

EMBASSY UPDATES

NEWSLETTER FOR U.S. CITIZENS IN KOSOVO



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Embassy Offices—Bilateral Affairs Office



The State Partnership Program is a Department of Defense program that pairs state National Guard units with partner nation militaries. In Kosovo, the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) works with the Iowa National Guard. Major Kerri Lewers is the current Bilateral Affairs Officer for Kosovo, stationed here for two years to coordinate the 25 partnership events

that Iowa has with Kosovo.

Bilateral Affairs brings trainers to Kosovo and KSF members to Iowa and throughout Europe to work with American National Guard and other military units. The relationship between Iowa and Kosovo has been continuous since March of 2011. The KSF learns military medical techniques, cyber security, disaster response, and professional development from the Iowa National Guard. With a National Guard partnership, there is much less turnover of officers as they rotate through the system. National Guard units tend to keep their leadership over several years. This continuity is especially beneficial as the KSF begins its ten year plan to transition to an expanded mandate that includes territorial defense.

The Whole of Iowa/Whole of Kosovo not only fosters a military relationship between the two states, it adds economic and educational opportunities between the two entities. Agricultural exchange programs and guidance has bloomed, with an exchange of faculty with the Agricultural School of Pristina. Other partnerships include those between health professionals and the opening of business opportunities.



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New CRBA Rules

You just had a baby overseas? Congratulations! How do you get a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA), and why is it important? A CRBA is a certificate stating that your child is a United States citizen and used as proof of citizenship for passport applications. In that way, a CRBA is a very important document indeed.

What do you need to obtain a CRBA for your child? You and/or your spouse must be a United States citizen. If the child was born in wedlock, the parent must show proof of marriage, the child's birth certificate with both parents' names on it, and proof of physical presence in the United States. If out of wedlock, the citizen does not have to show a marriage certificate.

Recently, a ruling has been handed down that children of parents in the employ of the US government overseas do not have their time counted as physical presence in the United States. That means that if you spent time on a military base or at an embassy or at another government facility overseas on your parent's orders, you may NOT count that time as physical presence in the United States. Be prepared to show other time in the US to cover those gaps.

The Department of State is lobbying for reconsideration of the law to allow children's time on their parents orders overseas to count, but nothing has happened yet. If this concerns you, write your congress person.



The U.S. Embassy will be closed on these dates:

Monday, February 18—Kosovo Independence Day and Washington's Birthday	
Tuesday, April 9—Kosovo Constitution Day	Wednesday, May 1—May Day
Monday, April 22—Easter Monday	Thursday, May 9—Europe Day
Monday, April 29—Orthodox Easter Monday	Monday, May 27—Memorial Day

Travel To Serbia?

If you travel to Serbia often and worry about the Kosovo stamps in your US passport, come talk to us. We may have a solution. Recently, the passport division has eased the restrictions on issuance of second passports for those traveling often between Serbia and Kosovo. This means you may have one passport for such travel and another for travel between Kosovo and other countries. Second passports have shorter validity durations, and you must safeguard them just as well as your primary passport. Consider well before applying, but it may be a solution for some of your travel headaches.

It's Tax Time

All US citizens earning money domestically or abroad must file tax returns. You can check to see if you need to file [here](#). The Consular Section does not offer tax advice, nor does it have forms for you to fill out. All questions need to be addressed to the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

Keeping Warm When The Heat's Off

Sometimes the power goes out at the most inconvenient times here in Kosovo. There's no warning, no storm, and it just pops off – often for hours. Here's some advice for keeping you and your family (and pets!) warm during the outage.

First, check the breakers. It might be you and not the power company. Make sure your breakers are working and on.

Next, gather in one area of the house –an area you can cut off from the rest of the house, and preferably with a fireplace.

Third, seal the doors and window ledges with towels or other materials to keep the heat in. If you have a tent, you might want to put it up in this space for an even smaller area to stay warmer.

Lastly, light the fireplace safely. Make sure the flue and damper are correct and you have a screen across the front.

Pile in blankets and heavy clothing and huddle close together. You'll all be warm for a while. If you have elderly in the house, check them frequently for hypothermia. Elderly people lose heat more quickly and need to be kept warmer. This is a matter of life or death for them.

Here are a few more ideas on staying warm.

[Liberty Mutual's Guide](#)

[House Logic's Guide](#)

Converting Beer Drinkers One Brew At A Time

Alex and Etida Butler founded Sabaja Brewery in 2012 and their first brew was released to the public in June of 2013.- Currently, they are selling three different beers, and have made eight varieties in their since they openend the business. The local market is accustomed to basic pilsners; Sabaja is working to expand the local palate one customer at a time! This has sometimes been a challenge, as many people hesitate to try new things.



Just as Kosovo is beginning to be on the wine map, Sabaja and a few others are putting premium craft beer on the mental map of Kosovo's consumers. Local brewers work in cooperative competition with each other, even using each other's equipment and facilities when necessary. Currently, the employees of Sabaja use the equipment of another brewer in Gjilan to brew their products.

All local brewers, including Peja, import hops, grain, and yeast from other parts of Europe. Barley was formerly grown in Kosovo, and may make a comeback in the next few years. While wild hops are native to Kosovo, no one is currently growing beer hops for the expanding market here.

A native New Yorker, Alex graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) with an MBA, then moved to New York City to start his career. Etida was a fellow student at RIT and, one day while she was visiting him in New York, he showed her his closet home-brewing set up. She asked if he would be interested in starting a beer and brew pub in Kosovo. Alex moved to Kosovo with her, and they founded the company. Alex also teaches at RIT-Pristina while Etida manages most of the day-to-day workings of Sabaja. They plan to ex-



Road Sign of the Quarter

- A. Right turn only.
- B. Thick lane has priority.
- C. Make bunny ears!
- D. Diamonds go right.

Answer:

B. Thick lane has priority.



Unseen Kosovo – National Museum of Mines and Minerals TREPÇA

There's a curator who wishes more people would visit his museum. He's got a beautiful collection of rocks and minerals getting dusty because not enough people come to visit. The National Museum of Mines and Minerals, also known as the Crystal Museum, is located just inside the main gates to TREPÇA mine outside Mitrovica. It's a modern structure opened in 2012. There are many mineral samples from the mine itself and from all over the world. All are in glass cases and beautifully presented. The museum is open daily from 10 to 5, and the curator will guide you through himself, showing you all the little surprises. There is also a three dimensional map of the TREPÇA mine, which is awesome to look at. The map is made up of layers of etched glass. For more information, you can go [here](#) or [here](#).

