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Mongolia will be country 63 for president of Mackinac Center

BY STUART FROHM
of the Daily News

Midlander Lawrence W. Reed, 51, will have visited 63 countries in a 20-year period.

That's as of next month, when — in Mongolia — he presents a commendation to a former visitor to Midland, Prime Minister Elbegdorj Tsakhia.

Tsakhia studied at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a growing, multimillion-dollar “think tank” on a downtown Midland corner. Reed is the center's president.

The Mackinac Center's commendation recognizes the Mongolian official's love of liberty and his leadership in bringing free enterprise and limited, constitutional government to Mongolia's people. That was as a young activist in the early 1990s and in two stints as prime minister.

With headquarters at 140 W. Main St., the Mackinac Center is a research and education center with a free-enterprise orientation. It has a \$3.2 million budget, 31 full-time employees and five summer interns, Reed said.

Reed to see Naadam festival events, meet officials, give speech

Midlander Lawrence W. Reed says he will have a front row seat for events of the three-day Naadam festival.

“People come from all over Mongolia to Ulan Bator,” the capital, for Mongolia's biggest annual festival, he said.

It includes horse racing, wrestling and archery competition.

The travel plans also include three days in Beijing, China.

While in Mongolia July 9-15, Reed expects to meet with members of parliament and the Cabinet and to give a speech to the Individual Initiative Institute.

Reed said the institute was created by Orgodol Sanjaasuren, who was sent by Prime Minister Elbegdorj Tsakhia to a Mackinac Center leadership conference in October 2003.

Sanjaasuren — known as Orly — is translating Mackinac Center materials for Mongolia, including Reed's “Seven Principles of Sound Public Policy” speech, which now has been translated into at least 10 languages, Reed said.

“We'll soon be making more hires,” he said. “We want to do more in the labor and education arenas.”

Scheduled to start work soon is Patrick J. Wright. As senior legal analyst, the former Michigan Supreme Court commissioner will write advisory papers that might

influence decisions in Michigan courts and the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The cases will concern property rights and the proper role of government, said Joseph Lehman, Mackinac Center executive vice president.

Reed said he thinks the Mack-

inac Center has more influence in the current Republican-dominated, term-limited Michigan House and Senate than when Republican John Engler was governor.

Some of the center's products are analysis of the state budget, by line item; a critique of the Michigan Economic Growth Authority; and examination of a groundwater permitting proposal.

The Mackinac Center makes cases for when privatization (less government) can work, and suggests innovative ways to make education more accountable and competitive, Reed said.

“We never rest on our laurels,” he said. “We're always looking for ways to do things better” and to learn from experience.

Tsakhia — known as E.B. — attended a leadership conference in Midland in 2003. It was one of 16 such gatherings the Mackinac Center has hosted to help U.S. and foreign free-enterprise think tanks start and grow.

The Mackinac Center can learn from similar think tanks' successes, Reed said.

“There's a great need for more of

these kinds of organizations in Africa and in the Caribbean,” he said.

“We're very excited about” a new think tank in Haiti, to which the Mackinac Center donated two old computers, he said.

Reed and Kendra Shrode, his assistant at the Mackinac Center, will use vacation time to travel to Mongolia at their own expense, he said. Some of his previous travel has been as a senior adviser to the International Freedom Corps program of Atlas Economic Research Foundation of Fairfax, Va., which sent him to Asia in February 2004.

Reed said other travelers to Mongolia will be Helen Overton, widow of Joseph P. Overton, Mackinac Center senior vice president, who died in an ultralight plane crash in 2003, and two of Reed's friends, who are from Ohio.

On the Web:
Mackinac Center for Public Policy: <http://www.mackinac.org/>

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