

Hosting Corner



Kansas City, MO's Union Station provided the setting for a Nov. 1 ceremony honoring two veteran Open World hosts: **Barbara Dolci** of the **International Visitors Council of Greater Kansas City** and **June Meredith Costin** of the **Rotary Club of West Wichita (KS)**. (Dolci is shown standing next to Ambassador O'Keefe in the picture above left; Costin is in the picture above right.) Costin, who chairs Rotary District 5690's Open World Committee, was honored for her quality programming and ongoing work with Ukrainian alumni. Dolci, who was also recognized for her quality programming, had an Open World delegation of Russian museum and archive leaders in town during the ceremony; one of the delegates—Sergey Mironenko, director of Russia's state archives—is shown seated in the picture above left.

In the Field

One of the most eventful Election Days in U.S. history provided an exciting lesson in democracy for 10 Russian accountable governance delegations visiting the United States in early November to study our electoral process. Many of the Russians accompanied their hosts to the polls to watch them engage in the fundamental ritual of democracy. The delegates—mainly government officials and journalists—also went behind the scenes, observing operations at local campaign and party headquarters, media outlets, and board of election offices.

Two city дума deputies, a deputy's aide, and a magazine editor hosted by the **League of Women Voters of Broward County (FL)** got an early start on Nov. 4, arriving at the county board of election command center at 6:30 a.m. to watch preparations for opening the polls. Russian journalists hosted by the **Kiwanis Club of Omaha** also got a jump on the day's main event by viewing the latest polling numbers and projected results at the Gallup Organization's operational headquarters.

At Oak Park, IL Democratic Party headquarters, delegates hosted by the **Friendship Force of Northern Illinois** spoke with veterans of **Sen. Barack Obama's** previous runs for office and observed get-out-the-vote phone banking. Getting out the vote

was also the subject of a class at Wichita State University attended by delegates hosted by the **League of Women Voters of Wichita (KS) Metro**; the Russians in turn spoke on issues with getting out the vote in their country. The **League of Women Voters of Minneapolis** brought their delegates, all city council staffers, to their office to listen to voting-hotline volunteers provide polling place locations to callers unsure about where to cast their ballots.

Government officials hosted by the **Friendship Force of Western North Carolina** interviewed the manager of the Asheville television station about its election coverage, asking whether there is interference from the station owner or public officials. A facilitator hosted by the **Friendship Force of Montgomery (AL)** became an interviewee, commenting on live television on **Montgomery Mayor Bobby Bright's** ultimately successful bid for Alabama's hotly contested 2nd Congressional District seat. Mayor Bright, who happened to be watching the broadcast, was able to thank the facilitator for his kind words during a meeting later in the week.

As Election Day became Election Night, **Friendship Force of Dayton's** delegates stopped by the Montgomery County (OH)

Board of Elections to watch the coverage on the multiple TVs in the county auditorium and to discuss the ballot-counting process with the board's director. Local officials hosted by the **League of Women Voters of Sedalia-Pettis County (MO)** dropped by a gathering of Republicans celebrating wins by their local candidates. And in Reston, VA, a group of Russian delegates who had attended Sen. Obama's final campaign rally in Manassas, VA, the previous night watched and excitedly discussed the election coverage with several of their **American Association of University Women** home hosts until 1:00 a.m.

National Grantees: Academy for Educational Development; Friendship Force International; League of Women Voters; National Peace Foundation



Russian delegates and League of Women Voters co-host Alice Levy (second from right) stand before a Broward County, FL bus that bears an Election Day reminder.