NUTTER: Congress Must Act Now to Protect Our Future

81st WINTER MEETING: WASHINGTON, DC

USCM Revolutionizes Benefits with Great-West, Colonial Life

11 Cabinet Members Participate in Winter Meeting Sessions

Nutter Joins Feinstein for Assault Weapons Ban Introduction

Senator Begich Champions City Priorities

New York City Mayor Bloomberg

Vice President Biden, USCM President Nutter Demand Action on Gun Violence Legislation

Senator Feinstein, Mayors United on Assault Weapons Ban

Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa, Chicago Mayor Emanuel

Mayors Fight to Protect Tax-Exempt Financing

Mayors, Governor, Musicians Honored for Arts Leadership
The Conference of Mayors has had strong policies on guns and gun violence since 1968 and up until our most recent meeting.

We heard from California Senator Dianne Feinstein as she announced her decision to introduce common sense gun legislation banning assault weapons. Our organization has strong policy on this issue. On Thursday of this week, Conference President Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and I stood with Senator Feinstein and others when she introduced her legislation.

Municipal Bonds
Gun violence is not the only issue before us. Certainly, the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds is a matter that dominated many of our policy meetings. Mayors were forceful in our opening press conference. Members of our Executive Committee voiced their concerns to the Administration and Members of Congress while they were in town.

On Wednesday of this week, I joined with executive directors of the National Association of Counties Matt Chase, and National League of Cities Clarence Anthony, where we planned a bipartisan strategy to protect the tax status of municipal bonds, which are vital at a time when infrastructure development must not be affected. Government is unified on this issue and in the coming months we will be even stronger advocating local government interests as well as the interests of our people.

Immigration Reform
In addition to the “fiscal cliff” issues and gun safety, we are appreciative of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s leadership on comprehensive immigration reform. Mayor Villaraigosa addressed the immigration reform before The National Press Club on January 14, and he repeated his call for national immigration reform before our Mayors Winter Meeting on January 19. He was well received and we will continue to work with Congress and The White House on this issue as we move forward.

We appreciate the mayors who attended this great meeting. The meeting has energized our mayors and our staff. We look forward to working with all of you in the days ahead.

Guns – Assault Weapons
The massacre of Newtown, where 20 precious babies were riddled to death with bullets from an assault weapon hung over our meeting.

It started when Vice President Biden came to brief us on the Administration’s plan, “Now is the Time: The President’s Plan to Protect Our Children and Our Communities by Reducing Gun Violence.”

The Conference of Mayors has had strong policies on guns and gun violence.
Nutter: Congress Must Act on Sequestration, Guns, Infrastructure, Climate Change, Immigration

By Ed Somers

In his opening report to the nation’s mayors on January 17, Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter said, “As is always the case with the Conference of Mayors, there are certain events we can plan for, and there are moments in history that were not expected and will never be forgotten.”

Speaking to expected events, Nutter thanked the mayors for their bi-partisan leadership on the fiscal cliff, middle-class tax cuts, and protecting municipal bonds. On the threat to tax-exempt financing, Nutter said, “If we had not acted, we could have seen the erosion of this most basic federal-local partnership.”

But Nutter stressed that there is much work ahead, including another fight on sequestration, which was only delayed for two months. “We have suffered dramatic cuts from Washington. We have seen Community Development Block Grants drastically reduced. We have sacrificed for the greater good,” he said, urging that a final spending agreement not come at the expense of key domestic investment programs.

On the threat to tax-exempt financing, Nutter said, “We must continue to educate both the Administration and Congress on the negative impact that limitations to tax-exempt financing would have on our local communities, and the job creation that comes through financed infrastructure investments.”

Nutter said that Congress should act on an infrastructure investment package as called for by both Conference of Mayors and the Administration. “We all know that investments in roads, transit, airports, ports and water systems create jobs. Most of these jobs are in the private sector.” That is why this issue has had strong bipartisan support from groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and in the past, from Congress.

And speaking to immigration, Nutter said, “Washington is well overdue to act on comprehensive immigration reform. There is too much at stake for both our economy and our social fabric for us not to resolve this issue now.”

Moving to a discussion of what he called “unplanned events in our nation’s history that rock us to the core, and become a touchstone for action,” Nutter assured all the mayors impacted by Superstorm Sandy that, “We stood with you then; we stand with you now; and we will stand with you in the days ahead until you receive the help you need from our federal government to help recover and rebuild.”

Nutter stressed that the threat to tax-exempt financing remains very real as Washington searches for more revenue to reduce the deficit. “We must continue to educate both the Administration and Congress on the negative impact that everything you need from our federal government to help recover and rebuild.”

But Nutter said that, “Simply helping our cities and communities to heal the scars of devastation is not enough. Washington cannot continue to deny the basic fact that climate change is real and having a major impact on the health and safety and economy of our country.”

Nutter said that through the Conference of Mayors climate center and climate protection agreement, the Conference of Mayors has led on the issue of climate change. “Now is the time for Congress to help protect our future. No more denial; no more debates. Just action.”

Nutter then moved to the issue of gun violence. “Every day, mayors think about the children that walk or take a bus to schools in their cities… Every day, mayors worry about the brave police officers who work to protect their neighborhoods… And, far too often, it is the mayor who gets the call about a tragic crime committed with an illegal gun that has resulted in the loss of life.”

“That is why this Conference of Mayors has also long championed the issues of public safety and crime reduction,” the he added.

Since the killings of Dr. King and Robert Kennedy, the Conference of Mayors has led on the issue of comprehensive immigration reform, including universal background checks, a ban on assault weapons, and large capacity magazines that Nutter said are “designed to serve our military needs but with no practical use on America’s streets or in our neighborhoods.”

Nutter said that for far too long, the federal government has been unwilling to act. “But then, on December 14, we all witnessed a tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut that— even after all the others—we still could not imagine. 26 lives taken from us. 20 children—ages 6 or 7—shot dead at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, a terrible, unforgivable moment in our nation’s history. We cannot get those lives back. We cannot get back the more than 30,000 lives lost every year to gun violence. But we can, and we must, act to help protect lives in the future,” he stressed.

Nutter commended the Administration’s new gun safety agenda, and said that the nation’s mayors “…will stand firmly with President Obama and Vice President Biden on their plan to reduce gun violence,” and push Congress to act.

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USCM President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter

Vice President Biden Presents President’s Plan to Protect America from Gun Violence to Mayors

By Tina Garza

Vice President Joe Biden delivered a strong address on the first day of the 81st Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors, detailing a plan released by the Obama Administration for curbing gun violence in America. In his January 17 remarks, Biden told the hundreds of mayors present that, “It’s nice to talk to a group of leaders who I agree with on 90 percent of the issues.”

The Vice President chose the event to unveil, point by point for the first time, his plan to Protect Our Children and Our Communities by Reducing Gun Violence. “Although there is no absolute unanimity on how to solve the issue of gun violence, there is a need to end the carnage in our schools and in our streets,” he said.

Biden told the mayors he recognizes that all of them deal with gun violence everyday. “I’m not going to ask for a show of hands but how many of you have had to attend a funeral for a police officer, an innocent child at a drive-by shooting or a shop owner killed in your city?”

The Vice President mentioned that it’s not just in big cities where gun violence can take place, but it can happen anywhere. He said in the last several years, about 25 people have died in mass homicides every single day. He added, “As much as we intend on making schools our focus or more secure, as Mayor Rahm Emanuel has said, the truth is most schools are safe.

It’s going to and from schools that young people are in the greatest danger.”

Biden said one of the reasons President Obama charged him with coming up with a plan to address gun violence, was his experience on the Senate Judiciary Committee. The President asked him to convene a special working group of experts and quickly, conduct a survey and present him with key recommendations. Experts convened as part of the group included Attorney General Eric Holder, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano.

Biden said he and other leaders also met with more than 2,000 groups offering a wide range of perspectives, including members of the law enforcement community, gun safety advocates, victims of mass shootings, hunters, gun owners and the NRA. Other groups also included representatives of the video game industry, educators, retailers and public health officials. The Vice President said he also spoke to many mayors, along with gun owners and advocates. He added that a set of principles were used to guide their plan based on conversations with various groups, as well as after reviewing documents that had been written in the past.

• President Obama and Biden support the 2nd Amendment and it comes with the right of law-abiding responsible citizens to own guns.

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Four Cities Win Grants for Outstanding Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Initiatives

The United States Conference of Mayors announced the winners of the 2013 Safeguard My Meds Prescription Drug Abuse Recognition Program, during the 81st Winter Meeting in Washington (DC). Awards were given to outstanding local initiatives that have the greatest potential to reduce the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs, particularly among young people.

Grants were made to mayoral-based initiatives in four cities: Asheville, Baltimore, Madison, New Bedford.

The grant program is the latest initiative in a four-year partnership between Conference of Mayors and Purdue Pharma, L.P., with the goal supporting and/or enhancing existing prescription drug abuse prevention programs in America’s cities, as well as encouraging the development of new and innovative programs.

The successful Conference of Mayors / Purdue Pharma partnership began in 2009 with a nationwide public awareness campaign, featuring national PSAs on the dangers of prescription drug abuse, and offering simple steps parents can take to protect their children by properly storing and disposing of medication in the home. To date, mayors have recorded more than 200 radio and television PSAs, which have reached an audience of millions in cities across the country.

“I am proud to be a part of this important partnership with Purdue Pharma,” said Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. “Together, the Conference of Mayors and Purdue Pharma have taken a national leadership role in the fight against prescription drug abuse, particularly among our young people, and these awards are an important step in supporting the efforts of mayors on the ground, at the local level.”

“We congratulate the mayors who have won this year’s award and applaud the efforts of all the mayors who participated throughout the years in the Conference of Mayors Safeguard My Meds public education campaign,” said Purdue Pharma Healthcare Alliance Development Executive Director Pamela Bennett, RN, BSN. “The Conference of Mayors has been a valuable partner in helping to educate the public about the importance of safe storage and disposal of medication, and we look forward to our continued partnership.”

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• Certain people in society should not, and legally cannot be qualified to own a gun because they are unstable or they are dangerous.

• We should make common sense judgments about keeping dangerous weapons off our streets.

• This issue isn’t just about guns. It’s about the “coarsening of our culture” whether its with video games or movies or behavior.

The Vice President said the comprehensive plan includes a common-sense approach where he believes there is overwhelming consensus.

Speaking about the gun culture in America that varies from region to region, Biden said, “It’s a big business, as well as institutional; it is cultural. But it’s really important for those of you who have strong feelings on gun control, to understand that it’s part of the ethic where a lot of us come from.”

Determining Who Can Own Guns

One of the questions that Biden asked groups he met with, was who should be legally prohibited from owning a gun? He said that current law has evolved over time. For example, following the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, in 1968 Congress passed what was then the Gun Control Act. Then he added that in 1994, under his leadership, the Violence Against Women Act was passed, and a new category of people who were prohibited against owning a gun.

Biden said he has recommended to the President, that the Attorney General examine whether any other people should be added to that category. For example right now, certain convicted stalkers can still purchase a gun. The Vice President admitted that the most delicate area is in the mental health area, which requires a great deal of study. He said that ironically, this is where pro-gun owners are more inclined to deny ownership and anti-gun groups are more inclined to say, leave them alone,” it’s privacy.

Closing Background Check Loopholes

The Vice President said that the NICS background check system must also be examined, and that right now the information put into that system is woefully incomplete. “States are supposed to have the mental health records available for people who can’t have guns. But today, there are 17 states that have made fewer than ten mental health records available on the background checks system but yet there are tens of thousands of felons.”

President Obama has called for $20 million to be redirected to the states, to update those records and make them available. This would happen with support from the Justice Department. Biden said the federal government has also failed to do their part to share information, leading President Obama to issue an Executive Order calling on the federal government to share information within their lawful possession.

Banning Military-Style Assault Weapons, High Capacity Magazines

Biden said another question discussed was what kinds of guns should be swept off our streets. He said President Obama believes that there should be newer stronger assault weapons bans. “We are calling for the prohibition of high capacity magazines all together. High capacity magazines leave victims with no chance and leave policeman outnumbered sometimes too,” Biden said.

The Vice President said that if the assailant who shot Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, hadn’t been stopped from putting in a new clip, by a woman nearby, there would have been many other victims in the Arizona shooting. “High capacity magazines in our view are not worth the risk,” he added.

Making Schools Safer

The Vice President added that the Administration has already directed OMB, to provide another $4 billion dollars in grants for the COPS program. “The next question we ask is how to make our streets and schools safer, and we believe cops make our streets safer,” said Biden. But the Vice President quickly clarified that the program would be used to support community policing. He said the resources could be used by a community as needed, and under their discretion. “I’m proposing a new school safety program that funds officers but also gives your community the flexibility to apply it for other priorities like a psychologist,” said Biden.

The Vice President added that they don’t want ‘rent-a-cops’ or officers who are not trained. The Administration also wants to make sure that every school has a reliable emergency response plan.

“So one of the few things that the federal government historically can do is figure out what best practices are, especially by working with mayors. But we’re asking the Congress to fund safety implementation programs,” added Vice President Biden.

Improving Mental Health Services

Biden said that the Administration is proposing ways to improve access to mental health services, so that people get help they need before its too late. “What happens when people age out of Medicaid and there’s nothing they can do? We’re calling on Congress to provide support for persons who work with children everyday who need mental health services and look for the warning signs,” said Biden.

Prevent Gun Trafficking

The Vice President said that another important issue is how to prevent gun trafficking and it starts with creating a

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Conference of Mayors Can “Move the Needle” on Immigration Policy, Villaraigosa Tells Mayors

Immediate Past President Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s message to the mayors attending the 81st Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors was that, while the national political agenda is packed with issues such as the debt ceiling, long term fiscal stability, infrastructure, gun violence, and winding down the war in Afghanistan, “There are few more fundamental questions that we face than: who we welcome to our shores, how we secure our borders, what we do to include the millions of undocumented men and women who work hard and do the hardest work, and how we keep them safely together with their five million citizen children.” These questions, he said, “go straight to the heart of who we are as a people.”

Addressing the January 19 plenary session of this year’s meeting, Villaraigosa, the immediate Past President of the organization, recalled the day in March 2006 when the immigration issue became a very personal one for him, a day on which one million immigrants marched on Los Angeles City Hall. “People who worked hard, who were humble but who were tired of being scapegoated, tired of hearing the catcalls that they were the cause of all the country’s problems, tired of being told to go home, to go back where they came from. “Now is the time for comprehensive, not piecemeal, immigration reform,” Villaraigosa told his audience. “And now is the time for the nation’s mayors to assert our leadership in this crucial debate.”

The mayor had delivered a speech on immigration reform to Washington’s National Press Club earlier in the week and recapped for the mayors his message that day. “The system is broken and now is the time to fix it. Reform must be balanced. Immigrants must take personal responsibility for their actions. But as they do, we must provide them with a meaningful path forward to become full members of American society. We have every right to enforce our laws and protect our borders. But at the same time, we need to encourage the aspirations of immigrants.”

Villaraigosa cites six “pillars” of immigration policy:

“One, a pathway to legal permanent residency and citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants must be at the core of reform….

“Two, legalization should be earned, but not unattainable…. “Three, family unification should continue as a key priority of our immigration continuation.

“Four, the hard work and talent of immigrants fuels our economy….

“Five, immigration reform must include an effective and efficient employment verification system…. “Six, we must protect our border through smart enforcement…We spend more money on border enforcement than we do for the FBI, the DEA, the ATF, and all the federal low enforcement agencies combined.”

The Conference of Mayors has been “a strong and consistent voice for common sense reform,” Villaraigosa said. “In 2008, we passed a resolution calling for immigration reform that was comprehensive, that promoted family unification, and that provided a path to citizenship. In the coming months, we will again be called to be part of the national debate on our immigration future.”

“Mayors, we must answer this call. We don’t have a vote, but we have a voice. And together, we can move the needle. Together we can push our national leaders to enact reform that is good for our cities, good for our economy and good for our country. Together we can lead,” he said.

Governor Malloy to Mayors: “We Cannot Lose our Children”

Returning to address the 81st Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors as Governor of Connecticut, former Conference of Mayors Trustee Stamford Mayor Danell Malloy appealed to his audience to protect children on several fronts, beginning with the reform of their schools and their safety within them.

“Everything I needed to know and learn about education I learned as a mayor,” Malloy told the mayors and business leaders in the January 19 plenary session, where he expressed the need to do “everything in our power to educate our children effectively.”

“I’m the governor of a state that has certain urban areas in which 60 percent of the students are receiving a high school diploma that actually represents value,” Malloy said. “We will not compete with other nations and we in the state of Connecticut will not compete with other states if we are simply willing to throw away up to 40 percent of our children growing up in urban environments…We cannot lose our children,” he said.

Even in low performing school districts, Malloy explained there are outstanding schools and their successes need to be captured. The problem, he added, is that “We are far more likely to recommit ourselves to our mistakes and repeat behaviors year after year than to replicate successes,” and he appealed to the audience to “break the trend of replicating mistakes and start the trend of paying for replication of successes.”

Turning to the recent mass shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, which took the lives of 20 young children and six school employees, Malloy, who was a constant presence in the community in the aftermath of the tragedy, said, “The experience I’ve had pale in substance and cause and reaction to that which struck 20 families who lost their children, and the spouses and family members of those six adults who died protecting those children.”

Describing the issue of assault weapons and high-capacity clips in mass killings, Malloy said, “We have got to use this experience in Newtown to make sure not only that we reignite for the moment our interest in doing something about this issue, but we do it for whatever period of time it takes for us to make real change. There are things that make so much sense to the American people, simple things that we could do to help prevent further loss of life in Newtown and in other cities. There is no reason that in a country where we don’t allow anyone to get on an airplane without undergoing a background check, we allow anyone to buy a gun without a background check.”

“Actually, there is a reason,” he added, referring to the profits earned by the firearms industry: “People make money.” But, he added, the American people understand the unfairness of trading lives for profits. “This is a fight that the American people are willing to have if we provide the leadership when we go back to our cities, our states, and our companies.”

Malloy also appealed for a change in the perception of mental health treatment in the nation, explaining that the continued stigmatization of those who have undergone treatment for problems such as depression or anxiety—even when that treatment is successful—discourages those needing help from seeking it. Adding to the problem, he said, is that “We make it hard to get treatment when it’s needed.”

On the other hand, Malloy said we have effectively de-stigmatized violence. “On the day that Newtown happened there were games available that actually allowed people to go into schools in the games and shoot them up.”

“If we spent as much time and energy on de-stigmatizing mental health treatment as we do on the proliferation on these games that are de-stigmatizing violence, we as a society would make leaps forward,” Malloy said.

“There are going to be more Newtowns, there are going to be more Aurora, there are going to be more people who walk into movie houses and shoot them up, because we have failed to act in the past and we will be slow to act now,” Malloy concluded. “It will be the volume of the repeat of these incidents that ultimately will allow us as a nation to do that which we already know, and have known for a long period of time, should have been done.”

Biden

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federal trafficking statute for guns. “We have one for drugs so why can’t we have one for guns?” said Biden. According to Biden, in New York 68 percent of illegal guns are purchased outside the state. The Vice President concluded by stating that too many in this country have been silent too long on the issue of guns. “We cannot be silent any longer. What happened in Newtown is not just about gun violence, it is about regaining civility in our society,” said Biden.
“Get Old, Live Better” Panel Explores Strategies for Developing Age-Friendly Communities

By Jubi Headley

Transportation and pedestrian mobility, zoning strategies, and social/civic engagement were the predominant themes echoed throughout the “Get Old, Live Better” panel discussion at the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting. Sponsored by Pfizer, Inc., the world’s largest research-based pharmaceutical company, the hour-long discussion explored strategies and best practices to prepare for the coming wave of older adults, and more broadly, to inspire more age-friendly community development.

“With advances in healthcare, it is possible for more people to live better as they live longer. Our nation’s older populations will more than double by 2050 and the needs of our neighborhoods and communities will change,” said Pfizer Policy External Affairs and Communications Executive Vice President Sally Susman in explaining the panel’s concept.

Moderated by Grantmakers in Aging CEO John Feather, Ph.D., the panel included mayors Greg Ballard of Indianapolis, Sly James of Kansas City (MO), and Greg Stanton of Phoenix, as well as New York Academy of Medicine Policy and Planning Senior Vice President Ruth Finkelstein.

The panel echoed the normal question and answer session at the end of the panel, in favor of innovative audience response system (ARS) technology. Each member of the audience was provided with a keypad, through which they could respond to a series of questions, or polls, conducted throughout the panel’s discussion. Results of each poll were displayed in seconds of each audience member recording their response, allowing for these audience polls to shape and influence the course of the discussion. Further, the panelists engaged the audience in the discussions to shape and influence the course of the panel.

By Jubi Headley

Pedestrian Mobility. Finkelstein helped frame the conversation by noting that, “The enemy of healthy aging is social isolation.” In order for older adults to be engaged, they need to be mobile, as pedestrians, first and foremost. In Kansas City, Indianapolis, and Phoenix alike, each city has a variety of strategies have been employed to enhance mobility for all residents, from improving sidewalks and pedestrian thoroughfares to installing bike lanes. James noted, for example, that in Kansas City, they are exploring permeable concrete for their sidewalks. By definition, permeable or pervious concrete is a special type of concrete that allows water and air to pass through it. This results in less puddling, and therefore less cracking and degradation of the surface, making sidewalks safer for pedestrians. Permeable concrete also has significant environmental benefits.

Downtown Development. The mayors have found that the amenities that attract younger residents to cities are similarly desired by older adults. Chief among these is a desire to return to a culturally and socially vibrant downtown core to live. This recognition is woven into the fabric of each mayor’s development efforts, and each mayor recognizes that zoning can be an important tool in spurring the type of development that is attractive to all residents, older adults included. Ballard gave an example of this in Indianapolis, where the city has developed the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, an urban bike and pedestrian path that connects neighborhoods, Cultural Districts and entertainment amenities, and serves as the downtown hub for the entire central Indiana greenway system.

Zoning as a tool to develop age-friendly communities. The mayors recognize and embrace zoning as a tool to encourage the type of development that encourages vibrant, age-friendly communities. For example, each city is exploring light rail, at various levels, as a means to not only enhance mobility, but encourage development, particularly in the downtown core. Stanton noted that Phoenix has invested significant resources in a light rail project; however, given the current economy, they haven’t seen the resulting development historically associated with light rail projects. And overall, financing and legislative challenges often pose significant hurdles to light rail projects. However, Stanton noted that zoning regulations can be adapted to provide incentives to encourage the types of development that cities need, and that results in better communities for older adults and all residents.

Collaboration and Civic Engagement. The mayors that one of the keys to successful development is collaboration — among agencies within the city, among cities and communities within the region, and among residents. To this end, all the panelists stressed that older adults should be engaged to help develop the strategies and solutions to the issues that they themselves face. Older adults are often an invaluable and untapped resource, not only on aging issues but on community issues at large, and by and large are willing and able to actively participate in civic activities. Finkelstein suggested that one measure of the success of development of an age-friendly community would be one in which there’s less of a dichotomy between the younger or “creative” class of residents and the older adults in a community. Aging means something different than it ever has before, she noted — a person who is 60 years old today can reasonably expect to live another 20 to 30 years — and first and foremost, they want to be able to live as themselves, as she put it. It’s our mutual responsibility as the public sector, Finkelstein stressed, to create an environment that lets people live as themselves in this way — that lets people engage in all of the activities and lifestyles they’ve enjoyed throughout their lives.

Resources. Finkelstein notes that, as the WHO affiliate for aging population, one of the mandates of the New York Academy of Medicine is to guide cities in the development of age-friendly policies and programs, and they’re happy to engage in these conversations. More information is available online at www.agefriendlynyc.org.

Conference of Mayors/DuPont Partnership Promotes “Science in the School Day”

DuPont Public Relations Manager Mary Kate Campbell spoke to our mayors about DuPont’s Platinum Partnership with The U.S. Conference of Mayors. She noted that over the past 12 years DuPont and the Conference of Mayors have worked to assist mayors in making their cities safer, smarter, and healthier.

For the past 12 years, DuPont has invested more than $5 million and numerous resources to assist mayors in making cities safer, smarter and healthier. From science education to safety to the state of the art turnout gear for first responders, DuPont has partnered with mayors for the betterment of our cities.

In 2013, the partnership will continue to focus on our cities’ elementary school children through the Science in the School Day Program. DuPont will also expand their offerings in this area to reach out to science educators. DuPont will offer science teachers access to national programs that will help them find new and inventive ways to make math and science interesting.

To that end, DuPont will work with mayor’s to nominate 20 teachers to attend the National Science Teachers Association’s National Conference in San Antonio in April of this year. DuPont will also work with mayor’s to nominate another 20 teachers to send to different roadways across the country to attend a program called Driving SCIENCE. Driving SCIENCE is a professional development institute sponsored by DuPont Motor Sports, Daytona International Speedway, and Clemson University where teams of teachers work to strengthen content knowledge in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines and take them back to their classrooms.

Additionally, with the tragic events that have been taking place around the country, DuPont is committed to protecting the people who protect us — law enforcement, firefighters, first responders.

As part of this partnership, DuPont will select cities to donate turnout gear and bullet resistant vests made with Kevlar and Nomex to provide state of the art protection to help guard those who so bravely put their lives at risk for others.

For more information on these programs or to schedule a Science in the School Day event, contact DuPont at scienceinth escollday@verizon.net.
Conference of Mayors, Philips Launch New Mayors’ Lighting Partnership

By Debra DeHaney-Howard and Kevin McCarty

Addressing mayors at the 81st Winter Meeting, Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran announced a new partnership between The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Philips Lighting, stating, “With the Mayors’ Lighting Partnership, we are bringing the strengths of our two great organizations together to give mayors a new resource for lighting technology solutions. This partnership will save money, reduce energy consumption and climate emissions, improve public safety, and beautify your cities.”

In his remarks, Philips Chairman Emeritus Zia Eftekhar cited the benefits of the new partnership. “This is a distinct opportunity for us to work together through a very strong public-private partnership, moving forward and achieving the goals that we all ultimately have for our country and for our communities.”

“While innovative, energy-efficient lighting solutions are a significant source of cost savings, they can also be beautiful and inspire, and help promote safety and economic development of our communities,” he said.

“Potentially LED technology, where Philips is really a clear cut leader, is more than just a new tool to save energy. Digital lighting and LED technology enable us to do significantly more with that technology, in terms of communications and in terms of controls and in terms of really being able to enhance our lifestyles,” Eftekhar said at the January 18 plenary session.

In his comments on the Mayors’ Lighting Partnership, Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter said, “We want to thank Philips for their support of the Conference and their work with mayors. I can attest on a personal level that Zia and his entire team are focused on these issues.” He continued, “You can see what they can do for South Broad Street in Philadelphia [Avenue of the Arts lighting project], and they can do the same in your city as well.”

“Our work with Philips has shown me their strong commitment to you and your cities. This partnership is another example of that commitment,” Cochran said in comments on the Partnership. “At our Orlando Annual Meeting, you asked the Conference of Mayors to do even more in supporting you and your cities in deploying new lighting technologies. Today’s announcement is how we are responding to that policy adopted by you,” he said.

“Mayors across the country have already seen firsthand what we [Philips] have been able to do collectively to not only create significant energy savings and conservation in terms of environmental impact, but also what we can do together to enhance cities throughout the country,” Eftekhar said.

Benefits of Partnership Featured at Meeting

Throughout the Winter Meeting, Philips officials shared information on the Mayors’ Lighting Partnership including taking requests for free energy assessments in cities. “Philips invites you to request a free energy assessment of your cities and, based on that assessment, we can talk about all the different options that we could, through our collaboration through our Mayors’ Lighting Partnership, take to a stage that can be executed in your communities,” Eftekhar said in closing his remarks.

Additional information on this announcement and the Mayors’ Lighting Partnership is available online at usmayors.org/MayorsLightingPartnership.
Bloomberg Tells Mayors Keeping Guns from Criminals Is a Political Courage Issue for Congress

Following are excerpts from the opening address by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in the January 18 plenary luncheon.

"Whether you are the mayor of a little town or a big city, there are a lot of responsibilities that we all share in common. We have to balance the budget. We have to find new ways to create jobs. And we have to deliver quality, efficient services. But perhaps the number one responsibility we all have is protecting the lives of our citizens. As mayors, we see people breaking the law and we say: How do we stop them? Unfortunately, you are here in a city that’s not what people do. Here in Washington, for far too long, elected officials have been watching people break the law, and have said absolutely nothing. Or they have said: ‘I support the Second Amendment.’ Well that’s nice — so do most of us.

"Our bipartisan coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns now has more than 800 members, including many people in this room. And I think we all support the Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment does give you the right to bear arms. Having said that, the Supreme Court has ruled that there are legitimate controls and regulations that are consistent with the Second Amendment and that we should use those to protect the public.

"But the real strength of our coalition and the real force that we have to protect our citizens is right here in this room. The mayors of small cities and medium size cities and big cities, the mayors of cities from the east and the west and the north and the south, Republican mayors, independent mayors, Democratic mayors, mayors from urban and suburban and rural areas. And looking down on us as police officers is not something that we can do very effectively at the local level.

"This is not a constitutional question, but it is a political courage issue, and it is an issue for Washington. We can do it alone.

"This week, President Obama and Vice President Biden did step up and put forward a comprehensive plan for attacking gun violence. I give them both a lot of credit for listening to the voices of everyday Americans and putting public safety ahead of special interest. The trouble is, Congress is more removed from this issue than mayors are. Congress people don’t get called in the middle of the night when a police officer has been shot — mayors do. Congress people and Senators don’t have to go and explain to a mother or father or sister or brother, a spouse or a child, why their loved one is not going to come home, and how the person that shot them got the gun, and why we didn’t, as a society, do something to protect them and to keep that from happening.

"We understand what it’s like, and they don’t, and so it’s incumbent on us to explain to the people in Washington that when we have to go to the hospital and we have to look the police officer’s parents or spouse in the eye and explain that their worst nightmare has come true — their loved one won’t be coming home — it’s up to the Congress people to do something about it. When someone says: ‘The only thing that keeps a bad guy a gun is a good guy with a gun’ — I ask them: What about our police officers? They are good guys. They have guns. And all too often across this country, they get shot — and all too often, they do not survive.

"Those of us in elected office have a responsibility, I think, to protect those whom we ask to protect the public. And it’s up to us to convince the members of Congress that our officers deserve laws that help keep guns away from criminals."

New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg In January 18 Plenary Luncheon

Mayors Put Focus on Employee Benefits with Great-West, Colonial Life

By Kathryn Kretschmer-Weyland

The U.S. Conference of Mayors, under the leadership of President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, appointed Columbia (SC) Mayor Steve Benjamin as the advisor and advocate to the Conference of Mayors benefits partnerships with Great-West and Colonial Life.

Nutter emphasized the importance of these partnerships to mayors, explaining, “These programs are not only valuable to our cities, but our cities’ participation in these programs keeps our dues here at USCM low.”

Benjamin moderated a panel of public sector retirement experts, including Groom Law Group Chairman Steve Saxon, Great-West Financial Vice President Brent Neese, and Colonial Life Public Sector Director Bill Heydt discuss some of the most pressing employee benefits concerns facing cities.

Left to right, Groom Law Group Chairman Steve Saxon, Great-West Financial Senior Director for Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Marilyn Collister, Great-West Financial Vice President Brent Neese, and Colonial Life Public Sector Director Bill Heydt discuss some of the most pressing employee benefits concerns facing cities.

“Those of us in elected office have a responsibility, I think, to protect those whom we ask to protect the public. And it’s up to us to convince the members of Congress that our officers deserve laws that help keep guns away from criminals.”

Benjamin told mayors, “This costs your city nothing, and provides a needed benefit.” Continuing the theme of providing additional value to employees during challenging times, Colonial Life Public Sector Director Bill Heydt provided information on 17 best practices as outlined by the Government Finance Officers Association that can help cities contain the costs of health care benefits while still providing for employees.

One case study comes from Dallas, who as Heydt described, “Saved $1.1 million by doing a dependent verification of their healthcare plan at no cost to the employer.” Heydt provided a study to mayors that for the first time pulled together a variety of best practices into one easy to use and implement document. The U.S. Conference of Mayors partnerships with Great-West and Colonial Life are bringing cities best practices, revolutionary ideas, and value added benefits for their employees. The Conference of Mayors will be hosting seminars, webinars, and will be providing additional resources to cities to help them implement these programs.

For more information, contact Jeannie Fanning at 240-393-9672 or send e-mail to jfanning@usmayors.org, or contact Jeff Bean at 202-446-8140 or send e-mail to jbean@usmayors.org.
Panel Explores Innovative Strategies to Support Healthy Lifestyles in America’s Cities

NBCNews.com senior health writer Maggie Fox, Weight Watchers International CEO David Kirchoff, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy, and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer.

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

It long frustrated Rawlings-Blake that despite being home to world-class health institutions, her city was also home to rates of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease significantly higher than the national average. But before addressing the issue, the city needed to understand the scope of the problem. A city-wide health assessment was conducted, which found that in some zip codes, people lived well into their eighties; in others, people lived only into their sixties. These findings led to the development of Healthy Baltimore 2015, the city’s comprehensive health policy agenda for the city. The plan highlights areas that represent the greatest potential impact on improving the quality of life for city residents. It’s worth noting that the plan was developed not simply for the city’s residents, but by them as well — city officials took the plan into neighborhoods and allowed communities to determine which health issues should be priorities for them.

Rawlings-Blake also highlighted Baltimarket — The Virtual Supermarket Program (VSP), an innovative, award-winning program that uses an online grocery ordering/delivery system to bring food to Baltimore neighborhoods with low vehicle ownership and little access to healthy foods (commonly called food deserts). The VSP allows neighborhood residents to place grocery online orders at local library branches and other venues. Residents pick up their order weekly at their community site, and the delivery cost is paid by the Health Department. Mayor Rawlings-Blake noted that it’s the only program in the nation that allows residents to pay for groceries online using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett

In Spring 2007, Men’s Fitness magazine ranked Oklahoma City eighth on its list of America’s fittest cities. This was one ranking that Cornett found embarrassing, and determined to lead by example, he addressed his own weight issue first, losing 40 pounds over 40 weeks. But in order to address the issue city-wide he needed the city as a whole to start talking about obesity and healthy living in general. Cornett came up with an unconventional idea to jump-start the conversation. Standing in front of the elephant exhibit at the local zoo, he proposed that the city go on a diet, and collectively lose one million pounds. The initiative cost the city nothing.

Over the next four years, approximately 470,000 people visited the city website designed for the campaign. The city tracked the weight loss of each individual; as of January 2012 the city had achieved its goal, collectively losing over one million pounds. The initiative cost the city nothing.

The resources to develop the campaign website were donated by a private entity, and Cornett leveraged free and earned media to promote the initiative.

Beyond this, Cornett was able to leverage momentum from the campaign to get citizens to vote to support and fund community improvements that he believes they wouldn’t have otherwise. These initiatives include building new gym facilities in all inner city grade schools, new sidewalks throughout the city, over 100 miles of jogging trails, and a downtown central park over 70 acres in size. The impact has been significant. One sign of progress — the March 2012 issue of Men’s Fitness ranked Oklahoma City number 23 on its 2012 list of the fittest cities in America.

Asheville (NC) Mayor Terry Bellamy

In one low-income neighborhood adjacent to the city limits, residents couldn’t allow their kids to walk to school — without sidewalks, it just wasn’t safe. That’s why the city applied for and received a Safe Routes to School grant to put in side-walks, allowing children and parents from the neighborhood to walk to and from the school with ease. The transformation in that community was so significant that they did the same thing in a second community. Asheville has taken this transformation a step further, by adopting a “complete streets” policy, in order to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists as well as motorists and public transportation users.

Other city programs focus on providing increased access to fruits and vegetables to children and residents at large. Through a school garden program, kids can take home the healthy fruits and vegetables that they grow. Asheville also amended its city ordinance to allow every church and school the opportunity to operate a “tailgate market,” where producers can sell directly to the public in accordance with applicable regulations — without barriers from city hall.

Asheville’s health and wellness strategies extend to city employees as well. Upon discovering that twenty percent of city employees accounted for eighty percent of health care costs, the city instituted an employee wellness program that’s since been replicated in various cities across the nation. Bellamy is especially proud of the fact that all of these initiatives enjoy broad-based support throughout the community.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer

Fischer notes that Louisville has a strong food and beverage “culture” — it’s vital to the local economy and accounts for a large part of the city’s GDP. The city consumes about $3 billion per year in food — about twenty percent of that, $600 million, is a demand for local food. To meet this need, Fischer is working with local farmers in the surrounding region, connecting them with industrial and education large volume users to build a healthy, sustainable local food economy.

In addition to macro initiatives like these, Fischer also stressed the importance of taking action at the individual level. As an example, he cited Louisville Youth Advocates, a group of young leaders from a disadvantaged part of the city. The group conducted an assessment of their community’s needs, and identified a need for healthy local fruits and vegetables. To make this happen, the city partnered with YMCA to develop “Healthy in a Hurry” corner markets — people can walk to their local corner store to purchase fresh food and vegetables.

The program has had, as Fischer puts it, a triple impact — the young people grow the food themselves and sell it directly to the corner stores. Thus, through this program youth are learning not only how to be effective community advocates but also how to grow food, and how to run a business.

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Latino Leaders Network: Antonio Villaraigosa Leadership Award

At left, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa presents the “Antonia Villaraigosa Leadership Award” to Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and USCM Second Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith with Latino Leaders Network Chairman Mickey Ibarra on January 18 at the Tribute to Mayors dinner.
Legend, Innovation Leaders Come Together for STEM Education

By Paul Leroux

In a workshop titled “Learn. Build. Create: Connected Learning Over the Next 4 Years,” the nation’s mayors were joined on January 18 by education leaders in a lively discussion about the ways in which STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education can be improved. The workshop featured a panel moderated by Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter during the Conference of Mayors Winter meeting in Washington, D.C. The panel included Conference of Mayors Technology and Innovation Task Force Chair San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee, MacArthur Foundation U.S. Programs Director of Education Constance M. Yowell, Electronic Arts, Inc. Government Affairs Senior Director Craig Hagen, Special Assistant to the President for Education Ricardo Rodriguez, and music and education advocate John Legend.

Nutter underscored the importance of STEM education in his opening remarks, saying that it should be “…considered part of the national defense of the USA.” Lee echoed this sentiment, saying, “Every industry is rolling in technology. How do we get institutions not only interested but committed in STEM education?” Legend provided key insights from the perspective of an education reform champion. He summed up the challenges of STEM education into two dilemmas. The first was how to create a culture of “thinking about math and science as it relates to life and relating it to things that matter.” The second was, “How do we make sure we hire, train, and connect the right people to those teaching professions jobs?”

Yowell, speaking in apparent answer to these dilemmas, noted that the MacArthur Foundation was working hard to close the learning gap in STEM education that exists between what experts know about learning and the way schools are organized. Yowell noted that the foundation was overseeing a $100 million initiative in digital media and learning in order to close this gap, bringing together game designers and curriculum experts.Cit ing the basis for partnerships like these, Yowell said, “The most sustainable learning happens when young people’s social world, academics, and what they’re learning are connected.”

EPA Presents President’s Award to Jackson

EPA Announces New Partnership with Cities

By Judy Sheahan

Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter presented the outgoing Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lisa Jackson with the Conference of Mayors President’s Award on January 19 for her outstanding work in protecting the environment. Nutter highlighted the work that Jackson and her staff did on the issue of Clean Water mandates with a particular focus on Combined Sewer Overflow consent decrees which were costing local governments upwards to billions of dollars per community. “She listened to our concerns and what resulted was quite remarkable for a federal agency,” Nutter said. “EPA has issued a series of memos to the regional offices that will hopefully change the way it does business with local governments.”

During Jackson’s term as Administr ator, the EPA has issued three memora ndums aimed at helping local govern ments. The memos include: promoting the use of green infrastructure; creation of “Integrated Planning” that allows local governments to work with their regions to outline their infrastructure needs with their clean water mandates to best determine the approach to solve their most pressing environmental and health issues; and an “affordability dialogue” that EPA will be entering into with the Conference of Mayors and other local government organizations regarding the costs of water compliance.

For the first time, EPA is taking a non-silo approach to solving a multi-faceted problem,” Nutter said. “While we still have a way to go, we applaud EPA and you, Administrator Jackson, for working closely with the mayors of this nation, listen ing to our concerns, and having the courage and tenacity to change the way EPA finds solutions.”

Accepting the award, Jackson talked about how important local governments were to protecting the environment and how EPA needs to work in partnership with local governments to continue to move forward “towards the many environmental goals we share.”

Jackson discussed the EPA memos on green infrastructure, integrated planning, and an affordability as a means of approaching the problem in a different way. “We’ve given up nothing [environmental protection] but I’ve given my staff a nudge to think harder about what cities are going through,” Jackson said.

Jackson said that cities approached her telling her that they need to make investments in water, wastewater, and stormwater issues and that they were willing to spend the money but they needed help with flexibility, prioritizing those investments, and enough time for implementation. “You can renegotiate to give yourself more time, and the new affordability dialogue will provide an opportunity to look at all the costs, to look at other factors including all water investments and determine if you are spending the right amount,” the Administrator said. Jackson was hopeful that EPA will con tinue it works with local government as partners. “I believe we are on the right road, now we just have to make sure that as I walk out, and with your leadership, we can continue to be on the right road.”

Elaborating more on what such partnerships might look like was Hagen, whose company is one of the leading video game producers in the world. Hagen said that a top priority for his company was answering the question, “How do we embed common core curriculum into these games?” Ideally, Hagen said, this would, “…bring together the best and brightest to combine curricula with intellectual property.” In one exam ple of this, Hagen presented mayors with the newly unveiled plan for SimCity EDU, an online lesson-planning platform that will provide teachers with access to educational content embedded in a best-selling game about city management and development.

Rodriguez spoke on behalf of the White House and highlighted its plan for the next four years. He said that the last four years had been about “recalibrating and raising expectations for our system,” but the next four had to be about “making a nation of students that are critical thinking and deep learners.” According to Rodriguez, “Raising the bar on STEM education is critical to collective future as an economy as well as individual opportunity.”

Each of the panel’s participants acknowledged the hard work that mayors put in to, “drive innovation and change,” as Rodriguez put it. After they concluded, the mayors engaged in a question and answer session in which they were able to share best practices for innovation in STEM education.
Chicago Mayor Emanuel Urges Action on Common Sense Federal Gun Legislation

By Kevin McCarty

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel addressed attendees of the Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting, speaking as mayor of the nation’s third largest city but drawing extensively upon his vast experience as a senior White House official pressing for common sense gun legislation during the 1990s.

“When I was with President Clinton in passing the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, a lot of the focus at that time was on the NRA. They were as fierce in their opposition then as they are today, and, in my view, against common sense gun legislation,” Emanuel told his colleagues during the January 19 plenary session. “Both of these legislations were successful because they were focused on criminal access to guns.”

Drawing upon lessons from earlier legislative struggles, he used his address to advocate for common sense reforms, urge local action by mayors and focus attention on the opponents of legislation. “Who is behind, beyond the membership of the NRA, are the gun manufacturers themselves.” He explained that these companies are “making sure that any efforts that restrict access are prevented.”

Comprehensive National Background Check System Needed

“I happen to think that while I support wholeheartedly all of the President’s proposals, and will light as an individual mayor to them through and hope we, as an organization, also continue to do that, but, as a baseline, it is essential to deal with the 40 percent of guns that are purchased that do not get a criminal background check. It is essential to do that,” he said.

Regardless of city size, Emanuel said, “Creating a baseline at the national level is essential so that all guns regardless of where they are purchased a criminal background check is done.”

Citing recent efforts in his city to direct pension funds to divest of holdings in companies that manufacture assault weapons, Emanuel noted efforts by other mayors. Whether enacting new ordinances or directing city pension funds to divest, he said such actions will “help the President and the Congress finally create in my view common sense gun control legislation that will compliment all of what our police, our after school investments and our tougher penalties on gangs will be do. Without this, our system will be much weaker.”

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel urges common sense federal gun control legislation during his January 19 plenary session remarks.

Reminding mayors they need to fully engage this debate, he said, “Collectively, we are stronger when we all act together. They need to hear a clear and unambiguous voice. You’ll do [gun manufacturers] what you need to do but don’t get in the way of a comprehensive background check system to keep criminal access to guns away.”

Magazine Limitations Needed

He explained that limitations on magazines have been part of federal law for some time, with a single standard for duck hunters in every state in the U.S. “Duck hunting goes on,” he said, with a federal 3-cartridge limitation. “But if we are going to have a federal law on a limitation for the sportsman as it relates to duck hunting, we surely should have an assault magazine limitation as well because the lethality of that weapon changes.”

Emanuel, who served as Chief of Staff to President Bill Clinton, reflected on the success of earlier common sense gun reforms, when coupled with commitments to the COPS Program, community policies and other policies, in helping mayors reduce crime in their cities over the last two decades. “From those battles, I will tell you both from the crime bill and the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill, The United States Conference of Mayors was in the leadership. The Conference of Mayors stood with President Clinton, shoulder to shoulder, across party lines.”

“All of us know we are at an inflection point that has tipped — Aurora, Colorado, Virginia, Oregon and Newtown, Connecticut,” he said in concluding his remarks. “We are all residents of Newtown, Connecticut.”

Digital Media and Learning Application Helps Prepare 21st Century Workforce

By Megan Cardiff


Philadelphia’s “Digital On-Ramps” project is designed to fight digital illiteracy and solve many of the problems mayors face today in their communities. It is a mobile and land-based digital network that provides anytime, anywhere access to connect individuals to employment and post-secondary education.

“Digital On-Ramps provides many benefits to Philadelphia by utilizing digital technology to provide better organization of and access to resources,” said Nutter, who highlighted the personalized and customized employment training, education programs that can be accessed online and increased access to employment opportunities.

The project was conceived in order to address the needs of individuals looking to further their education and careers. One of its focuses is on scale and impact to increase quality and provide support to more people. “Philadelphia, through Digital-On-Ramps, will have access to vetted, personalized digital training and tailored matches to employment opportunities,” Nutter stated.

“This is a destination for learners and a trusted source for information,” said Kruse of Pragmatic Solutions, a software development company and a key partner in the Digital On-Ramps project who helped executive the badging concept. As a student moves through the course they acquire a set of badges representing the various skill levels mastered. These levels are competency-based, rather than time based, and progress is marked in small, flexible accomplishments measured by multiple assessments.

Holland discussed one of the assessment tools used in the Digital On-Ramps project — PYN’s internship assessment. This assessment is used by internship mentors and is designed to support skills development with badges being earned at the end of each successfully completed section of the course.

Left to right, USCM President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Philadelphia Academies Inc. President Lisa Nutter, Philadelphia Youth Network CEO Stacy Holland, and Pragmatic Solutions Inc. Director of Education and Serious Games and Creative Director Stacy Kruse.

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During the panel Weight Watchers International CEO David Kirchhoff announced the Healthy Communities Grant Program, a new joint initiative with the Conference of Mayors to curb the national obesity epidemic and foster healthy lifestyles in communities. Through this pilot initiative, $1 million worth of Weight Watchers support services will be provided to three cities, one large, one medium, one small — that have existing healthy lifestyle programming, to help them build upon successful strategies for healthy eating, physical activity, and weight loss and management. For more information on this new initiative, contact Crystal Swann on the Conference of Mayors staff at cwann@usmayors.org.
Dollarwise Awards Annual Grants to Eight Cities

By James Kirby

Summer Youth Grants to: Wichita; St. Louis; Kokomo; Chester (PA); Richmond (CA)

The DollarWise Campaign awarded its annual Summer Youth Campaign (SYC) Grants for financial literacy Janu-
ary 19, during the 81st Winter Meet-
ing of The United States Conference of Mayors. The grants were awarded to Wichita, St. Louis, Kokomo (IN), Chester
(PA), and Richmond (CA). The winners were announced at the Plenary Luncheon by Conference of Mayors Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Each city will use its DollarWise SYC award to integrate financial education into their local summer youth employment program (SYEP). Through the generous support of the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, DollarWise awarded each city a $4,000 grant. These cities have unique programs that address financial education needs. Their programs will serve as templates for other cities across the country to follow.

Wichita’s The Way to Work Program provides paid work experience to youth four hours a day, and includes a paid career skills workshop session. Prior to starting their jobs, youth participate in classes on financial literacy and money management. Wichita Mayor Jeff Longwell stated: “SYL Youth Jobs Program will create jobs for youth ages 16–23 from two high-risk neighborhoods. The program will help lay the foundation for social, career, and academic growth for youth including comprehensive financial literacy training. Kokomo’s Summer Youth Employment Program will allow 60 youth, ages 15–21, the opportunity to participate in a structured financial literacy program while working with seasonal employees at Kokomo Beach, the city’s municipal swimming pool.

Chester’s Employer Paid Internship Program provides six-week, paid summer internship opportunities for youth ages 16–21. The program facilitates both hands-on work experience as well as a complementary professional development series, which includes a financial education component.

Richmond’s Summer Youth Employment Program will implement its ninth annual community supported summer jobs initiative in 2013. Program participants will work up to 100 hours in a local business or community organization. They will also undergo development training with emphasis on financial management.

“We believe that a strong foundation to educate consumers on the benefits of savings is a critical skill for future economic success,” said Bank of America Charitable Foundation President Kerry Sullivan. “We are pleased to support the DollarWise program and the work of the Conference of Mayors in improving financial literacy for residents across the U.S.”

Innovation Grants to: San Francisco, Philadelphia, Baltimore

The DollarWise Campaign also awarded its annual Innovation Grants for Financial Literacy to San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Baltimore received DollarWise Innovation Grants to expand local programs that further financial literacy education and promote responsible money management. With the financial support of the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, DollarWise awarded each city a $15,000 grant.

San Francisco’s Office of Financial Empowerment has offered financial services to 1,900 bay area residents through the San Francisco Financial Planning Day. It has also conducted over 150 financial education workshops with partner organizations, reaching over 2,300 San Francisco residents. With the DollarWise grant, the program will expand its overall outreach especially within its target demographics: domestic violence survivors, residents of affordable housing, adults with disabilities, and older adults.

Philadelphia has been a national leader in foreclosure prevention, saving over 5,000 homes through its Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion program. In order to prepare homeowners recovering from the crisis of foreclosure for long-term financial success, Philadelphia has established a comprehensive financial education effort: “Tools for Financial Growth” (TFFG) which will expand its reach with the DollarWise Innovation Grant.

Baltimore has established a strong, ongoing campaign that weaves financial literacy education into the city’s YouthWorks summer jobs program. Each year, YouthWorks places approximately 5,000 young people, ages 14–21, in six-week summer work experiences at more than 400 work sites. With the DollarWise Innovation Grant, Baltimore will expand the financial literacy component of its summer program.

DollarWise awards Innovation Grants to member cities of The U.S. Conference of Mayors that demonstrate innovative, ongoing financial literacy programs for their citizens. The Bank of America Charitable Foundation has generously supported DollarWise since the program’s inception.

The DollarWise Campaign congratulates all of the cities and the mayors for receiving these awards and thanks them for their outstanding commitment to financial literacy. DollarWise encourages all mayors to establish financial education and summer youth employment programs in their cities and to participate in DollarWise grants programs and initiatives.

USCM Honors Departing Leadership Mayors

Redondo Beach Mayor Michael A. Gin has served as mayor since 2005 and also as a Conference of Mayors Advisory Board member. He was an active member of the Energy Standing Committee and an advocate for many issues such as energy efficiency and conservation.

Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield has served as mayor since 2005 and lent his experience to the Conference of Mayors as a member of the Advisory Board. He was a strong member within the Mayors Water Council and was instrumental in progress made working with EPA on Clean Water Mandates.

Arlington Heights Mayor Arlene J. Mulder has served 20 years as mayor and many years as a Trustee of the Conference of Mayors. She also served as Vice Chair of the Criminal and Social Justice Committee and has been a strong supporter of gun violence and public safety.
Indianapolis Mayor Enjoins Colleagues to Change City Fleets, End U.S. Dependence on Imported Oil

By Debra DeHaney-Howard and Kevin McCarty

Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard addressed Winter Meeting attendees at the January 19 morning plenary session, stating, “I want the legacy of the veterans of the Gulf War and War on Terror to be that no serviceperson will set foot on a future battlefield due to our dependence on foreign oil.”

Touting his city’s plan which shifts all city vehicles from gasoline and diesel fuels to compressed natural gas and electric vehicles by 2025, Ballard said, “Our national dependence on foreign oil compromises our national security.” He used his remarks to call upon other mayors to join him in pursuing post-petroleum transportation strategies in their cities.

Speaking as a 23-year Marine and a veteran of the Gulf War, Ballard said, “As a veteran, I know of the human toll it takes on our service men and women and their families. The tragedy of war ... The separation of families. This is what is driving me. This is who I’m doing it for.”

"History will not look kindly on us when reflecting on the past 40 years, as the U.S. and her allies participated in the greatest voluntary transfer of wealth in world history,” he said.

Referencing earlier oil embargoes, he cited the transportation sector and its reliance on petroleum-based fuels. “The U.S. and its allies have faced a growing problem — that our transportation sector and our quality of life are dependent on foreign oil. And that makes us vulnerable. But now, technology allows us to change that dynamic.”

New Technologies Key to Indianapolis’ Plan

Charting a path to a different future, Ballard expressed optimism about this cause if mayors and others act. “But we can break out of this situation. And we can do it now. The technology is now here — it is not like it was 3-4 years ago.”

Acknowledging new developments in powering vehicles, he said, “Electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids are here and competitively priced. They are solid, reliable cars — much better than just 3-4 years ago.” In referencing natural gas, Ballard said, “There’s plenty of CNG. And for that matter, liquefied natural gas is also a great option.”

He also described elements of his plan to transition to post-petroleum vehicles, such as purchasing non-responding fleet cars that are only EV or plug-in hybrid EVs and replacing the city’s entire heavy vehicle fleet and fire trucks with CNG-only vehicles.

Ballard urged other mayors to take up the challenge of moving to a petroleum-free transportation sector. "We look forward to working with you to break our dependence on foreign oil, stop sending money to people who want to do us harm, and bringing our troops home. We look forward to collaborating with you to end our dependence on foreign oil.”

Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard urges support for his campaign to end U.S. dependence on foreign oil during remarks at the January 19 plenary session.
Mayors Compete for Most Livable City Honor

By Jocelyn Bogen

With a wide range of programs eligible, The United States Conference of Mayors and Waste Management launched the mayor’s race for the honor of calling themselves a 2013 City Livability Awards Program Award winner. The program has begun with the mailing of the application and guidelines to mayors of cities of 30,000 or more.

“For 34 years, the City Livability Awards Program has been one of the most competitive awards program sponsored by The U.S. Conference of Mayors. Each year hundreds of mayors and their city governments submit applications for a wide range of programs to compete for the honor of calling themselves a City Livability Award winner. I am pleased to be a two-time past City Livability Award winner for the 2010 Philly-Goes2College Program and 2009 Philadelphia Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program. I thank Waste Management, Inc. for their long-term support in honoring and giving national attention to mayoral leadership. It is through this partnership that we are able to continue to salute the mayors who have developed innovative and successful programs that improve the quality of life for their residents,” said Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter.

For over two decades, Waste Management has partnered with the Conference of Mayors to honor mayors and their cities for outstanding programs that contribute to the quality of life of their citizens. Waste Management Chief Executive Officer David Steiner added, “Waste Management is the largest environmental solutions provider in North America, serving nearly 20 million municipal, commercial and industrial customers in the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico. Sustainability is the driving force in our business. It is the central motivation for our transformation from a waste disposal company to an environmental solutions company that views waste as a resource. Waste Management has been the proud sponsor of The City Livability Awards for 24 years because it is a reflection of our core values. At Waste Management, we share The U.S. Conference of Mayors City Livability Awards commitment to contribute toward a more sustainable society and make cities and communities better places to live.”

Participating cities will submit an initial application of 500 words, due on Friday, March 15, which briefly describes their program and indicates when and why it was created, how it has improved the quality of life of the community, and why it is outstanding or innovative.

From these initial applications, approximately 20 second-round cities in each of two population categories will be selected. These second-round cities will then submit a more detailed application, due on April 12. An independent panel of judges will select the winners in May. Award winners will be announced in June at the 80th Annual Conference of Mayors in Las Vegas.

The City Livability Awards are presented in two population categories—ten awards to cities of less than 100,000 people, ten for cities of 100,000 or more.

Every municipality in the United States is eligible to nominate one or more city government programs in any policy area, regardless of whether the municipality has applied for or received a City Livability Award in previous years. All programs initiated by the city government are eligible, including those developed and implemented in cooperation with private sector and/or community group participation.

2013 City Livability Time Lines

March 15: Initial Applications Due
April 12: Announcement of Second Round Cities
May 10: Second Round Applications Due
June 2013: City Livability Awards Announced in Las Vegas at 81st Annual Conference of Mayors

Conference of Mayors, ScottsMiracle-Gro Announce GRO1000 Gardens and Green Spaces Awards at Winter Meeting

The U.S. Conference of Mayors and The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company announced the recipients of the 2013 GRO1000 Gardens and Green Spaces Grant Awards Program. The grants, which focus on improving our nation’s cities through increased access to public gardens and green spaces, were announced at The U.S. Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting in Washington (DC).

This year’s winning cities are:

• Bridgeport — Mayor Bill Finch
• Cincinnati — Mayor Mark Mallory
• Fort Worth — Mayor Betsy Price
• Sacramento — Mayor Kevin Johnson
• Tuscaloosa — Mayor Walter Maddox

“We congratulate the five award winners this year’s 2013 USCM-Scotts Miracle GRO1000 Gardens and Green Spaces Grant Awards. The U.S. Conference of Mayors and The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company are proud to work with cities to bring the benefits of gardening and green spaces to their residents,” said ScottsMiracle-Gro Chairman and CEO Jim Hagedorn. “Through our partnership with The U.S. Conference of Mayors, we are proud to work with cities to bring the benefits of gardening and green spaces to their residents.”

The partnership between the Conference of Mayors and ScottsMiracle-Gro, now in its second year, aims to improve U.S. cities through increased access to public gardens and green spaces. The winning cities were chosen from a competitive field to create new, innovative greenescapes and to recognize mayoral commitment to urban beautification.

More information and descriptions of the programs are available on the website: usmayors.org/gro1000.
Public Leadership in the Arts Awards

Coss is actively committed to and engaged in supporting arts and culture in the community. Under his leadership, the city invests $1.7 million yearly in arts-in-the-community. Under his leadership, Mayors have given out the awards annually since 1997.

Public Leadership in the Arts Awards

The awards honor elected officials and artists who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts. Recipients received the honor January 18 at The United States Conference of Mayors 81st annual winter meeting in Washington (DC). Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors have given out the awards annually since 1997.

USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Santa Fe Mayor David Coss, The Roots, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, and Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch.

USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, USCM President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Musician John Legend, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu and Americans for the Arts President and CEO Robert L. Lynch.

One of the highlights of the 81st Winter Meeting Arts Breakfast was a presentation by Architect of the Capitol Stephen Ayers, FAIA, LEED AP who gave a powerful lecture about the 57th Presidential Inauguration preparations and little known facts about the Capitol.

Citizen Artist Awards

Legend is a prolific recording artist and longtime social activist who was named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in 2009. He has won nine Grammy Awards®, including two for Wake Up!, a compilation of R&B music with themes of awareness and social engagement, released in 2010 with The Roots. In 2007, Legend created the Show Me Campaign, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to break the cycle of poverty using solutions that have been proven to improve people's lives and to give them the opportunities to survive, thrive and succeed. Believing that equal access to quality education is the civil rights issue of our time, the Show Me Campaign fights for education reform in the United States. In 2010, Legend joined the national board of Teach For America. He also sits on the boards of The Education Equality Project, the Harlem Village Academies and Stand for Children. He serves as co-chair of the Harlem Village Academies' National Leadership Board. Legend has testified before Congress in support of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and is a member of Americans for the Arts Artists Committee. In 2007, Legend received the Young Artist Award for Artistic Excellence at Americans for the Arts National Arts Awards. In 2010, Legend and The Roots collaborated on the album Wake Up!, which won two awards at the 53rd annual Grammy Awards® Ceremony: Best R&B Album and Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance.
Morial to Nation’s Mayors: “Your Voices Are Needed Now More Than Ever”

By Elena Temple-Webb

National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial closed the 81st Winter Meeting with a call to action for the nation’s mayors saying, “Now is your time.” Morial reminded the group that it was mayors who lifted their voices to successfully push for the 1994 crime bill — out of which the COPS program was born as well as the ban on assault weapons. He reminded the group that it was mayors who first called for a federalization of the airport security system following the attack on the nation on September 11, 2001. Morial also reminded the group that it was mayors who sued gun manufacturers after the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999. Morial continued by saying it should be mayors who lift their voices in support of the children and victims of the Newtown (CT) school shooting to push Congress to act on the issue of gun control. “When Washington is mired in partisan wrangling, it is mayors who are able to find common ground,” he explained.

A past president of the Conference of Mayors, Morial pressed mayors to remember the power of their collective voices on all issues and challenged them to speak out on jobs, the fiscal state of our nation and the mounting federal debt. “Nobody knows about balanced budgets more than mayors. Nobody knows about budget priorities and making tough decisions more than mayors. No one knows more than mayors how crucial investments in community and workforce development programs that lift people are. … This nation needs to hear your voices now more than ever,” he concluded.

Cities Against Racism Meeting Set for September in Birmingham

By Tom McClimon

A special announcement was made at 81st Winter Meeting that The United States Conference of Mayors has been designated as the North American representative for the United Nations UNESCO organization in its international program, Coalition of Cities Against Racism. Announced by Conference of Mayors Executive Director and CEO Tom Cochran, this effort to address civil rights issues has been long supported by the Conference of Mayors. The effort will culminate in 2013 with a meeting in Birmingham to be held on September 13. Support for this effort is being given by the U.S. State Department.

Birmingham Mayor William Bell spoke about his city’s struggles and accomplishments on civil rights. He announced that this special meeting would take place during a week of activities in his city designed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of civil rights targeted church bombings in Birmingham.

ARMS

Performance for “Hang On In There.” The album also won Legend and The Roots two NAACP Image Awards — one for Outstanding Album and one for Outstanding Duo, Group, or Collaboration. The Roots are the influential and critically acclaimed Philadelphia-based band described by Rolling Stone as “one of the greatest live acts in the world.” The band has won numerous awards for its jazz-influenced, eclectic approach to hip-hop, and they currently serve as the house band of “Late Night with Jimmy Fallon.” The Roots have been active with Philadelphia-based foundations such as the GrassRoots Foundation, Triple Threat Foundation and D.A.S.H. Annually, they organize and perform at the Roots Picnic Festival in Philadelphia and at the Philly 4th of July Jam concert. The Roots have been strong advocates for arts education and support the work of the Save the Music Foundation. Since their debut album Organix in 1993, The Roots have played such notable venues as New York City’s Radio City Music Hall, Lincoln Center and the Apollo Theater, performing more than 200 shows annually. Their 1999 release Things Fall Apart reached number four on the Billboard chart, and 2004’s The Tipping Point debuted in the same position. The Roots’ lineup includes original members rapper/MC Black Thought (Tariq Trotter) and Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, who were classmates at the Philadelphia High School for Creative Performing Arts. They later added Owen Biddle, James “Kamal” Gray, Frank “Knuckles” Walker, Kirk “Captain Kirk” Douglas, Damon “Tuba Gooding Jr.” Bryson, and James Poyser.

“I am grateful to Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors for honoring me with this award,” said Legend. “As you can imagine, the arts and arts education have meant so much to me and have made me who I am. The arts are inseparable from a great education. They help students perform stronger academically, instill self-confidence and creativity, and prepare them to lead with empathy and a collaborative spirit in a diverse world.”

“We are honored to receive the 2013 Citizen Artists Award from The United States Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts,” said Trotter. “We are aware that this role comes with responsibility, and access to quality arts education has enabled us to follow our passion and to serve as trailblazers for other hip hop artists. We receive great pleasure in giving back to our hometown of Philadelphia, and feel it’s important for those of us who have been blessed to give back and give often. Cities need more than philanthropic contributions, they need leadership as well as ongoing and sustained efforts to bring about real change. With continuous work with Philadelphia-based foundations, we are proud to annually give back to our hometown by organizing and performing at our annual Roots Picnic Festival and the Philly 4th of July Jam concert, and promoting the message of an arts influenced education.”

“John Legend and The Roots have been extraordinary advocates for the arts and arts education, showing that a quality arts education is the key to arming the workforce of the future with the skills they need to succeed: creativity and innovation,” said Lynch.

January 28, 2013
Mayors, Business Partner for Success: Excellence in Public Private Partnership Awards

By Judy Reid

The United States Conference of Mayors recognized outstanding partnerships between cities and members of the business community January 19 in Washington (DC) at the Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting.

Conference of Mayors Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, who presided over the Business Council Breakfast, remarked, “The Business Council members’ commitment to developing new partnerships with cities and promoting innovation is fundamental to success of the Business Council.” He emphasized, “Mayors have always understood the power of the private sector to affect change and improve lives and we can point to successful public private partnerships in cities across the nation.”

Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran also participated in the awards program, recognizing best practices in Chicago (IL), Gresham (OR), Philadelphia (PA) and San Francisco (CA). He highlighted the importance of the Mayors Business Council stating, “We look forward to continuing our commitment to work with America’s mayors and the business community to promote the public private partnerships that will strengthen the economy in cities and in America.”

Awards

The award winners are as follows:

- **Award of Excellence**: San Francisco (CA) and Citi Community Development for the “Kindergarten to College” partnership.

- **Outstanding Achievement Awards**:
  - Chicago (IL) and Comcast for the “Internet Essentials” project.
  - Gresham (OR) and Veolia Water North America for the “Achieving a Green Vision for Energy Independence” project.
  - Philadelphia (PA) and Recyclebank for the “Philadelphia Recycling Rewards” project.

An independent panel of judges was appointed by the Conference of Mayors to review the submissions. Criteria upon which their selections were made included: improvement in delivery of services, sustainability, cost savings, creativity of approach, benefits to both public and private partners, economic and business benefits, and measurable results.

Applications for the 2014 awards will be available at www.usmayors.org/buscouncil/ following the Annual Meeting in Las Vegas June 21-24. Deadline for the 2014 awards is October 1, 2013. Visit the website www.usmayors.org/buscouncil/ for additional information about the Public/Private Partnership Award winning programs.

Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Outstanding Achievement Award winners Gresham (OR) Government Relations Manager Ronald Papsdorf, Veolia Water North American Executive Vice President David Gadis and USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Outstanding Achievement Award winners USCM President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Recyclebank Community Solutions Vice President Erika Diamond, Philadelphia Recycling Coordinator Philip Bresee, and USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Award of Excellence winners, San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee, Citi Microfinance and Community Development Global Director Bob Annibale, San Francisco City and County Treasurer Jose Cisneros and USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Outstanding Achievement Award winners Comcast Executive Vice President David L. Cohen, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith presides during Mayors and Business Leaders Breakfast.

USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran addresses mayors and business leaders at Breakfast.

Siemens Corporation State and Local Government Affairs Director Tom Phillips, Co-Chair of the Mayors Business Council Steering Committee.

HDR Vice President David Cobb, Co-Chair of the Mayors Business Council Steering Committee.

Mayors and Business Leaders Plenary Breakfast Co-sponsor Kim Winston, Senior Manager of Government and Civic Affairs, Starbucks Coffee Company, addresses mayors and business leaders at the 81st Winter Meeting.
The Mayors Business Council

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Mental Health, Children, Healthcare Discussed at Children Health and Human Services Committee

By Crystal D. Swann

The Children, Health and Human Services Standing Committee met on January 18 to discuss issues facing cities including mental health services, child poverty and healthcare costs. The meeting was held during the 81st Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, under the chairmanship of Green Bay Mayor James Schmitt long with his committee vice chairs, Washington (DC) Mayor Vincent Gray and Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett. The guest speakers included Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Founder and President of the Children’s Defense Fund Marian Wright Edelman, Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield, and Grammy nominated singer and Founder of the Mario Do Right Foundation Mario Barrett.

Healthcare, Mental Health Access

Sebelius updated the mayors on the new resources available to begin confronting the desperate need for mental health service access especially for young people. In President Obama’s recently released violence prevention plan, Sebelius pointed out, it is focused on health training and awareness. The President’s plan centers largely on training teachers, parents, social workers and others who work with children, teens and young adults to recognize mental illness as it’s developing. The new initiative, Project Aware, which would need congressional approval, would provide mental health first aid training for teachers and establish a referral system for children with mental health and behavioral problems. Sebelius highlighted a separate initiative that would have a strong focus on “transitional aged children.” These are older teens and young adults — ages 16-25 — in need of mental health assistance.

In addition, Sebelius indicated that the president plans to sign a final rule on mental health parity that will apply to nearly every type of insurance, from state Medicaid programs to employer coverage to individual health plans sold under the Affordable Care Act. The final rule, which does not require congressional approval, would seek to achieve full parity and integration of mental health and medical care as intended by the 2008 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. The Affordable Care Act implementation is integral to providing health care to those with physical and mental illness.

She concluded her remarks by noting that the open enrollment process for the new health exchanges begins October 1, and that those states that choose to expand their Medicaid rolls would receive 100 percent federal coverage support for 2014-2116. She noted that the new law and exchanges would impact 46 million people who are currently uninsured by giving them access to health care, mental health and substance care as well.

Child Poverty, Gun Violence

Edelman addressed the mayors on the overwhelming prevalence of child poverty and gun violence. In a new awareness campaign, Edelman is warning law makers to be careful what federal funds that cut because some of those programs might continue to unduly burden the least among us — children. Citing astounding statistics, Edelman called on mayors and elected officials to put children first. “The greatest threat to our national security and a nation’s soul is our failure to protect and invest in all of our children,” she said. There are currently 16.1 million children living in poverty with 7.3 million children living in extreme poverty.

Investing in children includes investing in early childhood education for every child. Noting that many children in 4th, 8th and 12th grade (including 60 percent of all race and income levels) cannot read or compute at grade level, Edelman posed the question, “What’s a child to do who cannot read or compute at grade level? What are they going to do in this globalized economy? They are being sentenced to social economic death and sentenced to prison.”

Shifting the conversation, Edelman cited astounding statistics on gun violence deaths in the U.S. — 1.3 million people have died from gun violence and suicide by gun. That’s more people than who died in all of our wars including the Revolutionary War. Calling the President’s gun pro-

Left to right, Children’s Defense Fund Founder and President Marian Wright Edelman, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Committee Chair and Green Bay James Schmitt address the USCM Children, Health and Human Service Standing Committee.

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Mentorship

In our final presentation, the mayors heard from Mario Barrett, better known as simply, MARIO. Through his own difficult upbringing in Baltimore as the son of a heroin addicted mom and then rising to international fame, MARIO realized that he could use his fame to help children. “It was a point where I realized that I was my duty as a young adult coming from Baltimore to help influence kids in my city who went through the same thing,” stated Littlefield. He spoke the mayors about his upbringing in a family with a drug-addicted mother and how that experienced shaped his life and his philanthropic endeavors. MARIO, along with childhood friend Kevin Shird, started the MARIO Do Right Foundation to support, educate, guide and mentor young children of drug-addicted parents. Through his foundation work, MARIO hopes to continue to reach kids beyond Baltimore.
Immigration Task Force Discusses Integrating Immigrants into U.S. Communities, Importance of Trade Across U.S. Borders

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

The importance of integrating immigrants, including those who are undocumented into communities and fostering trade along the border with both Mexico and Canada were the focus of the discussion in the Immigration Reform Task Force meeting held January 17 during the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington. The Task Force is led by Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas, Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs Betsy Markey worked with the Conference of Mayors to organize the session and participated in it.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Alejandro Mayorkas told the mayors that his agency focuses on welcoming immigrants to the United States and integrating them into communities, acknowledging that it is local efforts, which are primarily responsible for the success of that integration. He cited several cities, including Boston, Chicago, Hartford, Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, that have individuals in city government responsible for integrating immigrants into the community and for special immigrant integration efforts underway which have been successful.

Mayorkas also reported that under the Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals program, over 400,000 applications have been received and over 150,000 applications had been granted. During its 2012 annual meeting in Orlando in June, the Conference of Mayors called on President Obama to provide deferred action status to young people who would be eligible for the DREAM Act and, while the mayors were still in Orlando, the President announced his intent to do just that. During his opening remarks at the session, Salinas discussed the importance of providing a pathway to citizenship for "Dreamers," young people who were brought to the country as children, have pursued an education or served in the military, and basically done everything right.

Mayors Move Sports Agenda Forward

By Tom McClimon

Mayors gathered for the meeting of the Mayors’ Professional Sports Alliance to discuss how the recent work of this group will help to move their agenda forward. Under the leadership of Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, the mayors heard how the partnership with New York University’s Tisch Center for Tourism, Hospitality, and Sports Management has helped to provide mayors with needed information on sports benefit their cities.

Lee Igle, Associate Professor at New York University’s Tisch Center, brought the mayors up to date on seven projects that were completed for the Alliance by graduate students. The seven projects were: the economic impact of major league sports on both the Indianapolis metro area and the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area; a case study of Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson’s efforts to maintain their National Basketball Association team, the Sacramento Kings; lease agreements in the NBA and National Hockey League cities; and ways cities in the United States can assist their Brazilian counterparts with the upcoming World Cup and Olympic Games. New projects for the Alliance will be conducted by graduate students in the upcoming Spring semester.

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman led a discussion on what is the proper role for mayors in future major sports leagues work stoppages. He cited the recent National Hockey League lockout and the impact it had on small businesses near the arena. Rick Horrow, Host of “Sportsfolio” on Bloomberg Television, also joined the discussions. The consensus seemed to be that once the mayors are fully able to demonstrate the contributions that the public makes to sports arenas and stadiums that it will be much easier for the mayors to engage the sports leagues into these types of discussions.

“The ability of the U.S. economy to produce jobs for the future is intimately related to what we do with Mexico and Canada,” Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Matthew Rooney told the mayors at the task force meeting. He asked the mayors to encourage their small business development centers to think broadly about the economic relationship with Mexico and Canada and assist small businesses to take advantage of it.

Rooney discussed the importance of the economic relationship between the U.S. and Mexico in particular, reporting that 80 percent of trade with Mexico occurs over land crossings, that the U.S. is the largest tourist destination for Mexicans, and that the economic relationship with Mexico is important for all areas of the country, not just along the Southwest Border.

Customs and Border Patrol Deputy Commissioner David Aguilar stressed his agency’s efforts to improve border crossings, explaining that illegal immigration and narcotics problems have been mitigated. He reported that his agency is working closely with Mexico’s new government, and admitted that in some areas Mexico is ahead of the U.S. in reducing delays at the border. He cited federal fiscal constraints and discussed the importance of public-private partnerships to fund efforts to improving border crossings. Finally, he stressed that his agency works closely with communities located along the border, some of which, he said, are among the safest in the U.S.
Women Mayors Discuss Public Employee Benefits, Leadership Opportunities

By Joan Crogger

The Women Mayors met at opening day of the 81st Winter Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors. Miramar Mayor Lori Moseley, Chair of the Women Mayors, opened the session with brief remarks and then introduced Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran to talk to the mayors about moving up in the leadership of Conference of Mayors.

Cochran presented a brief history of the Women Mayors and said that the Caucus was founded by Senator Dianne Feinstein, then mayor of San Francisco, to bring women together and move them into the leadership of the Conference of Mayors. Cochran encouraged women mayors to participate in the Caucus and said there are numerous ways to be a part of the Conference of Mayors—11 standing committees and numerous task forces. In addition, he said, you must make yourself visible to the other mayors.

The point of entry into the leadership is the Advisory Board, Cochran noted. The President appoints a Nominating Committee in April for elections to be held in June at the Annual Conference of Mayors. Past Presidents are always on the Nominating Committee. He encouraged them to run. Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz, a former President, told them to keep on applying even if they do not make the cut. Then, once you are on the Advisory Board, the next step is a Trustee.

The top three officers come directly from the Trustees—Second Vice President, First Vice President and President.

“We are a bipartisan organization,” Cochran said, with two Democrats and one Republican always in the top three positions. The current officers are Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, President, and a Democrat, Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, First Vice President and a Republican, and Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, Second Vice President and a Democrat.

Moseley added some information about the number of women currently in the elected leadership:
- of 13 Trustees, four are women.
- of 29 Advisory Board members, only three are women.

“Shame on us,” Moseley said. “Last year, only one woman mayor put her name forward to the Nominating Committee. That cannot happen again. You must put your name in and continue to apply if you don’t make the cut.”

Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, then told the Women Mayors that he had talked with Moseley and Moravia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, Vice Chair of the Women Mayors, about Women Mayors being very visible in the Conference of Mayors and that he was committed to make that happen. Immediately following Nutter, Great West Retirement Services Vice President for Client Relations Amy Heyel addressed the Women Mayors about empowering mayors regarding public sector workers and retirement preparation. She said there was a huge misconception about public sector workers being financially ready when they retire. However, she said, nearly 74 percent of workers are not saving. Heyel indicated that the numbers are even worse for women. “What can you do about this? When you return home, meet with your finance director and ask to look at the statistics of your public workforce.

Left to right, Women Mayors Chair Miramar Mayor Lori Moseley, Great West Retirement Services Client Relations Vice President Amy Heyel, and Moravia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, Co-Chair of the Women Mayors.

If you have any problems, I can help you interpret the numbers,” she said.

Moseley then announced that the Women Mayors would have an election in June for a new chair and vice chair. She appointed Southfield Mayor Brenda Lawrence as Chair, along with Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin and Edison Mayor Toni Ricigliano. Moseley said she will send out a notice in March. If you are interested in serving as Vice Chair, please let them know.

Next, Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn provided an update on Human Trafficking from his presentation at the Annual Conference of Mayors last June.

New Orleans Mayor Landrieu Urges TAPES Committee Members to Attend World Cultural Economic Forum

By Tom McClimon

Leading off the meeting of the Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports Committee, Committee Chair New Orleans Mayor Mitchell Landrieu encouraged his fellow mayors to attend the World Cultural Economic Forum to be held May 1-3 in New Orleans.

The World Cultural Economic Forum (WCEF) highlights the role of culture as an economic and social force that drives the creation of vibrant cities. Landrieu stated that WCEF will allow for mayors to build partnerships with the world’s mayors, and explore new opportunities for the development of a city’s cultural economy. Participants will also be able to participate in the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, one of the world’s greatest music festivals.

Other presenters were: Jason Schubbach, Director Design for the National Endowment for the Arts who spoke on how to apply for a “Our Town” grant; Gary Steuer, the Chief Cultural Officer for Philadelphia who cited ways cities can get involved on World Jazz Day, April 30; and Rick Harrow, Host of “Sportsfolio” who shared his thoughts on the future of sports in cities in the near future.

Left to right, Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero, Southfield Mayor Brenda Lawrence and Corpus Christi Mayor Nelda Martinez discuss moving up in USCM Leadership during the Women Mayors’ Meeting.

Left to right, USCM Leadership during the Women Mayors’ Meeting.

TAPES Committee Chair New Orleans Mayor Mitchell Landrieu, National Endowment for the Arts Director of Design Jason Schubbach, Philadelphia Chief Cultural Officer Gary Steuer, and Bloomberg TV “Sportsfolio” Host Rick Harrow.
Environment Committee Focuses on Priorities for Congress, President Obama’s Second Term

By Jubi Headley

With both President Obama’s second term and a new session of Congress set to begin, the meeting of the Environment Standing Committee focused on key priorities for each. First, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe outlined key priorities for the Obama Administration’s second term. Chief among these is a commitment to strengthen partnerships with municipal and local governments, and to ensure that federal projects are aligned with local priorities. As one example Perciasepe pointed to EPA’s work with the Conference of Mayors over the past year to develop an integrated planning process for cities’ implementation of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The framework, known as IP3, is designed to promote greater flexibility for cities struggling to finance and maintain existing wastewater infrastructure and services and respond to new federal regulations that expand city responsibilities, such as costly control of stormwater and sewer overflows. Perciasepe noted that just in the past week EPA had taken another step in this process, by coming up with an affordability framework to address issues such as financing and scheduling. Other programs that might benefit from a similarly collaborative or integrated approach, according to Perciasepe, include the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, as well as efforts to better integrate combined sewer overflow and stormwater planning.

Beyond integrated planning, other Administration priorities mentioned by Perciasepe include:

- **Green Infrastructure.** Unlike single-purpose, gray stormwater infrastructure, which uses pipes to dispose of rainwater, green infrastructure uses vegetation and soil to manage rainwater where it falls. By weaving natural processes into the built environment, green infrastructure provides not only stormwater management, but also flood mitigation and air quality management, among other benefits. EPA is conducting pilot projects in a number of cities to assess the effectiveness of green infrastructure practices.

- **Brownfields.** EPA has added funding for local brownfields redevelopment planning processes. As Perciasepe noted, brownfields redevelopment is more than a significant environmental benefit—it’s an economic engine as well. EPA believes that there could be as many as 85,000 jobs associated with brownfields redevelopment.

- **U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee.** The Committee’s ranking minority member, Senator David Vitter (LA), which they hope, bodes well for a bipartisan effort to pass the legislation. Passage of the bill would allow the Army Corps of Engineers to begin spending federal dollars on a number of projects. Key provisions of the bill are likely to include an “extreme weather” title to give the Corps immediate authority to better respond to disasters, as well as measures addressing improved levee safety, waterways, airports, and other key infrastructure provisions. Other issues and legislation that Boxer is likely to place on the EPW agenda during the upcoming session include:

  - **The Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act, proposed by Boxer, which aims to provide new tools and mechanisms to help local governments finance this work.** Albright said this program is intended to supplement state revolving funds, not replace them. Albright noted that the bill enjoyed substantial bipartisan support in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee during the last session and, and Boxer hopes to replicate that support in this session.


Mayors Discuss Ways to Help Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

By Tom McClimon

Mayors attending the meeting of the Small Business, Franchising and Entrepreneurship Task Force meeting heard of new efforts underway to assist small and minority businesses and budding entrepreneurs. The discussions were led by the two co-chairs of the task force: Past Conference of Mayors President Burnsville-Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz and Kansas City (MO) Mayor Sylvester “Sly” James. U.S. Minority Business Development Agency National Director David Hinson talked about his agency’s efforts to assist small businesses especially in the export area. Kautz explained to the mayors how she piloted a new program with the International Franchise Association “Meeting with Mayors” in which she brought regional mayors together to learn about ways cities can assist existing franchise businesses and new franchise businesses. International Franchise Association Director of Diversity Miriam Brewer spoke on IFA’s “Franchising Day” program that brings together a number of resources available to assist franchise businesses. Public Policy and Tax Counsel State Government Relations Director Dean Heyl shared with the mayors the latest information on how franchise businesses create jobs.

Left to right, USCM Environment Standing Committee Vice-Chair Chicopee Mayor Michael Bissonnette, EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe, USCM Environment Standing Committee Chair Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper, Best, Best Krieger Partner Shawn Haggerty, and Senate EPW Committee Membeer Jason Albright.
School Safety, Jobs for Returning Veterans Top Mayors’ Education, Workforce Agenda

By Kathy Wiggins

“We need a lot less children shot dead — a lot less children living in fear — and I’d like to publicly thank the President and Vice President for their leadership in developing a series of sweeping reforms to curb gun violence across the nation,” Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan told the mayors in his opening comments at the Jobs, Education and the Workforce Standing Committee meeting, chaired by Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis.

The reforms are the result of the effort led by Vice President Biden and members of the Cabinet, including Duncan, to come up with concrete steps that can be taken to keep children safe, help prevent mass shootings, and reduce the country’s broader epidemic of gun violence. Regarding school safety, “The actions the President is taking and proposing to reduce gun violence echo what educators say they need to better protect and reduce gun violence and other behavior problems and to gather and share best practices on school discipline. ‘If we don’t do it now, frankly, as a country, I’m not sure when we’re going to do it’,” said Duncan.

Department of Labor (DOL) Assistant Secretary Jane Oates also addressed the mayors, outlining a new DOL initiative for veterans called the Gold Card. The Gold Card, a joint effort of the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Admin-

Mayors Stress Importance of Third-Grade Reading Proficiency

By Megan Cardiff

The ability of children to read at grade-level by the third grade is a “huge indicator for their future success,” proclaimed Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, Vice Chair of Grade-Level Reading for The U.S. Conference of Mayors Jobs, Education and the Workforce Standing Committee.

Under Taveras’ leadership, a group of mayors met January 19 during the 81st Annual U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting to discuss the critical importance of ensuring our children are reading at grade-level by the end of third grade. A vital partner in mayors’ efforts to achieve this goal is the Annie E. Casey Foundation, who has made third grade reading achievement an important element in their work through their support of the “Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.”

National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Managing Director Ralph Smith spoke on the panel about the need for mayors and local officials to work in conjunction with the school districts, school boards, and teachers to ensure children do better, emphasizing that the solution is not in the classroom but in the entire community. “This is quintessential mayors’ work. There is a narrative in this country that there is paralysis and gridlock — mayors can’t afford paralysis and gridlock.”

Also on the panel was Kansas City (MO) Mayor Sly James, who presented the successes of his program “Turn the Page Kansas City,” an education initiative that takes an umbrella approach to marshaling 50 community partners toward the goal of grade-level reading by third grade. James organized a Board of Directors for Turn the Page Kansas City, set it up as a 501(c)(3), and received a grant from the Bloomberg Foundation that assisted the organization in its efforts to train volunteers, monitor progress and coordinate curriculums and best practices in city school districts.

“What works in one city might not work in another,” said Taveras, “but we can learn best practices from one another and this is an opportunity as mayors for us to rally or communities around an issue.”

Left to right, Kansas City (MO) Mayor Sly James, National Summer Learning Association CEO Gary Huggins, USC Jobs and Education and the Workforce Committee Vice Chair Grade-Level Reading Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, and Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Managing Director Ralph Smith.

Left to right, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis, Labor Assistant Secretary Jane Oates, and Providence Mayor Angel Taveras.

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Sequestration Threat Continues as Focus of Defense Transition Task Force

In its second meeting since being established last April, The U.S. Conference of Mayors Task Force on Defense Transition, The Task Force continued to focus on the threat to local economies if Congress and the Administration fail to settle on an alternative to the deep, arbitrary defense and domestic budget cuts now scheduled to take effect on March 1. Scheduled cuts in the defense budget are of particular concern to mayors in cities and metro areas that are home to military facilities and the industries that support national defense.

Opening the January 17 meeting during the Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting in Washington, Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, who Chairs the task force, said that another name for the session would be “everything you always wanted to know about sequestration but were afraid to ask.” The detailed look into the potential economic damage of sequestration and the outlook on alternatives to it was provided by Aerospace Industries Association Legislative Affairs Vice President Cord Sterling, Bipartisan Policy Center Senior Policy Analyst Shai Akabas, and Senate Majority Leader Deputy Chief of Staff Darrel Thompson.

In his presentation to the mayors and industry representatives in the meeting, Sterling included the results of a study by George Mason University economist Stephen Fuller that projected defense and non-defense job losses of 2.14 million if sequestration is allowed to take effect. Of particular concern for defense industries, he said, would be the loss of a highly-skilled workforce, the threat posed to small suppliers and the potential increased reliance on foreign suppliers, the reduced investment in research and development, and the increased unit costs of products. At risk, Sterling explained, is an aerospace industry that is currently operating at a $50 billion trade surplus and providing highly-paid jobs for highly-skilled workers across the nation.

Akabas delivered a detailed analysis of the “fiscal cliff” deal struck in Washington on the last day of 2012, and the upcoming battles to be fought over the March 27 expiration of the current FY 2013 Continuing Resolution, the sequester of defense and domestic funds, and the requirement to increase the debt limit within the next four to six weeks. On the sequester, Akabas noted that the cuts would occur no matter what Congress appropriates and would be made at the “program-project-activity” level. Particularly difficult, he said, would be arbitrary cuts to accounts made up almost entirely of personnel costs, such as those for Border Patrol Agents, and large procurement and construction projects.

In a discussion of what might be expected to come out of the Congress between now and the approaching fiscal deadlines, Thompson said, “It’s not likely we’ll reach some grand impressive deal to fix everything in six to eight weeks,” and a deal to avoid disaster in order to buy time to make a larger deal is a possible outcome. “If this degenerates into just another partisan tug of war, you all are going to feel the brunt of it,” Thompson said. In the House and Senate, “There has to be an opportunity to go beyond just reading talking points from both sides of our partisan bases,” he said. “There has to be some opportunity to listen to folks like you all. Your representatives in Washington have to understand what this means to your immediate front line constituents — who also happen to be theirs.”

International Affairs Committee Discusses Trade, Global Economic Policy, Nuclear Disarmament, Sister Cities

By Jocelyn Bagen

International Affairs Committee Chair Oakland Mayor Jean Quan began the session by welcoming members of the committee and making several key announcements. She invited and encouraged mayors to participate in the World Cultural Economic Forum to be held May 1-3 in New Orleans. The World Cultural Economic Forum will highlight the role of culture as a key economic and social force driving the creation of innovative and vibrant cities.

Quan also shared highlights of her recent mission to China as well as plans for an upcoming meeting on women entrepreneurship. The committee heard from United States Trade Representative Ambassador Ron Kirk. The Ambassador discussed many of the recent achievements of his office, in carrying out the President’s vision of a more robust, responsible, and responsive trade policy. These include bilateral free trade agreements with Panama, Colombia, and Korea; advancing the ambitious goals of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Talks; and improvement in the U.S. relationship with the World Trade Organization.

The Conference of Mayors has long had strong policy supporting nuclear disarmament and ultimately support for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Mayors for Peace North American Coordinator Jackie Cabasso, an international organization of more than 5,000 mayors across the world seeking nuclear disarmament, gave the mayors an update on the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign. European Union to the United States Ambassador João Vale de Almeida briefed mayors on the European Union, the global financial crisis, and the central importance of trade to the economic health of the world’s nations. The committee concluded with remarks from Sister Cities International President and CEO Mary D. Kane, who shared new initiatives and plans for 2013 and emphasized the importance of everyday citizen diplomats in promoting peace and prosperity around the world and the powerful impact of citizen-to-citizen exchanges. Kane set forth strong vision for strengthening sister city relationships and her commitment to continuing to work closely with mayors.
2013 Summer Youth Jobs Key for Mayors

In First Ever Survey, Only 30 Percent of Companies Hired Youth Last Summer

By Dave Gatton

Only 30 percent of businesses hired a youth under the age of 23 for a summer job in 2012, according to a new U.S. Conference of Mayors/Zogby poll sponsored by the Council on Metro Economies and the New American City and its DallasWise Campaign. The results were released during a January 17 Summer Jobs workshop at the U.S. Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting in Washington (DC).

“A summer job has always been a rite of passage for youth and young adults as a way to develop pertinent skills, earn a little extra money, or begin a new and exciting career,” said one of the report authors, John Zogby. “But the survey data does not present a rosy picture for youth/young adult summer employment.”

According to the report, two-thirds of respondents did not hire any youth/young adults for the summer of 2012. Also, 84.3 percent of respondents say they did not make a financial contribution to a summer jobs program. Over 86 percent of businesses said they had never been asked to hire youth/young adults by a government agency or non-government organization. But the report did find a silver lining. Of the 29.7 percent of companies that did hire youth, 61.6 percent said they were likely to hire more youth/young adults for the summer of 2013. Of those companies, the overwhelming majority (73.7 percent) characterized the skills and educational capacity of the youth/young adults they hired as excellent (25.3 percent and good (48.4 percent).

These survey results show that there is tremendous potential for cities, the private sector and the foundation community to work together to increase the participation of our business sector in hiring youth next summer,” said Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Michael A. Nutter. “We thank the businesses and foundations who hired youth in 2012. But we really want to raise the bar and partner even more closely with every business across America, and encourage them to hire young workers every summer.”

**Mayors, Business Partnerships**

Responding to the survey results, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings said, “We have our work cut out for us.” Most of the workshop was devoted to “best practice” examples of how cities had worked with the private sector to hire youth for summer jobs, including Rawlings, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, and Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman.

Rawlings described his Mayor’s Intern Fellows Program (MIFP), which offers rising high school juniors and seniors meaningful paid summer employment experiences in companies, universities, and non-profit organizations in Dallas. The mayor actively recruits employers within the city to participate in the program and fundraises for the effort. In 2012, the program doubled.

Coleman then commented on his Successful Opportunities to Achieve and Reconnect (S.O.A.R hire!) summer program. The initiative is a collaborative between the mayor and the city, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, and the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation. The program connects 2,000 youth and young adults to employers and offers paid internships and valuable learning experiences. “Sometimes I have to tell kids that they will not be hired today, because they were not appropriately dressed,” Coleman said. “I sent them home and they returned dressed properly for a job interview.”

Fischer also presented his SummerWorks program, which partnered with Louisville’s local businesses, foundations, and city leaders last year to raise over $1 million to employ Louisville’s youth — double the amount of funds raised from 2011. This was the second year that Fischer reached out to local businesses to support his program. “Providing meaningful summer jobs to young people is one of the most important steps we can take as city leaders,” Fischer explained.

**Partnership with Bank of America Foundation**

At the workshop, Rawlings released a new publication, “Partnerships in Summer Youth Employment,” which outlines how mayors in 14 cities worked with their private and non-profit sectors to provide and increase summer job opportunities for youth. The report was published in partnership with the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

“Young people are facing a crisis to obtain the employment and skills needed to succeed,” said Kerry Sullivan, President of the Foundation. “We encourage mayors to ask for support in establishing and sustaining programs that connect our youth to opportunities that provide valuable knowledge and skills for future employment.”

In 2012 summer, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation provided funding for over 800 teens to intern at nonprofits in 20 cities. The Foundation also sponsored the USCM/Zogby Survey of businesses and their summer job hiring practices.
Attorney General Tells Mayors It’s Time for “Tough” Votes in Congress

By Laura Delkoven Waxman

After describing key provisions of the Administration’s plan to reduce gun violence, Attorney General Eric Holder told the Conference of Mayors Criminal and Social Justice Committee January 18 that “…some have said that these changes will require ‘tough’ votes by Members of Congress. Public service is never easy, and there come times when those of us who are in elected or appointed positions must put the interests of those we are privileged to serve above that which might be politically expedient or professionally safe…This is one of those times.”

The first thing Holder called on Congress to do was adopt legislation to require universal background checks, so that a full background check is conducted every time someone attempts to buy a gun. This, he said, “…can significantly strengthen our ability to keep criminals and other dangerous individuals from gaining access to deadly weapons.” Holder also called on Congress to renew the ban on high-capacity magazines, pass an updated and stronger assault weapons ban, protect the police by getting rid of armor-piercing bullets, and pass new federal laws which impose tough penalties on gun traffickers who help to funnel weapons to dangerous criminals.

Regarding the executive actions which the plan calls for Holder said, “Not one of the Executive Orders — contrary to what a few have said — impinges upon anyone’s Second Amendment rights or is inconsistent with the historical use of executive power.” When she introduced the Attorney General, Criminal and Social Justice Committee Chair Houston Mayor Annise Parker cited several of the mass slayings that have occurred in the U.S. and described the letter signed by over 200 mayors which calls on the President to exercise his powers through Executive Order and the Congress to introduce and pass legislation to make reasonable changes in our gun laws and regulations. She highlighted the three legislative proposals which the letter calls for, all of which are contained in the President’s plan:

- Enact legislation to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines being prepared by Senator Dianne Feinstein and others;
- Strengthen the national background check system and eliminate loopholes added by state laws;
- Pass legislation to make reasonable changes in our gun laws and regulations.

Council on Metro Economies and the New American City: Modest GDP Growth in 2013; Need Debt Extension to Avoid Recession

By Dave Gatton

The U.S. economy is expected to grow a modest 1.7 percent during 2013, according to projections provided by IHS Senior Director James Diffley at the Council on Metro Economies and the New American City meeting held January 17 in Washington (DC). Diffley said the unemployment rate would slightly fall to 7.5 percent by the year’s end from its current rate of 7.8 percent. Responding to Council Chair Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman’s question on how the debt ceiling debate could affect economic growth, Diffley said that Congressional failure to extend the debt ceiling could pull the economy back into recession. Since the meeting, the House passed a bill to extend the debt ceiling for three months to allow time for Congress to pass a federal budget.

Coleman outlined the Council’s work in the coming year, which will include continued publication of the U.S. Metro Economies Series; expansion of the Council’s DollarWise Campaign: Mayors for Financial Literacy; continued work with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; analysis of sustainable development trends and projects; and expanded joint research with the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC).
Homelessness Task Force Meet with Interagency Council, 100,000 Homes Campaign

By Eugene T. Lowe

The Hunger and Homelessness Task Force, chaired by Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy, met January 19 and heard presentations from Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Mike Brown of City Policy Associates, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Executive Director Barbara Poppe, and Community Solutions of the 100,000 Homes Campaign National Field Organizer Linda Kaufman.

Nutter spoke about his city’s hunger and homelessness problems. He set his remarks in the context of Philadelphia’s 28.4 percent poverty rate (the national poverty rate is 17.1 percent). In addition, the food insecurity rate for the city is one of the highest in the nation. The mayor added that 450,000 Philadelphians rely on the SNAP program to feed their families. Another 180 million people are eligible for SNAP but are not signed up to receive the benefits. Nutter said that, only a few days ago, he basically revamped his anti-poverty agency that had been in operation for decades. He said the new agency has a new director, new name, new focus and more resources (700 million dollars a year from a variety of sources) to help low income people and people living in poverty.

Brown gave a brief history of the annual survey. He said that the task force began in 1982. At that time, there were tensions about the survey as many thought that homelessness was not a national problem. But the mayors kept at it, sharing notes, realizing that homelessness was indeed a national problem. In 1985, it was decided that the survey should be standardized so that the results would be comparable year after year. Brown said that the survey today is essentially the same survey that was used in 1985. City Policy Associates is the policy research organization that conducted the Conference of Mayors 2012 Hunger and Homelessness Survey Report.

Poppe talked about the first ever federal plan to eliminate homelessness called “Opening Doors.” The plan provides a road map for the joint action of 19 federal agencies that are part of the Interagency Council on Homelessness which has as its purpose the alignment of mainstream housing, health, job education and human services to help prevent people from experiencing homelessness. Poppe said that the nation has “made progress on preventing and ending homelessness despite the economic downturn and continuing recovery.” She added, “In the wake of the recession, we have prevented a real surge in homelessness, in part, because of the work of the Recovery Act, through a program called Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing.” Poppe spoke at length about housing first that considers housing as therapeutic in and of itself. Housing is the place where people become stable, then access employment and all other needs.

Kaufman described the 100,000 Homes Campaign as a national movement of 185 communities around the country who have decided that they are going “…to take the precious resource of housing and align it with people who need it most in their community.” Kaufman showed a photo of a group of people living on the streets in the year 2000. She said that only one of those persons in the photo is alive today. “Things we cannot see raise peoples’ risk of dying on the street,” Kaufman added. The 100,000 Homes Campaign has developed a vulnerability index to help communities know by name, who the people living on their streets are, with enough information to triage them into housing. In this way, the “most sacred and precious resource of housing go to people who are most likely to die on the street.” Kaufman said that in September of last year, there were 20,000 people housed as part of the campaign and 155 communities participating. Today, there are 31,000 housed and 185 communities participating. Philadelphia, Allentown, and Santa Barbara are some of the cities participating in the campaign. Kaufman encouraged the mayors to get their cities to be part of the campaign.

GUNS
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in it; and
• Strengthen the penalties for straw purchases of guns.

Pistole Details TSA’s Risk-Based Approach to Security

“We believe we have the best security in the world, it’s the gold standard,” Transportation Security Administration Administrator John Pistole told the mayors during the committee session. He described TSA’s risk-based approach to airline security, saying that his agency cannot expect to achieve a 100 percent guarantee given the nearly six million people or bags his agency must screen every day so, much as mayors do in their cities, it mitigates risk by working in partnership with the traveling public. Through the trusted-traveler PRE-™ program, in return for sharing information about themselves travelers are pre-screened and receive expedited physical screening at airport check-points. Pistole indicated that the program is now operating in 35 airports and that his agency plans to increase that number.

McGinn Updates Mayors on Backpage.com Problem

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn provided the mayors an update on efforts to require Backpage.com, which advertises adult escort services on-line, to require in-person age verification to ensure that such services are not being provided by minors. McGinn reported that as a result of efforts by his city, the Conference of Mayors, and attorneys general around the country, Village Voice Media, which owned backpage.com, has divested itself of the site. The bad news, however, according the mayor, is that backpage.com has successfully, thus far, challenged as a violation of the First Amendment a Washington State law that would have established a new crime of advertising commercial sexual abuse of a minor.

Mayors Discuss Climate Strategies with Top White House Official

Left to right, Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change Heather Zichal, Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force Chair Carmel Mayor James Brainard, and New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell during a mayors-only task force session on climate policies and strategies.
Mayors Promote Increased Exports; Port Modernization

By Dave Gatton

Under Secretary for International Trade Francisco Sanchez called on a continued partnership with the nation’s mayors and cities to help meet President Obama’s goal of doubling exports by 2015. Addressing the January 19 Metro Mayors Exports and Ports Task Force at the 81st Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington (DC), Sanchez reviewed the various programs available to businesses through the International Trade Administration to expand exports. He called on mayors to help convene companies, universities, and business organizations to create regional export strategies that would expand the number and size of export markets.

Task Force Vice-Chair Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, who presided over the session, highlighted the Conference of Mayors Export-Ready Metro Challenge, launched last year by Past Conference of Mayors President Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Partnering with the Brookings Institution, the Challenge encourages mayors to develop tailored metro export strategies using a variety of tools developed by Brookings, including a “How-To” Guide on creating a metro export plan.

The Export-Import Bank of the United States

Export-Import Bank Chairman and President Fred Hochberg outlined the various achievements and new programs of the Bank, particularly for small and medium-sized businesses. He told the mayors that in FY 2012, the Bank had financed over $35.7 billion of exports, a fourth straight record breaking year; supported $50 billion of export sales; and $6.1 billion in small-business authorizations. Eighty-five percent of total agency transactions benefit small businesses and the Bank achieved a 16.5 percent increase in authorizations for minority and woman-owned businesses.

Hochberg described how the Bank had developed new risk and credit products to meet unique export needs. The Express Insurance program provides a five-day turnaround for first-time customers; the Supply Chain Financing increases liquidity for small companies that are suppliers to U.S. exporters; the Renewable Express program provides project financing for small-scale renewable-power projects; and the bank’s Small Business Web Portal makes it easier to understand how export finance transactions work.

He told the mayors that the bank was holding Global Access Forums across the country in cities to educate businesses on the export finance tools available to them through the bank.

Modernizing Nation’s Ports

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Director Steven Stockton reviewed the breadth and scope of the nation’s system of ports and inland waterways. He emphasized, as he did in the Task Force’s national forum in Jacksonville last year, that the widening of the Panama Canal could significantly alter global shipping patterns because ports would be required to have a depth of 50 feet to accommodate dramatically larger ships. The new canal is now scheduled to open in 2015. The Administration has funded five ports to begin their modernization to meet this challenge.

At the same time, Stockton painted a less than optimistic picture of future funding of Corps projects in all categories, compared to the overall system’s modernization needs. He said the Corps’ budget had essentially remained flat over the last few years.

Jobs, Municipal Bonds, Internet Sales Taxes Focus of Metro Economies Committee

By Larry Jones

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer reminded mayors that cities across America are still recovering from the Great Recession, which set the tone for the January 17 meeting of the Metro Economies Committee. Still facing high levels of unemployment, he said most local communities continue to place a high priority on jobs and economic growth. Two speakers — Economic Development Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce Matt Erskine and U.S. Treasurer Rosie Rios — discussed a number of efforts underway at the federal level to spur jobs and economic growth.

EDA Multi-Agency Collaborations

Erskine told mayors that the Economic Development Administration is leading three multi-agency efforts to spur jobs and economic growth: a Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative, which is working to empower local leaders to identify and leverage bottom-up strategies to strengthen their local economic ecosystems; the Make it in America Challenge, which is designed to accelerate the trend of companies bringing jobs to the United States and making investments here; and the i6 Challenge Program, which encourages and rewards innovative, groundbreaking partnerships across the nation that accelerate the commercialization of cutting-edge research and related new company formation.

CFI Fund/New Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

Mayors were told that the Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund strives to increase economic opportunity in underserved communities by providing monetary financial and technical assistance awards to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Community Development Entities (CDEs). The CDFI Program recently awarded $186 million in financial and technical assistance grants to CDFIs in 210 communities. She also encouraged mayors to go to the U.S. Treasury Department’s website to check out the New Markets Tax Credit program which recently provided $3.6 billion to Community Development Entities. Rios pointed out that the Department of the Treasury is working with 18 federal agencies on the Strong Cities, Strong Communities. She said the President launched a new interagency pilot initiative to strengthen neighborhoods, towns, cities and regions around the nation by strengthening the capacity of local governments to develop their economic vision and strategies. The pilot phase is currently underway in seven cities: Chester (PA), Cleveland, Youngstown, Detroit, Fresno, Memphis and New Orleans.

Tax Exempt Municipal Bonds

Fischer told mayors that a number of proposals were circulated last year that would have eliminated or limited the deduction on tax-exempt municipal bonds.

“We think these proposals will hurt local governments by destabilizing the bond market and driving up our borrowing costs,” he said. Updating mayors on the issue Michael Decker, Managing Director and Co-Head of the Municipal Securities Division for the Securities Industry and Financial Market Association Municipal Securities Division Managing Director and Co-Head.

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Membership Committee Discusses Responding to and Recovering from Hurricane Sandy, Other Major Disasters

By Katie Piroli

Membership Standing Committee Chair Piscataway Mayor Brian C. Wahler led an interactive discussion on disaster preparedness at the January 18 Membership Standing Committee during the Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting. The session, titled “Responding to and Recovering from Superstorm Sandy and other Major Disasters,” reviewed effective strategies in dealing with the immediate aftermath and longer-term problems resulting from these major disasters.

The mayoral panel included Des Moines Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie, Hempstead Mayor Wayne J. Hall, Fairfield Mayor Michael C. Tetreau, Freeport Mayor Andrew Hardwick, and Hope Mayor Timothy McDonough. Also joining the mayoral panel were Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Intergovernmental Affairs Director Gwen Camp, FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist Robert Nadeau, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Senior Advisor Frederick Tombar, and HUD Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force Intergovernmental Affairs Director Adria Crutchfield.

“These extreme weather events are becoming the new normal. Mayors are on the front lines of efforts to mitigate, respond to, and recover from these disasters,” said Wahler during his opening remarks. “The Conference of Mayors has been directly involved in calling for disaster relief funding and will continue its push to have a bill before the President as soon as possible,” he added.

Highlighting the important role that social media played in getting vital messages out to his citizens, Tetreau said, “We sent out two Code Red messages per day that were consistent among Facebook, our website, and Twitter, which allowed two-way communication and reduced panic.” Fairfield city staff also manned non-emergency lines in order to keep the 911 lines open the mayor reported.

McDonough touched on the importance of public-private partnerships and praised Wal-Mart for their quick response in providing water. He also emphasized the need for mayors to put pressure on the board of public utilities as “...the communication between mayors and public utilities: cable, telephone, and electricity; needs to be improved and is vital in effectively responding to these disasters.”

“In Freeport there are still 3,000 homes in danger, five empty co-ops, and thousands of vehicles destroyed as a result of Hurricane Sandy. It has taken Congress too long to vote and unless there is direct funding to cities, the effort is fruitless,” said Hardwick.

Officials from FEMA and HUD discussed agency guidelines and responded to participants’ questions. Camp stated, “It is extremely important for mayors to understand their state and local statutes, what their role is during a natural disaster, and how to utilize resources in the private sector, churches, and schools.”

Tombar explained the work that HUD has done in response to Hurricane Sandy and their efforts to remove obstacles among and across departments. He expressed concern for mayors and stated, “Mayors should register with and apply directly to FEMA, rather than through contractors who may be fraudulent.”

Cownie, who serves as Vice Chair for Emergency Management of the Conference of Mayors Criminal and Social Justice Committee, commented that in some of the conference calls the organization had in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, it became clear that there are some policy issues that need to be examined. “We heard a lot of frustration from mayors and other city officials who tried to help to communities affected by Sandy and were unable to,” Cownie commented. “Clearly, we need to take a hard look at the EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) system which routes all help through the states and make recommendations for its improvement.”

Left to right, Paterson Mayor Jeffrey Jones, HUD Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force Intergovernmental Affairs Director Adria Crutchfield, Hempstead Mayor Wayne J. Hall, HUD Senior Advisor Frederick Tombar, Membership Committee Chair Piscataway Mayor Brian C. Wahler, FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Director Gwen Camp, FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist Robert Nadeau, and Tuscaloosa Mayor Walter Maddox.

At right, Fairfield Mayor Michael Tetreau addresses the membership committee, with, left to right, Hempstead Mayor Wayne J. Hall, Hope Mayor Timothy McDonough, and Membership Committee Chair Brian C. Wahler.

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government borrowing to build schools, roads, airports, water and waste water systems would increase somewhere in the neighborhood of two percentage points. A proposal to cap the deduction on interest on municipal bonds at 28 percent was considered in connection with the fiscal cliff bill. Decker said we were fortunate that it was not included in the final legislation. He warned, however, that the issue is likely to resurface later this year when Congress considers the debt ceiling legislation, sequestration, and a continuing resolution. He also encouraged mayors to make sure their congressional delegations understand that the vast majority of benefits associated with tax-exempt municipal bonds is accruing to state and local governments in the form of reduced borrowing cost.

Marketplace Fairness Act

Carey Tellez, Legislative Assistant to Senator Richard Durbin (IL), updated mayors on the Marketplace Fairness Act (S. 1322), a bipartisan proposal that would level the playing field between merchants on Main Street and merchants who sell over the Internet. Due to a 1992 Supreme Court ruling, state and local government are prohibited from requiring Internet and other out-of-state merchants to collect their sales taxes. Under the proposal, Internet merchants would be required to collect state and local sales taxes just as merchants on Main Street are required to do. She said the bill has been gaining bipartisan support. It enjoys 21 cosponsors in the Senate. Twenty three governors (15 Republicans and 8 Democrats) and a countless number of mayors and local leaders have voiced support for the bill. Attempts were made to move the bill last year but to no avail. Senator Durbin, along with Senators Michael Enzi (WY) and Lamar Alexander (TN), plan to reintroduce the bill soon, with some revisions. Mayors were asked to continue urging their Senators to support the bill.

Pension Liability

To address a growing pension liability problem, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed explained that last June the voters approved a ballot initiative that changed the city’s charter to require city employees to pay 16 percent more for their pension benefits or they could choose a new less expensive plan which would cost them and the city less money. He said most of the unions thought that having an employee choice provision was a good idea but they wanted assurances that if they adopted the lower cost plan, the tax treatment would be appropriate. So the city agreed to seek a private letter ruling from the IRS just to give everybody comfort. So far the IRS has not issued the ruling. In response, Reed pointed out that the Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities adopted a resolution last year urging the Administration to issue guidance in this area. While the Treasury Department has included the issue on its work plan for 2013, there are 17 issues on their work plan. Mayors were urged to send letters to the Administration to demonstrate this is not just a California problem, but a national problem.
Vilsack, McGovern Call on Mayors to Help Save Vital Food, Nutrition Programs from Budget Cuts

By Crystal D. Swann

The meeting of the Food Policy Task Force, led by Vice Chair Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, featured presentations that echoed a similar theme — the presenters called on the nation’s mayors to help preserve the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other federal feeding programs against potential drastic cuts in funding.

Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack outlined key priorities for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), with a special emphasis on SNAP, as it is popularly known. SNAP is a perennial candidate for budget cuts — in part because, Vilsack suggested, it’s widely perceived as a program subject to significant fraud and abuse by participants. “I’m concerned about the rhetoric demonizing SNAP, as if it’s a fraudulent program, when it’s one of the most effectively run federal programs,” Vilsack said. He cited a report by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), which found that SNAP has less than a three percent error rate when it comes to providing benefits to eligible households. Vilsack also dismissed the notion that SNAP is a cash welfare program — only eight percent of SNAP recipients receive cash welfare; the vast majorities, 92 percent (working families, senior citizens, and children), do not.

Vilsack also noted that, rather than being seen as a budget drain, the SNAP program is an extraordinary economic driver — every dollar spent on SNAP generates $1.79 in communities. Beyond this, the SNAP program is very important to the nation’s farmers, Vilsack said, as they receive 15 to 16 cents of every food dollar spent.

Another priority mentioned by Vilsack was the National School Lunch Program — Congress has allowed the Administration to increase the level of reimbursement to schools. In addition, Vilsack noted, USDA is working to improve administrative efficiencies to streamline the qualification process, as well as to improve the healthiness and quality of the food served through the program. Vilsack equally stressed the importance of the Summer Food Service Program. “Thirty-one to 32 million children benefit from the School Lunch Program — but,” Vilsack asked, “what do they do when they’re out of school?” The program is targeted to low income areas where at least 50 percent of school children qualify for free-reduced lunch. Vilsack noted that USDA is forming partnerships with faith-based and community-based organizations to get meals through this program to the children who need them, and he encouraged Mayors to reach out to USDA and to work with local partners to establish summer feeding programs in their own communities.

Vilsack maintains that these programs can also be economic drivers and job creators in cities. He noted there is an array of federal grants designed to assist cities in creating food policy programs, which many cities, large and small, have already used to form their own summer feeding programs. Vilsack referred mayors to the “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” section of the USDA website, which includes more information about these grant programs. Vilsack did note that city food policy officials would already be well aware of these programs, he encouraged mayors that do not have a food policy person to consider creating a position in their cities.

Congressman McGovern

U.S. House of Representatives Agricultural Committee Member Congressman McGovern echoed concerns about potential cuts in the SNAP program. “SNAP has become kind of an ATM machine in Congress to fund other programs,” McGovern said. Without concerted action by mayors and other stakeholders, McGovern said, SNAP benefits will be cut this fall. “There is a drumbeat in Congress” to cut this program, McGovern said. He noted that the farm bill considered in the last session of Congress (which included SNAP as well as other nutrition programs) cut $4.5 billion from SNAP in the version passed by the Senate, and roughly $16 billion in the version voted out of the House Agriculture Committee.

McGovern illustrated the importance of SNAP and similar programs by noting that hunger generates significant costs in America’s cities — such as increased emergency room visits by elderly persons forced to take their medications without food, and malnourished children. He also noted that hunger is a leading cause of obesity, how it relates to access to healthy food. McGovern also cited diminished capacity to learn, and lost workplace productivity, as additional costs of hunger.

McGovern stressed, “We know what works.” The goal must be to ensure that successful programs and initiatives to fight hunger are replicated across the country. McGovern said that the nation needs a national plan to deal with hunger, and called for a White House Conference on Food and Nutrition — something that has not been done, he maintains, since the Nixon Administration. He encouraged mayors to get behind the idea.

In the question and answer session that followed Vilsack’s and McGovern’s presentations, Vilsack noted, that, like the SNAP program itself, the farm bill suffers from an image problem. “This is not just a farm bill. It’s a food bill, a nutrition bill, and a jobs bill,” Vilsack stressed. He called on mayors from cities large and small to make their voices heard, so that Congress understands that the bill impacts all sectors, not just rural communities.

Rounding out the SNAP and farm bill discussion were comments by independent policy consultant Kate Fitzgerald, who noted that SNAP received an extension as part of the recent “fiscal cliff” negotiations — but that many of the longer term programs apart from SNAP were not included in that extension. Fitzgerald stated that food will continue to “play second fiddle” in Congress to other issues perceived as more pressing — while the farm bill may pass in the upcoming session, Fitzgerald believes that it will likely be attached to a larger initiative or piece of legislation. Given that, she suggested that the strategy should be to identify key stakeholders for key aspects of the farm bill, and engage them so that people can see that there can be a “both/and” situation instead of “either/or.”

Grant to Help Reverse Childhood Obesity Epidemic Awarded

In addition to these presentations, it was announced that the Conference of Mayors has received a grant of $300,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to support and enhance the work of The U.S. Conference of Mayors Food Policy Task Force in its efforts to increase access to high-quality, affordable healthy foods in cities and help expand the number of mayors with established city-wide food access strategies. The grant was awarded through Leadership for Healthy Communities, an RWJF national program that assists state and local leaders in their efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. In discussing the grant award during this session, Leadership for Healthy Communities Director Maya Rockeymoore-Cummings stressed the RWJF’s hope that will identify, highlight and disseminate best practices across the country. In addition, she offered the expertise of her staff to cities that might need additional technical assistance. “We’re doing this for our communities and for our children,” Rockeymoore-Cummings said.
HUD Secretary Donovan Tells Housing Committee Next Four Years Present Challenges, Opportunities

By Eugene T. Lowe

Newton Mayor Setti Warren convened the Community Development and Housing Committee on January 17 to be briefed by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and Oakland Mayor Jean Quan. Donovan told the mayors that they had “the toughest jobs in the world and the best jobs in the world.” Looking back at the past four years when the country was on the verge of a great depression, he said that mayors should “get an enormous amount of credit on how far the country has come since then.” He said, “In the big picture, we have some real opportunities in the next four years that we did not have four years ago.”

But according to the Secretary, there will also be challenges. Citing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME, Donovan said that if we don’t get the fiscal cliff resolved, we are looking at a 8.2 percent cut immediately and that is just the beginning if the overall fiscal dilemma is not solved. That is to say, the Secretary said, “How we balance revenue and spending is the single most important determinant to what happens over the next four years with programs such as CDBG and HOME.” The Secretary urged the mayors to make their voices heard. “And make them heard all across the country over the next couple of months to make sure we get this right,” the Secretary added.

Donovan told the mayors that, “We have a big opportunity to make the case for CDBG, HOME and the other programs you care about.” In the Recovery Act, CDBG money was the best job creator and that for every dollar spent $3.50 of private money “...comes to the table and is put to work in your communities. We must make this case together, this year and every year going forward, and, we have to look at how we can maximize the impact on economic development and jobs, especially with CDBG.” Although we are creating jobs, “...we are not creating them as fast as we would like to be. Using CDBG and reforming it over the next four years to make sure we get the best bang for the buck is very, very important to me,” Donovan said.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), which the Secretary said he is the proudest of, created almost 100,000 jobs, renovating and rehabilitating the most distressed housing across the country. Donovan also reported that foreclosures in December 2012 were at the lowest level since before the crisis began and that home prices increased by ten percent this past year. But, he caution “…that there is a lot more we can do to make sure that things do not go backwards.”

Donovan said that Project Rebuild, which is an expansion of neighborhood stabilization, must be creatively funded as the third round of the neighborhood stabilization program is done next month. Sustainable communities money, a mere 270 million dollars, has been effective, but is “an effort that is really at risk.” The Secretary said that we must take the program to the next level.

Quan presented a best practice of

Veterans Affairs Task Force Holds First Meeting

By Larry Jones

As Chairman of the Conference of Mayors Veterans Affairs Task Force, Auburn Mayor Peter Lewis opened the first meeting by reminding mayors that our veterans have made enormous sacrifices to ensure our national security, and they have earned and deserve our support when they reenter our communities. This new generation of veterans has gone on many tours of duty and when they get out, many will come back with problems and will need support to make a smooth transition back into local communities. “But the other part is that veterans bring value to our communities,” he said. He explained that veterans qualify for numerous federal benefits, including education, job training, health care and assistance to start small businesses. He said these are federal dollars that are spent in local communities which support the local economy. Veterans also help attract new businesses because they are highly trained, skilled dependable workers.

To assist veterans in his community, Lewis told mayors he encouraged veterans to apply for FHA 203 K loans to rehab a house and then buy it with a VA loan. He said the city had a bunch of abandoned properties that the city took pictures of and then posted them on “the wall of shame.” The name of the lender, address of the property and the phone number for the lender were also listed so all the neighbors could call. This encouraged the owners to fix up or sell these homes. Veterans were told where these houses were located so they could benefit from the rehab and VA loans.

Veterans Affairs Benefits

Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary John Garcia told mayors that the VA has a budget of $140 billion and $100 billion of that goes into states and localities. He said over the next five years, he projects 2.5 million men and women will leave the military due to downsizing and the pull back of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. A lot will have to be put in place to assist our troops in making the transition into our communities. Garcia explained that every state has a state director of veterans’ affairs who has funding to support veterans. And every state has veterans’ service officers whose main job is to find veterans and help them file for their benefits. The VA works with other federal agencies to make sure veterans get the support they need such as education, job training, housing and health care. Although a tremendous amount of federal assistance is available, many veterans are not taking advantage. He explained that there are 22 million veterans in the nation but 65 percent have not filed for benefits they are eligible for. He urged mayors to work with the VA Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to help make veterans aware of the benefits available to them.

Defense Communities

Association of Defense Communities Outreach Director Matt Borron told mayors that part of the mission of his organization is to help communities and states understand current and future challenges facing military families and veterans, and help to find effective solutions. He said there are five ways local governments can help returning veterans make the transition into their communities. He encouraged mayors to: (1) assess their environment and become aware of the various programs and services available in the local area; (2) organize by indexing services and programs and pooling resources; (3) use existing resources and partner with military installations; (4) plan for sustainability by not relying solely on scarce public dollars or one-time funds; and (5) let people help (understand there is widespread community support for veterans and their families) and partner with local business and industry for resources.

Left to right, Sunnyvale Mayor Anthony Spitaleri, Association of Defense Communities Outreach Director Matt Borron, Miramar Mayor Lori Mesely, Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs John Garcia, Newton Mayor Setti Warren, USCM Veterans Affairs Task Force Chairman Auburn Mayor Peter Lewis, San Diego Mayor Bob Filner, Harrisburg Mayor Linda Thompson, Hinesville Mayor James Thomas, Livermore Mayor John Marchand, Sumter Mayor Joseph McElveen, and Pleasanton Mayor Jerry Thorne.
Transportation and Communications Panel Tackles Key Priorities with U.S. DOT Secretary, FCC Chairman

By Kevin McCarty

Members of the Conference of Mayors Transportation and Communications Committee engaged Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski and U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on key mayoral priorities during the Conference of Mayors 81st Winter Meeting in Washington (DC).

Transportation and Communications Committee Chair Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, who presided at the January 18 panel session, praised the Administration officials for their leadership on behalf of cities.

FCC Chairman Issues “Gigabit City Challenge”

Genachowski shared his vision for tapping the job creation and economic potential of telecommunication technologies and services, calling upon mayors to take up his “Gigabit City Challenge,” which he unveiled at the committee session. Genachowski urged mayors, other local leaders and broadband providers to establish at least one gigabit community in each of the 50 states to “accelerate the creation of a critical mass of markets and innovation hubs with ultra-fast Internet speeds.”

In comments before the panel, he said, “The question is whether jobs are created here or elsewhere in the world.” He explained further that there are now “…places in the world developing gigabit communities.”

To help cities meet the “Gigabit City Challenge,” Genachowski said that he would be working with the Conference of Mayors on best practices clearinghouse to provide online information on how cities are lowering the costs and increasing the speed of broadband deployment nationwide, including building out gigabit communities. He also announced that the FCC will hold workshops on gigabit communities to hear from local leaders on how to evaluate barriers, increase incentives, and lower the costs of speeding gigabit network deployment.

Genachowski fielded questions from mayors, with Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter discussing his efforts to close the digital divide in his city. Touting his partnership with Comcast on its Internet Essentials initiative, Nutter said, “Forty-one percent of Philadelphia’s citizens don’t have access to broadband.” He went on to call broadband deployment “…one of the great civil rights challenges of this time.” Nutter urged the FCC Chairman to address a pending challenge to his city’s zoning authority under the so-called “OTARD” rules, with other mayors asking the agency to affirm local authority over local rights-of-way.

Secretary LaHood: “Mayors Are Good Partners”

LaHood praised the mayors for their leadership and called on them to engage the legislative process to find new revenues for added federal investment in transportation infrastructure.

“We love working with this organization and working with you,” he said. “We are trying to make your job easier by coming to your communities,” recounting his trip earlier that day to Detroit where he announced with Mayor David Bing an investment of $25 million in a new light rail system.

With his department now working to implement the new federal surface transportation law, called “MAP-21,” LaHood urged mayors “…to look at the TIFIA loan program and its $2 billion to leverage other dollars.” Looking ahead to the new legislation, he said, “The debate is over how we are going to pay for this and be number one again in infrastructure. We are not number one; we are being out-competed.” In assessing the role of the Administration in finding new revenues and shaping the new legislation, he said, “I think you will see some leadership from the President on this.”

Pipeline Safety Task Force Formed

Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski, recently named by Nutter to lead a new Pipeline Safety Task Force, briefed committee members on key challenges before mayors in addressing pipeline safety in their cities.

After recounting the devastating impact of a pipeline explosion on his city, Pawlowski said, “We are no longer able to rely on the utilities for our safety nor can we rely on the existing national hodgepodge of state and federal regulations.”

“So with the help of the Conference of Mayors, we are creating a national Task Force on Pipeline Safety to engage mayors from across the country in a collaborative effort to define and develop pipeline safety protocol specific to our cities,” he said, inviting committee members and other mayors to join with him in serving on this new task force now being established.

Siemens Public Affairs Director Becky Johnson briefed mayors on what her company can do to support mayors in investing in new transportation projects and solutions. In discussing rail transit, she told the mayors that Siemens is the only fully integrated light rail vehicle manufacturer, building light rail cars for Houston, San Diego, and Minneapolis; streetcars for Atlanta; locomotives for Amtrak’s Northeast and Keystone Corridors; and signed contracts in 2012 with Charlotte and Portland for additional rail cars.

Johnson described how Siemens can help cities make the most of existing infrastructure to offset costs and modernize facilities and equipment, with little to no capital outlay. She talked about making upgrades to buildings and other facilities through energy saving performance contracting, and the use of available federal dollars to fund certain transportation systems, such as smart traffic signals. She emphasized how leveraging new technologies can help advance mayoral priorities.

Donovan

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how her city is addressing the issue of foreclosures. In a program with Wells Fargo, she said that her city disposed of nearly 2,000 blighted foreclosed homes.

She said before foreclosure, Wells Fargo worked with the city to register their homes in order to do pre-inspections. Wells Fargo also helped the city go to other banks to pursue the same procedure of registering homes before foreclosure.

Oakland also initiated a Roots program, based on a program developed at Harvard. Wells Fargo again played a big role by taking 46 of its homes and enabled people to renegotiate their homes at the current value of their homes. This led to another program where the city uses a million dollars coming from HUD, a $2 million grant from a foundation, and $2 million from the Attorney General Settlement for a $5 million fund. Quan said that she is trying to get the $5 million fund matched. As of now, she will work with the $5 million in hand to have a non-profit buy homes and then sell them back to the owners.
Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force Briefed on Vacant Residential, Commercial Properties

By Jocelyn Bogen and Eugene T. Lowe

Conference of Mayors: Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force Chair Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin opened the meeting on January 17 stating the task force purpose to afford mayors the opportunity to learn the latest and most effective policies and best practices for making vacant and abandoned properties productive and useful to our cities and citizens. Four speakers addressed the task force on vacant and commercial properties, much of this taking place because of the economy and foreclosures.

HUD Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Johnston began by giving mayors an encouraging word: “The number of people falling into foreclosure is the lowest it has been in 5 years.” He added, “Places with targeted neighborhood stabilization investments have seen vacancies fall and home prices rise.” As for HUD’s Neighborhood Program (NSP) — a program created to address the foreclosure problem — “is currently on track to address 95,000 properties before its end.” He told the mayors that 95,000 properties out of three million might seem small, but it “…represents a quarter of the REO in the hardest hit places.” Johnston provided examples. He cited Chicago that formed a unique partnership with Mercy Commerce, a nonprofit housing agency, to manage all of the implementation of the NSP Program. The city and Mercy organized a network of more than 50 developers to rehabilitate foreclosed and abandoned buildings. Allowing them to operate in multiple locations at the same time offers quick results to halt deterioration.”

Wells Fargo Vice President Bill Honaker discussed vacant commercial properties. He told the mayors that commercial assets include all real estate except for property covered by mortgages. Consequently, land is a huge portion of Wells Fargo commercial portfolio. After describing to the mayors what happens before the bank can take control of a property (primarily a lengthy waiting time due to legal limitations), Honaker then discussed the process once the bank gets control of commercial property. The first item of business is to look at safety and environmental risks. The second is stabilize the property as soon as possible, which includes taking care of expenses such as back property taxes. The next step is to understand the highest and best use of a particular property. The final step is the disposition strategy. Honaker then explained the process that Wells Fargo followed in a recent transaction with Virginia Beach Mayor William Sessoms, where the bank was able to work with and help the city meet its goals to preserve a very environmentally sensitive piece of property.

Wells Fargo Premier Asset Services REO Community Development Vice President Tyler Smith talked about the bank’s efforts from default through the REO disposition with respect to residential property. Smith described the management of properties before foreclosure takes place. Once a property is 45 days delinquent, it is triggered for inspection. Vendors are hired to inspect the property every 30 days. The bank manages and secures the property that includes such things as mowing the lawn. This is all on the pre-foreclosure side. Tyler said, “Our goal is to protect the asset. We want to maintain the properties and retain any value that is in the property until it gets to REO.”

Safeguard Chairman Robert Klein said he runs what the industry calls a field service company. Having absolutely no interest in the property, Safeguard performs property inspections across the entire country for a number of clients exactly the same way Wells Fargo does for its properties. When a loan goes delinquent 45 days for any of its clients, Safeguard goes out and inspects the property right away. Klein said Safeguard has a nationwide network of 14,000 people who carry out these inspections. Properties are inspected on a monthly basis. Of major concern to Klein was the length of time from the 45-day delinquent trigger for inspection to actual foreclosure taking place. This, he said, in some States can take two, three and even four years. During this time, the maintenance of the property is at serious risk.

Mayors, Police Chiefs Focus on Practical Advice on Keeping Students Safe

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

Task Force of Mayors and Police Chiefs Chair Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengen opened the January 19 meeting by repeating a question asked by Newtown Superintendent of Schools Dr. Janet Robinson a few days earlier in a Congressional hearing: “How do we protect our children without building fortresses? That’s really what this is all about.” And so, the Task Force devoted the session to discussing ways that mayors, police chiefs and school officials working together can keep students safe.

COPS Office Director Bernard Melekan briefed the task force on the school resource officer program that his office has funded and the Administration’s plan, as part of the President’s plan to reduce gun violence, to expand COPS hiring grants in FY 2014 by $4 billion to fund 15,000 additional officers and to establish a new program that would add 1000 new school resource officers. School resource officers, Melekan said, are teachers and counselors as well as police officers and “should be woven into the fabric of the school.”

Every school should have an emergency management plan, David Esquith, Director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students at the U.S. Department of Education, told the Task Force. Such a plan, he says “…is the first step to securing our schools, addresses a wide range of events [natural, man-made] that can disrupt teaching and learning, and addresses events that occur both in and outside of the school and school day.” Esquith invited participants to visit the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center (http://rems.ed.gov/) that provides information on school readiness and emergency management.

Canton (MA) Police Detective Chip Yeaton, a school resource officer who heads up his department’s SRO unit, discussed what it takes to be a school resource officer. He stressed the importance of training, that you cannot just pull officers off the streets, and the importance of funding, explaining that he “wouldn’t be here today if it hadn’t been for a COPS grant” that his city received. In response to a question, Yeaton said that should not be armed civilians in schools, but that they should be well trained police officers. Yeaton is President of the Massachusetts Juvenile Police Officers Association, which is a state chapter of the National Association of School Resource Officers.

“We need to do a better job of sharing information regarding mental illness and get around the HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) privacy and security rules, so that we know about problem kids and get them treatment” commented Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer. He talked about the importance of being prepared to respond to events when they occur so that they can be minimized, stressing the need for training, including active shooter training, school site assessments, and called for conducting active shooter drills in schools. In Fresno, he said, there are cameras in every high school and middle school, but only in 20 percent of elementary schools, and every police cruiser has the floor plan for every school on its computer.
Mayors Discuss Public Private Partnerships, Water System Reinvestment

By Rich Anderson

The Mayors Water Council Co-Chairs, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, welcomed mayors to the Mayors Water Council meeting on January 17 in conjunction with the 81st Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors. Rawlings-Blake started the meeting by inviting mayors to identify themselves and what their major water issue is.

Public-Private Partnership Project

Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski presented information concerning a long-term Public Private Partnership the city is planning, and is about to select an operator from among six bidders. The city is motivated by the need to address current and future municipal employee pension funding, and especially an unfunded pension liability of about $170 million. The mayor said pension fund payments are eating up so much of the general fund it is crippling the rest of city operations. Meeting the pension payments would require a dramatic increase of 100 to 150 percent in local revenues. Allentown already has the highest tax rate in the region and is competitively disadvantaged. Allentown has 20 percent of households at or below the poverty rate, and another 20 percent who are senior citizens on fixed income.

The mayor said Allentown’s first step was to begin negotiating new labor agreements that bring employee benefits in line with the new fiscal reality. Second, the city decided to address the growing unfunded pension liability, but instead of raising property taxes and driving middle class homeowners and small businesses out of the city the mayor looked at leasing the public facilities. It was determined that leasing the local wastewater treatment plant could generate a concession fee that could reduce, if not eliminate, the unfunded pension liability. And, as a lease arrangement, the city never gives up title to the facility.

Pawlowski estimates the concession could raise $170 to $250 million. There would also be an annual royalty fee paid by the operator to the city that would be used to pay down existing wastewater system debt. The deal would also stabilize a good portion of the city’s finances for the next 30 years, reduce pension liabilities, pay off most existing water and sewer debt and avoid having to raise taxes in the city for a number of years. The mayor stated that the entire program can be viewed on the website Allentown.gov.

Investing in Our Nation’s Water Infrastructure to Grow Jobs, Rebuild Regional Economies

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee described how the city and county took the opportunity to make a $4.6 billion water system investment, and a 20 year $6.9 billion capital sewer investment to upgrade their public water infrastructure, create jobs, and include training to improve worker skills. Lee illustrated the link between public infrastructure investment and creating economic activity with multiple public benefits.

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission General Manager Harlan Kelly described the Water System Improvement Program as a $4.6 billion construction effort to expand capacity in the system and harden it to withstand seismic activity. The program involves 81 projects including: new dams; treatment plants; tunnels; and pipeline replacement. The system serves 2.5 million people in the city and Bay area.

Kelly said that the Commission negotiated a project labor agreement that requires no work stoppages, use of qualified workers through training, and paying prevailing wage. Projects under $5 million are not under labor agreement and gives flexibility to small businesses. The results, said Kelly, 33,000 jobs created, nine million craft hours, and innovative workforce inclusion strategies where about 50 percent of craft hours were done by workers in and around San Francisco. The program also includes a $300 million habitat restoration and watershed protection component.

Kelly then described the 20-year $6.9 billion capital investment in the Sewer System Improvement Program. Manage stormwater and catastrophes, adapt to climate change, and achieve economic and environmental sustainability and affordable consumer rates. Kelly stated that new digesters will be costly and are not mandated by law, but will solve local nuisance issues.

Lee pointed out that cities need a partnership with the federal government to create jobs, and the Conference of Mayors should support the President’s Infrastructure Bank.

National League of Cities

National League of Cities (NLC) President Marie Lopez Rogers brought greetings to the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting and spoke to the ongoing partnership between the two organizations on shared priorities. Rogers’ term as the NLC President will overlap with her neighboring mayor, Scott Smith of Mesa, who will become the Conference of Mayors President in June.

At left, USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith with NLC President Avondale Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers.
Mayors, National Leaders Launch Advanced Manufacturing Campaign

By Paul Leroux

The U.S. Conference of Mayors Advanced Manufacturing Task Force convened on January 18 during the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington. Mayors from around the country discussed strategies to attract advanced manufacturing, which Task Force Chair Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx described as, “the rapid transfer of science and technology into manufacturing products and processes.” According to Foxx, this can include computer software, robotics, or highly processed chemicals.

Foxx noted the work Charlotte has done to attract advanced manufacturing. In particular, this has included partnerships with area colleges to expand both training and research and development. Foxx hailed partnerships like these as having “...jolted a struggling manufacturing sector.” “When companies see that Charlotte has the human and physical resources they need to compete, they look more seriously at our city,” he said.

Speaking during the Task Force meeting, U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis offered a hopeful message for the future of advanced manufacturing. Solis suggested that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) training was essential. She emphasized the work that the Department of Labor was already doing with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Community College and Career Training Grant Program as an example of this. Secretary Solis noted that while her tenure is coming to an end, work still continues on front and she plans to be a part of it. “While I may be leaving the administration,” she said, “I plan on doing what you do. Which is being an advocate.”

Dr. Rebecca Blank, the Acting U.S. Secretary of Commerce, spoke after Solis on the importance of turning cities into “hubs for advanced manufacturing.” Blank highlighted the need for creativity on the local level, and noted that Ameri- can cities can no longer simply expect foreign manufacturers to locate in the United States. She noted that Commerce’s SelectUSA program was working to overcome the barriers to locating in the United States and that the Make it in America Challenge was providing seed funding to encourage new production. She encouraged mayors to make use of both programs in their cities.

In order to continue leading in manu- facturing, Blank said American cities must emphasize innovation and provide links to research and development. She said, “Keeping us at the front edge of innova- tion is going to give us what we need to attract manufacturing.” In this vein, Blank urged passage of the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) Act, which Chris Slevin, Economic Policy Director for Senator Sherrod Brown, also presented. This act is designed to bring together state and local governments, industry, colleges, and federal agencies to accelerate manufacturing innovation.

Siemens Corporation President and CEO Eric Spiegel also visited the Task Force. He said that it was “…great to see the renewed emphasis on cities and from mayors with this Task Force.” He called the competition for advanced manufacturing a “global game,” and said, “The productivity advantage is ours now, but it will slip away if we don’t address that issue.” In order to increase productivity, Spiegel urged mayors to invest in training technology-skilled workers in their cities and work to improve infrastructure in order to bring goods to markets, particularly exports.

Reporting back to a plenary breakfast the following day, Foxx applauded the engagement from mayors and other leaders. He urged action from all of the nation’s mayors, saying, “We can make our cities hospitable environments for advanced manufacturing through the right combina- tion of policies and partnerships. We can also work with the federal government to create the needed tax, trade, talent, and tax climate all around the country.”

CEQ, EPA Discuss Water Mandates, Affordability with Elected Officials

EPA Deputy Administrator Periciasepe Announces Clean Water Affordability Dialogue with Local Government

By Rich Anderson

The United States Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities (NLC) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) welcomed Nancy Sutley, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe and senior officials from the U.S. Enviromental Protection Agency (EPA) to discuss water mandates and community affordability. The three organizations invited CEQ and EPA to discuss an urgent local government need to clarify how the financial capability of a community will be considered when developing legally enforceable long-term control plans and when other water quality obligations under the Clean Water Act (CWA) require increased local costs.

Mayors Water Council Co-Chair Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard welcomed NLC and NACo and thanked CEQ and EPA officials for their participation and for their continued engagement with local elected officials. Ballard outlined some of the practical results of prior meetings that helped EPA clarify support for green infrastructure and integrated planning under the CWA.

Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, and Second Vice President of the National League of Cities, thanked EPA for recognizing the vital role that all cities play in protecting our nation’s water resources saying that he looks “...forward to engaging in this important dialogue with EPA on the affordability and expediency of bringing clean and safe water to our cities and towns.”

EPA Takes Steps to Improve Intergovernmental Partnership

Perciasepe stated that a fundamental EPA priority is to strengthen the inter-governmental partnership with cities and local governments. He cited Administration efforts to establish Inter-Agency coor- dination with HUD and DOT and listen to community leaders more than ever before, and better understand how clean water goals mix with housing and transpor- tation goals. He also identified several programs like the Urban Water Initiative where EPA is engaged at the local and regional level to foster water quality.

He stated that working with local gov- ernment in the last several years on water quality issues has resulted in new EPA policy to promote green infrastructure to address wet weather overflows, and the Integrated Planning Policy to use flexibili- ties in the CWA to prioritize local invest- ments to projects that deliver the highest health and environmental benefits to the public.

Now, he announced, EPA is com- mitted to a dialogue with local govern- ment on how to assess a community’s ability to make potentially large capital investments to control sanitary and combined sewer overflows. He stated that what he hopes to move forward is, “Priority setting and financing and [finding out] where are the flexibilities and how do we work that through to implementation.”

CEQ Advances Case for Smart Investment

Sutley stated, “Smart infrastructure investment creates jobs and is good for our economy and our country.” Sut- ley asserted it is timely to look at cost- effective and innovative approaches to managing tough issues like flooding and sewer overflows. Innovation, she stated, is important; by example she referred to the role of green infrastructure in meeting needs through different solutions.

Sutley amplified Perciasepe’s remarks that the Administration is working together to build a more coordinated Inter-Agen- cy approach to achieving clean water goals. She stated that local investments in clean water obligations also present opportunities to a community to grow economically and become more resilient.

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Energy Committee Reviews Climate Change, Building Energy Efficiency, Offshore Wind Development

By Debra DeHayne-Howard

The Energy Committee met January 17 during the Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors and discussed several energy related issues, including climate change, energy efficiency in buildings, and offshore wind power development.

Conference of Mayors’ Committee Vice Chair Gresham Mayor Shane Benis, who led presentations by Energy Secretary Steven Chu, Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, New Bedford Mayor Jan Mitchell and Philips Chairman Emeritus Zia Eftekhari, told panel members that “We need to continue our leadership role in defining our nation’s energy policy in ways that will be economically and environmentally beneficial to our cities.”

Energy Secretary Describes Climate Changes

Chu briefed committee members on the progress of the Energy Department’s response and recovery efforts to Hurricane Sandy and other weather-related events. “The Energy Department is here to help cities rebuild after a catastrophic event...rebuilding in an energy efficient way,” said Chu.

During his remarks, Chu provided panel members with a historical perspective on climate changes over several decades. “There is a reasonably good chance the frequency of violent storms is increasing. I’ve been going through a lot of data and that is absolutely turning out to be true in terms of floods and other things,” he said.

When asked about future funding for energy efficiency programs at the Energy Department, Chu stated that “We support energy efficiency; however, we don’t expect the budget to go up but down, given the budget deficit and fiscal issues.”

Nutter Touts City’s Building Initiative

“Over the past five years there has been a renewed focus on how we use energy in this country, led by President Obama and Secretary Chu’s commitment to energy efficiency and innovation. The Energy Department’s Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act supported hundreds of millions of dollars of energy efficiency projects and programs across the country, with some impressive results,” said Nutter during his remarks before the Energy Committee. “Cities are poised to make smart energy investments that would reap long-term savings, create jobs, and reduce their impact on the environment, and EECBG was the catalyst to get that moving.”

Speaking on how energy benchmarking and disclosure laws are emerging as an important policy tool for cities, Nutter said, “Philadelphia is excited to continue its leadership in sustainability with our energy benchmarking and disclosure law, which we passed last spring in collaboration with a supportive city council,” he said. “This cutting-edge strategy allows us to target the biggest source of energy use and carbon emissions in the city. When we start using real energy data to improve our buildings, quality of life for our residents goes up, and energy bills — along with greenhouse gas emissions — go down.” Other cities with benchmarking and disclosure laws in place include Austin, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia and Seattle.

New Bedford Mayor Embraces Offshore Wind Power

Highlighting the job growth potential in developing offshore wind power, Mitchell said, “As the state’s designated staging area for the nation’s first offshore wind energy project, the city of New Bedford is excited about the tremendous potential for this emerging industry to generate jobs. Wind energy means not just erecting turbines, but transporting complex machinery and equipment great distances, and developing new industrial technologies. The ripple effects will spread right up the supply chain and across our entire economy.”

Leading wind energy experts report that an increase in offshore wind energy development will have a significant impact on job creation and will spur manufacturing. “Wind energy will also strengthen our local economy, fostering our energy security, and protecting our environment for future generations,” said Mitchell.

Conference of Mayors-Philips Lighting Partnership

“Philips is a firm believer in the strength of public-private partnerships. That is why we remain so committed in our support of The US Conference of Mayors. And that is why we are so pleased to be part of the Mayor’s Lighting Partnership, dedicated to assisting mayors in seeing how new lighting technologies can help their cities save money, improve public safety, and promote economic development,” said Eftekhari, during his remarks.

Noting the energy consumption in cities, Eftekhari said, “Cities consume 70 percent of the electricity used in the U.S.; and lighting accounts for about 20 percent of this electrical consumption. This presents a big opportunity for cities to retrofit their existing infrastructure and save money. With new LED technologies your city can save as much as a 70 percent in lighting costs.”

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in wet weather conditions. CQE has been exploring ways to work with foundations and the private sector to leverage public investment to achieve multiple goals. CQE is considering ways to promote public-private partnerships that attract private investment. For example, she mentioned a partnership model applied in Rio De Janiero where multiple applications were aligned to schedules for large public projects, such as underground pipe replacement, and overall costs may be shared.

EPA Makes Good on Promise to Look for Opportunities to Apply Flexibility

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) Assistant Administrator Cynthia Giles stated that EPA is bringing increased flexibility to the table in enforcement actions and consent agreements. She cited several cities and counties that were afforded longer compliance schedules in their long term control plans to manage sewer overflows, and other cities that have successfully incorporated green infrastructure to manage wet weather overflows and reduce overall project costs.

Giles said that at previous meetings with the Conference of Mayors, EPA listened to mayoral concerns about community financial capability and agreed to take concrete steps to address those concerns. The agency issued a Memorandum to the Regional Offices on January 18, stating a framework for consideration of expanded community financial capability factors in setting compliance schedules for sewer overflows. Giles reiterated EPA’s participation in the Affordability Dialogue with local government, and try to find flexible solutions that are within the scope of the CWA.

Giles stated that cities want consistent policy implementation at EPA Regional offices. She noted that consistency in the Region is one of the items to be discussed in the Dialogue, and was included in the Memorandum. Giles stated that the Dialogue can identify additional information that should be considered, EPA’s endorsement of considering those items, and how we are going to use this as a foundation going forward working with you [local government] to implement these ideas on the ground.

Framework for Considering Financial Capability

Office of Enforcement Acting Assistant Administrator Nancy Stover introduced several of the topics slated for discussion with local government under the Framework including: benchmarks used to assess affordability and how EPA does not solely rely on the two percent of Median Household Income benchmark; how to use flexibility in the CWA to prioritize investments; alternative rate structure arrangements; innovative financing tools including public-private partnerships; how to facilitate consistent policy implementation at EPA Regional offices; and other community specific factors including obligations under the Safe Drinking Water Act should be considered.
Mayors, MC Hammer Discuss “Culture of Innovation in Cities” at Technology and Innovation Task Force

By David W. Burns

To a packed room of 34 mayors and other guests on the first day of the 81st Winter Meeting, San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee chaired the Technology and Innovation Task Force, focusing on the topic of “Creating a Culture of Innovation in Cities.” This meeting, the third ever for the task force, brought together mayors with other government officials, tech companies, and civic advocates to discuss a wide range of issues.

The task force kicked off with an introduction by MC Hammer, an artist turned civic advocate, who spoke about the San Francisco Citizens Initiative for Technology and Innovation, or “SfCiT” for short. This “technology chamber of commerce” acts as a resource to the city and advocates on behalf of the tech sector to find ways to make government more efficient and effective for all citizens.

“The marriage of technology for the good of the community is something near and dear to my heart,” said MC Hammer. “When information is in the cloud and on all these mobile platforms, the Mayors are the last mile solution,” referring to who’s capable of implementing innovation and technology in government.

From there, the discussion took off. One of the pillars of the discussion focused on the “Sharing Economy,” the notion that we can tap into existing resources and share them rather than create new ones. Focusing on how we can use Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky and District of Columbia City Administrator Allen Lew.

“Average power drill in the United States is used 13 minutes in its lifetime, yet there are 80 million power drills out there. We think this is a metaphor for the sharing economy,” said Chesky. “Anything you aren’t using can be shared and used by someone else. Trust has limited this in the past, but with the internet, you can now have a reputation and share with others.”

Chesky cited examples of car sharing (such as Zipcar and Car2go) and home or room sharing, mostly for vacations (such as Airbnb and Home Away) as opportunities for sharing in cities today and in the future. Economic activity is generated by using these these products at times when they aren’t normally used, making usage of homes and cars more efficient.

Closing the sharing economy topic was Lew who shared the story of the District of Columbia where his team is working on a “digital dispatch” of cars and taxis, a contemporary twist to one of the most common and long-standing sharing services.

After the discussion on the sharing economy, Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter addressed the task force and announced the Mayors Innovation Summit, a three-day meeting taking place in Philadelphia May 22-24 where social media, civic innovation, open data, and open government will be the focus. Mayors were invited by Nutter to share their ideas of what they’d like to see at the summit.

Later in the task force, Lee introduced Yelp, a new member of the Mayors Business Council. Together, they’ve worked on the open data project “Local Inspector Value-Entry Specification.” This is a way for local-based web sites, such as Yelp to use city data on restaurant health inspections and make them easier to find by placing them in places such as review pages.

“One of the things we do is give consumers information to make good decisions, which is primarily user generated” said Yelp Public Policy Vice President Vince Sollitto. “One of the things Mayor Lee has helped championed is this open data standard which means, how can we as a partner to disseminate this information which isn’t as accessible as it should be.”

This open data standard is something any city or county can model their data on so any developer, can make this information accessible to citizens and consumers. Lee also talked about one of the task force’s first initiatives, the Open Government Innovation Partnership action plan, which received an update. San Francisco and Louisville had completed their plans, which are now available on the task force’s first initiatives.

The Technology and Innovation Task Force was launched one year ago at the 80th Winter Meeting in 2011. More information on the task force can be found at its web site, usmayors.org/innovation.
National Conference of Democratic Mayors

National Conference of Democratic Mayors President Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak is shown addressing mayors at their January 18 business meeting.

Members of the National Conference of Democratic Mayors join Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak with Senator Mark Begich, center, who was one of their speakers.

Republican Mayors and Local Officials (RMLO)

Left to right, Republican Mayors and Local Officials President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, WPA Opinion Research Chief Operating Officer Bryon Allen, and USCM Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Republican mayors at the 81st Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors in Washington (DC).

Calendar of USCM Events

February 27–March 1
Winter Leadership Meeting, Washington (DC) (Invitation Only)
(Wednesday–Friday)
Contact Carol Edwards (202-293-7330)
Registration Available Soon

May 1–3
World Cultural Economic Forum, New Orleans (International and U.S. Mayors)
(Wednesday–Friday)
Contact Jocelyn Bogen (202-861-6727)
Registration Available Soon
Sponsorship Information Contact Geri Powell (202-861-6774)

May 22–24
Mayors Innovation Summit, Philadelphia
(Wednesday–Friday)
Contact David Burns (202-861-6765)
Registration Available Soon
Sponsorship Information Contact Geri Powell (202-861-6774)

June 21–24
81st Annual Conference of Mayors, Las Vegas
(Friday–Monday)
Contact Carol Edwards (202-293-7330).
Registration Available February 2013
Sponsorship Information Contact Geri Powell (202-861-6774)

September 12–13
Coalition of Cities Against Racism, Birmingham
(Thursday–Friday)
Contact Tom McClimon (202-861-6729)
Registration Available Soon
Senator Begich Tells Mayors Congress Faces Many Tough Decisions in 2013

By Larry Jones

Alaska Senator Mark Begich told mayors at the January 18 plenary session that Congress has a lot of big issues to deal with in 2013: immigration, gun violence, education reform, energy and climate change. But, “We cannot get to these issues until we deal with the bigger budget issues,” he said. Begich explained that in the next 90 to 120 days, Congress will have to make some tough decisions. The fiscal cliff bill approved last year, which provided additional revenue to reduce the federal deficit, was just the start. “We still have a $16 trillion debt hanging over our head,” he said. Congress must still deal with sequestration or automatic across-the-board budget cuts, and tax reform.

How Congress deals with these issues will be critically important to local and state governments. Begich said, “We have to make sure that when we make these decisions, they are smart budget cuts and reductions.” At the same time, he said Congress must continue to invest in effective programs to grow the nation’s economy. He explained that programs like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) support economic growth. “When you think about the dollars we spend on this program and the ripple effect it has in local communities, it’s amazing. It is the most efficient program in delivering services and leveraging money out there,” he said. Energy Block Grants and transportation programs were also mentioned as smart investments that are critically important to local communities.

Reacting to proposals introduced last year to eliminate or limit the deduction on tax-exempt municipal bond interest, he pointed out that he is amazed at how little some members of Congress understand the importance of this program and how it has been used to fund critical infrastructure needs. Because they don’t understand, he told mayors, “Your voice is going to have to be loud and frequent on this issue.”

Begich reminded mayors that we did not accumulate $16 trillion in debt over the last few years. But it has been occurring over the last 40 years. If you compare where we are now compared to where we were four years ago, he explained you can see “…we are on the right path, the economy is headed in the right direction, slow but better.” As evidence he mentioned that four years ago the stock market was down to 6,500 points and today it’s well over 13,500; unemployment was in the double digits and today it’s below eight percent, and housing start is at a five year high.

Mayors were told it is critically important for them to continue to educate their members in the Senate and House on the issue that are important to them back home. Begich said, “There is no better group than the Conference of Mayors to prove how you can make things happen and it doesn’t matter if you are a Democrat or Republican.” He commended the Conference of Mayors for setting the example for state houses and Congress when it comes to setting aside partisan differences in order to get things done.

Senator Feinstein Introduces Assault Weapon Ban Bill; Nutter Says Mayors Will Do Everything Possible to See It Enacted

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

In a dramatic and emotional January 24 Capitol Hill press conference, California Senator and former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein unveiled legislation to renew and strengthen a ban on assault weapons.

“This must stop,” Nutter commented. “The Assault Weapons Ban of 2013 will:

• Ban large-capacity magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition—devices which allow shooters to fire numerous rounds in rapid succession without having to stop and reload;

• Protect the rights of law-abiding citizens who use guns for hunting, house-hold defense or legitimate recreation-al purposes and exempt all assault weapons lawfully possessed at the date of enactment from the ban.


Conference of Mayors Launches Social Media/Twitter Campaign in Support of Feinstein Bill

In an alert to all mayors Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran asked mayors and through them the citizens of their cities to tweet the following message:

“I Stand with @USMayors and @SenFeinstein. Support the Ban on Assault Weapons Bill NOW! #MayorsStandWithFeinstein”

Left to right, New York Representative Carolyn McCarthy, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, and USCM President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter discussing assault weapons ban before press conference.
THE 2013 WORLD CULTURAL ECONOMIC FORUM

May 1 – 3, 2013 • NEW ORLEANS

Hosted by The United States Conference of Mayors and Mayor Mitch Landrieu, City of New Orleans

SAVE THE DATE

May 1 – 3, 2013
NEW ORLEANS

WCEF highlights the role of culture as an economic and social force that drives the creation of vibrant cities.

WHY YOU SHOULD BE THERE:

- Build partnerships with the world’s mayors and business leaders and shape the global dialogue on the importance of a vibrant culture
- Explore new opportunities for the development of your city’s cultural economy and share best practices from your city’s experiences
- Participate in the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival presented by Shell. With 12 stages of soul-stirring music featuring over 60 musicians, meeting participants are given VIP access to experience food from chefs and restaurants around Louisiana, as well as cultural exhibitions of the many components of New Orleans’ international heritage.

For more information, please contact Jocelyn Bogen: jbogen@usmayors.org or 202-861-6727
Mayor Nutter Delivers Jazz Connect Keynote Address

Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter attended at the Jazz Connect Conference — a conversation initiated by JazzTimes in conjunction with the Jazz Forward Coalition, which featured panels, workshops and sessions dedicated to expanding the audience for jazz. This year, Nutter delivered the keynote address held in New York City January 11. Below are his remarks:

“I am honored to be here today at the Jazz Connect Conference in New York City. Jazz is alive, and will never die. Jazz is a unique American art form that affirms the noblest aspirations of our nation — individualism, discipline, perseverance, innovation. As jazz saxophonist Charlie ‘Bird’ Parker said, ‘Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.’

Jazz has produced some of America’s leading artists and ranks as one of our greatest exports to the world. With its international popularity, jazz music has become a symbol that brings people of all races, ages and backgrounds together. I am one of those people.

As President of the US Conference of Mayors, and Mayor of my hometown, I am in a position to promote and expand the reach of jazz music in our cities, schools and neighborhoods. The first Jazz Appreciation Month celebration in the United States was held in April 2001, and organized by the curator of the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. Schools, organizations and governments big and small celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month with events ranging from free concerts to educational programs.

In 2008, my first year as Mayor of Philadelphia, the US Conference of Mayors adopted its first resolution calling for Mayors across the country to celebrate Jazz Appreciation Day.

The resolution called to play an important role promoting the cultural sector as an economic driver for our national economy. For those that aren’t familiar: the US Conference of Mayors is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Almost 1,300 American cities are represented in the Conference, and I have been proud to serve as the Conference’s President since June 2012.

Cities and their metro areas represent more than 90% of the national GDP — and the creative sector is a large chunk of those cities’ economies. In Philadelphia, we released a report in 2012 showing that more than 6% of our local economy is directly or indirectly linked with Arts & Culture, making it the 4th largest employment sector behind education, health care and retail. That’s roughly 1 in every 15 jobs supporting the Creative Economy in Philadelphia — nearly 50,000.

Last year, Mayor Nutter — the US Conference of Mayors hosted the first city-focused World Cultural Economic Forum in New Orleans. Mayors and cultural officials from more than 50 cities or countries from around the world attend to exchange ideas, build partnerships and shape the discussion on culture as an effective tool to spur innovation and economic growth. Culture is about the heart and soul of a city, but the creative sector is about more than that. It’s about real, tangible jobs and increased quality of life for residents — people want to live in places that have thriving creative & performing arts to enjoy.

Shirley Scott, Kevin Eubanks, Orrin Evans and of course, John Coltrane.

Last year, I had the honor of standing in front of John Coltrane’s house in the Strawberry Mansion section of the city to declare April ‘Jazz Appreciation Month’ in Philadelphia for the second time as Mayor. I look forward to doing it this year, and every year that I am Mayor — not just because I love jazz, but because I know how important it is to our city and to our collective identity as Americans. Philadelphia’s jazz scene at the beginning of the 20th century developed like almost every other city’s scene — in the predominantly African-American neighborhoods and clubs.

In Philadelphia, that meant places along Columbia Avenue in North Philadelphia (renamed for civil rights activist Cecil B. Moore) and clubs like the Club Cafe of Jazz and Performing Arts and Pep’s in South Philadelphia. In 1970, Philadelphia became the home of Sun Ra’s band, which then helped lay the groundwork for the development of USA’s new millennium music. Today, Philadelphia still has places where you can hear great like Chris’ Jazz Cafe in Center City — which features nightly shows — and Relish in West Oak Lane, but we have far fewer than we used to. We need to work to rebuild appreciation of jazz and promote innovative presentations of jazz music to build the audiences that clubs need to survive.

We also have a thriving jazz radio station — WRIT — sponsored by Temple University. It’s hosts have included notable such as Bob Perkins and late, great Harrison Ridley Jr. Philadelphia has taken steps in the last few years to promote our heritage and preserve the art-form for future generations. In 2010, the Philadelphia Jazz Coalition was formed to help promote Philadelphia’s celebration of Jazz Month in 2011. The Coalition came together as an organization dedicated to the future of jazz in our city. The members of the Coalition are caring, dedicated professionals hoping to address issues faced by jazz artists and producers across the board.

Issues like too few employment opportunities, low compensation for the opportunities that are available, lack of unity and cooperation among club owners and the musical community, and dwindling funding for music education programs. And like it’s jazz scene a few decades ago, the Coalition can come together to address these issues for the benefit of the future of jazz.

Just like in the early days of the genre, jazz has the ability to bring us together and connect us across time. In the 1920’s, jazz drew patrons — black and white — to illegal speakeasies and the clubs in urban areas. At one time, jazz represented a threat to the moral order of America, according to some commentators. Today, it is revered as the uniquely American art-form and appreciated the world over. It is studied in universities and heard in concert halls once reserved for European classics. Let us reflect upon that remarkable transformation to guide us in dealing with the challenges we face in preserving jazz music in the modern world.

Always evolving, jazz continues to transform itself as new musicians experiment with themes that address issues facing them and of themselves and tell their unique stories — from stride and swing, to be-bop and cool jazz, the music has evolved. In the new millennium, jazz musicians have more options and more influences than ever before. They are compelled to wrestle with new questions about musical cross-over and integration.

But just as it always has, jazz will continue to reflect the moods and diversity of our society. It is a force for melting pots. It has stood the test of time because it has been open and accessible to everyone. And regardless of where we fall on the spectrum, we all agree that the biggest challenge jazz music faces is remaining relevant.

In an economy where music programs are cut in schools and the popular music on the radio changes almost every day, jazz education is worth investing in. Music education became standard parts of the school curriculum, like math, English & science, in every school in America. Jazz music won’t endure unless young people pick up the torch. It is our responsibility to teach them to love it.

In Philadelphia, many institutions offer jazz programs to talented students: The Kimmel Center Youth Jazz Ensemble, Temple University Boyer School of Music’s Jazz Studies Program, Settlement Music School offers jazz classes, University of the Arts School of Music, Maplewood Music Studio in Germantown, The Club Cafe’s jazz education program, and many more.

In addition to these private institutions, the School District of Philadelphia is working hard to give every student a quality education that includes music instruction and appreciation in this difficult economy. 2013 marks the 15th year for the School District’s annual Jazz Fest. Students from high schools prepare for several months in advance of the festival. The School District has recently expanded instrumental music programs in more high schools hoping to encourage even more students to pick up an instrument and explore their musical abilities.

See Jazz on page 42
Reconnecting, Preparing Youth for Workforce Major Focus at Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council Winter Meeting

By Megan Cardiff

Reducing youth unemployment and connecting young people to jobs is a major focus for The U.S. Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council (WDC) in the upcoming year. The WDC’s newly elected President Marlēna Sessions, CEO of the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, stressed the importance of cities meeting the employment and workforce needs of people facing barriers to employment — particularly youth, economically disadvantaged individuals, dislocated workers and returning veterans.

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) Director of Youth Policy Linda Harris, who played a key role in establishing Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth (CCRY) Network, joined WDC members to discuss the CCRY Network and benefits of partnering with them. The CCRY Network joins together multiple workforce and youth development professionals to engage in successful peer-to-peer exchange among local communities in cross-system collaboration for high-risk youth.

“The CCRY Network is an opportunity for WDC and mayors to be key voices in prioritizing youth as our future workforce,” said Harris. Through this network, mayors and workforce development professionals, as local community leaders, can build on the work already occurring within their own city to increase the thinking and decisions of federal legislators and policymakers on behalf of high-risk youth.

“About ten percent of all high schools produce more than 40 percent of the nation’s dropouts and in today’s workforce 60 percent of adults who dropped out of high school are unemployed,” said General Manager of Community Development Department for Los Angeles Greg Irish. Chronic absence, even in kindergarten, is a strong indicator of future dropouts and in the Los Angeles Unified School District, one in ten students is chronically absent.

Community Development Department for Los Angeles Assistant General Manager Robert Sainz and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Director of Pupil Services Debra Duardo joined Irish on a panel presenting what the city has done to combat chronic absence and establish a high school recovery system.

The LAUSD, in partnership with Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board and Community Development Department, opened 13 new YouthSource Centers and a redesigned student recovery system within the city. All 13 centers are in operation with LAUSD and nearly 1,500 out-of-school youth have one-on-one academic assessments. The partnership has received a Department of Labor Workforce Investment Fund grant to serve an additional 1,200 high school drop-outs based on the model.

In addition to their focus on youth employment services, WDC members heard from Microsoft Corporation Senior Director for Education and Workforce Bill Kamela, Department of Veteran Affairs Deputy Under-Secretary for Economic Opportunity Curt Coy, and Department of Labor Director of National Programs Ruth Samardick on ways workforce professionals can put veteran’s back to work.

Newly-elected USCM Workforce Development Council President Workforce Development of Seattle-King County CEO Marlēna Sessions.

As veteran employment programs are developed, we need to keep in the back of our minds that 76 percent of veterans over the age of 35 are the ones who make up unemployed veterans — the average ‘unemployed veteran’ is not the young 20-something that most people assume. The WVO to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 is one of the pieces of legislation being implemented that assists veterans, essentially doubling the number of people put through the transition program. The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) provides veterans with up to 12 months of additional education benefits toward achievement of a higher degree.

Samardick emphasized the role of one-stops in providing priority service to all veterans. Local veterans employment representatives do outreach to make sure veterans are integrated into the system and receive priority. She also discussed the Homeless Veterans Reintegration program, which are formula grants to states that fund positions in one-stop career centers.

Through their own survey, Microsoft learned that veterans weren’t receiving a lot of hands-on training and some of these veterans need better training to develop the proper skill sets. Microsoft developed a voucher program—providing 10,000 vouchers for certain populations to figure out what the required skills are that they will need and help them obtain these skills.

“We focused on strengthening local leadership connections. We don’t have all the answers and the expertise, so we talked to experts in different areas. We don’t have to solve the answer or the best model, so we need to identify the best people out there, give them the money and provide them the support and guidance,” stated Kamela.

Holland and Knight Partner Robert Bradsher provided the council with details on the recent fiscal cliff deal and possible outcomes of sequestration, debt ceiling and appropriations legislations. “We have increasingly gotten into the business of not doing appropriations on time and using continuing resolutions (CR) to temporarily fund the government,” Bradsher said.

Senior Labor Policy Advisor for the House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce Livia Lam gave an update on Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization, stating that Chairman John Kline (MN) and Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (NC) will likely reintroduce the Workforce Investment Improvement Act (WIA 4297) in the new congress. Congressman George Miller (CA) and John Tierney (MA) will reintroduce the Democratic alternative to the Republican WIA reauthorization bill.

Conference of Mayors President Co-Hosts Post-Inaugural Party

By Jocelyn Bogen and Tom McCriman

U.S. Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter co-hosted a post-inaugural party with pop singer-songwriter John Legend, music producer-rapper Pharrell Williams, and model Malin Akerman. Electronic Arts sponsored the invitation-only after party at the W Hotel in Washington (DC) to promote an organization called Learn. Build. Create. Also in attendance during the late night event were musicians Will.i.am and Jermaine Dupree.

Legend participated on a panel discussion held Friday January 18 about STEM education during the 51st Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Following the workshop, Legend was presented with the 2013 Citizen Artist Award from the Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts for his arts advocacy efforts.
Nutter Calls on Congress to Act Quickly on Legislation to Reduce Gun Violence

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

In an unusual and emotional January 16 hearing, members of the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee heard from four witnesses who have witnessed the effects of gun violence firsthand. Among them was Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter. The other witnesses were Dr. Janet Robinson, Superintendent of Schools, in Newtown (CT); Dr. Emily Nottingham, Mother of Gabe Zimmerman, an aide to Congresswoman Gabby Giffords who was killed in the shooting in Tucson two years ago; and Chaska (MN) Police Chief Scott Knight.

Over 60 members of Congress were in attendance, including New York Representative Carolyn McCarthy who entered politics after her husband was killed and son severely injured in a shooting which occurred on the Long Island Railroad in 1993. McCarthy has been a proponent of gun safety legislation since she came to Congress commented that, “This is the first time since Clinton was President that we have hope that we can do something to save lives.” She said that it is important to do so not just because of mass shootings, but because of the shootings which occur every day in this country.

As she opened the hearing, Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA) commented that, “Earlier this month, shortly after Newtown, all members of Congress took an oath to protect and defend the Constitution and the American people. To protect and defend; that is our first responsibility. Today, leaders of the House Democratic Caucus have come together to fulfill that duty, to confront the challenge of gun violence in our society, to act to ensure the safety and security of our communities.”

Nutter told the members that, “You make me very proud to have the opportunity to be with you and that you have taken the time to discuss these issues. I am sad at the deaths which occurred in Tucson and Newtown, but angry that we have made it so easy for this to happen.” Nutter referenced the Conference of Mayors open letter to the President and Congress sent just three days after the shooting in Newtown occurred and urged Congress to act quickly to:

• Enact legislation to ban assault weapons and other high-capacity magazines being prepared by Senator Dianne Feinstein and others;

• Strengthen the national background check system and eliminate loopholes in it;

• Strengthen the penalties for straw purchases of guns.

The hearing occurred just hours after the President and Vice President released the Administration’s plan to reduce gun violence. Nutter told the Committee that the Administration had listened closely to recommendations which the Conference of Mayors offered. “The nation’s mayors urge the Congress to give that report full consideration and to move forward on the legislative action which it requires,” he said.

Left to right, Newtown Schools Superintendent Dr. Janet Robinson; Dr. Emily Nottingham, Mother of Gabe Zimmerman; Chaska (MN) Police Chief Scott Knight; and USCM President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter.

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi with Newtown Schools Superintendent Dr. Janet Robinson, left, and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, right, prior to the January 16 hearing.

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