

St. Paul Mayor on 5-Day Exploration of Cuba



Havana, February 6 (RHC) — St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman arrived in Havana on Wednesday alongside several dozen business and civic leaders from the U.S. for a five-day cultural exchange, Pioneer Press reported yesterday.

The mayor's trip features walking tours of open-air markets in Old Havana, a dinner with international business executives, lunch with foreign journalists and a briefing on U.S.-Cuban relations led by the former Cuban ambassador to the European Union.

On Friday, the group visited a Cuban cigar factory to see how the country's most famous export is made. The tour was followed by a briefing on foreign investment law and Cuba's economic reforms by economist and real estate expert Miguel Figueras.

On Saturday, the group will tour Ernest Hemingway's home and an organic farm on the outskirts of Havana.

Coleman, who served last year as president of the National League of Cities, is representing the organization alongside Michael Kasperzak, a city council member from Mountain View, Calif.

Obama loosened restrictions on "purposeful" travel to Cuba in January, but U.S. residents must still justify their trip under one of 12 goals. General tourism visits are not allowed.

A bill introduced last week by Republican Jeff Flake of Arizona and Democrat Patrick Leahy of Vermont would end restrictions on U.S. travel to Cuba entirely.

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