



August 2007

## Ambassador Graber in Chicago

During his visit home in the United States, Ambassador Richard Graber spoke July 30 with members of the Milwaukee North Shore Rotary Club on U.S.-Czech relations and the importance of people-to-people engagement. He also addressed U.S.-Czech investment opportunities with business leaders on several occasions. In Chicago, the Consul General of the Czech Republic and Sister Cities Program hosted a reception for him and the Czech-American community. He toured Cicero, the town just outside Chicago which became a refuge for many young Czechs following the Prague Spring of 1968. More information on the events surrounding "Prague Days in Chicago" is available at <http://www.mzv.cz/chicago>.



Shortly before traveling to the U.S., Ambassador and Mrs. Graber visited the town of Žamberk in the Liberec region, which has a Sister City partnership with Rice Lake, Wisconsin. They are seen here with some of the talented young students of Zamberk.

## Modernization of the Visa Waiver Program Is Good News

President Bush signed the Improving America's Security Act of 2007 on August 3, which affects both current and prospective Visa Waiver Program (VWP) member countries. It will significantly enhance the security elements of VWP for the benefit of all travelers. It also creates a way for countries that meet all security requirements, but not the law's standard for visa refusal rates, to join VWP. President Bush called the modifications a step forward, but expressed his intention to continue working with Congress for greater expansion of the program.

Ambassador Graber is strongly committed to working with the Czech government, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security to promote the efficient, practical implementation of these reforms, with the Czech Republic leading the way for others to join the Visa Waiver Program.

## New Deputy Chief of Mission Mary Thompson-Jones



*New Deputy Chief of Mission Mary Thompson-Jones in her office*

The U.S. Embassy is pleased to welcome Mary Thompson-Jones, the senior diplomat selected by the Ambassador to serve as the new Deputy Chief of Mission. She is, in fact, returning to Prague, having served here as Press Attaché from 1993-1996. Her other overseas assignments include Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer in Madrid; Press Attaché in Sarajevo; Public Affairs Officer in Montreal; and Counselor for Public Affairs in Guatemala. The Department of State has awarded Mary Thompson-Jones with three Meritorious Honor Awards. Before beginning her diplomatic career, she worked for eight years as a journalist and editorial writer.

## Ambassador Greg Schulte in Prague

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Vienna Greg Schulte spoke on nuclear nonproliferation, and more specifically on international efforts to mitigate the threat that Iran poses, during August 2-3 consultations with the Czech government and at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He also participated in a roundtable organized by the Association of International Affairs (AMO) at the American Center and appeared on the nightly news program "Events and Commentary." Ambassador Schulte has occupied his current position for two years; previously, he served as the Executive Secretary at the National Security Council. His interview and more information on Iran is available at <http://www.rferl.org/>.



*Ambassador Schulte talks to journalists at the American Center in Prague*

## Missile Defense Site Survey Team Gets Down to Specifics

A team of 30 Missile Defense Agency civil engineering and environmental experts, working in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense, concluded survey work in the Brdy Military Training Area August 16. The purpose of the intensive four-day effort was to gather data on the suitability for the construction of a state-of-the-art missile defense radar facility of a proposed corner of the Brdy military area. The team gathered information on the geology of the area, soil types, road conditions and water quality in the immediate area. Although wet weather hampered travel at one point, much was accomplished.



The survey work will feed into the development of design options for the small facility and contribute to the information available to the bilateral negotiating teams. The U.S. experts shared their preliminary findings with the Czech Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. U.S. negotiators are expected to return to Prague September 5 for the second round of negotiations related to U.S.-Czech missile defense cooperation. Meanwhile, former Czech President Vaclav Havel signed a pro-radar petition during a rock festival near his summer house near Trutnov. Follow weekly embassy updates on MD issues online at <http://prague.usembassy.gov/>.

## U.S. Embassy Supports Ricky Skaggs at the Music in the Park Festival



U.S. Embassy Prague supported renowned American musician Ricky Skaggs and his band at the *Music in the Park: Prague International Blues and More Music Festival*. Skaggs and his band performed July 27 at the MF DNES Stage. Ricky Skaggs has

won eleven Grammy Awards for his music and is known affectionately as bluegrass music's official ambassador. He has brought the genre to greater levels of popularity in the past few years. This second year of *Music in the Park* spotlighted the best in Czech and International artists. The festival took place in the popular Stromovka Park and offered hours of music and other exciting programs on multiple stages.

## Major Biotech Conference in Prague September 12



The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, and the Federation of Food and Drink Industries of the Czech Republic are sponsoring a major

conference on *Biotechnology in Modern Agriculture, Food, and Industry*. About 70 participants are expected at the conference, which will take place September 12 at Angelo Hotel, Prague 5. European, American and other international speakers will address the uses of biotechnology in food, feed and biofuels. For more information, please contact Jana Mikulasova in the office of the Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Embassy Prague, tel: 257-022-026 or e-mail: [Jana.Mikulasova@usda.gov](mailto:Jana.Mikulasova@usda.gov).

## CIAF in Brno September 8, NATO Day in Ostrava September 15

The United States Air Force is participating in force at the NATO Day show in Ostrava on September 15, providing F-16 fighter jets at the show, including one on display for the crowd and one flown by a demonstration team. There will also be a C-17 transport aircraft which will do a demonstration and be on display for visitors. Finally, there will be a KC-135 aerial refueling tanker aircraft on display.



The 2007 Czech International Air Fest September 8-9 in Brno will also have a great lineup of United States Air Force aircraft this year, including two F-15 fighter jets on display. There will also be a C-17 transport plane that will do both a demonstration and be on display for the public. Also this year, there will be a U.S. B-1 bomber for the Czech view at the show.

### Other Upcoming Events

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| Aug. 27-28  | Visit of Congressman Sires and other U.S. lawmakers related to Cuba                                       |
| Aug. 29-30  | Visit of Congressman Trent Franks related to missile defense  |
| Sept. 5     | Assistant Secretary John C. Rood arrives for missile defense negotiations                                 |
| Sept. 18    | Exhibit opening – “Fiction without Borders” at the American Center 09:00-16:30                            |
| Sept. 19-20 | U.S. Embassy organized Transparency Conference  |
| Sept. 25    | Scott Turow, attorney and author of mystery suspense novels, speaks at the American Center, 17:00 – 18:30 |