



ST. PETERSBURG RUSSIA AND FLORIDA CELEBRATE THEIR ANNIVERSARIES

ST. PETERSBURG (March 2003) — Though they are nearly half the world apart, St. Petersburg, Florida, and St. Petersburg, Russia, have joined together for a historic celebration of their anniversaries. The Florida St. Petersburg's 100th anniversary will incorporate many Russian influenced events in order to honor its Russian namesake, which will celebrate its 300th anniversary. The events for this historic occasion will run throughout the year with special ceremonies honoring the Florida incorporation date June 6-8. Along with these historic events, delegations from each city are traveling to their counterparts to participate in exchanges in government, education, business, arts and cultural, tourism and more.

Russian aristocrat Peter Demens helped create Florida's St. Petersburg on June 6, 1888. Demens' Orange Belt Railway came through the Florida Gulf Coast city for the first time and consequently Demens was credited with naming it St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg, Florida, is a beautiful city surrounded by sparkling ocean water on three sides. It is known for its record-breaking sunshine and picturesque beaches.

“With more than 1,000 special events each year, any time is a great time to visit our St. Petersburg,” said the Florida city's Marketing Manager Robert Danielson. “But this particular year there are nearly 200 diverse events to commemorate both anniversaries. Events range from historical tributes to the city's past and Russian heritage celebrations, to cultural exchanges and international trade conferences.”

St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

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The two St. Petersburgs share many similarities, but also have many differences. St. Petersburg, Russia, is located in Eastern Europe on the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Florida's St. Petersburg is located between the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay on the state's west coast. St. Petersburg, Russia, is known for its winters and the average temperature is 39.9 degrees F. St. Petersburg, Florida, is known for its place in the Guinness Book of World Records for consecutive sunny days and the average temperature is 73.3 degrees F.

Even though the two cities are separated by the Atlantic Ocean, throughout 2003 visitors will be able to experience the best of both St. Petersburgs through festivals and events being held in Florida, including a giant birthday party at the city's landmark Pier on June 7.

Here are some of the major events taking place:

May 23 and 24 – The Salvador Dali Museum hosts the Cinema of Agitation: Russian Surrealist Cinema. This event celebrates Russian filmmakers use of surrealist techniques and concepts in visionary films, with speaker and films. www.salvadordalimuseum.org 727-823-3767

May 24 to 26 – St. Petersburg College, Gibbs Campus hosts the 300/100 Anniversary Chess Festival. The event features chess events with Russian visiting Grandmasters. 727-822-1171

June 8 – The Museum of Fine Arts hosts the St. Petersburg Russian String Quartet featuring one of the world's outstanding chamber ensembles. www.fine-arts.org 727-896-2667

September – December – The Florida International Museum hosts Memorabilia of World's Prima Ballerina, Anna Pavlova. Complementing this exhibit is the memorabilia of Composer Peter Tchaikovsky. www.floridamuseum.org 727-822-3696

November – The Florida International Museum hosts the State Russian Museum Exhibition. For the first time ever, more than 250 superlative artifacts leave their home and travel to the United States. www.floridamuseum.org 727-822-3696

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St. Petersburg, Florida, has a multitude of sites to see. Visitors to the area will also find picturesque beaches such as Clearwater Beach, Honeymoon Island, and Caladesi Island in the surrounding area. St. Petersburg is also home to some of the state's most well-known museums including the Salvador Dali Museum, Florida International Museum and Florida Holocaust Museum.

For more information regarding the centennial celebration, visit www.stpete.org and for more information on the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area, call 1-877-FL-BEACH (352-3224) in the U.S. and Canada, or 1-727-464-7200 internationally. Take a virtual visit to the area on the Internet at www.FloridasBeach.com.

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