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Foreign delegates to study Pensacola

Officials from 3 nations visiting area this week

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This week, Pensacola is receiving guests from around the world.

Individual delegations from Hungary, Greece and Russia are visiting Pensacola as part of their national tours to experience America's regional diversity.

The Hungarian delegation arrived Friday for a five-day stay, during which they will examine ways to combat domestic violence and do research on the criminal justice system.

Today, Spyridon Kouvelis, an environmental official and member of the Greek Parliament, will arrive for a three-day stay to study waste management and environmental protection.

"It's a real compliment that Washington, D.C., is sending him to us," said Jena Melancon, Diplomacy Council spokeswoman.

A five-person Russian delegation will arrive Monday to study environmental protection practices.

Each delegation will meet with Diplomacy Council members and local experts in their fields of study, which will include public service officials and representatives from the University of West Florida and Pensacola Junior College.

For example, the Hungarians will be working with the Favor House, an organization that helps battered women.

Sue Hand, Favor House executive director, said she's looking forward to introducing the delegates to the community's progressive stance on domestic violence.

"This is a knowledge-seeking group," Hand said. "We hope the message they take away is that they can deal with this as a criminal issue to make some social change."

The visits are sponsored by the International Visitor Leadership Program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Pensacola's Diplomacy Council was formed in November and already has brought more than five international delegations to the area.