

In the Field

STEVENS POINT, WI – Five Open World environmental delegates from **Rostov Veliky**, Russia, who arrived in **Stevens Point, WI**, on Oct. 3 carried with them a resolution signed by their mayor reaffirming a sister-city partnership between the two communities that dates back to 1990. Stevens Point Mayor **Andrew Halverson** cosigned the resolution at a special ceremony held during the delegation's visit. The Stevens Point City Council recently voted to designate Stevens Point an Eco-Municipality (a sustainable city model that encourages communities to follow environmentally friendly best practices), making the Wisconsin town an especially interesting host community for this exchange.

The delegation included a water management specialist, an environmental engineer, two environmental educators, and a municipal ecotourism official. Open World's local host organization, the **Stevens Point-Rostov Veliky Sister City Project**, arranged a highly cus-

tomized program that provided plenty of opportunities for the delegates to meet individually with their local counterparts. Delegates Natalya Belikhina and Mikhail Kokorin met with city and county water quality specialists to discuss the role of government in ensuring that citizens' water is clean and safe. The two environmental educators, Olga Ilin-skaya and Yelena Potapova, toured Boston School Forest while a group of students on a field trip there learned about nature and conservation. Yelena Romanova met with the local convention and visitors' bureau to discuss how to promote ecotourism. Together, the group traveled to Baraboo, WI, to tour the **International Crane Foundation** and the cottage of Aldo Leopold, a noted Wisconsin conservationist.

Host **Susan Burns Zach** and other sister city committee members spent their last day with the delegates discussing ways to continue collaborating on environmental issues, such as working on a joint

project to improve the water quality of a lake near Rostov Veliky, recruiting volunteers to develop environmental walking trails around the Russian city, and organizing a future exchange of teachers and students.

Open World is pleased to have played a role in strengthening the Stevens Point-Rostov Veliky partnership. National Grantee: World Services of La Crosse, Inc.



From right, Open World delegate Olga Ilin-skaya, Stevens Point host Susan Burns Zach, and facilitator Vladimir Matveyev review photos and articles documenting nearly 20 years of sister-city relations between Stevens Point and Rostov Veliky.

Hosting Corner

EAST ST. LOUIS, IL – For 24 Russian delegates visiting Chief U.S. District Judge **David Herndon's** East St. Louis, IL court on Oct. 4, a particularly interesting piece of courtroom "equipment" was something not visible during a trial: a bolt for leg shackles hidden under the skirted defense table. Accustomed to a judicial system in which criminal defendants appear in court in cages, the Russians were impressed that a dangerous defendant's restraints would not be seen by jurors during proceedings before Judge Herndon.

The Russians who got this unexpected civics lesson are regional and local legislators and civil servants, educators, and representatives of public policy institutes and NGOs. All were nominated for Open World by the **Moscow School of Political Studies**, a prestigious independent educational institution that promotes democracy and civil society. With Russia about to fully implement a law making municipalities more responsible for providing basic services, the delegates were eager to absorb as much information as they could on government administration and community develop-

ment—so their visit to St. Louis was action-packed. The agenda included working sessions at **St. Louis City Hall**, the **St. Louis County Executive's Office**, several county administrative departments, a school, economic development organizations, and the **University of Missouri – St. Louis**, which helped plan the schedule. The nonprofit **Supporters of Civil Society in Russia** administered the visit for Open World and paid for all the delegates' local hosting expenses.



Chief U.S. District Judge David Herndon (third from right) meets with Russian accountable governance delegates on Oct. 4 in his courtroom in East St. Louis, IL.



Iowa home host Bill Brock proudly displays a special gift (a rug) sent to him in September by two Tajikistani lawyers who stayed with his family while visiting the Des Moines area on a March 2008 Open World exchange. Bill and his wife, Elizabeth, home-host through Iowa Sister States.