

Estonian mayor visits America By Greg Guenther Monday, June 28, 2004

Times Staff Writer

Mayor Indrek Kivimae of Westminster's sister city, Paide, Estonia, began a 12-day visit Friday by meeting with Mayor Kevin Dayhoff at City Hall.

"I am very glad to be here," Kivimae said. "In Estonia, people think it's a dream to be in America."

In America, the towns, cars and homes are a lot bigger than in Estonia, Kivimae said. Kivimae gave up his job as the manager of the Paide Health Center to become the mayor of Paide earlier this year, he said. This is his first trip to the United States.

Dayhoff gave Kivimae several gifts, including an embroidered Westminster polo shirt. Kivimae presented city officials with a Paide flag and a book on the history of the city.

Kivimae said he hopes the two cities maintain a favorable relationship in the future, and that they receive mutual benefit from the friendship. If Westminster and Paide want to begin a project together, he said, it will be much easier when both sides know each other personally.

Dayhoff said he hopes to build off the strong relationship with Paide to facilitate cultural and economic exchange.

"It's all about making things happen," he said.

There are many things both cities have in common, Dayhoff said. Paide is a city with 10,000 residents and, like Westminster, is the seat of government for its county. The two cities also gain knowledge and the ability to examine different approaches to similar problems through their interaction, he said.

"We share a lot of the same goals and challenges in our communities," Dayhoff said.

Kivimae is to attend the Maryland Municipal League annual convention in Ocean City with Westminster City officials beginning Monday.

In September, two employees from Paide will be coming to Westminster to work for the city, said Thomas Beyard, director of planning and public works.

Dayhoff said he has not yet been to Estonia but looks forward to visiting sometime in the near future.

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