

# Toledo officials visiting Hungary

BY MARK ZABORNEY  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

With a suitcase full of Toledo baseball caps and other goodies, three members of city council were sister-city bound, off on a whirlwind trip to Szeged, Hungary, to spread goodwill and strengthen business ties.

Council president Jack Ford and council members Eleanor Kahle and Peter Ujvagi left Wednesday from Toledo Express Airport for Budapest, with a stopover in Atlanta.

"The world is getting smaller, whether we like it or not" Mr. Ujvagi, who was born in Hungary, said. "It is those businesses, those individuals, those cities that recognize that they have a role in an international world who are going to be successful."

There will be little time for sight-seeing: Mr. Ford returns on Monday, Mr. Ujvagi on Wednesday, and Mrs. Kahle on Thursday.

"It's going to a marathon push," Mr. Ford said.

Mr. Ujvagi said it was important that Toledoans could make such international connections through Toledo Express.

"We need to be able to promote this airport," Mr. Ujvagi said.

Because Delta Air Lines is a sponsor of Toledo Sister Cities International, the city was able to get a hefty discount on air fare. Three round-trip business class tickets, value \$11,000, will cost the city about \$1,100, Tom Keating, Delta district sales manager, said.

Szeged Mayor Pal Lippai visited Toledo last fall and invited Mayor Carty Finkbeiner to take part this weekend in the annual Szeged Day commemoration of the city's founding. But because the Chrysler Corp. annual meeting was held in Toledo yesterday, the mayor asked Mr. Ford to go in his place.

Mr. Ford said Toledo might ask to be considered as the site of the 1996 conference of Sister Cities International, which could bring 1,500 people to town. But Toledo, in competition with New York City, Roanoke, Va., and Orlando, Fla., would have to raise \$250,000 from the corporate community.

In 1990, Mrs. Kahle led a Toledo delegation that traveled to Szeged for the signing of a sister-city agreement.

The trip this time will be filled with dinners, speeches, and meetings with business and political leaders. Today and tomorrow, the council members will take part in the Szeged Day events, along with officials from Szeged's other sister cities — Parma, Italy, and Turku, Finland.

On Tuesday, Mr. Ujvagi and Mrs. Kahle will hold a press conference at the Hungarian Trade Association in Budapest to extol Toledo as a gateway for trade.

Mr. Ujvagi said the delegation would be promoting opportunities in Toledo for Szeged businesses and looking at the chance to export Toledo-area products to Hungary and central Europe.

"There has been an ongoing interest by a number of restaurateurs from Szeged to potentially opening a venture here in Toledo," Mr. Ujvagi said, adding that taking this kind of trip doesn't mean necessarily returning with signed deals.

"Business isn't instantaneous," he said.

But does Toledo have an edge, with Mr. Ujvagi, fluent in Hungarian, in the delegation?

"Let's put it this way: When I talk, you don't need an interpreter," he said.