both cities to support the exchange of information to enhance student and community members; the sharing of the unique culture and sports of each city and country; the use of the problem solving experiences of each city; the development of information and relationships between the local industries of each city; and the continuation of the exchange program for students and community members.

Wadayama, was located in the north-central portion of Hyōgo Prefecture; about an hour and fifteen minute drive from Himeji, a large city on the east coast of Japan. The Hyōgo Prefecture main industries include metal and medical manufacturing, and Kobe Port (Kobe is the capital city of the Hyōgo Prefecture) is one of the largest ports in Japan. Hyōgo is also a part of the Hanshin Industrial Region. There are two research institutes of Riken, natural sciences research institute in Japan, in Kobe and Harima. It also has "Spring-8", a synchrotron radiation facility in Harima. The General Technological Center of Hyōgo Prefecture for Agriculture, Forest and Fishery is located in Asago.

On April 1, 2005, the cities of Asago, Ikuno, Santo and Wadayama merged to form Asago City. Mayor Hidetoshi Inoue was elected as mayor of the combined Asago City. As of March 31, 2008, the district had an estimated population of 34,743. Asago has experienced a thriving tourism industry with destinations highlighting the Ikuno Ginzan Silver Mine, Asago Art Village, Takeda Castle, three large dams, and several art and history museums. Newberg receives countless products from Japan; and some of Newberg's products also end up in Japan including dental equipment, wine, nuts, and even strawberry jam.

In May 2000 school students from Newberg, along with then School Board member, Bob Larson, visited Wadayama. Invitations were received to send delegates from the City of Newberg to Wadayama in 2001 and 2003, both trips were declined because of funding and mayoral transitions. In the fall of 2002 a student delegation was sent from Wadayama to Newberg. In June 2005, then Council President Bob Andrews visited Asago City to meet Mayor Inoue and brought greetings from the City Council and citizens of Newberg. A key to the City of Newberg was also presented. It was discussed that it would be appropriate to update the agreement between the City of Newberg and Wadayama to reflect its new incorporation as a part of the larger Asago City.

A new sister city agreement was authorized by the City Council on February 6, 2007, by Resolution No. 2007-2696 to allowing the long-term relationship between the City of Newberg and Wadayama, Japan to continue and affording the opportunity to develop a similar relationship with Asago City. A letter received from Mayor Inoue indicated twenty-four students were planning a visit to Newberg in 2008. A group of Chehalem Valley Middle School students traveled to Wadayama in the spring of 2010. The spring trip for 2011 was cancelled due to advisories against travel after the earthquake, tsunami, and radiation warnings; the annual trips are planned to resume in 2012.