Maryland and Anhui boost 38 years as sisters

2018-05-30

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 China Daily USA |  
 Updated: 2018-05-30 13:35

After 38 years of a fruitful sister-state relationship, Maryland and Anhui province are finding a whole new chemistry.  
The opening of Maryland-Anhui Promotion Week was announced in Rockville on Tuesday.  
The promotion, to be held May 29 to June 1, presents the artistic and cultural heritage of Anhui, as well as business opportunities between Anhui and Maryland.  
"I'm especially delighted that we all have the opportunity to experience first-hand Chinese art and cultural heritage," said Yumi Hogan, first lady of the State of Maryland, after she toured the exhibition.  
Hogan was presented with a Huizhou bamboo carving and Hongbin paintings on silk and cotton, which she called "gorgeous."  
Anhui, one of the most historically rich provinces in China, has a population of about 70 million and lies in the eastern part of the country.  
"When China just opened up in 1979, the governor of Anhui Wan Li led a delegation to the US, and they visited Maryland and established the sister-state relationship, which opened up the gates for collaborations between us," said Zhou Xi'an, vice-governor of Anhui.  
"Our ties have become closer and closer over the past 38 years, and our relationship will grow even stronger in the future," said Zhou.  
Chinese Ambassador to the US Cui Tiankai spoke highly of the relationship between Anhui and Maryland and the role they played in promoting the bilateral relationships of the two countries, according to Xu Xueyuan, minister at the Chinese Embassy.  
"Regional collaborations are one of the most active part of China US relations,"Xu said.  
The Maryland Sister States Program was established in 1980 and currently includes 19 relationships with 17 countries, the Anhui link being the first.  
Maryland-Anhui Promotion Week is the outcome of a meeting between Governor Larry Hogan and Anhui Party Secretary Li Jinbin last summer.  
"During that meeting, the governor and Party secretary agreed that the 38-year-old sister-state relationship between Maryland and Anhui, established in 1980, was deserving of a focus, a celebration, and a re-commitment to the deep and significant economic, trade, educational, and cultural relationships between Maryland and Anhui," said Maryland State Secretary John Wobensmith.  
"Three years ago, we honored the 35th anniversary of this partnership, which encourages exchange and cooperation in a wide range of areas, including agriculture, economic development, trade, culture, education, environment, science and technology," said Maryland Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford.

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