

Citation: Citywide broadcast email from Mayor Paul Schell, October 14, 1999. 1802-01, City Clerk Files. arc 7157, SPD 04, Panel 2. Seattle Municipal Archives.

From: SPD Broadcast
To: SPDALL
Date: Thu, Oct 14, 1999 10:52 AM
Subject: World Trade Organization Ministerial

The message below has been approved by the Mayor's office for citywide broadcast.

Please share this email with your co-workers who may not have immediate access to email. Thanks.

October 12, 1999

Dear City of Seattle Employees:

As you know, Seattle will soon host the third World Trade Organization Ministerial, which will bring to Seattle delegations from more than 160 countries, up to 2000 press representatives, and members of interest groups (called non-governmental organizations) from around the world.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is a United Nations type organization that facilitates trade negotiations among its members. Launched as the "Seattle Round," these talks could influence how trade throughout the world will be conducted for years to come. However, the conference will focus on discussions and few decisions will actually be made during this round of talks. Ministerial activities will begin on Monday, November 29, and end by Friday, December 3. Some of the 8,000 participants may begin arriving the week before the Ministerial begins.

While all the media "buzz" is tending to whip up worst-case scenarios about the WTO, this event is a momentous, exciting affair for Seattle. It speaks to the growing stature of Seattle's place on the world stage, and shows impressive confidence in our ability to serve as gracious and competent hosts for international dialogues.

The City of Seattle has been preparing for the event for some time now, and I will be providing you with updates and information to help make all our lives go smoothly throughout the conference. We are doing everything we can to mitigate any inconveniences or disruptions to citizens, retailers, employers and employees, shoppers, visitors, and homeless individuals in our city.

By November 1, City departments will receive information packets to help you answer questions that residents and employees alike may have about access to downtown and City services. By the end of this week, we will post a web site called Gateway to Seattle (<http://cityofseattle.net/wto>), which we will be adding to and updating continuously. The web site will provide information for getting around downtown and promote news features to the 2,000 or more journalists who will be exploring our city for stories to send back home.

The web site will promote our City's best practices and programs, things like Seattle's environmental innovations, our cultural diversity and neighborhood efforts such as P-Patch, our international programs including our award-winning Sister Cities program, our stand for human rights and against discrimination, and other important efforts. Millions of people will learn about us and we will learn about them through the many critical issues being debated and reported on right in our midst.

Also in November, the City will have a hotline up and running to give residents, commuters, holiday shoppers, and visitors regularly updated information on transportation, alternative routes and parking, and any other information that will make travel to and from downtown easier. Downtown holiday festivities will be in full swing and accessible to all.

As it has been reported, the AFL-CIO and its allies are organizing a rally and march during the WTO Ministerial opening session on Tuesday, November 30th. This march will cause traffic problems in the area between the Seattle Center and the Convention Center. This is expected to be the worst day for

Citation: Citywide broadcast email from Mayor Paul Schell, October 14, 1999. 1802-01, City Clerk Files. arc 7157, SPD 04, Panel 2. Seattle Municipal Archives.

downtown traffic, especially in the area north of the Convention Center. We will have more information about this in the near future.

There has been a lot of talk about protests and demonstrations. Seattle has a long history of level-headed citizen expression and demonstrations. As the City did prior to the APEC conference, we have been meeting early and often with protesting organizations to support their right to free speech and help them organize their demonstrations in a peaceful and effective manner. We encourage employees to let people they know who are planning to participate in protests to contact Virginia Swanson, Seattle Parks Department (206-684-8017), for information about permits and protest areas.

In addition to protests, you've probably heard a lot of talk about security. Providing security for the Seattle Round is a regional effort led by the Seattle Police Department (SPD), which is one of the most experienced and respected departments in the country when it comes to managing an event of this scale. SPD is working in cooperation with local, state, and federal jurisdictions to ensure everyone's safety. SPD will provide escorts for heads of state. We anticipate that President Clinton and Vice President Gore will attend some portion of the WTO, but have no confirmation from any other head of state. We expect everything to flow peacefully during the event, but we are fully prepared to respond to emerging situations if need be.

As the host city for the WTO, I believe it is not the City of Seattle's role to stake out positions on the very complex trade issues that are likely to be discussed during the Seattle Round of negotiations. Our role as host is to provide a welcoming, safe, and organized venue for dialogue to take place. I hope you will greet our guests with interest and openness during their stay here.

I want to encourage you to go a step further after reading this letter and find out more about the WTO and global trade. For those of you who are parents, expect your kids to be asking questions! They'll be learning about WTO through special curricula and discussion of news coverage in school. Here's a factoid you can impress them with: 1 out of every 3 jobs in our region is linked to trade. Now challenge your kids to go out and find out why that is. In October and November, you'll have the chance to attend seminars, town hall meetings, and other events throughout the Puget Sound Area. You can find out more about these events on the internet at www.wto-seattle.org or by contacting the Seattle Public Library. The library also has compiled an extensive bibliography on the issues.

I will stay in touch and keep you posted.

Very truly yours,

Paul Schell