



JEFFERY SMITH | THE LEADER

Corning Mayor Rich Negri and San Giovanni Valdarno, Italy, Mayor Maurizio Viligiardi signed a protocol document Monday at City Hall extending the municipalities' Sister Cities agreement.

Continued from 2A

benefits it has caused."

City Councilman Frank Muccini, chairman of the San Giovanni Valdarno sister cities committee, said the partnership has been successful.

"It's been very good and it will only get better," Muccini said.

August Titi, a member of the city's San Giovanni Valdarno Sister Cities Committee, said the most important aspect of the relationship is its impact on young students.

"For both our students and their students to be

able to experience an exchange of culture at such a young age is wonderful," Titi said.

Students from Corning and San Giovanni Valdarno have traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to visit more than a half dozen times since the initial agreement was reached in 2003.

Viligiardi said the partnership has grown dramatically and has seen many important exchanges.

"Especially students," Viligiardi said. "I really want these student exchange programs to go on because it's very

important. But we'd like to also develop an economic relationship, and we're eager to do this."

Fabio Franchi, chairman of the San Giovanni Valdarno Municipal Board, said he was excited to come to America.

"This is my first trip to the U.S., where democracy and liberty were born," Franchi said. "Your flag is a symbol of all freedom in the world. Thank you for your warm hospitality."

The group of San Giovanni Valdarno arrived in Corning Sunday and will leave Thursday afternoon.