

## **SISTER CITY**

### **Obihiro, Hokkaido, Japan**

Since 1968, Seward has had a sister-city relationship with Obihiro, Japan. Obihiro is located on the northern island of Hokkaido. This relationship began during the tenure of then-Seward Mayor Bob Richardson and Yasuhiko Ohsono. Seward and Obihiro have exchanged students each year since 1973. Seward presents the city of Obihiro, Japan with an Alaskan Gold Pan as a Mayor's Trophy for their annual Heigen Festival, and Obihiro, Japan presents Seward with many Fourth of July Mt. Marathon trophies and a Silver Salmon Derby trophy each year. In the early years, Seward gifted Obihiro with two live Alaskan moose, one which held residence in their zoo for many years.

Some highlights include:

- In 1982, the Seward High School Band and Choir were invited to be a part of Obihiro's Centennial celebration.
- In 1992, Obihiro's 110th anniversary was attended by a delegation from Seward in conjunction with the 25th Seward/Obihiro Sister City Anniversary celebrated in Seward the following year. The pagoda on the Waterfront Park bike trail was a 25th Anniversary gift to us from the City of Obihiro.
- In 2002, Obihiro celebrated their 120th anniversary and invited Mayor Stu Clark and a group of 25 delegates from Seward to join in the celebration in October and November. Seward reciprocated by inviting Obihiro officials and citizens to Seward in 2003 for the city's 100th birthday. Founding father Yasuhiko Ohsono was in attendance.
- In 2004, Yasuhiko Ohsono set up a fund administered by the Obihiro Friendship Committee and the Seward International Friendship Association, to conduct the Adult Citizen Exchange (ACE) so local adults could also enjoy an annual exchange. This donation would run for 10 years with each city receiving 1 million yen a piece.

### **50th Anniversary between Obihiro, Japan and Seward, Alaska**

The year 2018 marked the 50th anniversary of the Sister City relationship between Seward, Alaska and Obihiro, Japan. In honor of this anniversary, a group of citizens was chosen from Obihiro, Japan to visit Seward, Alaska, along with the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Obihiro. Then in October, a group of Seward citizens, including a couple of Council members, was chosen to accompany the Mayor of Seward to visit both Obihiro and Kushiro. Both of the adult groups enjoyed learning about different cultures and experiencing new adventures!

# **City of Seward, Alaska International Relationships**

## **PORT CITY**

### **Port of Kushiro, Japan**

Seward also has a Sister-Port Relationship with Kushiro, Japan, also located on the northern island of Hokkaido. Officials from Kushiro have also participated in delegation exchanges over the years. We have had this relationship since about 1982. Seward sends an Alaskan Gold Pan for the "Best Seamanship award" to the winner of the yacht race at their annual Port Festival.

On August 2-8, 2004, Kushiro invited a delegation of 5 children and 1 adult for the 1st World Children's Summit. The children gave a 10-min. presentation about their state, activities and environmental concerns.

## **FRIENDSHIP CITY**

### **Yeosu City, Korea**

Seward has had an informal sister-city relationship with Yeosu City, Korea for years. Delegations have traveled back and forth. Most interactions and meetings revolve around trade, commerce and strengthening the relationship bond. Yeosu City was the sight of the World Expo in 2012, and the City of Seward sent former mayor Willard Dunham to attend as the city's Ambassador. We look forward to more interaction and collaboration with this great city in the near future.