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May 25, 2001

Ms. Elizabeth Barnett
Consul, Consular Section
The US Embassy
Trziste 15
11801 Prague 1, Czech Republic

Re: **Tourist Visa applications for 17 visitors to attend the Portland Streetcar celebration, July 20th – 22nd.**

Dear Ms. Barnett:

Portland City Commissioner Charlie Hales has contacted me regarding a group of 17 Czech artists, musicians, filmmakers, photographers and actors who have been invited to the grand opening celebration of Portland's new streetcar line, which will take place July 20th through the 22nd. Your courtesy in considering their tourist visa applications at your earliest convenience would be greatly appreciated.

The city of Portland has purchased seven Czech-built streetcars from the Skoda company of Plzen in the Czech Republic. The purchase, valued at approximately $14 million, represents an enormous and important investment in the Czech economy and is the first sale of Czech streetcars to a U.S. customer. Happily, the city of Tacoma, Washington has also agreed to purchase three Skoda streetcars for their new system.

I began working on the Portland streetcar project in the mid-1980's when I served as a member of the Portland City Council. The Portland Streetcar project is the first modern streetcar to be introduced in the United States in more than half a century. My former colleague, Portland City Commissioner Charlie Hales, has extended an invitation to this group of artists to share a glimpse of Czech cultural history with Portlanders.

I understand this group will travel directly from Prague to Portland and will be staying for approximately 10 days. A list of the 17 participants follows. If I can be of further assistance with this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me through Joyce Fleming who is on my District Office staff. She may be reached at fax #503 230 5413 or by email

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