

## EDITORIAL

# Close to home

## Consulate's choice of Danbury law firm gives Brazilian community connections

The Brazilian consulate's selection of Ventura, Ribeiro & Smith as its legal representative is a distinction for the law firm and its home city of Danbury.

The consulate could have gone with a bigger name firm from Boston or New York but evidently felt that Ventura, Ribeiro & Smith had not only the expertise but the understanding of the Brazilian community needed to best do the job.

Deputy Consul General Nestor Forster said Tuesday that the choice was made after an extensive search. He noted that Ventura, Ribeiro & Smith "have a record of working with immigrants, especially Brazilians."

We congratulate the Danbury lawyers on achieving this distinction. And we recognize that the consulate's choice underscores Danbury's place as perhaps the Brazilian capital of the state of Connecticut, and it highlights the importance of consulate personnel's monthly visits to provide services in Danbury.

The 2000 census showed this city to have the largest Brazilian community in the state. Whether that holds true for 2010 remains to be seen. As detailed in Sunday's News-Times, the city's immigrant population is in flux, partly due to a shaky economy, and perhaps partly because Danbury's ICE partnership has made immigrants here uneasy.

Still, a large part of Danbury's identity is Brazilian. The richness of that heritage was on display this summer during the soccer World Cup, and earlier this month, as Brazilian and American flags were raised at City Hall during a celebration of Brazilian Independence Day.

It seemed for a while that Brazilian nationals in Danbury might lose the local services of the consulate when a new facility was built in Hartford. But soon after the new consulate opened in Hartford last year, Brazilian officials confirmed their commitment to monthly visits to Danbury.

Forster said this week that based on an assessment of need in Danbury, the "traveling consulate" will continue to make stops here. The next visit, he said, is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 16 and 17, at a site to be determined.

We urge officials to continue those monthly visits indefinitely to ensure that Danbury's Brazilian community is well served. Having a local law firm represent the consulate can only help, as well.

