

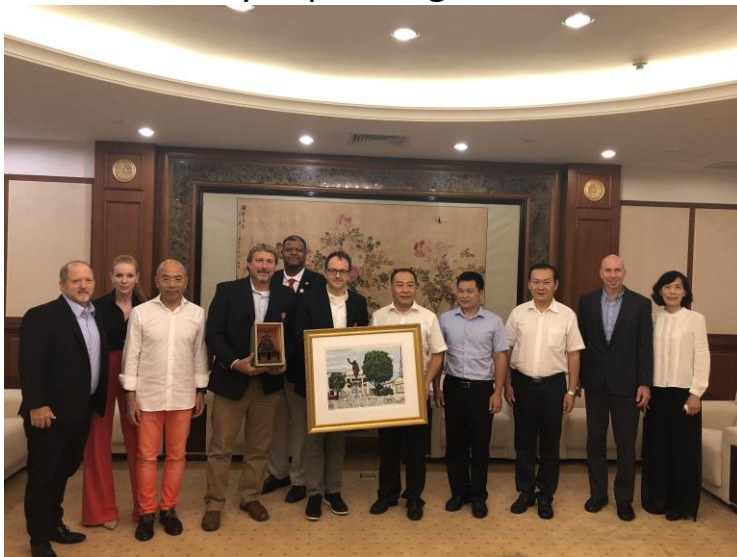


**LAGRANGE**  
GEORGIA

**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 24, 2019**

## **City of LaGrange to Establish Sister City in China**

**LaGrange, Ga. September 24, 2019** – The City of LaGrange is raising its international profile and building upon its reputation as a great place to do business by expanding relations with China.



City of LaGrange delegation with Liuzhou City leaders

“LaGrange is always looking for new economic development opportunities and our staff is able to demonstrate that LaGrange is a great place for business,” said LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton. “Chinese companies represent a tremendous growth opportunity for us.”

Mayor Thornton, Mayor Pro Tem Jim Arrington, Councilman Nathan Gaskin and the city’s economic development staff recently completed a

visit to China, during which time they visited multiple cities and met with various Chinese business leaders.

“The outstanding people of LaGrange are industrially fit, culturally mature and globally poised to be leaders of international commerce, manufacturing and the arts,” said Councilman Nathan Gaskin. “I am excited about our future as a city.”



City leaders touring a Chinese industry in Liuzhou

In 2017, Mayor Thornton and LaGrange Development Authority President Scott Malone visited China as part of a delegation organized by the State of Georgia.

During that 2017 trip, Thornton and Malone first met with leaders from Liuzhou City, who expressed interest in establishing a sister-city relationship with LaGrange.

“I believe that LaGrange will once again be a leader in our state by cultivating this relationship with Liuzhou and it will prove to be economically, culturally and educationally invaluable,” said Arrington. “The highlight of the trip was a visit to Liuzhou City in southwest China.”

Earlier this year, the Foreign Affairs Office of Liuzhou extended a formal invitation for LaGrange officials to visit in September as part of the 9th China-ASEAN Automobiles Expo hosted in Liuzhou.

Last week, Thornton and Malone returned to China along with Mayor Pro Tem Jim Arrington and Councilmember Nathan Gaskin, as well as the city's Director of Utilities Patrick Bowie and Senior Economic Development Manager Kelley Bush.

The delegation attended the formal opening of the China-ASEAN Automobiles Expo and met with the leadership of Liuzhou City.

The sister-city relationship between LaGrange and Liuzhou will initially focus on economic development, cultural enrichment, tourism and educational exchanges.

In addition, city staff met with multiple Chinese industries that are considering expansion to the United States, giving LaGrange officials an opportunity to present the city as a great place for business location and expansion.

Leaders from Liuzhou are expected to visit LaGrange in spring 2020 to formalize the sister-city relationship.

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