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**SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO BECOMES EIGHTH  
SISTER CITY TO JACKSONVILLE**

*Mayors from both cities participate in official "twinning" ceremony*

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Oct. 2, 2009** – The Honorable Mayor Jorge Santini of San Juan, Puerto Rico joined Mayor John Peyton and members of the Jacksonville Sister Cities Association and the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce of Northeast Florida for the official signing of a sister cities agreement between San Juan, Puerto Rico and Jacksonville, Fla.

San Juan's vibrant port and Jacksonville's vastly growing port are closely linked. Puerto Rico is Jacksonville's number one trading partner. More than 75 percent of all the ocean-borne cargo shipped between Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland moves through Jacksonville – more than any other U.S. port. This commerce with Puerto Rico has an economic impact of more than \$1 billion annually to Jacksonville.

"San Juan is a significant trading partner with Jacksonville and this sister cities connection will further strengthen our relationships to lead to more business, both port and non-port related," said Mayor John Peyton. "In addition to their strong maritime activity, San Juan offers tremendous opportunities for educational, tourism and cultural exchanges that Jacksonville residents can take advantage of as a new sister city."

"This agreement signing with San Juan reflects Jacksonville's growing trend in developing its Latin connections," said City Council President Richard Clark. "We are pleased to be adding this eighth Sister City and look forward to our relationship with San Juan as an international partner for business and cultural exchange."

The Jacksonville Sister Cities Association is a non-profit citizen diplomacy network that encourages partnerships between the United States and international communities. The goal is to build global cooperation at the municipal level, promote cultural understanding and stimulate economic development.

Jacksonville is pleased to welcome San Juan into its Sister Cities family, joining other cities including: Curitiba, Brazil; Bahia Blanca, Argentina; Masan, Korea; Murmansk, Russia; Nantes, France; Port Elizabeth, South Africa and Yingkou, China. In addition, Jacksonville has developed friendship agreements with other cities in China – Shaoxing, Suzhou and Ningbo. This designation helps the cities to build economic ties within each community and will generate tourism and trade for economic development to a greater extent.

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