

TRIP TO ENGLAND SET TO SEAL NITRO 'SISTER CITY' OTHERS INVITED TO JOIN "EXPERIENCED LONDON TRAVELERS" JUNE 10-21

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The City of **Nitro** should have an official "sister city" in England by the middle of June.

Nitro officials and others are making a trip to London June 10-21, during which they will meet with their counterparts in the Town of Alfreton, which is in the Amber Valley of Derbyshire, near Sherwood Forest.

Nitro City Attorney Richie Robb is organizing the London trip, which will include a side visit to Alfreton to finalize the agreement, which was set in motion last year.

Robb is inviting other interested travelers to make the trip. Fifteen people are needed to get a group rate. The price is \$1,920 per person, double occupancy (add \$500 for a single). The group will depart from Dulles Airport in Washington D.C. The price includes daily breakfast and round-rail service to Alfreton. National Travel in Charleston is handling the arrangements.

"The neighborhood we are staying in is near the University of London and has lots of good, but inexpensive places to eat," Robb said in an e-mail.

He said **Nitro** City Councilman Craig Matthews would join him on the trip. **Nitro** treasurer John Young "is leaning to go, and [Mayor Rusty Casto] has not yet made a commitment."

Several people who plan to make the trip are experienced London travelers.

They "are old London hands who will make excellent guides for the London portion, which is most of the trip."

Robb, who was mayor of South Charleston for more than 20 years, has been working closely with Alfreton Town Clerk David Holmes on the sister city project.

During the two-day side trip to Alfreton, Robb and the others will meet with Holmes to formalize the sister city agreement.

"David has indicated some type of ceremony," Robb said.

The sister city project began a little over a year ago. Robb, who was familiar with the sister city concept during his years as mayor of South Charleston, had been exploring a similar relationship for **Nitro**. He began looking for a town overseas that had a similar history and background as **Nitro**.

"I was involved with Sister Cities International in South Charleston. After becoming Nitro's attorney, some folks mentioned a World War I town for a relationship," Robb said.

Battlefield towns in Northern France showed no interest, but then Alfreton came into the picture.

The **Nitro**-Alfreton connection came about after Robb and his wife traveled to England to visit a college friend, John Titford, who lives in the Derbyshire area.

Titford's wife was familiar with Alfreton through her teaching job, and thus the wheels were set in motion.

"The next thing you know - actually several months - we hooked up with Alfreton via Town Clerk David Holmes. David sent me a bunch of stuff recently, which I turned over to Mayor Casto."

Robb said Alfreton is nearly "a mirror image of **Nitro**, being an old industrial area."

According to Wikipedia, its population is 22,000, and its economy is now based on light industry and warehousing.

The sister city arrangement with Alfreton could result in some economic development opportunities, but "education is an easier option, with exchanges of various types. Right now ... I just want to see if we can get this up, and let's see where it goes from there," he said.

For more information about the London trip, call Robb at 304-744-8231, or send e-mail to robb@suddenlink.net.