

March 10, 2022



Ivan Ivanovich Ulyanchenko
Head of Stavropol City Administration
96 Karl Marx Avenue
Stavropol, Russia 355 035

Greetings to our Stavropol friends:

In writing to you during such uncertain times in the world, we are reminded of the Russian saying: *There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.*

The relationship that Stavropol and Des Moines have as friends will commemorate 30 years this summer. It is a significant milestone for our two cities, and we know that you share in our pride of this wonderful accomplishment.

We have both seen monumental change during that period as well as many challenges. Our perseverance has made us both stronger and our bond closer.

We face, though, perhaps the greatest challenge between our two countries in more than a half century, precipitated by the unprovoked attack on Ukraine. This is an act of unprecedented aggression that we, as two longtime friends, cannot ignore or disregard.

That is why our Sister Cities Commission supports the unanimous decision by the Des Moines City Council to officially suspend our relationship until the Russian military presence is out of Ukraine and the matter is resolved peacefully. The suspension means we will provide no exchanges of delegations or official communications between our two cities.

It does *not* mean that our 30-year relationship we both worked so diligently to create and maintain has ended. On the contrary, it is the very strength of this relationship that gives us confidence it will endure.

Our Sister Cities Commission was created to foster relationships for cultural, educational and economic cooperation with other communities around the globe. We will never abdicate this inspiration and spirit behind our endeavors.

Stavropol has been a cherished and valued friend for many years, and we are hopeful that it will thrive for decades to come. Because we hold this relationship in such high esteem, we believe the future can be as bright as the past has been rewarding.

In closing, our hearts and thoughts remain in support of our good friends in Stavropol and of a future that we can hopefully share together again soon.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T.M. Franklin Cownie".

T.M. Franklin Cownie
Mayor of Des Moines

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger A. Nowadzky".

Roger Nowadzky
Chair, Sister Cities Commission

cc: Vidal Spaine, Chair, Stavropol City Committee