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Estero couple named to diplomatic posts

Residents Donald, Gerda Hansen are consuls

BY CHRIS UMPIERRE • CUMPIERRE@NEWS-PRESS.COM • FEBRUARY 8, 2010

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1:10 A.M. — Even though more than 420,000 Europeans visit here each year, Southwest Florida has few cultural and economic exchanges with European governments.

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Estero residents Donald and Gerda Hansen hope to change that.

The Hansens were installed as honorary consuls for Luxembourg and Austria, respectively, on Sunday in Bonita Springs. In addition to aiding Luxembourg and Austria citizens during their Florida visits, the Hansens hope to foster cultural and economic exchanges between Lee County and Europe.

Luxembourg, a small, landlocked country in western Europe that has the world's highest per capita income, recently gave \$200 million to Arizona State University for cancer research.



Donald Hansen was installed Sunday as an honorary consul to Luxembourg and his wife Gerda as honorary consul for Austria. At the Bonita Bay clubhouse, the Estero residents said they hope to foster a cultural exchange between Lee County and Europe. (Jack Hardman/special to news-press.com)

WHAT IS AN HONORARY CONSUL?

Honorary consuls are official representatives of the countries they're named by. Honorary consuls assist and protect the citizens of the consul's country during their visits to America. If a citizen from a consul's country loses a passport or is arrested, the honorary consul's job is to provide aid.

Honorary consuls also facilitate trade and friendship between t

people of the country to whom he or she is accredited and the country of which he or she is a representative.



Donald Hansen and his wife Gerda share a kiss Sunday after their diplomatic appointments. The Hansens now are responsible for fostering trade between the U.S. and Luxembourg and Aus



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