



U.S. MAYOR

Gresham Mayor Bemis Releases USCM Energy Survey 9

Mayoral "Innovation Moments" Featured 10

USCM/Mexican Mayors Sign MOU 11

Smith: INNOVATIONS THAT DRIVE THIS COUNTRY BEGIN WITH MAYORS

82nd WINTER MEETING: WASHINGTON, DC



Mayors Highlight Strength of
Metro Economies

President Obama and Mayors Discuss
Infrastructure, Investments in the White House

Mayors, Governor, Artist Honored
for Arts Leadership

House Transportation Chair Shuster to
Mayors: I Need Your Help

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Over 50
New Mayors Active at Winter Meeting

TO THE MAYOR FROM THE CEO AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



January 29, 2014

Washington, DC

The 82nd Winter Meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors, according to many responses I have received, was the best in recent history. There was new energy, new mayors and a feeling that our members want more of what was presented at the 82nd Winter Meeting.

I returned this past December from our New Mayors Institute at the JFK School at Harvard and reported to our staff that the mayors coming in this year want to be a part of our organization.

Thanks to the outstanding and successful membership team headed up by Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler and conference staffers Debra DeHaney-Howard and Katie Pirolt, our membership is up and I am pleased to report that the numbers of mayors joining and dues dollars greatly exceeded the goals set. Their five-year data-driven plan coupled with the outreach they have accomplished through state league meetings, our USCM meetings, and events has paid off and

there is no reason to see the effort and success waning. At our leadership meeting in Mesa, Membership Chair Wahler will present a more thorough report for our future.

Conference President Smith, Scott Butler and his Mesa team are credited, and we thank them for recommending the "Innovative Moments" feature of our Winter Meeting. The positive response was overwhelming and that feature of giving mayors the opportunity to share an innovation, a best practice, something that works — will continue at our national meetings. So look for more mayors with more innovations to share at our Dallas Annual Meeting in June.

Another new feature — which I felt so strongly about — was to have the new mayors bring greetings. It worked. It will continue.

New mayors and old mayors sharing best practices and providing innovations are most important now. Certainly the federal government is not working to provide additional funds across-the-board for cities. Hence, today mayors are finding new ways with their local business communities and the international business communities to provide jobs and better services to our cities.

We appreciate the access and the sessions we had at The White House. President Obama, Vice President Biden, Valerie Jarrett, the Cabinet Officers all partici-

pated in an open way that mayors truly appreciate. David Agnew and his team provided total support for The White House event that involved invaluable give-and-take, questions and answers, and learning experiences for all.

Transportation and Infrastructure House Chair Bill Shuster came again before us as he did at our June Annual Meeting in Las Vegas to say he needs our bipartisan help to get transportation and infrastructure funding this year. Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, our Transportation Committee Chair, gave strong and brilliant testimony before the Shuster committee earlier this year. The work now is ahead of us and we have with us our sister organization the National League of Cities who will be a strong ally. NLC President St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman addressed our members assuring them that we will have a strong ally as we both move forward together. NLC Executive Director Clarence Anthony and I are planning more strategy discussions at our leadership sessions next month in Mesa, Arizona. And Assistant Director Kevin McCarty and Program Director Leslie Wollack of NLC are in constant discussions concerning our joint transportation strategy.

In June we are all headed to "BIG D" Dallas, Texas. Host Mayor Mike Rawlings is producing a blockbuster meeting. At this year's Winter Meeting, the buzz about Dallas is strong. No doubt, it is a

world-class city with a world-class mayor. We are fortunate and thankful for Mayor Rawlings personal leadership to make The 82nd Annual Meeting June 20-23, 2014 one that you must not miss. So go ahead now and sign up for an experience you will never forget!

Winter will fade and Spring comes. There's work to be done. We at the Washington headquarters are constantly reminding people here in Washington that it is the mayors and their business communities who have worked together to bring this nation out of the greatest recession since the Great Depression. We thank our Business Council Members and all of our Sponsors for recognizing our worth. Together we have value added initiatives that will help us have better cities and a better America for all.

Thank you Birmingham Mayor Bill Bell and the City of Birmingham for the sincere proclamation and plaque you presented to me and our organization for the work we do across the board for the mayors and cities of our nation. We thank you also Mayor Bell for your leadership. Birmingham is leading the way as a metropolitan city to benefit Alabama and our nation.

To our mayors, thank you for being with us at our Winter Meeting and to all mayors, if we can be of further service to you please let me know.

82nd Winter Meeting Opening Press Conference



USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith is flanked by, left to right, USCM 2nd Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, USCM Membership Committee Chair Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler, and USCM Energy Committee Chair Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis. "Our message is simple," said Smith. "Our future economic prosperity depends directly on the productivity and growth of our cities and their metro areas. In order for our nation to reach its full potential, mayors must be at the center of federal policy discussions."



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Smith Promotes Local Innovation in President's Report

By Paul Leroux

Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith stressed the importance of local innovation for the future of America's cities in his opening report January 22 at the 82nd Winter Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors. "Mayors from around the country are a tremendous source of what I like to call, 'Innovations that Lead,'" said Smith, announcing the theme for the Winter Meeting. To further local innovation, Smith called for action on the part of cities and the federal government.

Supporting Innovation

"The truth is that no level government can operate as an island. Federal policies have a great impact on what mayors can do to support job creation, improve education, help lift people out of poverty, and invest in the future," he said. These policies included investments in science and technology, support for private-public partnerships, more workforce training programs, and incentives for manufacturing. "We must commit, as a nation, to competing globally through innovation," he said.

Smith highlighted the need for a metro-centered trade and exports strategy, something he has focused on throughout his tenure as Conference President. "According to our own Metro Economy reports, one-third of U.S. economic growth over the next decade will come from expanding exports. These are our new markets," he said. The 363 metro economies of the United States contribute over 90 percent of U.S. Gross Domest-



Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith delivers his President's Report on January 22.

tic product and account for 86 percent of American jobs. Smith argued that this was cause for further investment in America's cities, particularly in terms of infrastructure. "To support manufacturing and export growth, we must also strengthen our infrastructure," said Smith, "Transit, roads, bridges, airports and sea and land ports all provide vital links in our supply chain. And it is past time that our federal government adopt a long-term surface transportation bill and other transportation bills."

"We must also continue to protect the few existing federal tools we use for investment and innovation," said Smith. He emphasized that the Community Development Block Grant and tax-exempt municip-

pal bonds both encourage investment in local priorities. He also called for passage of the Marketplace Fairness Act, calling it a, "vital tool for economic development as we protect our Main Street businesses."

Broken Policies

Smith took time to call out Washington for its inaction on key priorities, saying, "As mayors, we must challenge the federal government to acknowledge policies that aren't working." For Smith, among the most important of these is the nation's immigration system. He said, "The system is broken, the status quo doesn't work." He continued, saying, "Encouraging innovation means embracing new and energetic immigrants, while at the same

time creating laws around immigration that ensure our security and promote justice, public safety, and economic growth."

Smith also called for an end to unfunded mandates from the federal government, saying they represented, "Another stranglehold on national policy setting."

In calling on Washington to get past partisanship and address the long-term fiscal stability of the country, Smith noted, "Mayors across the nation — Democrats, Republicans and Independents — balance budgets by making tough choices." He said, "I believe that we are and should still continue to be the driving force in achieving new agreements."

Sharing Solutions

Smith encouraged mayors to use their time in Washington as a chance to learn from their peers. Specifically addressing new mayors, he said, "Over your time in city hall, I encourage you to reach out to your peers, Tom Cochran, and the Conference staff for guidance. The relationships I have formed while a member of this organization have benefited me, Mesa, and all my constituents immensely."

Smith vowed to make the Winter Meeting a gathering largely based on best practice sharing, and announced a series of Innovation Moments that would feature prominently across Conference sessions.

Smith concluded by saying, "The innovations that drive this country begin with cities and begin with mayors. What that means is it begins with us, right here in this room! Every mayor here has something to learn from another mayor, and something to share with the rest of our organization and most importantly the country as a whole. That is the brilliance and the greatness of The U.S. Conference of Mayors."

Transportation Secretary Foxx Cites Transportation Funding Challenges, Enlists Mayors to Help Find Solutions

By Kevin McCarty

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx addressed the nation's mayors during the Conference of Mayors 82nd Winter Meeting, reminding his former colleagues of the transportation funding challenges before Congress and the nation. "The reality is that in transportation we have several challenges, and the first of which is our funding challenges. You all know this. We are encroaching on ten years without a six year reauthorization bill," Foxx said in remarks at the January 23 morning session.

"We are currently on track today, to go upside-down before the fiscal year that we are in concludes. It is a serious problem. It is a serious problem not only because of the math, but also because of what it does at the local and state levels. Projects get slowed, they get delayed and some of them don't get on the books at all. Meanwhile, we are stacking up a list of needs in this country—maintenance needs and new capacity needs," he said.



U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx addresses mayors on surface transportation priorities.

Foxx also talked about the consequences of inadequate resources to support federal transportation funding commitments. "There are things that you want to get done, projects that you want to see happen, and the overhang of this issue at the local level is that for years we've had so much uncertainty, so much unpredictability that it's been hard to plan, hard to get things done, hard to figure out how to get things done."

Calling on mayors to help address this revenue shortfall, Foxx added, "I'm going to ... enlist your help in helping us move this issue at the national level, so you can move it at the local level."

Talking about some initiatives to replenish the federal transportation trust fund, including emerging bipartisan efforts to link tax reform to infrastructure investment, he said, "But we need to go from ideas in our heads to ideas on the table. And that is what you are starting to see; but to get those ideas into action, it going to require you."

To prompt Congress into action, Foxx urged mayors to take their "to do" lists of transportation projects to their Members of Congress to show them what "you are doing" and show them what "you want to do." He also talked about the costs of delay, and how rising project costs had affected Charlotte's 20-year transit plan.

Until revenues are developed to support a larger surface transportation renewal, Foxx pledged to continue his Department's reform efforts to improve processes and project delivery that can save money and move projects forward faster.

In outlining the last of his priorities, Foxx talked about the need to have a "vision of what transportation should be in America." He later said, "And the substance of this vision should be rooted in, what those of us who lead communities intuitively know, which is that first and foremost our transportation systems have to be interconnected, just like they are in your communities."

Mayors Spend Half-Day in The White House

By Ed Somers

All mayors attending the Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors were invited to spend an entire afternoon in the White House on January 23 that included an extensive discussion with President Obama. The afternoon began with mayors selecting one of five breakout sessions to attend that focused on:

- Strengthening Education and Workforce Development
- Ensuring Access to Quality, Affordable Health Care for All Americans
- Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change Locally
- Utilizing Civic Technology and Innovation
- Boosting Trade and American Exports

These were give-and-take discussions led by top Administration staff members and mayors held in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Next, the mayors moved to the White



USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith asks a question of President Barack Obama.

House for a panel discussion led by Senior Advisor to the President Valerie

Jarrett and four Cabinet Members: Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, HUD

Secretary Shaun Donovan, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and Labor Secretary Thomas Perez. During this session, mayors were able to raise questions on a wide variety of issues related to housing, infrastructure investment, education and workforce training, and much more.

After the Cabinet panel, Vice President Joe Biden introduced President Obama, who spoke to the mayors, and then engaged in an open discussion during which the Conference of Mayors President, Vice President and membership could ask any question.

In his introduction, Vice President Biden said, "Hey, folks, look, there's a reason the President and I like talking to mayors. You're the one group of elected officials that get things done, in large part because you have no option but to get things done. And also, most of the innovation is coming from you all."

The afternoon concluded with a White House reception, during which the mayors were able to talk with Cabinet Members and top Administration officials.



Vice President Biden introduces President Obama.



Left to right, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

President Obama's Opening Remarks

Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Please have a seat.

Well, welcome to the White House. It is great to have you. For those of you who have been here before, welcome back. I see a lot of friends and a lot of familiar faces around the room, but I've also already had a chance to meet some newly elected mayors. So to all of you, congratulations — and make sure you're shoveling the snow. Just a little piece of advice. It's been cold.

We've got more than 250 mayors here from more than 45 states and territories. You represent about 40 million Americans. And over the last five years, thanks in part to the partnerships that we've been able to forge with mayors in this room and across the country, we've accomplished some big things on behalf of the American people.

But you know as well as anybody that while our economy is growing stronger, and we are optimistic about growth this year and in subsequent years, we've got a lot more work to do to make sure that everybody has a chance to get ahead. If they're willing to work hard and take

responsibility, they've got to be able to participate in that growth. And every day, mayors are proving that you don't have to wait for the gridlock to clear in Congress in order to make things happen.

Now, Mayor Greg Stanton in Phoenix and Mayor Ralph Becker in Salt Lake City have ended chronic homelessness among veterans. In San Antonio, Mayor Castro has launched an early childhood education program designed to reach more than 22,000 four year olds over the next eight years. In Fresno, Mayor Ashley Swearengen is spearheading projects to develop her city's downtown, including a high-speed rail station that's going to help attract jobs and businesses to the Central Valley. In Philadelphia, Mayor Nutter is helping young people reach higher during their summers by working with partners across the city to create thousands of summer jobs. In Tampa, Mayor Bob Buckhorn has gone, in his words, "all in," helping his constituents get covered with quality, affordable health insurance.

So mayors from both parties are a part of the climate task force, helping to

make sure that cities have what it takes to withstand changes that may be taking place in our atmosphere in the years to come. More than a thousand mayors across America have signed agreements to cut dangerous carbon pollutions. I want to work with Congress whenever and wherever I can, but the one thing I'm emphasizing to all my Cabinet members is we're not going to wait. Where Congress is debating things and hasn't been able to pull the trigger on stuff, my administration is going to move forward and we're going to do it in partnership with all of you. I've got a pen and I've got a phone. And that's all I need.

Because with a pen I can take executive actions. With a phone I can rally folks from around the country to help grow the economy and restore opportunity. And that's what today, hopefully, has been about. You've met with members of the administration. You've gotten to know each other, but also, hopefully, they've given you some insight into where we see the most promising programs, things that are working, best practices. And we want to cooperate

and coordinate with you as effectively as we can to make sure that whatever works is getting out there and hitting the streets and actually having an impact on people's lives. And, frankly, there are a lot of things that folks in this town could learn from all of you.

And I want to close by personally saying how much it means to me to have you here today. As Joe mentioned, I know a little something about cities. I got my professional career started as somebody working in some of the toughest neighborhoods in Chicago. But I also saw how hard work can transform communities block-by-block, neighborhood by neighborhood. And to see the resilience and the strength of people, and the incredible vibrancy that cities bring to not just those who live within the boundaries of cities but entire regions, that's what you understand. And I want to make sure that I've got your back in everything that you do.

So I want to say thank you to all of you for making sure that your constituents are well-served. But, as a consequence, America is well-served.

Commerce Secretary Pritzker Calls for Partnership in Skills Training, Manufacturing, Export Promotion

By Dave Gatton

Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker called on mayors to forge a new partnership with business and federal agencies to address the skills gap, promote manufacturing, and expand exports, during the opening plenary luncheon at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter meeting January 22 in Washington (DC).

At the outset, Pritzker placed mayors and their local leadership as central to the nation's economic recovery. "From my perspective as a business leader for 27 years and now as Commerce Secretary, what is most clear to me is this: As a mayor, each of you is on the front lines of our country's economic growth. You have helped local employers survive the recession — and you are now helping them grow once again," she said.

As part of her Open for Business Agenda at the Commerce Department, she left no doubt that business leaders needed a better qualified workforce to grow their companies. She called on mayors to work hand-in-hand with businesses to more closely align workforce training programs with readily available jobs.

She told the mayors, "Simply put, we must align local training efforts with the workforce needs of business in order to create direct paths to good jobs for our citizens. Local companies and mayors play a crucial role in this effort. There

is no one better suited to bring together all of the key stakeholders — employers, labor, colleges, and others — than those of you in this room."

She also encouraged the mayors to incorporate smart and strategic manufacturing plans into their economic development strategies, citing the sector's economic multiplier effect and the fact that new manufacturing jobs have 38% higher salaries compared to new jobs in other sectors.

As part of that effort, Pritzker announced last November in a White House meeting with mayors a new program, "Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership." Through a competitive process, 12 communities will be officially designated a "manufacturing community," and will receive special status in applying for over \$1.3 billion of existing federal programs. The application deadline is March 14.

"We want to support you as you create the best long-term strategies for designing and making investments across many key areas — such as supplier networks, research institutions, infrastructure, and more," she said.

On exports, the Commerce Secretary exhorted the mayors to work with local businesses to encourage expansion of exports. Echoing the Administration's view that exports are key to the recovery and helpful to the middle class, she told the mayors that, "2013 will likely be a



Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker addresses mayors, calling on new partnerships to grow economy.

fourth consecutive record-breaking year for U.S. exports. In November, we hit an all-time monthly record of \$195 billion in U.S. exports. And our trade deficit fell to its lowest point since October 2009." Export-related jobs have salaries about 15 percent higher than others. But she said that only 40 percent of U.S. companies export and, of those, over half export to only one market.

She encouraged the mayors and their local businesses to "Look South," the name of her recently launched initiative to encourage exports to Latin and South American countries. "Today, more than half of America's free trade agreement partners are in Latin America. These 11 economies are growing fast, with diverse, young populations — and each has a burgeoning middle class," she said.

She acknowledged Mexico's U.S. Ambassador Medina-Mora who shared the stage and was present to sign a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Conference of Mayors to work together to promote city economies in both countries. And Pritzker announced that in May she would lead a delegation of hundreds of U.S. businesses to Trade Winds, a large trade event in Columbia.

While her remarks focused on how Commerce, mayors and business could work together, she reminded the audience that Congress plays a crucial role in the need to pass Trade Promotion Authority, which will be necessary to conclude major trade agreements such as the Trans Pacific Partnership. "Once Trade Promotion Authority is approved, we are one step closer to expanding market access, ensuring a level playing field for exporters, and supporting more good-paying jobs across the country," she said.

Mexican Ambassador Medina-Mora Embraces Trade Partnership

By Evangelina Garcia

Mexico's Ambassador to the United States Eduardo Medina-Mora, spoke to mayors about the increasingly crucial relationship between the U.S. and Mexico, beginning with the 2,000 mile border that unites them. He focused specifically on the significance of the growing Latino population and evolving trade demands that have led to North American countries working and producing as a unit.

The Ambassador stated that Latinos are the nation's largest minority group and fastest growing population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Latino population in 2012 was 53 million or 17 percent of the total U.S. population.

According to the Ambassador, the Hispanic share of the total population in metro areas ranges from 20 percent in San Francisco and Sacramento, to over 80 percent in Brownsville, El Paso and Laredo. In Miami and San Antonio, the Latino population is 55 percent and they are among the ten largest metro areas where Hispanics make up a majority. Medina-Mora said, "I think the message is clear, America is changing and we can be afraid of it



Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Eduardo Medina-Mora discusses the importance of trade relationship with the United States.

or embrace it but we cannot deny it. No one is in better positioned for embracing change than city governments."

The Ambassador praised the formation of the High Level Economic Dialogue

(HLED) launched by Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto in 2013. Under this new agreement, the U.S. and Mexican governments plan to make strategic economic and commercial priorities central to promoting mutual economic growth and job creation. The High Level Economic Dialogue is chaired by top U.S. and Mexico officials including: Vice President Joe Biden, Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, the U.S. Department of State, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and their Mexican counterparts. The group will meet annually at the cabinet level and bring together leaders from the public and private sectors. The Ambassador said there might not be two countries as important to each other as Mexico and the U.S., and that they trade approximately \$1 trillion dollars a day and \$1 million dollars a minute.

The Ambassador said the strong trade relationship first began 20 years ago under the North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and those years have transformed the way we interact with each other. "Since the NAFTA years, a deeper economic integration in the region has taken place," said Ambassador Medina-

Mora. "North America has become a region of shared production, and we are now building things together and competing as a unit in the global economy."

For example, he said that Detroit and Ontario have been joined by Mexican cities like Puebla, Monterrey and Aguascalientes, informing the North American auto platform. While Seattle, Los Angeles, and Wichita in the U.S., together with Montreal, Canada and Guaymas, Chihuahua and Queretaro in Mexico are cities united in the aerospace industry.

According to the Ambassador, The White House estimates that six million U.S. jobs depend on exports to Mexico. In 2012, total U.S. exports to Mexico reached \$217 billion dollars, more than U.S. exports to Japan and China combined. Medina-Mora added, "While a tag may read 'Made in Mexico', more and more of these products are actually made in North America. To put it simply, the interest of the U.S. and Mexico are aligned because we build and export things together."

In closing remarks, the Ambassador praised Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith for making trade a priority as Conference President and for his recent visits to Mexico. "It is no accident that I am here today and able to address you. Mayor Smith is already on board," concluded Medina-Mora.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio Joins Mayors for First Winter Meeting

By David W. Burns

A mere 23 days as the 109th mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio made a trip to Washington (DC) for the 82nd Winter Meeting to share with his fellow mayors what he sees as the challenges facing cities across the United States along with what he hopes to work on with fellow mayors. "There is a long tradition of mayors being ahead of the curve, working for the notion of shared prosperity and working for the notion of rising together even when it wasn't en vogue in the national debate," said de Blasio.

de Blasio continued, adding, "Mayors have been in the forefront of economic recovery for the last five years, whether it be Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake on the east coast, Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson on the west coast, or Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett

right in the middle. Mayors all across this country are solving problems. Problems that have been ignored too long."

de Blasio continued, focusing much of how the work of mayors focused on eliminating economic inequality and driving progress. "You know that this organization not only unites mayors and common cause, but its origins are in responding to the crisis that our nation faced economically in the 1930s. The year was 1932. 14 million Americans were unemployed, our financial systems in shambles and our cities teetered on bankruptcy. Something had to be done and it was America's mayors who stepped up and led the way," he said. He added, "Today, more than 80 years removed from the great depression, America faces another profound economic crisis and yes, at the same time, our financial markets have bounced back [...] but far too many of the people we repre-

sent are grinding and struggling to make ends meet."

"We are in the midst of an inequality crisis," said de Blasio.

de Blasio laid out his plan to help close the inequality gap with his call for full day, universal Pre-K, for every child of age. "The evidence supporting the value of full day pre-k is overwhelming. It elevates all of our children," he said.

The mayor also called for paid sick leave for all workers; something he sees not as a "privilege but something earned through the work we do."

de Blasio concluded his speech, committing to work with cities cross the country and to being an active member of the Conference of Mayors. "Going forward, my administration is committed to build a deep relationship with all the mayors in this room and with this great organization and we intend to look beyond



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio shares his thoughts on the challenges cities face with his fellow mayors.

the five boroughs for smart, progressive ideas," said de Blasio. "We are committed to partnering with other cities to make sure our voices are heard in congress," de Blasio added, "It's time to stop short-changing our cities."

Mayors Release 2014 Metro Economic Forecast at Winter Meeting

Nearly All Metro Areas Will See Economic, Job Growth this Year

By Dave Gatton

The nation's mayors reported that nearly all U.S. metro areas (356) would see economic growth in 2014, up dramatically from last year when almost one-third of the 363 metros experienced flat or declining economies. Of those metro economies, 340 are expected to see real growth of 1.0 percent or higher.

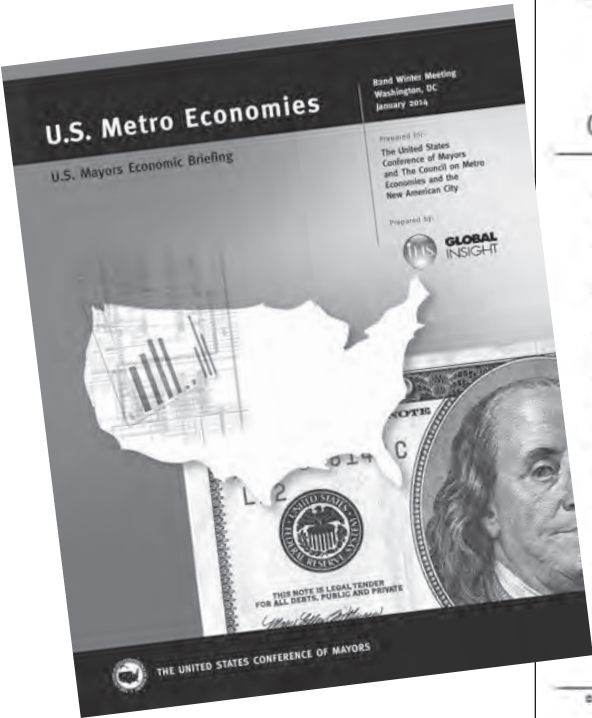
The report, prepared in conjunction with IHS Global Insight and released at The U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter meeting January 22 in Washington (DC), also forecast that U.S. real (inflation-adjusted) GDP growth would be 2.7 percent in 2014 and 3.2 percent in 2015 — a marked improvement from last year's 1.9 percent.

Part of the reason for the more optimistic projection is the two-year budget agreement reached by Congress that will avoid future government shutdowns. "These numbers are welcome news and prove that our cities and metro areas are finally turning the corner and moving toward steady economic recovery," said Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith. "Mayors have always known that as cities and their metro areas go, so goes the nation. The bipartisan budget agreement is an example that Congress can, in fact, work together for the good of hard-working Americans, and we need this spirit of cooperation to continue for the nation's metro areas to thrive."

On the jobs front, 357 metros are projected to return to job growth in 2014. Only 17 metros will see job growth of 3.0 percent or higher; one-third (121) are forecast to see job growth of 2.0 percent or higher, compared to 77 metros in 2013. 297 metros (82 percent) will see job growth of 1.0 percent or higher in 2014, compared to 185 last year.

Still, over one-third of metros (128) will end 2014 with an unemployment rate of 7.0 percent or higher.

The full report contains economic and job growth projections for each of the nation's 363 metro areas and can be viewed online at usmayors.org/metroeconomies.



US economic growth by sector

(Percent change, 2009 dollars)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real GDP	2.8	1.9	2.7	3.2
Consumption	2.2	2.0	2.8	3.1
Residential investment	12.9	12.7	14.6	17.3
Business fixed investment	7.3	2.7	4.9	6.3
Federal government	-1.4	-4.6	-1.1	0.0
State & local government	-0.7	-0.2	0.4	0.6
Exports	3.5	2.5	4.6	5.1
Imports	2.2	1.4	4.7	6.5

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Other key US indicators

(Percent change unless noted)

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Industrial production	3.6	2.6	3.0	3.7
Payroll employment	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.0
Light-vehicle sales (Millions)	14.4	15.6	16.0	16.4
Housing starts (Millions)	0.78	0.93	1.16	1.47
Consumer Price Index	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.1	7.4	6.5	5.9
Brent crude oil price (\$/barrel)	112	109	104	99
10-year Treasury yield (%)	1.8	2.3	3.0	3.3

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Conference of Mayors, Scotts Miracle-Gro Company Announce GRO1000 Gardens and Green Spaces Awards

The Conference of Mayors and The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company (NYSE:SMG) announced the recipients of the 2014 GRO1000 Gardens and Green Spaces Grant Awards Program January 24. The grants, which focus on improving cities through the development of community gardens and green spaces, were announced at The U.S. Conference of Mayors 82nd Winter Meeting in Washington (DC). The winning cities were chosen by a panel of former mayors and national garden experts from a pool of applicants.

For 2014, the GRO1000 grants have been expanded to award a total of \$40,000 in monetary funds and product, payable over three years. In Year 1, each winning city will receive a grant in the amount of \$25,000 (\$15,000 cash and \$10,000 worth of product from Scotts Miracle-Gro). For Years 2 and 3, winning cities will receive a grant award of \$7,500 (\$5,000 cash and \$2,500 in product).

This year's winning cities are:

- Mesa — Mayor Scott Smith
- Tallahassee — Mayor John Marks
- Minneapolis — Mayor Betsy Hodges
- Miramar — Mayor Lori Moseley
- Houston — Mayor Annise Parker

"We highly commend the mayors in all five of these winning cities for their actions to improve the quality of life for all their citizens," said Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. "Thanks to the outstanding work by these mayors, their citizens have access to healthy, natural food while uniting people of all ages and creating a sense of community."

The partnership between The U.S. Conference of Mayors and ScottsMiracle-Gro, now in its third year, aims to improve U.S. cities through increased access to public gardens and green spaces. The winning



Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Scotts Miracle-Gro Representatives Mike Shelton and Paul Rabaut, Miramar Project Lead Elsi Rose, Miramar Mayor Lori Moseley, Minneapolis Food Coordinator Jane Shey, Houston Mayor Annise Parker, USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, SMG Director of Corp and Community Partnerships Su Lok, USCM 2nd Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Tallahassee Mayor John Marks, and SMG Vice President of Corporate Affairs Ann Aquillo.

cities were chosen from a competitive field to create new, innovative greenscapes and to recognize mayoral commitment to urban renewal and beautification.

"We are proud to be working with The U.S. Conference of Mayors to bring more green spaces to our nation's cities," said ScottsMiracle-Gro Chairman and CEO Jim Hagedorn. "Through our commitment to garden and green space development, our hope is that residents and future generations will have a place to enjoy the outdoors."

2014 GRO1000 Garden and Green Space project overviews:

Mesa: The McKellips and Ellsworth Park Botanicals Walkway will be both an

educational pathway and a recreational space — transformational to the local neighborhood, schools, and regional network of educational institutions by providing a model native desert community in a setting that is in close proximity and easily accessible to groups and individuals.

Tallahassee: GRO1000 will fund the development of Phase Two of the iGrow Whatever You Like Youth Farm, Phase Two — essentially, an off-the-grid urban farm educational hub. The expansion will include an outdoor kitchen (for cooking demonstrations); a bio-digester to sustainably produce cooking, heating, and water-pump fuel; a "giving garden" to raise more food specifically to donate;

a scaled-up composting operation; and a pavilion for community gatherings and workshops, among other features.

Minneapolis: The project supports the moving of the All Nations Peace Garden to the Black Storyteller's Karamu Gardens in the same neighborhood. This hub connects Project Sweetie Pie to 25 community gardens in North Minneapolis. The GRO1000 grant will help improve and expand both the garden and the programming. Because the Karamu Gardens offer a highly visible location on a busy artery in North Minneapolis, the location will also provide visual beauty to the neighborhood as well as facilitate the continued engagement of local school children and enhanced community involvement.

Miramar: The Miramar Community Garden will be expanded to include an "Intergenerational Fruit & Vegetable Garden," comprised of a fruit grove, raised beds, a culinary herb garden, a seedling nursery and an outdoor classroom. The project will provide added community building activities, offer additional gardening resources and culinary/agricultural workshops. In doing so, the garden will enhance opportunities for engagement of youth, seniors, and the community-at-large, develop leadership and workforce skills, and promote micro-enterprise development which can boost the local economy.

Houston: The Garden and Nature Playground at the Gabriela Mistral Center for Early Childhood (located in the Gulfton area of southwest Houston, a low-income and immigrant community) will feature raised beds and container gardens, fruit trees, compost bins, barrels for rain water harvesting, an outdoor classroom, fort, pond, embankment slide, music space, sand pit and playhouse.

Welcome



District of Columbia Mayor Vincent C. Gray welcomes mayors to the nation's capital.

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House Transportation Chair Calls on Mayors to Help Address Nation's Transportation Needs

By Kevin McCarty

Representative Bill Shuster (PA), Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, called on mayors to support his efforts to move key transportation legislation through Congress during remarks at the January 24 closing plenary session of the 82nd Winter Meeting in Washington (DC). "Every American is in the transportation business," Shuster said, while urging mayors to join him in educating the public about the importance of transportation investment to the U.S. economy.

"The transportation system is essential. It is critical to the business and the economy of the United States. It really is the backbone, I believe, of the United States," he said.

Shuster was able to report to the mayors on progress he had made since he last spoke to them in June at the Conference's Annual Meeting, touting the bipartisan water resources legislation (WRDA), which cleared the House of Representatives on a 417-3 vote. In addition to the WRDA bill, Shuster pledged to work with mayors on intercity rail, aviation and surface transportation legislation.

In talking about efforts on rail legislation, Shuster said, "Another issue I'd like to talk about is passenger rail. I know many of you here are connected by rail. It is a process that is taking longer to do, but we are trying to figure out how to



House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (PA) delivers remarks to the mayors during the closing plenary session.

look at rail transportation in a new way. And we have a national system right now but there are places in the country that it makes more sense for us to be really focused on."

In the aviation arena, he said, "We want to make sure we are talking to the mayors. What are your ideas? What do you think we can do to help create more opportunities at your airports? Streamline things. So as we go through this process over the next year and a half, again we

will be reaching out to the mayors. You will be playing a critical role in doing what we need to do. How we will need to make these reforms and changes."

Explaining how the committee is already working to develop consensus on surface transportation renewal legislation, beginning with its initial hearing in mid-January, Shuster said, "We are starting to bring those stakeholders in to help educate us as to what they see as some of the reforms that need to take place.

And we did this, again just like we did on the WRDA bill. We had that hearing and Mayor Kasim Reed was there, and I have got to tell you he did a fantastic job. And, I can tell you on both sides of the aisle, I had Members coming up to me, so impressed with the mayor and what he said up there on the importance of transportation."

Shuster shared his philosophy of government and the need for a federal role in transportation, explaining that it is not the role of the Federal government "to do it all, but to make sure we are in partnership with the States and local governments to make sure that we connect this country. And President Eisenhower, I think, said it best, that without the unified force of transportation, we would be a mere alliance of separate parts. So the transportation system is what physically connects this country and it is absolutely critical to our competitiveness in the world and to keeping America prosperous."

In closing his remarks, he reiterated his desire to work with mayors. "I am here today to ask for your help. I look forward to working with you in making sure that we continue to have a robust transportation system because all of us depend on it and it will improve all Americans lives and keep America a prosperous place. I look forward to engaging with you on those issues that are so important to all of our constituents."

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Mayors Cite LED/Energy-Efficient Lighting as Top Energy Technology Choice, Most Expect Increased Technology Deployments

By Debra DeHaney-Howard and Kevin McCarty

A new Conference of Mayors survey report, *Energy Efficiency and Technologies in America's Cities*, released January 22 at the opening press conference of the 82nd Winter Meeting in Washington (DC) provides findings based on data from nearly 300 cities in all 50 states on city energy technology, efficiency and conservation efforts.

Two in three cities (67 percent) expect the use of new energy technologies to increase over the next five years, with utilities cited by 71 percent of cities as the most important partner in deploying these new energy technologies.

In his comments on the findings, Conference of Mayors Energy Committee Chair Gresham (OR) Mayor Shane Bemis said, "Mayors remain optimistic about the energy technology marketplace, with two in three cities anticipating increased investment, whether it is for state-of-the-art lighting or solar energy systems. It is not only cities who have a stake in this success, but the U.S. economy when new industries prosper because of these homegrown efforts."

When mayors were queried on the one technology that was expected to receive "top priority" in their cities over the next 24 months, LED/energy-efficient lighting topped the list (29 percent). Solar systems were a top priority for nearly one in five cities (19 percent).

In his comments, Philips Lighting Americas President and CEO Bruno Biasiotta said, "When we partner with forward-thinking communities, making their city buildings more energy-efficient, their streets brighter and safer, and turn darkened structures into iconic symbols of their cities, we not only aid in cost savings, urban recovery, and civic pride, we provide truly meaningful innovations. Our survey results show that mayors recognize this and we can help them take action."

Among other survey findings, LED/energy-efficient lighting led all other technologies as the "most promising" for reducing energy use and carbon emissions, selected by 82 percent of all cities. In addition, lighting technology, specifically LED/other energy-efficient lighting, was the most frequently cited among "previously deployed" technologies by cities, chosen by the same share of cities (82 percent).

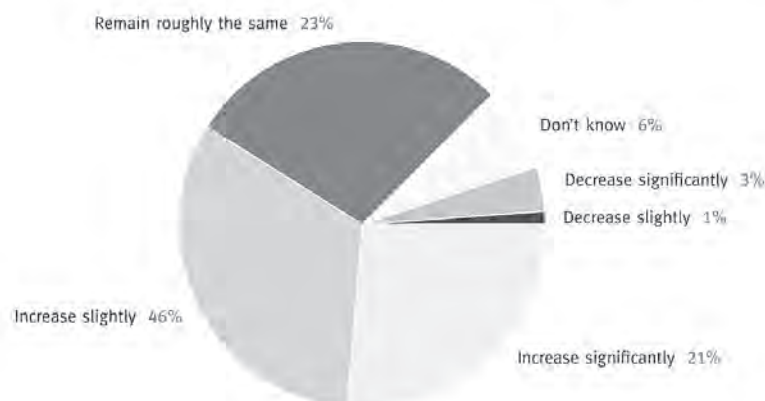
Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran said, "Our partnership with Philips — the Mayors' Lighting Partnership and this survey effort — is an example of how public-private collaborations can further mayoral leadership in the energy and climate areas."

The survey, conducted by the Conference of Mayors, focused almost exclusively on cities with a population of 30,000 or more and achieved a response rate of 21 percent, with 288 responses out of a potential sample of nearly 1,400 cities. This Conference of Mayors survey was sponsored by Philips.



At podium, USCM Energy Committee Chair Gresham (OR) Mayor Shane Bemis, flanked by other USCM leaders, presents the key findings of a new USCM energy survey during the January 22 opening press conference.

Deployments of New Energy Technologies are Expected to ... (percentage of cities)



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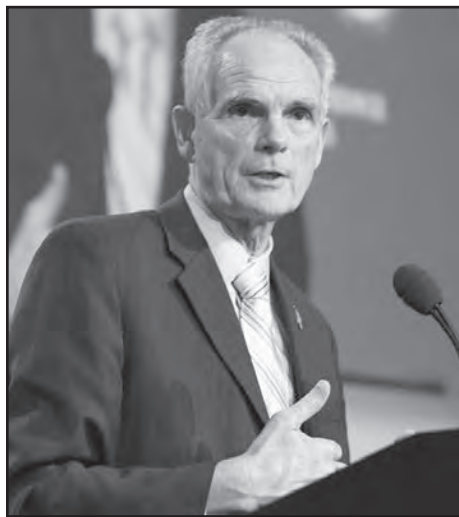
Six Mayors Share Innovation Success Stories

By Paul Leroux

Beginning a new tradition at The U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting, Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith kicked off a series of Innovation Moments, inviting six mayors from around the country to give brief talks on ideas for improving city government.

Pension Reform in San Jose

In the first Innovation Moment, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed focused on the issue of pension reform. Reed and his staff developed a plan to give their



San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed

employees the choice to select a lower cost benefit by slowing down the accrual rate, changing the cost of living adjustment, or raising the retirement age. This allows both the city and its employees to save money on plans.

Reed thanked his fellow mayors for their work to "help me get out of the box," by joining with him and the Conference of Mayors to push for federal adaptations. He is awaiting action from the Internal Revenue Service that would allow his plan to proceed in cities across the country.



Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson

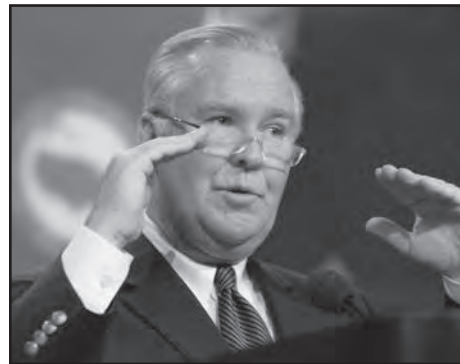
Student Innovation in Gary

Collaborating with a University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy class taught by former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson has turned her city into a living laboratory. "We asked the students whether they might have an interest in helping a new administration in Gary," Freeman-Wilson said. Fifteen students divided into groups focused on abandoned buildings, budgeting and garnering resources, community engagement and delivery of city services, and transportation assets.

Freeman-Wilson noted that the program has created new city programs and, "Resulted in a level of community engagement that we have not seen before."

Social Media in Tampa

Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn gave a rousing plea for mayors to make more effective use of social media. "I am not a technologist by trade, I am a mayor," said Buckhorn, emphasizing that all mayors, "Have to be comfortable and adept at using social media."



Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn

Buckhorn told mayors that to be "competitive in the race for intellectual capital," they had to utilize social media to make their cities appealing to young people. In addition to a mass email list that connects his office with residents weekly, Buckhorn also uses Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Foursquare, Instagram, and a variety of other social media platforms.

Pre-Kindergarten in San Antonio

San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro presented Pre-K 4 SA, an initiative to expand preschool to 22,000 four-year-olds. Castro said, "We believe that brainpower truly is the new currency of success in the new twenty-first century global economy." Castro appointed a Brainpower Task Force, which quickly discovered that, "The best way to make sure someone gets ahead is to make sure they never get behind in the first place."

Castro said that initiative's success was based on partnering education and business, including higher-income families, and being honest about costs. Pre-K for SA is financed by a one-eighth cent increase in city sales tax, adding just \$7.81 for the median household per year.



San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro

Business Practices in Burnsville

Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz presented on the application of business models to government processes. Kautz said, "I came into office in January 1995 with a lot of business skills and business knowledge...I knew the difference between political decisions and good, business-focused decisions." To differentiate among outcomes, Kautz established success factors, including public safety, youth, neighborhoods, development and redevelopment, environment, transportation, finance, and city services.

Kautz put in place results-driven policy guidelines that she called, "A playbook that helps everyone understand how we do things in Burnsville." Kautz credits this model with development and redevelopment, increases in market values, and improved relations with business.



Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz

Disaster Preparedness and Recovery in Tuscaloosa

Tuscaloosa Mayor Walter Maddox presented on his city's recovery from a major tornado in April 2011, and offered guidelines for disaster preparedness. "Mayors are in most cases statutorily required but in all cases morally required to provide leadership after a tragedy in their community," Maddox said.

Maddox's eight areas of mayoral focus include organizational structure, emergency response, media and communications, humanitarian support, intergovernmental collaboration, debris removal, departmental integration, and rebuilding. "Never forget that in a community's darkest hours, it is the mayors that innovate and bring hope to the people they represent," he concluded.



Tuscaloosa Mayor Walter Maddox



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Conference of Mayors, ABA Award \$445,000 in Grants to Support Childhood Obesity Prevention in Six Cities

The United States Conference of Mayors announced the winners of the 2014 Childhood Obesity Prevention Awards January 23 during its 82nd Winter Meeting in Washington (DC). A total of \$445,000 was awarded to cities with outstanding programs that encourage healthy weight through balanced diet choices and regular physical activity. The grant awards are divided into small, medium and large city categories, with first place and second place awards given in each category. An independent panel of judges met in Washington (DC) to evaluate programs based on innovativeness, creativity, ability to replicate and potential impact.

The following cities were recognized for their mayoral-based initiatives:

Large City

1st Place (\$150,000) — Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, "Healthy Childcare Makes a Healthy Start." The grant will support the launch of "Healthy Childcare Makes a Healthy Start," the goal of which is to increase the number of Denver's more than 600 childcare centers that incorporate evidence-based healthy eating and active living (HEAL) policies and activities in everyday operations.

2nd Place (\$25,000) — Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, "Mayor's Youth Fitness Initiative" (MyFi). MyFi is a public-private partnership led Rawlings along with business and community leaders. The two-hour, weekday afterschool program targets children ages 6–12 by engaging them in activities aimed at helping them develop a lifetime love of exercising and eating smart.



Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, USCM Assistant Executive Director Crystal Swann, Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, ABA President Susan Neely, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings, USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, USCM 2nd Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson.

Medium City

1st Place (\$120,000) — Waterbury (CT) Mayor Neil O'Leary, "Kids Marathon Program." The grant will support the 2014 Kids Marathon program, a collaboration between the YMCA, Waterbury, Department of Education, Boys and Girls Club, and the Police Activity League (PAL) aimed at introducing the sport of running to youth ages 7–12 over a 12-week period and at no charge to participants.

2nd Place (\$25,000) — Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, "Love Your School." The "Love Your School" ("LYS") Childhood Obesity Intervention and Prevention Initiative addresses the drivers of childhood obesity through evidence-based programs delivered to seven high-poverty elementary schools in the Little Rock School District.

Small City

1st Place (\$100,000) — York Mayor C. Kim Bracey, "Eat Play Breathe: York's Childhood Wellness Initiative." "Eat Play Breathe" will focus on transforming the school environment by implementing policies that incorporate wellness into the mission and culture of each city school.

2nd Place (\$25,000) — Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, "Fit Together." Fit Together aims to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables among children, encourages them to be more physically active, and at the same time has an underlying goal of preventing obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases.

"Combating childhood obesity has become a top priority for mayors in their cities," said Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran.

"The best available science demonstrates that children with health problems related to overweight and obesity unfortunately not only fall far behind in school, but also can't compete in the workforce. And that's why we're so proud of our partnership with the American Beverage Association to support the pioneering strategies that Mayors and cities are coming up with to reduce childhood obesity."

The grant program is the result of a partnership between the Conference of Mayors and the American Beverage Association (ABA) to support and/or enhance mayors' ongoing childhood obesity prevention programs in their cities. The program also includes a national public awareness campaign, and connects mayors with innovative, cost-effective strategies to successfully reduce childhood obesity in their cities.

"We're proud to continue our work on this initiative with The U.S. Conference of Mayors because of the positive impact it will have on families nationwide," said American Beverage Association President and CEO Susan Neely. "We're excited to see that previous award winners are growing programs in their communities that are focused on reducing and preventing obesity. This partnership proves that working together does work, and has a real impact in America's hometowns."

For more information on the 2014 Childhood Obesity Prevention Award Winners, or about the Conference of Mayors/ABA Childhood Obesity Prevention Program in general, contact Crystal Swann on the Conference of Mayors staff by telephone at (202) 861-6707 or send e-mail to cswann@usmayors.org.

U.S., Mexico Organization of Mayors Sign Cooperation Agreement

By Evangelina Garcia

Recognizing the importance of a mutually beneficial partnership between mayors of the United States and Mexico and as neighbors who share a nearly 2,000 mile border, The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Federal of Municipalities (FENAMM) signed a Memo of Understanding (MOU) on January 22 during the Opening Plenary Session.

The MOU signing took place following remarks by Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, where she announced a Look South Initiative where Mexico is a key participant in increased trade efforts between the United States and Latin America, and also following remarks by Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Eduardo Medina-Mora, where he talked about the importance for North American countries to trade as a unit.

Signing on behalf of FENAMM, was General Director Sergio Manuel Arredondo Ruiz. FENAMM's Vice President Pachuca (Mexico) Mayor Eleazar Garcia



Left to right, Mexican Ambassador Eduardo Medina-Mora, FENAMM General Director Sergio Manuel Arredondo Ruiz, USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, and USCM Executive Director and CEO Tom Cochran.

was not able to travel nor participate at the Conference of Mayors due to inclement weather conditions.

As part of the agreement, the two organizations agreed to create and support exchanges of mayors of each nation,

thru the Memorandum of Cooperation. The two organizations also vowed to share information about best practices and model programs through a variety of means, including: face-to-face meeting in summits and electronic exchanges of information. Specific topic areas in which the two organizations will begin to exchange experiences and to share best practices include (but are not limited to):

- Climate protection and improving the environment in cities;
- Managing and decreasing traffic and congestion in metropolitan areas;
- Increasing Trade in the Americas; and
- Discussing E-Government in the age of social networks.

The signing of the MOU is the second partnership agreement signed with a Latin American country in the past year, as part of Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith's agenda and campaign to increase Trade with the Americas. Last year during the U.S. Conference of Mayors annual meeting in Las Vegas, the Conference of Mayors also signed a first-ever MOU with Brazil's Association of Mayors (FNP).

DHS Secretary Johnson Calls for Strong Partnership with Mayors, Passage of Immigration Reform

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

In one of his first major addresses since taking office late last year, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson told the mayors at the January 25 plenary session during the Winter Meeting in Washington that the U.S. government's homeland security mission is evolving, and that the partnership with mayors, police chiefs and sheriffs is increasingly important. He said that as he lays out his vision for homeland security in the coming weeks it would include as a top priority strengthening the Department's relationship with its state and local partners.

Johnson briefed the mayors on the Department's five core missions — guarding against terrorism, securing the borders, enforcing the nation's immigration laws, safeguarding cyberspace and critical infrastructure in partnership with the private sector, and supporting emergency preparedness and response efforts at every level — and said that strengthening state and local capabilities to keep communities safe must be a top Department priority.

He said that information sharing and grants are one of the most important



Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson

ways the Department works with state and local governments. A cornerstone of this effort, he said, has been the Department's support for state and major urban area fusion centers, places where federal, state, and local law enforcement resources

come together to share information.

Johnson also discussed the importance of comprehensive immigration reform, acknowledging the Conference of Mayors strong support and advocacy for it. He said that border security is inseparable

from homeland security, and that protecting the borders, securing ports, and promoting the lawful flow of trade and travel across them must be a key part of comprehensive immigration reform. He commented that immigration reform should also provide a more effective and efficient system for enforcing immigration laws and should include an earned path to citizenship for the approximately 11.5 million undocumented immigrants currently present in the country.

Johnson said that he sees the path to citizenship as a matter of homeland security because it will encourage people to come out of the shadows and participate in American society. He said that he also sees it as a matter of who we are as Americans to offer an opportunity for citizenship to those who want to be citizens, many of whom came here has children. He called for passage of comprehensive immigration reform this year.

The Secretary began his remarks with some anecdotes about personal experiences he had as someone who grew up in a city and knows the importance of mayors to their communities.

Birmingham Mayor Bell Reports on Cities' Anti-Discrimination Coalition

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

Birmingham Mayor William Bell announced in a January 24 plenary address that 113 mayors have joined the U.S. Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Discrimination and reported on the events that occurred during Mayors' Day in Birmingham, September 12. That day came during Empowerment Week, which commemorated the 50th anniversary of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church that killed four young girls.

Bell reported that the Conference of Mayors launched the U.S. Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Discrimination on Mayors' Day and, that at that time, 50 mayors had joined the Coalition by signing onto our 10-point plan of action. He explained that the Conference of Mayors worked with UNESCO and the U.S. Department of State to establish the U.S. Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Discrimination. The U.S. Coalition is part of the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism, which is a global network

of cities working together to improve their policies to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and exclusion.

Bell said that none of this would have happened without Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. He explained that Cochran met with the U.S. Ambassador to UNESCO about a year ago and following that meeting UNESCO asked the Conference of Mayors to organize the U.S. Coalition and serve as its Secretariat.

Referring to Cochran as the energizer bunny, he presented him with a framed proclamation recognizing his leadership of the organization and its achievements over the years on the occasion of the 82nd Winter Meeting. Cochran thanked the mayor and spoke briefly of the Conference of Mayors long history relating to civil rights, beginning with President John F. Kennedy's address to the organization at the June 1963 annual meeting held in Honolulu.

Bell also thanked and acknowledged the presence of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Nerissa Cook at the session. He explained that the Conference of Mayors was able to undertake the effort because the State Department provided support to the organization through UNESCO. Cook oversaw the effort and was in Birmingham for the launch of the Coalition and the mayors' meetings.



At right, Birmingham Mayor William Bell presents USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran with certificate of appreciation.

Coleman: NLC and USCM Have Shared Missions



National League of Cities President Saint Paul Mayor Christopher Coleman brought greetings to the Winter Meeting on January 24 and focused on shared priorities including reauthorization of the surface transportation act, improving public education, protecting municipal bonds, and passing the Marketplace Fairness Act.

Mayors Discuss Action Items for Financial Responsibility

By Jeannie Fanning

Mayors from all over the country gathered together to hear the “Five Things Financially Responsible Mayors Need to Know” session held January 22 during the 82nd Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors. These five topics appealed to mayors of small, medium, and large cities. Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer moderated the conversation.

Kicking off the session with a discussion surrounding the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) regulations that apply to city governments, Fischer gave a five minute crash course in the major accounting standards that apply to cities, namely, GASB 45 (other

post employment benefits (OPEB) promised to retired employees) and the newly applicable GASB 67 (requires cities to report their pension liabilities). To supplement this topic, Colonial Life Public Sector Vice President Carey Adamson explored a real life case study surrounding these principles. Irving (TX) was able to reduce its OPEB liability by 50 percent by implementing a wellness program for retirees. This accounted for \$26 million. Mayors were encouraged to keep the value of their unfunded liabilities on a notecard for quick reference.

Next, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed gave a brief summary of pension reform, and red flags mayors should look out for in their current pension structure. Great-

West Financial Government Markets Vice President Brent Neese gave an overview of the importance of 457(b) plans as a necessary supplement to pensions. Both Reed and Neese emphasized the importance of the city and the mayor’s role as a fiduciary for retirement plans.

Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan K. Barnett focused on the importance of strategic business planning for cities. In Rochester Hills, the “City’s Dashboard” tool provides a way for citizens to easily review the city’s performance in five critical areas: finance, economic strength, public safety, quality of life, and community partnerships. A critical measure used by the city is general fund reserves as a percent of general fund revenues. Over the last decade, this ratio has steadily increased, a great metric for the city’s financial health. The city’s unfunded liabilities have also drastically reduced. Keeping all of these measurements in one location is an excellent business and financial practice.

Conference of Mayors Second Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake focused on the importance of accountability for mayors. Rawlings-Blake’s ten-year financial plan for Baltimore created a new realm of accountability, bringing transparency to the city’s financial challenges while pairing them with a timeline of solutions. This plan includes, but is not limited to, pension reform, new work schedules for public safety, funding for capital infrastructure, and property tax

reduction. Through the use of CitiStat, Baltimore has made these conversations public. “Taxpayers deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent, and if it leads to a conversation about spending priorities, that’s a healthy conversation to have,” Rawlings-Blake explained.

Rounding out with the fifth topic on the importance of bond ratings, Columbia (SC) Mayor Steve Benjamin highlighted why mayors need to know their city’s bond rating, and why they should make an effort on maintaining or bettering it. Benjamin noted that he keeps track of not just the General Fund’s bond rating, but also water and sewer, the convention center, and the parking system. All of these ratings impact the rate at which cities can borrow money, thereby impacting the cost of city projects. Keeping all bond ratings better than adequate (BBB as rated by S&P, Baa as rated by Moody’s) is a good benchmark for cities.

“We [mayors] have been challenged to find innovative ways to become more financially responsible,” states Barnett. “This session provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices with others who face similar issues.”

For additional information on these topics, contact Kathryn Kretschmer-Weyland with the Conference of Mayors at 301-460-5251 or send e-mail to kweyland@usmayors.org, or contact Jen Mosca at 407-761-1722 or send e-mail to jmosca@usmayors.org.



Left to right, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, Colonial Life Vice President Carey Adamson, Great-West Financial Vice President Brent Neese, Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett, and San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed prepare to discuss the five things financially responsible mayors need to know.

DuPont 2014 Lead Safe for Kids Safe Grant Competition Now Open

Total of \$275,000 in Awards Available

DuPont Public Relations Manager Mary Kate Campbell updated the mayors on DuPont’s Platinum Partnership with The U.S. Conference of Mayors on January 23. She discussed initiatives from 2013 and announced programs details for 2014.

Campbell gave an update on the Science in the School Day Program, noting that DuPont has been to over 250 cities and 500 schools working with over 40,000 elementary school children to expose them to the world of Engineering.

In 2014, DuPont will continue education outreach by continuing the Science in the School Day program and by providing science educators access to national programs to enhance their ability to bring science to life in their classrooms. DuPont will sponsor teachers to attend the National Science Teachers Association’s Conference in Boston and will send teachers to racetracks around the country for



DuPont Public Relations Manager Mary Kate Campbell

their Driving SCIENCE program. Teachers come home from these experiences raving about what they have learned and they take that enthusiasm right back into their classrooms.

Campbell also highlighted a different DuPont business at the meeting, biotech-

nology. She explained that DuPont has been working on sustainability issues for over 20 years extending to food safety, security and nutrition. With a global population expected to exceed nine billion by 2050, DuPont is working on technologies that have the potential for meeting the

worlds’ demand for healthier and more nutritious food, animal feed, alternative fuels and materials — such as crops with increased drought-tolerance and significantly improved yield per-acre.

DuPont wants to work with the Conference of Mayors to understand how they can best be a resource to ensure mayors have the tools they want and need to make informed decisions.

Since the inception of the Conference of Mayors /DuPont partnership, DuPont has put \$5.5 million into neighborhoods through the Conference of Mayors–DuPont Lead Safe for Kids Sake grant program. As a result of efforts by federal, state and local governments, and public-private partnerships such as this one, the reduction of elevated blood lead levels across the nation has been one of the biggest public health success stories of the past 50 years.

Campbell announced that the 2014 Conference of Mayors–DuPont grant program is NOW OPEN. They will award a total of \$275,000 to three cities that propose the most promising and creative lead safety programs. The deadline for applications is May 3. Winners will be announced at the 82nd Annual Meeting in Dallas. The application can be found online at <http://usmayors.org/cusp/leadsafe2014>.

St. Louis Honored with Conference of Mayors Leadership Award: Leading the Climb to a Bright Financial Future

By Jen Mosca

With a focus on improving the retirement readiness and financial literacy of public employees across America, The United States Conference of Mayors created a leadership award to recognize cities that are implementing important changes to their retirement programs to achieve more secure retirement outcomes for our Nation's municipal employees. The "Conference of Mayors Leadership Award: Leading the Climb to a Bright Financial Future" was presented to a mayor whose city has shown outstanding excellence through education, due diligence, and participation in the city's supplemental retirement program.

Columbia (SC) Mayor Steve Benjamin and Great-West Financial Government Markets Vice President Brent Neese recognized St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, Chief Staffing Officer Elaine Spearman, St. Louis 457 Committee Members, Personnel Department, and city employees for offering and participating in a "Best in Class" 457(b) Retirement Program. The city has worked hard at assisting their employees in achieving retirement readi-



Left to right, USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, Great-West Financial Government Markets Vice President Brent Neese, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, St. Louis Chief Staffing Officer Elaine Spearman and St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay.

ness and the City's plan has a high participation rate, provides top tier employee education, and has received the National Association of Defined Contribution Administrators (NAGDCA) Leadership Recognition Award for years 2013, 2010 and 2007. The city's program can truly be used as a benchmark for other cities.

"Great-West Financial is proud to partner with the city and we are commit-

ted to helping their employees reach a bright tomorrow where retirement is only the beginning," stated Neese as he honored St. Louis.

Slay accepted the award on behalf of the city and he stated, "One of the most important responsibilities as a mayor is to take make sure we look after and to take care of our employees and give them the best opportunity in their jobs, and also

help them with retirement security which is so very important. I have been thrilled with our relationship with Great-West; it's a great plan; it's a great organization. They are a new partner of the Conference of Mayors and I'm saying this unsolicited: if you don't have a 457(b) plan or a similar deferred compensation plan in your city, you ought to take a look at one and certainly take a look at Great-West."

Citing the fiduciary role of mayors, Benjamin challenged all mayors to a call of action, "All of our employees would benefit from us speaking with our HR or Finance Directors when we get back to our cities to get them on board as well. Conference staff will do a quick review of our plans with the help of licensed investments advisors at no cost. This will save our staff a lot of time, and will positively impact our employees' retirement accounts," he said.

The United States Conference of Mayors Retirement Program is committed to providing our nations cities with the innovative tools needed to serve employees up to and through retirement. For more information contact the Conference of Mayors at 202-302-6944.

Four Cities Win Grants for Outstanding Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Initiatives

The United States Conference of Mayors announced the winners of the Safeguard My Meds™ Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Recognition Program January 24 during the 82nd 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.

Grant awards were divided into two categories: small city (those with populations of less than 100,000) and large city. First and second place awards were given in both categories. An independent panel of judges evaluated the applications based on innovation, creativity, mayoral involvement and potential impact.

The winning cities are:

Small City

- 1st Place (\$10,000): Fayetteville (AR) — Mayor Lioneld Jordan, "Prescription Drug Abuse Awareness Program"
- 2nd Place (\$5,000): Columbus (IN) — Mayor Kristen Brown, "Diversion Education & Enforcement Program"

Large City

- 1st Place (\$10,000): Philadelphia — Mayor Michael Nutter, "Too Good for Drugs"
- 2nd Place (\$5,000): Indianapolis — Mayor Gregory Ballard, "Celebrating Families!™"



USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, USCM Assistant Executive Director Crystal Swann, Large City Winner Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, Purdue Pharma State Government and Legislative Affairs Vice President Alan Must, USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, and USCM 2nd Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

This is the second round of grants awarded as part of the five-year partnership between the Conference of Mayors and Purdue Pharma, L.P. "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."

The successful Conference of Mayors/Purdue Pharma partnership began in 2009 with a nationwide public awareness campaign, featuring mayoral 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. The goal of the grants program is to support and/or enhance existing prescription drug abuse prevention programs in America's cities, as well as encourage the development of new and innovative programs.

"It was great to see the enthusiasm from our nation's mayors for the second year of this award, and we are grateful to all the mayors and their respective staffs who took the time to apply for recognition. And we are also very appreciative for the programs the mayors implemented to address the issue of prescription drug abuse. We congratulate the mayors who were selected by the panel, and look forward to hearing more about their projects in the future," said Purdue Pharma Healthcare Alliance Development Executive Director Pamela Bennett, RN, BSN.

For more information on the winning cities' programs, contact Crystal Swann on the Conference of Mayors staff at 202-861-6707 by telephone, or by e-mail at cswann@usmayors.org.

Akron, Dubuque Mayors Receive 2014 Public Leadership in Arts Awards

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, Actress Fran Drescher Also Honored

By Jocelyn Bogen

The United States Conference of Mayors, in partnership with Americans for the Arts, presented 2014 National Awards for Local Arts Leadership on January 24 to Akron Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic, and Dubuque Mayor Roy Buol. In addition, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder received the National Award for State Leadership, and actress and activist Fran Drescher was presented with the Citizen Artist Award.

"Every year, The U.S. Conference of Mayors recognizes the efforts of those who believe as much as we do, that the arts are the heart of our society. Arts and culture help shape a city's quality of life, but mayors also understand the connection between the arts and business and the arts' impact on the local economy," said Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. The awards honor elected officials and artists who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts awards have been presented annually since 1997.

"This artist and these elected government officials understand the critical importance the arts, culture and creativity play in the education of our children," said Americans for the Arts President

and CEO Robert L. Lynch. "This group of awardees have consistently advocated for more government support of the arts and culture at all levels of government."

2014 National Award for Local Arts Leadership

For more than 27 years, Plusquellic has served as mayor of Akron. Plusquellic directs city contributions of over \$1 million annually to the performing and visual arts in Akron, a city of 200,000. During the mayor's tenure, Akron has supported the arts with direct contributions in excess of \$8 million, capital contributions of \$10 million, and loan guarantees of \$18 million. Even as government budgets were decimated by the Great Recession, Plusquellic maintained annual contributions to performing arts programs. The mayor's vision led to demolition of storefronts along Main Street and construction of the Lock 3 Pavilion. This entertainment venue has attracted over two million visitors over 11 seasons. The city also underwrites the cost of over 90 professional music performances each summer. Lock 3 is also home of the yearly 4th of July Festival, Italian-American Festival, National Hamburger Festival, and Global Village Festival. Also, Lock 4 now offers weekly Blues and Jazz concerts and weekly Gospel music all summer.

Under the leadership of Buol, the arts and culture have enjoyed a tremendous resurgence as a result of his consistent advocacy of arts and cultural initiatives for the city. In 1995, when Buol first assumed office, the city provided zero funding for the arts and culture. But, under his leadership of mayor, the city has distributed \$2.3 million to arts and cultural groups since 2005 for operating and project support, as well

as for a public art project. Buol also established an Arts and Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission. Through Buol's involvement in the America's River Project, the city has developed a nearly \$400 million educa-

when Governor Snyder assumed office. He becomes the first governor in over a decade to propose back-to-back budget increases for state arts funding in Michigan. In 2013, the governor established action-oriented workgroups. One of them specifically focused on Michigan's Creative Economy and Creative Placemaking, further advancing the critical role of the arts and creativity in shaping vibrant communities across Michigan.



Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, Dubuque Mayor Roy Buol, USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, Actress Fran Drescher, USCM Past President Akron Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic, Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis, and Americans for the Arts Chief Counsel of Government and Public Affairs Nina Ozlu Tunceli.

tional, entertainment, and historic riverfront project at the Port of Dubuque. Specifically, a Mississippi Riverwalk, River's Edge Plaza, and the Alliant Energy Amphitheater were built to host multiple community arts and culture activities, including a now thriving roster of festivals.

2014 National Award for State Arts Leadership

Now in his fourth year as governor, Snyder continues to affirm the important role the arts and culture play in Michigan's economic resurgence. State funding for the arts and culture has grown to \$8.15 million in FY 2014, up from a low of \$2.56 million allocated in FY 2012

2014 Citizen Artist Award

Drescher received two Emmy and two Golden Globe nominations for her portrayal as the lovable 'Miss Fine' on the CBS hit series "The Nanny", a show she also created, wrote, directed and executive produced. She is currently, producing and starring in her new TV show on TV Land called, "Happily Divorced." Drescher is a strong and vocal supporter of the arts and arts education in our communities, schools and lives. She has actively participated in the Americans for the Arts annual Arts Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill. She has brought national attention to the need to publically support the arts and arts education in America.

Solstice — Bring a Worldwide Music Celebration to Your City

By Jocelyn Bogen

Mayors were treated to a special presentation from Madison Mayor Paul Soglin who shared how Madison has recently started participating in Solstice, a free, worldwide music celebration that takes place in 700 cities around the globe on the longest day of the year, summer Solstice, June 21.

Solstice President Michael Fenchel encouraged mayors to participate in this one-of-a-kind music festival where the entire city is a stage — anything can be a venue (city hall steps, libraries, front porches, parks, sidewalks etc.), performances are free, and musicians represent all musical genres, ages, genders and races.

Solstice COO and Director of Celebrations Aaron Friedman gave mayors four steps to support their cities participation in Solstice:

- 1 Identify a local champion to lead the effort (for example your business investment district, local arts council, and/or public radio station);
- 2 The Solstice celebration is very cheap to put on, and it's helpful for basic expenses to be covered by the city;
- 3 Make the permit process easy, so there can be all types of spontaneous music making; and,
- 4 Promotion. It's helpful to have music events and schedule linked to city webpage and support on social media sites. We know many mayors will be attending the 82nd Annual Meeting in Dallas June 21 and want to participate. One way mayors can support the event is to issue a proclamation supporting the event to be given to a local performer or music organization. To learn more about Solstice and how your city can participate, visit the website

<http://onesolstice.com/>. For more information contact info@onesolstice.com.



Left to right, Solstice Intern Oriane Vittu de Kerraoul, Solstice CTO and President Michael Fenchel, Solstice CEO Matt Ford, and Solstice COO and Director of Celebrations Aaron Friedman.

Dollarwise Awards Annual Grants to Eight Cities

Innovation Grants to Dallas, Gary, Jacksonville; Summer Youth Grants to Boston, Chicago, Hattiesburg, Kansas City (MO), Tacoma

By James Kirby

The United States Conference of Mayors DollarWise Campaign has awarded its 2014 Innovation Grants to the cities of Dallas, Gary, and Jacksonville. The grants will assist in the development of each city's local financial education program. DollarWise awarded each city a \$15,000 grant.

DollarWise has also awarded its annual Summer Youth Campaign (SYC) Grants to the cities of Boston, Chicago, Hattiesburg (MS), Kansas City (MO), and Tacoma. The winning cities will use the DollarWise SYC awards to promote financial education as part of their summer youth employment programs. DollarWise awarded each of these cities a grant for \$4,000.

The Innovation Grant and Summer Youth Campaign Grant awards were presented to the mayors at the 82nd Winter Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington (DC) on January 24. These awards were made possible through the generous support of the Bank of America Charitable Foundation. The grant recipients maintain unique programs that address financial literacy needs. Their programs will serve as examples for other cities across the nation to follow.

"We have a longstanding commitment to support better money habits through our business practices and philanthropic endeavors and continue to deepen our focus on connecting people with tools and information to help them improve their financial lives," said Bank of America Charitable Foundation President Kerry Sullivan. "We are proud to support the DollarWise Campaign and The U.S. Conference of Mayors in their efforts to promote financial education in communities across the country."

Innovation Grant Recipients

Dallas will use the 2014 DollarWise Innovation Grant to provide financial literacy classes to its citizens in the spring, fall, and summer — incorporating the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's "Money Smart" curriculum. This initiative will take place in several branches of the Dallas Public Library System and will offer substantive financial education throughout the year.

Gary will use its grant to provide financial literacy training to elementary school students, youth in after school programs, youth participating in the Gary Youth Works Employment Program, and parents. Gary will create a mobile financial literacy lab to implement its initiative, which will allow the program to visit libraries as well as people in public housing.

Summer Youth Campaign (SYC) Grant Recipients

Boston's summer youth employment program traditionally puts to work 10,000 youth each summer. The city will use a 2014 Summer Youth Campaign Grant to offer financial literacy training workshops, particularly to youth who are planning to go to college.



Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Bank of America Charitable Foundation Senior Vice President Stephen Fitzgerald, Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, and USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson.



Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Bank of America Charitable Foundation Senior Vice President Stephen Fitzgerald, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, and USCM Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson.

Jacksonville will provide extensive financial literacy training to youth, adults, and older adults. Typically, the city provides approximately 20,000 hours of financial education to its citizens during its MoneyWise week. With funding from DollarWise, it hopes to increase that number to 25,000, providing training on topics including credit and debit management, housing, investment and wealth building, personal finance, work readiness, and entrepreneurship.

Chicago's One Summer Chicago typically provides 20,000 jobs to youth each summer. The Summer Youth Campaign Grant will go towards securing financial institution partners to make savings accounts and direct deposit capabilities available to 5,000 youth who are paid by the city. Additionally, the city will work with the Economic Awareness Council to provide online peer based, financial literacy modules to youth.

Hattiesburg will use its Summer Youth



Campaign Grant to provide youth with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's "Money Smart" and "Practical Money Skills" programing, which utilizes eight modules covering topics including: banking, credit, installment loans, planning with savings, credit cards, setting financial goals with money management, apartment rentals, and mortgages.

Kansas City's Bright Future Internship Program employs young adults within various city departments for eight weeks each summer. The city will use the Summer Youth Campaign Grant to provide a mandatory eight-hour financial literacy development course to all youth in the program. The course will introduce students to the core concepts of financial literacy including: budgeting, bank accounts, credit and debt, saving and investing, as well as student financial aid.

Tacoma's Youth Employment Program partners with its Public School District to place primarily low-income youth into summer jobs. The city will use the Summer Youth Campaign Grant to provide financial literacy instruction to its youth and create a mobile app, which will follow the National Financial Literacy Curriculum, and allow youth easy access to substantive financial education.

The SYC's main goal is to incorporate a financial literacy education component into every summer youth job in the country by 2015. The DollarWise Campaign is dedicated to the idea that all Americans can benefit from increased access to financial education.

The DollarWise Campaign congratulates all of the cities and their 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.

For more information on the DollarWise Campaign, go to the DollarWise website: www.bedollarwise.org, or contact Program Manager James Kirby by e-mail to: jkirby@usmayors.org.



"Cities Will Drive Prosperity" Labor Secretary Perez Tells Mayors

By Kathy Wiggins

"American cities — from Spokane to Schenectady — are the engine that will drive American prosperity in the coming decades," U.S. Labor Secretary Tom Perez told the more than 250 mayors gathered for the Mayors/ Business Leaders Plenary Breakfast on January 23.

Describing mayors as the most dynamic public policy innovators and incubators in the country, Perez touted mayoral leadership in cities as the change coming to Washington rather than from Washington. "I have experience in local government, so I know that you live where the rubber meets the road. Congress can adjourn, for example, without acting on an extension of unemployment benefits... but in your city, vital services have to be delivered every day."

Perez focused his remarks on one major theme: the importance of giving Americans the skills and training they need to secure good jobs, climb lad-

ders of opportunity and live out their highest and best dreams. "Skills — it's the key to a strong economy and a thriving middle class. We have the most talented and resilient workforce in the world. There's no challenge they shrink from, no opportunity they won't embrace. But we have to invest in them. We have to create more career pathways for them, more opportunities to acquire the credentials that employers demand. We need to build our human capital — and we have to do it in a smart, strategic, efficient way," said Perez. "And that means working closely with the private sector, to understand exactly what kinds of workers, with which kinds of skills and certifications, they're looking for," he continued. "The key is deep and sustained employer engagement at the federal, state and local levels," he added.

Acknowledging that any effective workforce development strategy has to be locally driven, the Secretary touted local innovation and strong partnerships as the key to success.

"In every city and community nationwide, we want to help you strengthen partnerships — between employers, colleges, labor unions, workforce boards, community organizations, and economic development entities — that create a well-aligned workforce investment system," said Perez.

Also at the breakfast, Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer were presented the first annual U.S. Conference of Mayors National Summer Youth Jobs Challenge awards for small/medium and large cities respectively. The awards recognize mayors for their work to create innovative partnerships with their local business and non-profit communities to ensure that the nation's youth have a meaningful summer job experience.

Through his hard work and dedication to summer youth employment, Segarra worked with his business and philanthropic community to secure a 35 percent increase in placements with private sector employers for



U.S. Labor Secretary Tom Perez

young people in his city through the Hartford's Youth Jobs+ program.

Fischer made a major shift to focus on the private sector for placements, and on preparing, placing and coaching low-income youth in their first job experience in Louisville's SummerWorks Program. His leadership and strong emphasis realized a 450 percent increase in private sector placements for 16-21 years olds in his city — a profound success.



Left to right, Summer Youth Participant Eugene Morton, Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra, and Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis.



Left to right, KentuckianaWorks Executive Director Michael Gritton, Norton Healthcare Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Tony Bohn, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, and Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis.

148 Cities Commit to the "Get Your Business Online City Challenge"

By David W. Burns

Mayors were provided an update on the progress with the United States Conference of Mayors and Google's Get Your Business Online City Challenge during the 82nd Winter Meeting. The challenge, now starting its sixth month, brings the total number of participating cities to 148. Google Vice President Public Policy and Government Relations Susan Molinari joined the mayors January 23 to deliver the update.

"Over 50 percent of our small businesses don't have a web site and they're leaving a lot on the table," said Molinari when speaking about the importance of the Get Your Business Online program.

The Get Your Business Online City Challenge was launched at the 81st Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. It's an extension of the larger Get Your Business Online pro-

gram launched by Google in 2011. The goal is to drive economic growth in the United States by providing the tools and resources to small businesses to make it easy and free for them to get online. Since the launch of the program, over 250,000 small businesses have gotten online. At both the Annual Conference in Las Vegas and at the Winter Meeting last week, the Google team helped cities join the city challenge and record PSAs to help mayors spread the word in their communities.

"When your city's small businesses get online they help share with the region, the country, and the world," said Molinari.

When your city joins the City Challenge, you'll get a customized logo for your city initiative, a press release, social media toolkit, collateral and giveaways, plus, your city will be featured on the Get Your Business Online City Challenge web site.

At the Annual Conference in Dallas this June, The United States Conference of Mayors and Google will award three technology prize packages featuring Google products valued at \$50,000 each to cities in three categories, small city (30,000-75,000 in population), medium city (75,000-250,000 in population), and large city (250,000 in population and larger). Participating cities are evaluated based on the reach, impact, creativity, commitment, and replicability of their activities.

Sign ups for the Get Your Business Online City Challenge close April 30, and final submissions of check-in activities are due on June 1. If your city hasn't signed up for the Get Your Business Online City Challenge, you can do so by going online to usmayors.org/gybo.



Google Vice President Public Policy and Government Relations Susan Molinari gives an update about the Get Your Business Online City Challenge.

Walmart, Conference of Mayors \$10 Million Partnership Announced

Partnership Aimed at Bringing Jobs Back to America's Cities

Walmart U.S. CEO Bill Simon joined more than 280 of the nation's mayors at the Capital Hilton in Washington (DC) at the 82nd Winter Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors to unveil a \$10 million partnership between Walmart and the Conference of Mayors. The new partnership is called the American Renewal Fund aimed at bringing back jobs to America's cities.

Commenting on the partnership, Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran said, "Mayors know more than most that job creation is the lifeblood of any city. We are pleased to be working with Walmart to bring new jobs to America's cities through innovation, creativity and old-fashioned ingenuity."

Mayors have always worked hard to foster innovation and bring forth new

ways of thinking because they know innovation leads to jobs, and jobs help create strong cities. Through the American Renewal Fund partnership, America's families will experience first-hand the tangible economic benefits of our mayors' consistent efforts to usher local growth."

The **\$10 million American Renewal Fund**, which will launch in March, features:

- Walmart and The U.S. Conference of Mayors will partner to launch a five-year fund.
- Cities and entrepreneurs will be able to apply for funding by partnering with local manufacturers, suppliers, universities, think tanks and financial institutions.
- Projects will need to significantly expand and innovate domestic production efforts.
- The fund will seek to create new jobs, ideas, products and processes that support Walmart's growing manufacturing footprint and will award innovators in the manufacturing sector in more difficult categories to source here.

In addition to the American Renewal Fund, Simon unveiled two additional

announcements that will help create jobs: he announced a new supplier commitment to produce bikes, and Walmart's second U.S. Manufacturing Summit designed to promote factory production.

Kent Bicycles

- Kent Bicycles is moving production of bicycles from overseas to Clarendon (SC)
- When at full capacity in 2016, they will have added at least 175 jobs and will be assembling 500,000 bikes annually.

Second U.S. Manufacturing Summit

- In August, Walmart will host its second U.S. manufacturing summit in Denver.
- This year's summit will focus on an issue many towns across the U.S. are facing: factories that aren't operating at full capacity or are in danger of closing.
- Simon challenged the mayors at today's conference to start identifying factories in their hometowns with capacity, so Walmart can facilitate meetings between government officials, factory managers and suppliers.



Walmart U.S. CEO Bill Simon

"At Walmart, we're taking action and creating opportunity by investing in American jobs," said Simon. "The time is right to bring more manufacturing back to the United States, and we hope to kick start these efforts with the American Renewal Fund and stronger commitments with suppliers to encourage them to do business here. We have to grow our way to opportunity in America," he added.

Women Mayors Hear from Leading Women in U.S. Army

By Joan Crigger

The Women Mayors met during the 82nd Winter Meeting of The United States Conference of Mayors and heard from two highly ranked women in the U.S. Army. First was Lieutenant General (LTG) Flora D. Darpino, the 39th Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Army and the first woman to serve in this capacity. Second was Lieutenant General (LTG) Patricia D. Horoho, the 43rd U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Medical Command. She is the first woman and the first Nurse Corps Officer to serve in this capacity.

Opening the meeting was Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, Chair of the Women Mayors. Lutz described how excited she was to hear from two such distinguished women and then introduced Darpino. Darpino said how delighted she was to be in the company of so many women mayors and then described her three roles in the military:

- 1) Senior military legal assistant to the Secretary of the Army, primary legal advisor to the Joint Chief of the U.S. Army and the head of the Army's Judge Advocate General's office.
- 2) General Counsel to the equivalent in the Army of the city attorney, the city prosecutor and the contracts' attorneys in your cities.
- 3) General practitioner in your city for the military.

Darpino indicated that the primary requirements for the job are to be highly flexible, highly adaptable and willing to learn. She went on to describe how she got where she is. Darpino then said that

the Army judged her on how she did her job. The Army gave her a chance and was interested how she performed in "this team sport." One of the things she does now is mentor both women and men under her command. Darpino added that you must ask a lot of questions. And, she said, most important is working as a team. "It is essential."

Lutz then introduced Horoho who echoed Darpino's excitement about being among the women mayors. Horoho said she was too short to be a flight attendant so she decided to become a nurse and teach because her grandfather told her that no one can take away your education. At the time she entered the Army as a nurse, there were no commands for Nurse Commanders. There were only white, male commanders. But, eventually, she was appointed as the first woman to command Walter Reed Army Hospital, the first woman in 98 years. It took 236 years for a woman to be selected as the Surgeon General. Horoho said, "We have come a long way, we still have a long way to go." Continually having to prove that you have the right skill set for the job is extremely important. Handling stress is a necessity. Horoho said a leader told her years ago, "Fake it 'til you make it." Surround yourself with people who know more than you do. In closing, Horoho said one of the nicest things that has happened to her is fathers coming up and saying thank you for providing a role model for their daughters.

Following the speakers' remarks, Lutz opened up the floor for questions. In closing Lutz thanked the two Lieutenant Generals and said that they were terrific.



Left to right, LTG Patricia Horoho, U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Medical Command; Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, Chair of the Women Mayors; and LTG Flora Darpino, Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Army.



Left to right, Miramar Mayor Lori Moseley, Lake Worth Mayor Pam Triolo, Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper and Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl.

Mayors to Compete for Most Livable City Honor

By Jocelyn Bogen

With a wide range of programs eligible, The United States Conference of Mayors-Waste Management launched the mayor's race for the honor of calling themselves a 2014 City Livability Awards Program Award winner with the mailing of the application and guidelines to mayors of cities of 30,000 or more.

"Communities are always striving for excellence and looking for innovative ways to improve their cities and benefit their residents. The best part about the City Livability Awards is that mayors are able to highlight what they do best and share their successes with other cities. We thank Waste Management, Inc. for their partnership and many years of support in helping us salute these mayors," said Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

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 said, "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 25 years

because it is a reflection of our core values. At WM, 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 14, 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, about 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 May

2. An independent panel of judges will select the winners in May. Award winners will be announced in June at the 82nd Annual Conference of Mayors in Dallas.

The 20 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.

2014 City Livability Time Lines

March 14:	Initial Applications Due
March 28:	Announcement of Second Round Cities
May 2:	Second Round Applications Due
June 2014:	City Livability Awards Announced in Dallas at 82nd Annual Conference of Mayors

Mayor, Business Leaders



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



Walgreen Co. Local Government Affairs National Director Donovan Pepper, Co-Chair of the Mayors Business Council Steering Committee



Mayors and Business Leaders Plenary Breakfast Co-sponsor Blair Taylor, Starbucks Coffee Company Chief Community Officer/Executive Vice President, addresses mayors and business leaders at the 82nd Winter Meeting.



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



USCM Business Council Chair Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster presides over Mayors and Business Leaders Breakfast.



2013–2014 Business Council Co-Chairs, Steering Committee



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Tom Phillips,
Director, State and Local
Government Affairs,
Siemens Corporation



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Local Government Relations
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Governments Affairs
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Vice President and
Managing Director
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Angie's List—Band of Neighbors

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Health Care Service Corporation

Holland & Knight LLP

Home Away

Hudson News

IBM

International Council of Shopping Centers

International Franchise Association

IPS Group, Inc.

Itron, Inc.

Jefferies LLC

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

KHAFRA Engineering Consultants

Kronos

Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP

Lion

Lyft, Inc.

Mars Incorporated

Microsoft Corporation

Morgan Stanley

Motorola

Mueller Water Products, Inc.

MuniServices, LLC

MWH, Inc.

National Apartment Association

Pacific Gas & Electric Company

Parsons Brinckerhoff

*Parsons Corporation**

PayLock IPT LLC

Pearson

Pepco Holdings, Inc. (PHI)

Philips

Portland Cement Association

Power Survey Company

Purdue Pharma, L.P.

Recycle Bank

Red Bull North America

Safeguard Properties

SAP

*Science Applications International Corporation
(SAIC)*

Sensus

*Service Employees International Union, CTW, CLC
(SEIU)*

Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure Inc.

Siemens Corporation

Smart Cities Council

Sodexo, Inc.

Southwest Airlines

Sprint

Starbucks Coffee Company

Target Corporation

The American Federation for Children

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company

The Sherwin-Williams Company

Thomson Reuters

*United Water**

U.S. Cellular

URS

*Veolia Water North America**

Verizon Communications

Visa, Inc.

Walgreen Co.

Walmart

Waste Management, Inc.*

Weight Watchers International, Inc.

Wells Fargo

Witt O'Brien's

* Charter Members
Platinum Partners (bold)
New Members (italicized)



Cordray Announces New Partnership with Nation's Mayors at Council on Metro Economies and New American City

By Dave Gatton

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray announced a new initiative with the nation's mayors to link local 311 systems to the Bureau's Consumer Protection hotline. Speaking before the Council on Metro Economies and the New American City at The U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter meeting January 22 in Washington (DC), Cordray acknowledged the damage financial institutions caused cities and neighborhoods as a result of the recession. "The financial crisis showed us how irresponsible lending can assault the foundations of stable communities, with the damage taking many years to repair," he said.

Created as a part of the Dodd-Frank legislation in response to the financial crisis, the CFPB has a consumer protection function that provides it the authority to respond and resolve consumer complaints. "My colleagues and I at the Consumer Bureau appreciate the outstanding role that mayors play in building America," he said. "We applaud you on the many ways you do that, including your efforts through the DollarWise campaign. This campaign promotes financial education and supports summer youth employment through innovations and enhancements to existing programs."



Left to right, Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, Council on Metro Economies and the New American City Chair Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray.

But he observed that many consumer complaints go beyond local jurisdictions and that this is where the CFPB can be helpful to the consumer. Cordray told the mayors that ConsumerFinance.gov or the CFPB's consumer hotline 1-855-411-CFPB, takes complaints about mortgages, credit cards, bank accounts, student loans, auto loans, credit reporting, debt collection, consumer loans, money transfers, and payday loans. To date the CFPB has received over 270,000 complaints, logging 15,000 last month alone.

Cordray then announced a major partnership between the CFPB and the Conference of Mayors to allow financial complaints received through local 311 systems to be forwarded directly to the CFPB's consumer response team. Currently the program is being piloted in Boston, Newark, St. Louis, Jackson (MS) and Columbus (OH). Cities will be invited to sign up for the partnership by July 2014 for their 311 systems to have access to the Bureau's consumer capabilities.

Council on Metro Economies and the New American City Chair Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman praised Cordray for his leadership on consumer protection and said, "As a Conference, we have strongly supported the creation of the CFPB from day one. We look forward to strengthening our relationship on this partnership as well as others."

Following Cordray, Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown recommended that the council perform research into the issue of downward pressure on wages for those returning to work from the recession and to recommend possible policy responses.

Andrew Plepler of Bank of America followed with a discussion on the responsibility of the financial sector to ensure that lower income families still had access to viable financial services and products.

Jeff Campbell of Cisco discussed the transformative impact the "Internet of Everything" (IoE) will have on cities. IoE is the networked connection of people, process, data and things, and will open opportunities to deliver services and implement policy goals in ways unimagined in the past. Campbell said, "\$4.6 trillion in public sector Value at Stake will result from IoE's ability to help public-sector organizations manage assets, optimize performance, and create new business models (over the coming decade)."

Mayors Small Business Task Force Hears from Entrepreneurial Mayors

By Tom McClimon

Mayors participating in the meeting of the Small Business, Franchising and Entrepreneurship Task Force heard from some of their new colleagues on how they started their businesses and what cities might do to assist budding entrepreneurs and small businesses. Chaired by Past Conference of Mayors President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz and Kansas City (MO) Mayor Sylvester "Sly" James, the task force agenda focused on going from being an entrepreneur to mayor, how Partner America can assist local small businesses grow, and ways the International Franchise Association can assist cities.

Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine and Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere shared with the mayors their thoughts as to what cities can do to assist entrepreneurs, which they were before becoming mayors. Prior to becoming mayor this past November, Levine launched Onboard Media with only \$500 in capital and grew it into an

\$85 million company. Prior to becoming mayor, LaRosiliere established and ran a successful photography studio in New York City. Both mayors' messages were to work side by side with your local small businesses and entrepreneurs, but to also "get out of their way." Mayors must make a special and concerted effort to meet their local business leaders and to streamline government practices, such as the permitting process.

American Management Services Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Louis Mosca, a Platinum Partner of the Conference of Mayors, shared with the mayors ways Partner America can help local small and medium-sized businesses in cities grow. He and his staff offered to go to the cities of the task force members and meet with the mayors and small businesses interested in growing.

International Franchise Association (IFA) Education and Diversity Senior Director Miriam Brewer, along with IFA State Government Relations, Public Policy, and Tax Counsel Senior Director Dean



Left to right, Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere, Kansas City (MO) Mayor Sylvester "Sly" James, Past USCM President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, and Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine.

Heyl, shared with the mayors ways that IFA can assist cities. It is estimated that the franchise industry will be responsible for over 200,000 new jobs this year. Pro-

grams like IFA's "Meet the Mayor" and diversity training programs for potential franchisees are some of the programs IFA can offer to mayors.

Strategic Investments in Advanced Manufacturing Key to Sector Success in Cities

By Megan Cardiff

Conference of Mayors Advanced Manufacturing Task Force Chair Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero led the task force meeting January 24 to discuss strategies to attract, retain and support advanced manufacturing in cities across the country. "Manufacturing is making a comeback in America," said Bernero. "But more needs to be done to remain competitive and prosperous and mayors can play a big role in strengthening local communities to be strong foundations for this sector."

Mayors heard from Jay Williams, former mayor of Youngstown and Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Economic Development Administration at the U.S. Department of Commerce, regarding the Obama Administration's investment in several initiatives to spur the manufacturing sector. "Continuing to build on the successes around the country in advanced manufacturing remains a priority of President Obama. Communities need to attract private investment and form strategic partnerships with businesses, federal and local government, workforce boards and community colleges," stated Williams.

Williams talked about the Administration's investment in the National Network for



Left to right, Jay Williams, U.S. Department of Commerce Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Economic Development Administration; Mark Troppe, U.S. Department of Commerce NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program Manager of Strategic Development; USCM Advanced Manufacturing Chair Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero; USCM Advanced Manufacturing Vice Chair Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary; and USCM Advanced Manufacturing Vice Chair Beaverton Mayor Denny Doyle.

Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI), which consists of regional hubs that will accelerate development and adoption of manufacturing technologies for making new, globally competitive products. The NNMI will consist of linked Institutes for Manufacturing Innovation (IMIs) where industry, academia and government partners leverage existing resources and collaborate to nurture manufacturing innovation and accelerate com-

mercialization. The initiative's pilot center is funded in Youngstown.

Mayors also heard from Mark Troppe, manager of Strategic Partnerships at the Department of Commerce's NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program. In his remarks, Troppe highlighted the new AMTech competitive grants program that establishes new or strengthens existing industry-led consortia in planning

research that address challenges impending the growth of advanced manufacturing. An announcement will be made this spring regarding the availability of \$4 million for activities supported by planning grants.

He also discussed the importance of mayors utilizing the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) through participation in meetings, such as AMP 2.0 regional meetings, to ensure that their voice is heard. Troppe emphasized, "Collaboration across your city and region, including public and private and intermediaries, to strengthen your regional ecosystem is key. Find out what your local MEP center is going to grow manufacturing in your region."

Advanced Manufacturing Task Force Vice Chair Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary outlined work in his city that links education, economic development and workforce development through the Waterbury Career Academy's focus on advanced manufacturing. Through this new state of the art advanced manufacturing center at Naugatuck Valley Community College, O'Leary has successfully drawn nine new manufacturing firms to Waterbury — creating over 100 new manufacturing jobs.

Mayors Emphasize Closing Achievement Gap as a Priority in Conversation with Secretary Duncan

By Megan Cardiff

U.S. Conference of Mayors Education Reform Task Force Chair Denver Mayor Michael Hancock led a discussion between U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan and over 40 mayors at the task force's meeting January 22, which took place during the Conference of Mayors Annual Winter meeting in Washington (DC). Hancock opened the meeting by outlining his plan to further build on the education work of previous Task Force Chair Conference of Mayors Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson.

In his remarks, Duncan stressed the importance of having a scorecard on education metrics, such as student achievement data and school accountability. He conveyed the importance of comparing current data to unmet needs in school and developing a viable action plan to close the gap between the two.

The Secretary also emphasized the need to go beyond just the academic and focus on social skills as well, stating "Social and emotional skills are as predictive of long term success, if not more, than the

academic side. Kids need an adult — one adult — in their life who they can go to through good times and bad times. That individual can come from home, school, church, or a boys and girls club — but absent that, it's much much tougher on kids. There is a lot of work mayors can do to reinforce those skills in kids."

The four major topics the task force focused on included recommendations for improving access to high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE), increasing the number of high performing seats, keeping students on track to graduate, and ensuring that students have access to and complete post-secondary pathways. Mayors highlighted the importance of evaluating and sharing best practices and programs that they can effectively use to close the achievement gap in their own cities as well as the importance of mayoral leadership and involvement in education.

Hancock said, "Our best chance of eliminating the achievement gap means that we have to address it before it begins and that means we must address it early. As a task force, we'll be addressing how to increase access to high-quality Pre-K programs so kids can hit school ready



At left, USCM Education Reform Task Force Chair Denver Mayor Michael Hancock with U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

to learn. We need to get to the heart of the challenge that we face in regards to school reform and working toward the goal of eliminating the achievement gap."

The task force adopted the agenda outlined by Hancock and will work on

developing an online playbook concentrated around the four major areas previously mentioned that will publicize educational best practices from mayors across the nation.

International Affairs Committee Focuses on U.S. Trade and Visibility for U.S. Cities Abroad

By Kay Scrimger

Chaired by Oakland Mayor Jean Quan, the International Affairs Committee met January 24 at the 82nd Winter Meeting.

The committee continued to focus on the critical importance of trade and investment for U.S. cities and metropolitan areas and for the nation as a whole. U.S.

Trade Representative (USTR) for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement Assistant Jewel James outlined major current initiatives of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, led by Ambassador Michael Froman:

- The Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Pact, which, when concluded, will join the U.S. with 11 other countries in Asia as well as in South America; and

- The Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, designed to strengthen the relationship between the United States and the European Union.

The USTR is confident that successful conclusion of each will result in significantly increased trade and investment and job creation in the United States. James also discussed the relationship between the USTR and the Department of Commerce in working to achieve these goals.

George Papagiannis, U.S. Spokesman for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), pointed out the good work of the Conference of Mayors in general, and particularly in September 2013, during commemoration of Birmingham's pivotal involvement in the civil rights movement of 1963 and the 50th Anniversary of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham (AL), which killed four young girls.

He noted that working with UNESCO and the U.S. Department of State, the Conference of Mayors has established the U.S. Coalition of Cities Against Racism and Discrimination. The Coalition's 10-Point Action Plan Against Racism and Discrimination was released in Birmingham.

The World Heritage Convention is one of UNESCO's landmark programs. The U.S. has 21 UNESCO World Heritage sites. Papagiannis noted that Birmingham

is not yet on the list for consideration to be named a World Heritage site, but that it would be a good candidate. He also encouraged mayors to get more involved in having their cities get nominated as future world heritage sites.

Papagiannis also pointed out that, UNESCO also works on ways to create sustainable urban development and link cities. In particular, he noted two cities — Paducah and Iowa City

Sister Cities International President and CEO Mary D. Kane described the variety of international sister city relationships that her organization oversees — cultural, business, educational, and economic development partnerships. The Sister Cities network of 550 cities encompasses programs in 140 countries on six continents. Kane discussed several examples of such relationships, including ties between U.S. and China cities. Sister City relationships are established and nurtured and intended to last for many years. Kane mentioned the importance of commitment to a long-term relationship: if you are in a Sister City relationship, she emphasized, it is important to commit to continuing it because cutting off the relationship will make it extremely difficult for another city to reestablish the connection.

Kane also noted that the 58th Annual Sister Cities International Conference will be held July 31–August 2 in San Jose.



Left to right, George Papagiannis, U.S. Spokesperson for UNESCO; Committee Chair Oakland Mayor Jean Quan; Jewel James, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative; and Sister Cities International President and CEO Mary D. Kane.

Metro Mayors, University Presidents Working Together

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Chair of the Mayors and Metro Universities Task Force (MMUTF), welcomed nineteen mayors and their representatives to discuss how they have worked with their respective university leadership to create opportunities and address the needs of their cities and communities. Dyer was joined by Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard, Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis Chancellor Charles Bantz, who serves as the Chair of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU), and University of Akron President Luis Proenza, the Co-Chair of USU. Former mayor of Indianapolis Bill Hudnut also contributed to the discussion.

This was the second meeting of the MMUTF. The Conference of Mayors and USU have partnered to work on issues of mutual interest through this task force. At this meeting on January 22, Dyer and Bantz lead a discussion of how the task force can serve as a platform to showcase successful approaches mayors and university leadership have developed and implemented together to meet the mutual needs of their constituents. For USU



Left to right, University of Akron President Luis Proenza, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Indiana University-Purdue University of Indianapolis Chancellor Charles Bantz, and Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard.

institutions — four-year public research universities with a mission to serve their urban populations — that constituency is one in the same. For other universities and community colleges, the constituencies share many of the same interests and needs. Sharing best practices — sharing

workable solutions to some of the many challenges mayors face — will be part of the activity of MMUTF.

The mayors and their representatives raised many challenging issues of common interest.

- Workforce development was one of the economic development issues raised by a number of mayors and the university presidents. Working with city leaders, metro universities educate the city's workforce — teachers, health care professionals, public safety workers, social workers, and city administrative staff. Bantz shared how IUPUI designed degree programs to support prominent economic clusters in Indianapolis, namely philanthropy and auto engineering.
- Public safety partnerships was another topic explored by the task force.
- Shared services — how can cities do more with less?
- Student interns benefit both cities and the university students and programs.

No matter the topic, the common theme among successful mayor-president partnerships appeared to be a strong relationship feed by regular meetings and open communications. The task force looks forward to issue-targeted discussions at upcoming meetings and project development to support successful approaches on a national basis.

Mayors Cite Action on Water Affordability, Recent Success in Attracting Private Financing for Water Utility Upgrades

By Rich Anderson

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard co-chaired a meeting of the Mayors Water Council at the 82nd winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors in Washington (DC) on January 22. Discussion focused on the Affordability Dialogue and a public-private partnership that involved pension fund financing.

Affordability Dialogue with EPA

Mayors participated in a December 13, 2013 Affordability Dialogue meeting between EPA and the Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities and National Association of Counties. Ballard reported that the elected officials and EPA are very close to agreeing on clarifications to the existing 1997 Guidance used to assess financial capability that would provide greater flexibility in the process of determining compliance with obligations related to the Clean Water Act (CWA). Monrovia (CA) Mayor Mary Ann Lutz agreed, stating it was "...a very productive meeting" because the "...integrated planning [framework] is vital to all of our cities."

Lima (OH) Mayor Dave Berger indicated that working with EPA's regional offices more effectively may require legislative guidance. He emphasized that mayors should stay "...focused on the bottom line — relief." He said that legislation is needed "...in a form that no longer leaves it totally within the Agency's discretion which they have refused

repeatedly to exercise in the regions to provide us with relief. Instead mandates should be based upon the demographics, the economic circumstances and the water quality challenges that each of us has in our communities."

Private Financing of Public Water Utilities — Rialto (CA)

Rialto (CA) Mayor Deborah Robertson presented information on a public-private partnership (P3) involving the water and wastewater utilities in Rialto. A special feature of the P3 project is the unique financing arrangement with a public pension fund.

Rialto Finance Director George Harris stated that the city entered into a long term P3 involving a \$172 million concession to the city, with \$41 million marked for immediate capital improvements that would create 445 jobs in the community, without conceding ownership or the authority to control rate structures. He said the city wanted system reliability and got a proven operator and professional management (Veolia Water North America) that the city could not guarantee even with their own training system.

Ed Smith stated that Union Labor Life Insurance, Co. (ULLICO) provided the capital financing for the P3 from their infrastructure fund established as an alternative to the current Wall Street model of financing that involves costly fees and investments that might go international instead of creating jobs domestically.

David Gadis, of Veolia Water — the chosen operator, said success in Rialto



Left to right, Ed Smith, ULLICO; Table Rock Capital Managing Partner Peter Luchetti; Rialto Finance Director George Harris; Veolia Water North America Executive Vice President David Gadis; Rialto (CA) Mayor Deborah Robertson; Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard; Lima (OH) Mayor David Berger; and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.



Veolia Water North America Executive Vice President David Gadis discusses how Veolia is helping Rialto close their budget gap.

is "...when the city, the utility and the ratepayers all benefit from what we are doing." Gadis said Veolia brings global

expertise to Rialto to implement asset management techniques to contain costs, and perform maintenance and upgrades.

Mayors Hear From MLS, NFL, NFLPA Officials

By Tom McClimon

Mayors participating in the meeting of the Mayors Professional Sports Alliance heard from senior officials from Major League Soccer, National Football League and National Football League Players Association. Chaired by Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, the mayors got the latest updates as to what was happening with each of these major sports leagues.

Major League Soccer (MLS) President and Deputy Commissioner Mark Abbott shared with the mayors the current status of the league and its plans for expansion. MLS is positioning itself to be one of the top leagues in the world by 2022. Expansion plans call for 21 teams by 2015 and 24 teams by 2020. More than \$1.6 billion has been invested in soccer stadia since 2006. Besides the huge economic impact



Left to right, Martin Gold, National Football League; Rory Verrett, National Football League; Mark Abbott, Major League Soccer; Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard; George Atallah, National Football League Players Association; and Joe Briggs, National Football League Players Association.

of soccer in communities, Abbott talked about the importance that MLS places on

getting its teams and players to participate in local community initiatives.

National Football League (NFL) Public Affairs Vice President Rory Verrett and National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) External Affairs Assistant Executive Director George Atallah discussed the current issues surrounding the National Football League, such as possible future expansion teams and player safety issues. Much of the discussion with the NFL and NFLPA officials centered about the fan experience at the game, including ticket pricing, safety and security issues and total entertainment experience.

Mayors also got an update as to the sports management research projects conducted every semester by New York University graduate students and ways they can submit a proposal for the students to undertake.

Prevention Key to Reducing Gang Violence

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

An upsurge in gang violence, especially in mid-size cities, and efforts to prevent and respond to it were the focus of the January 22 meeting of the Mayors and Police Chiefs Task Force during the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington. Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin, Chair of the Task Force, Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin, and Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis briefed the mayors and others at the session on the problems their cities have experienced and their responses. Among their comments:

- The Fresno Police Department focuses “equally and together” on enforcement and prevention in its efforts to reduce gang violence, Swearengin reported. The focus on gangs occurs at all levels of the Department and in every meeting, she continued. The city has seen a significant drop in violent crime over the last several years.
- Benjamin told the group that the Columbia Police Department has been able to increase the number of sworn officers and has tripled the size of its gang unit. He also described his city’s prevention efforts, some of which he “stole” from other mayors at Confer-



Left to right, COPS Director Ron Davis, Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason, Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin, and Columbia (SC) Mayor Steve Benjamin.

ence meetings. These include a mentoring program and a youth initiative, which provides alternative activities for kids, including summer jobs, summer camp, and basketball “all night long.”

- Gresham has seen a recent uptick in gang crime across the city, Bemis reported. In response the city is participating in a metro gang enforcement team with several surrounding communities that, the mayor reported,

has made a difference in stemming the crime rate and partnering with boys and girls clubs and other local community-based organizations to provide alternative activities.

COPS Office Director Ron Davis said that the response to gangs and other crimes cannot be mass incarceration, which among other things, costs too much. He called instead for a commitment to the four “C’s” of community policing — city lead-

ership, collaboration, community and cops — and discussed the importance of community control — not that by gangs or the police — of open space. “Whoever controls open space in a neighborhood controls the quality of life,” Davis commented. Finally, he talked about the importance of adopting evidence-based programs and restoring the relationship between communities and the police department.

Commenting that, “We cannot arrest our way out of the problem,” Assistant Attorney General for Justice Programs Karol Mason called for a public health approach to crime. She reported that the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been working together to identify effective crime prevention strategies. While her agency provides funding to police departments and other local agencies, it provides technical and other assistance to city officials which she suggested is much more valuable than the grants. She invited the mayors to go to CrimeSolutions.gov for information on the help, which the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) can provide. Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson attested to the benefits of these efforts, including the Diagnostic Center that OJP has established.

Criminal, Social Justice Committee Focuses on Reducing Violence, Improving Policing

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

Washington (DC) Police Chief Cathy Lanier told the mayors at the January 23 meeting of the Criminal and Social Justice Committee during the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in Washington that as she worked her way up through the ranks at the Metropolitan Police Department, she made a list of what she would change if she ever became boss and when she did in 2007 she pulled it out and got to work. Among the efforts she undertook:

- Changing the culture in policing that homicides cannot be prevented to one that recognizes they can be;
- Changing the mentality of the 90’s and early 2000’s that not every homicide is equally important, which Lanier said is not true;
- Moving her department from one that resisted the use of technology to being the most technologically advanced police departments in the country;
- Increasing foot patrols and reducing response times and numbers of calls for service at the same time.

As a result of these and other efforts, Lanier reported that in DC between 2008 and 2012, the annual number of homicides dropped 53 percent, gun homicides went down by 58 percent, and homicides committed by juveniles dropped 63 percent.

Assistant Attorney General for Justice



Left to right, USCM Criminal and Social Justice Committee Vice Chair Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, COPS Office Director Ron Davis, USCM Criminal and Social Justice Committee Chair Houston Mayor Annise Parker, Washington (DC) Police Chief Cathy Lanier, Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason, and Civil Rights Special Litigation Chief Jonathan Smith.

Programs Karol Mason briefed the mayors on her agency’s efforts to help communities develop and implement creative strategies that can help to reduce violence. She described the Attorney General’s sentencing reform initiative that, she said, can reduce mass incarceration without jeopardizing public safety. She outlined the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, which provides limited funding but also technical assistance, which she said can be much more valuable, to

the 10 participating communities. Mason told the mayors, however, that all cities can take advantage of the Diagnostic Center. Housed in the Office of Justice Programs, it brings together help from the COPS Office, Office of Violence Against Women and OJP to respond to problems that communities bring to it. She invited the mayors to go to crimesolutions.gov for information.

Consent Decrees

The committee session then turned to consent decrees, an issue about which several mayors have raised concern. Committee Chair Houston Mayor Annise Parker told the mayors that the Justice Department has had the authority for about 20 years to investigate local police departments if there is reason to believe their policies and practices violate the constitution. For some departments, these investigations have been positive and lead to important reforms. For others, they’ve been costly and taken too long.

Jonathan Smith, Chief of the Special Litigation Section of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, provided a primer for the mayors on the issue and told them that the vast majority of the work his agency does is in partnership with communities and their political leaders and not in an adversarial situation. That occurs only when they find a pattern of practice which violates federal laws after conducting an extensive and transparent investigation of an agency.

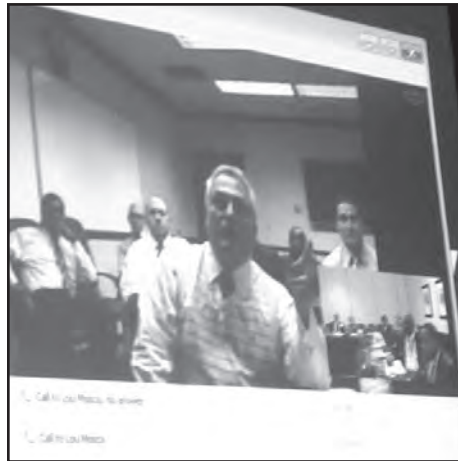
COPS Office Director Ron Davis briefed the mayors on his Office’s efforts to help departments avoid getting to the consent decree stage. The COPS Office is available to work with mayors and police departments to assess what may be broken and determine how to fix it in an effort to assure a department is engaging in constitutional policing. He discussed the links between constitutional policing and violence reduction. Davis applauded the mayors for their efforts to work with their chiefs to institute community policing and told them that the next evolution in policing is being smart on crime.

Partner America Update – Saved by Technology!

By Jeff Bean

Despite the winter storm and cancelled flights, the Partner America Program, a private/public partnership between American Management Services and The U.S. Conference of Mayors, was still able to give an update at Small Business, Franchising and Entrepreneurship Task Force held during the 82nd Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting. American Management Services Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Lou Mosca was scheduled to speak at the task force meeting, but his flight was cancelled. With quick action from Conference of Mayors and hotel staff, a live video link was established and Mosca was able to speak and interact with the mayors in the room.

Co-Chairs Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth



American Management Services Executive Vice President Lou Mosca speaks to mayors at the Small Business, Franchising and Entrepreneurship Task Force from his office in Orlando.

Kautz and Kansas City Mayor Sly James opened the meeting and then turned it over to Mosca to give an update on the Partner America Program. Mosca encouraged the mayors to focus on their working relationship with small businesses in their communities. "Mayors are the boots on the ground and the only true elected officials who understand and work with the local business community," Mosca stated. "Small businesses are still struggling and facing issues like access to capital, increasing cost of health care and shrinking profit margins. The Partner America program is a resource that the Conference of Mayors has which offers solutions and tools to help small business grow and succeed."

James thanked the Partner America program for helping one of his small busi-

nesses in Kansas City that was struggling and thanks to the efforts of the Partner America program the business is now on the path to profitability and growth.

Kautz reminded each of the mayor's present the importance of the value added services Partner America can provide to the small businesses in their cities and to reach out to Mosca to have Partner America provide help and assistance.

The session ended with Mosca providing each of the mayors in attendance with a copy of the Mayor's Small Business Best Practices, sharing ways to interact with their small business community and how to incorporate Partner America in their communities.

For more information on the Partner America Program, contact Jeff Bean at jbean@usmayors.org or 202-446-8140.

U.S. Trade Representative Froman Talks Trade Agenda to Exports, Ports Task Force

By Dave Gatton

The nation's new Trade Representative, Ambassador Michael Froman, met with mayors attending The U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter meeting January 22 in Washington (DC) to discuss the status of the Administration's trade agenda.

has promoted enhanced trade relations between U.S. and Latin American cities.

Froman discussed with the mayors major trade talks that would dramatically spur expanded exports, including the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. The TPP would cover eleven

Froman also acknowledged the importance of inland and seaport infrastructure to the efficient movement of goods throughout the U.S. Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster indicated that we needed to anticipate what the future trade patterns and infrastructure needs would be ten or twenty years into the future. "We need to ask ourselves the question: How will 3-D printing affect our international trade and our ports?" he said.

Following Froman, Jeff McKee of the Army Corps of Engineers reviewed that status of projects to deepen U.S. ports in

order to accommodate much larger ships due to the new Panama Canal. Those ships will require harbor depth of 50 feet, but many U.S. ports do not meet that requirement.

"We are working with Congress to ensure that funds collected through the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) are dedicated for their intended purpose," said Brown. HMTF currently has a \$7 billion surplus because Congress has used the funds for other purposes. Both the House and Senate version of the Water Resources Development Act would require a gradual increase of HMTF funds to be used for modernization of the nation's ports. The bill is in a House-Senate Conference Committee but is expected to see final passage this year.



Left to right, USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, USCM Metro Exports and Ports Chair Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman, and Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman.

Speaking before the mayors' Metro Exports and Ports Task Force, Froman directly linked expanded exports to high-quality job growth in the U.S. "In 2012, every billion dollars of exported goods supported 5,300 American jobs while the same amount of services exports supported nearly 4,000 jobs," he said. The salaries for these jobs range from 13 to 18 percent higher than jobs in other sectors.

Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith welcomed the Ambassador to the meeting. Smith represents the Conference of Mayors as a member of the President's Export Council and spoke on the importance of cities and metro areas developing export promotion strategies. During his tenure Smith

countries in the Asia-Pacific Region; the T-TIP would decrease and streamline regulations for U.S. workers and firms in trade relations with European countries. "These agreements would allow U.S. business to sell to 1.5 billion consumers representing two-thirds of the world's GDP," he said.

In order to conclude the trade agreements, Congress will need to pass Trade Promotion Authority to determine the process for consideration and agreement on the trade deals. "We understand how important it is for Congress to pass this authority in order for us to grow U.S. jobs and exports," said Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, Chair of the Task Force. "We will make that a priority within this Task Force and Conference."

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Market Place Fairness, Skills Gap, Pension Reform, Census Data Focus of Metro Economies Committee Meeting

By Larry Jones

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer told members of the Metro Economies Committee during the January 22 meeting that the passage of the Marketplace Fairness Act, which will enable local communities to collect taxes on Internet sales, continues to be a high priority of the Conference of Mayors in 2014. As Chairman of the committee, Fischer also mentioned three other key issues facing local communities: the skill gap between workers and jobs; out-of-controlled pension liabilities; and the need for up-to-date census data in order to plan for the future. Several highly knowledgeable speakers led mayors in a discussion on these issues. The following is a summary of their remarks.

Marketplace Fairness

Corey Tellez, Legislative Assistant to Senator Dick Durbin (IL), told mayors that with their support and support from retailers, governors and other stakeholders across the country, the Senate passed the Market Place Fairness Act last year by a strong bipartisan majority (69 — 27). Fischer pointed out that once enacted, the legislation will level the playing field between businesses on Main Street and those who sell over the Internet. It will do so by requiring Internet retailers to collect state and local taxes just as businesses on Main Street are required to do. State and local governments are losing an estimated \$23 billion annually because of this loophole in the current tax system.

Very little has been done since the Senate passage of the bill. Tellez explained that while House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (VA) has made it clear that he does not support the Senate bill, he introduced a set of principles last year that may be used later to draft a House bill. Tellez asked mayors to continue to urge Goodlatte as well as Speaker John Boehner (OH), Majority Leader Eric Cantor (VA) and Majority Whip Kevin McCarty (CA) to work to ensure action on legislation in the Judiciary Committee and on the House floor this year. If this does not happen in a timely manner, Tellez said Senate leaders will explore other alternatives to get the bill enacted.

Skills Gap

U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) Chief Economist Susan Helper explained that while the nation still has an unemployment problem, things are getting better. She said we have created 8.2 million jobs over the last four years, and the unemployment rate is coming down and now stands at 6.7 percent. However, she pointed out that's not the complete story. We still have 10.9 million people unemployed and about 4.1 million of those workers have been unemployed for six months or longer. She said we still face the overall problem of weak demand since there are 2.7 job seekers for every job announcement. At the same time there is a widespread skill shortage. She said, "To an economist, we say wait a minute, how is there widespread skill shortage? If there was, we'd see wages rise for people that have those skills." She explained that in today's economy, instead of raising wages, employers are often willing to let a job remain vacant until they find someone who is willing to accept the wages they are offering.

In response to the skill gap problem, Helper explained that DOC is working on developing a credentialing system that will enable firms to give guidance to people coming out of school or people in retraining on what kinds of things you need to know to qualify for specific jobs such as welders and hospital technicians. She also said DOC is working with the Department of Labor to help convene regional partnerships that bring together employers, unions and community colleges to promote better understanding of the job needs in the region.

Pension Reform

San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed told mayors his city was forced to reform its retirement system after experiencing a rise in pension costs from \$70 million ten years ago to \$270 million this year. He said most of the money used to pay pension benefits is taken out of the general fund. To address this problem, Reed explained that the city ended up going to the voters with a ballot measure that implemented a lower cost, lower benefit (but still a very good benefit) retirement package for new employees; and one that prohibited



Left to right, Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry, USCM Metro Economies Committee Chairman Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, U.S. Department of Commerce Chief Economist Susan Helper, U.S. Census Bureau Director John Thompson, and USCM Metro Economies Committee Vice Chairman Racine Mayor John Dickert.

bonus checks. For current employees, the voters approved a measure that would require them to pay a larger share of the unfunded liabilities. He said they are paying a very tiny portion now but that amount could grow to 16 percent of their pay in the form of additional contributions or pay cuts.

In assessing San Jose pension liability problem, Reed said he and other leaders concluded that making employees pay more was not a solution to the problem. The cost was going up so much, he explained, that neither the city nor the employees could afford to pay for it. That's what brought the city to offer employees the choice of a lower cost plan, one that is lower for them and lower for the city. Reed said the ballot measure was approved by a 70 percent yes vote in 2012 and he believes it could serve as a model for other cities trying to address out-of-control pension liabilities.

Census

U.S. Census Bureau Director John Thomas told mayors that this year, the Census Bureau would begin releasing

data from the 2012 Census of Governments, which is done every five years to provide comprehensive data about the nearly 90,000 state and local governments across the nation. He said information will be released through 2015 on a variety of areas including the number and structure of state and local governments, state tax collections, state administered pension systems, public employment and payroll, state and local finances, and state and local pension systems.

Thomas told mayors the Census Bureau is already engaged in testing and preparation for the 2020 Decennial Census. The aim is to modernize the technology used to conduct the Census in a way that will increase outreach to the public, while reducing the cost and improving the efficiency of the decennial census. The Bureau is also examining every question on the American Community Survey to make sure there is a need for its collection. This survey is an ongoing survey that is sent to a sample of the population each month to update what the nation's community looks like and how it lives.

Environmental Challenges, Best Practices Featured During Committee Meeting

By Jubi Headley

The Environment Committee, chaired by Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, met with U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe who outlined the agency's top priorities. Noting EPA's work with the Conference of Mayors to develop an integrated planning process for cities' implementation of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and an accompanying affordability framework, Perciasepe also highlighted the issues of resiliency and climate change. He noted that as part of President Obama's climate action plan, a task force of state and local government officials has been established to advise the Administration on resiliency issues, and acknowledged that with more than 1,000 mayors having signed the climate protection agreement, many mayors are in fact 'ahead of the federal government' on this issue and that mayoral leadership will be vital to progress.

Perciasepe also discussed the need for a framework to address resiliency issues at existing power plants, to prepare utilities for climate impacts. While states will be tasked with developing these plans, Perciasepe noted that EPA would like to ensure that mayors can work collaboratively with the states to develop these action plans.

Climate change and the issue of resiliency were also highlighted by Daniel Weiss, Senior Fellow and Director of Climate Strategy at the Center for American Progress (CAP). Weiss discussed CAP's just-released report, "Five Grow-



Left to right, USCM Environment Committee Chair Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, and Daniel Weiss from the Center for American Progress.

ing Threats to America's Cities: Extreme Weather." The report notes that the frequency of billion-dollar weather events has increased dramatically in recent years from less than two per year in the 1980s to more than nine per year from 2010 to 2012. The report calls for investments in community resilience to save both lives and taxpayer dollars. Weiss cited a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) study which found that every dollar spent on community resilience can reduce disaster damages by \$4. Conversely, CAP's research has found that from FY11 to FY13, federal taxpayers spent \$6 on disaster cleanup for every dollar spent on community resilience.

The report calls for a national projec-

tion of federal disaster spending — the only existing estimate is the one CAP undertook for this report — as well as an estimate of resilience dollars needed to address the issue, and a dedicated revenue source for resilience projects. Weiss called upon the mayors to let the Administration know how much communities need resources to prepare for extreme weather, rather than to respond to them.

Two mayoral best practices rounded out the session. First, San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, aided by San Francisco Director of Public Utilities Harlan Kelly, talked about the \$4.6 billion investment that the city is making in water infrastructure. Lee noted that San Francisco's aging system crosses three major seismic faults,

and some sewers date back to the time of the gold rush in the 1800's. In addition, the city's treatment facility, which treats 80 percent of wastewater, fails at an alarming rate.

In the Bay Area water infrastructure has been essential to business development, particularly in Silicon Valley, according to Lee. That's why San Francisco is making this significant investment in water infrastructure for every \$1 billion the city spends on water infrastructure, according to Lee, 26,000 jobs are created.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter talked about Penn's Landing, Philadelphia's initiative to develop its riverfront along the Delaware River. Historically the project has been a challenge to the city — prior to Nutter taking office the board responsible for the project had not met in two years. Nutter dissolved the corporation and simultaneously created the Delaware River Waterfront Authority, which created a master plan to address development along the seven-mile stretch of waterfront. The plan is focused primarily on the public part of the riverfront, resulting in the development of piers, bike trails, and will create ten new parks. And while the city's investment has created significant opportunities for private development, the plan requires private developers to ensure that their development will not block access or views for the public.

Walkability is a key feature of the plan, which also places an emphasis on the use of mass transit to travel to the waterfront. Nutter noted that there's been significant public input into the plan — the city has held numerous charrettes to discover residents' vision for waterfront, with the goal of making it one of the best waterfronts in the country.

Democratic Mayors Elect New Leaders for 2014

By Larry Jones

During their January 22 meeting, members of the National Conference of Democratic Mayors (NCDM) elected a new slate of leaders for 2014. Former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, who served as NCDM president until 2013 when he decided not to run for reelection as Mayor, presided over the election process. Members of the organizations unanimously elected the following new leaders:

- President, Houston Mayor Annise Parker
- Vice President, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter
- Vice President, Kansas City Mayor Sly James
- Vice President, Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland
- Vice President, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
- Vice President, West Sacramento Mayor Chris Cabaldon
- Treasurer, Newton Mayor Setti Warren
- Secretary, Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra
- Regional Chair, Racine Mayor John Dickert

After assuming leadership, Parker commended R.T. Rybak for providing outstanding leadership of the organization over the last several years. David Agnew, Deputy Assistant to the President and White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, and Democratic National Committee Deputy National Political Director Steve Walker addressed members of the organization, discussing plans for the new year.



At right, newly elected National Conference of Democratic Mayors President Houston Mayor Annise Parker commends former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak for his outstanding leadership as past president of NCDM during its January 22 meeting.

HHS Secretary Sebelius Discusses Affordable Care Act Progress

By Crystal Swann

U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius led off the meeting of the Children, Health and Human Services Committee, beginning her presentation by praising mayors for the leadership role on childhood obesity. She noted that last year in a number of urban areas across the country there had been a reduction in childhood obesity rates, representing the first 'dent' in an unwavering upward trend. Nevertheless, Sebelius stressed, there is still much work to do on the issue, and called on Mayors to sustain their efforts, pledging HHS' commitment to continue to partner with Mayors to address childhood obesity.

Sebelius then turned to the issue of health care coverage, stating, "Mayors see the bottom line of uncompensated medical care." According to the American Hospital Association, the nation spends roughly \$326 billion annually on uncompensated care, and \$18 billion on unnecessary emergency room visits specifically. Sebelius acknowledged the profound impact that health issues can have on educational attainment, jobs, and other socio-economic factors in cities, and emphasized the role that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) can play in helping communities address these issues.

ACA provides \$151 million in new grants for new health care sites, which will provide services for up to 100 million new patients. Approximately nine million people started the New Year with new coverage under ACA, including three million children covered under their parents' plans. Sebelius praised the efforts of Mayors and cities to encourage enrollment, and noted that while enrollment through the healthcare.gov website got off to a "rocky" start, the Administration committed to creating a different user experience by November 30, and met that goal. As a result, there have been millions of daily visits to the website, and no further crashes — the average website visit now takes about 30 minutes. Beyond this, everyone who initially visited the website has been contacted to provide assistance as needed.

The Administration always anticipated that not every person would be willing or able to access the website, and thus also provided a toll-free number (800-318-2596), staffed by 12,000 people. Both English and Spanish speakers are available, as well as translation services in about 100 additional languages. HHS has also trained helpers in every community and at every community health center across the country.

Sebelius called on the mayors to work collaboratively with the Administration to maximize enrollment during the open enrollment period ending on March 31, and to help educate people about the new law. National polls show that many people believe that they still will not be able to

afford coverage, when in reality six out of ten people can get insured under the new law for as little as \$100 per month.

Sebelius also noted that the law provides an opportunity to expand Medicaid. While at the end of the day states make final Medicaid eligibility determinations, Sebelius stressed that mayors can have a significant voice in the conversations taking place in state legislatures

the District to provide 2,000 new classroom slots for three- and four-year-olds over six years. As Gray noted, research shows that backing high-quality pre-kindergarten, or 'pre-K,' for all children yields high returns in terms of improved educational outcomes. In addition, studies of specific programs across the country suggest that the benefits for children extend well into adulthood — children enrolled in pre-K programs evaluated went



Left to right, Washington (DC) Mayor Vincent C. Gray; USCM Children, Health and Human Services Committee Chair Green Bay Mayor James Schmitt; and U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius.

across the country. Absent the expansion of Medicaid, the lowest income tier will still have no health insurance, and Sebelius stated that expansion could have a profound impact in larger states such as Texas, or Florida, where 23 percent of people are uninsured. If Medicaid was expanded in Florida, according to Sebelius, an additional two million more people would be eligible for health insurance — underwritten by an estimated \$51 billion in federal dollars. Sebelius further noted that the ACA provides for 100 percent coverage of these expenses in 2014, 2015, and 2016 — without adding to the federal deficit — and is structured to ensure that a state will never pay more than ten percent per year over the course of the next ten years.

The next presenter, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Principal Deputy Administrator Kana Enomoto, focused on HHS' and the Administration's commitment to addressing mental health issue. She also highlighted SAMHSA newly updated, "Mayors' Resource Guide on Behavioral Health Issues" and a new website, www.creating-communitysolutions.org to assist communities in addressing mental health issues.

The CHHS session also featured two mayoral best practices. Washington (DC) Mayor Vincent Gray spoke about his efforts, beginning during his tenure as Washington (DC) City Council Chairman, to spearhead the passage of the Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Act, which established a voluntary, high-quality pre-school program in

on to earn more income, were more likely to graduate high school — and less likely to repeat a grade, be arrested or have children out of wedlock — than children who did not participate in pre-K programs.

The legislation, signed into law in 2008, achieved the established targets well before the 2014 deadline. Current, 70 percent of three year olds in the District, and more than 90 percent of four

year olds, are enrolled in school. And the program is already showing concrete benefits. Improvements in math and reading skills have been documented. Moreover, the program has provided a gateway to universal health screening for young children. At the start of the program, an astonishing 35 children had been screened that year, according to Gray — that number has now grown to more than 4,000.

Conference of Mayors Children, Health and Human Services Committee Chair Green Bay Mayor James Schmitt discussed "Live54218," a program to address childhood obesity in his city. '54218' is a play on a traditional ZIP code fake zip code — in reality serves as a reminder to city residents to consume five servings fruits and vegetables, drink four bottles of water, spend less than two hours in front of the screen (any screen), participate in at least one hour of physical activity, and sleep eight hours — each day. The goal of the program is to transform Green Bay into a community where health, academic achievement, and the economy are supported by increased access to affordable, healthy, local food. Schmitt and other city leaders have been vocal and active champions for the program, a key component of which is a Farm-to-School Program to connect local food producers and food services directors, as well as develop a more coordinated approach to nutrition education and school gardening.

Schmitt noted that Green Bay, not coincidentally, is one of the cities mentioned previously by Sebelius that has seen a reduction in childhood obesity rates. In order to achieve such success, Schmitt maintains that, "You must be vigilant, keep talking about the issue. It's my top priority — next to winning the Super Bowl," Schmitt quipped, to a chorus of laughter.

Community Leaders of America: Republican Mayors



At left, Albuquerque Mayor Richard J. Berry, President of Community Leaders of America (formerly Republican Mayors and Local Officials), with USCM President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith.

Task Force Emphasizes Bipartisan Approach to Immigration Reform

Mayors' Letter to House Calls for Quick Action, Outlines Principles for Reform

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

What mayors can do to encourage action on immigration reform legislation in the House of Representatives was the focus of the January 24 immigration reform task force meeting co-chaired by Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas and Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait. Salinas welcomed Tait as his co-chair and said, "He is a Republican; I am a Democrat. We are committed to working together on immigration reform this year in true bipartisan fashion, as mayors generally do, and hope that we can help to persuade the House of Representatives to do the same so that we can achieve real immigration reform in our nation this year."

Tait thanked Salinas and said he believes that, "Achieving real immigration reform this year is critically important for our nation, our economy and all of our people, and hopes that our bipartisan effort through the Conference of Mayors can help to make that happen."

Briefing the mayors on prospects for immigration reform legislation in the House and what mayors can do to help make that happen were U.S. Chamber of Commerce Labor, Immigration and Employer Benefits Senior Vice President Randy Johnson and White House Domest-



Left to right, Senior Policy Director for Immigration at the White House Domestic Policy Council Felicia Escobar, USCM Immigration Reform Task Force Co-Chair Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas, USCM Immigration Reform Task Force Co-Chair Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait, and Chamber of Commerce Senior Vice President Randy Johnson.

tic Policy Council Immigration Senior Policy Director Felicia Escobar.

Johnson told the mayors that he has worked on immigration reform for 15 years, and that he thinks it can be accomplished this year because things have changed. Among the reasons he cited: the business community is more involved; evangelicals have been instrumental in trying to move House conservatives on the issue; polling shows the American people support immigration reform; and the economic data on the benefits of reform are better than before.

Escobar also discussed the economic benefits of immigration reform, particularly to agriculture and the housing industry, and told the mayors that it is important to make economic arguments in support of reform. She discussed the myths about border security, including its importance to promoting economic activ-

ity, trade and travel. She commented that providing an earned path to citizenship is an important public safety matter since having a large number of undocumented people is not good for safety.

Mayors' Letter to the House

Both Johnson and Escobar discussed the upcoming House Republican retreat, which was expected to include a discussion of immigration reform and the principles which Republican leaders have been developing. Both also cited the importance of sending to all members of the House the letter which the Conference was circulating to mayors for signatures and urged the organization to get as many mayors as possible from both parties to sign on prior to the retreat.

More than 100 mayors had signed on by January 29. The letter was sent to all House members that day, which was the

day before the retreat began.

In the letter, the mayors say that they "...believe strongly that maintaining the status quo will further damage the economic, political and social structure of our cities and our country" and they urge the House to expeditiously bring legislation to the floor. The letter contains four principles to guide immigration reform:

- "Like the constituents we serve, we believe that a meaningful fix to immigration must begin with a strengthening of border security. Further, interior enforcement should be improved to enhance our ability to identify and remove visa overstays, but our state and local law enforcement must be able to remain focused on community policing.
- "We believe the nation would benefit from a less bureaucratic and more time-sensitive system that allows workers of all types — seasonal, agricultural, lesser-skilled and high skilled — to lawfully come to America, either temporarily or permanently, and contribute to our economy.
- "As we fix immigration, we must also provide a uniform system of employment verification. We recognize that competing technologies and approaches exist and believe they should be tested against one another in determining the best manner for accurately authenticating workers.
- "There are equally compelling moral dimensions also related to fixing immigration that underscore the importance of moving forward with the effort. We believe that it is vital for any immigration legislation to enable people to come out of the shadows and fully pursue the American Dream for themselves and their families. This is also essential to our efforts to combat crime and provide effective police protection for our citizens."

Orientation for New Mayors, First Time Attendees



More than 60 new mayors and first time attendees gathered to meet with "veteran" mayors at the January 22 Orientation Session and learn about the organization from Membership Committee Chair Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler and USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran.



At podium, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, with Membership Committee Chair Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler, welcomes newly elected mayors and first time attendees to the 82nd Winter Meeting during the Orientation Session.

Veterans Affairs Task Force Focuses on Helping Returning Veterans Reintegrate in Local Communities

By Larry Jones

"As mayors, we are always looking for better ways to serve our veterans and military service personnel, who continue to make great sacrifices to defend our freedom and protect our way of life," said Conference of Mayors Veterans Affairs Task Force Co-Chair Rochester Mayor Ardele Brede, setting the tone for the January 24 meeting. He introduced several well-known speakers who discussed what is being done at the federal level and in local communities to improve services to veterans.

Increasing Awareness to Services Available to Veterans

Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Tommy Sowers at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) posed the question, "Who's going to be the first city to end veterans unawareness?" He pointed out that the Department of Veterans Affairs is a big agency with a \$151 billion annual budget and most of that goes to local communities in the form of direct payments. There are 1700 sites of care, 300 veteran centers, 151 major hospitals and regional offices across the nation. "Our Secretary has the broad idea that we owe our veterans the care they were promised and the benefits they've earned and we have incorporated that into the VA goals," he said.

Sowers explained that while there are 22 million veterans in the nation, only about nine million use one of many VA services available to them. Over 50 percent don't

use the VA. To increase awareness among veterans, the VA has teamed up with the Ad Council to develop an ad which will be aired later this year. They have also acquired 70 RVs that will travel around the country starting in March to draw attention to the VA's goal of increasing access to services.

Viewing Veterans, Families as a Resource

U.S. Army Colonel James Isenhower, Special Assistant to the Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff and Director of the Office of Warrior and Family Support, told mayors his focus was on the successful reintegration of veterans and members of their family back into local communities. He challenged mayors to view veterans and their families as a resource for local communities, not as charity cases. They make good workers. Citing a study released by the Corporate Executive Board, where supervisors of veterans were interviewed, Isenhower said it was

found that veterans are more productive and less likely to turnover. From the time veterans enlist, he said taxpayer monies are invested in creating a veteran who can implicate values that complement our country and community efforts.

Local Partnerships

Retired Air Force Major General Dutch Holland, who serves as Executive Director of the Shaw-Sumter Partnership for Progress, asked, "What does a military veteran want? What are the concerns of a military veteran?" His answer, "Housing for them and their families, educational opportunities, health care and employment."

Holland told mayors that the Shaw-Sumter Partnership for Progress is a partnership between four communities in South Carolina — Charleston, Sumter, Beaufort and Columbia — that work together to get soon to be released military service men and women to remain in these communities. He said veterans make good workers and want to work and businesses are looking for good workers and want to hire veterans.

He also said South Carolina has a pilot project called Transitional Workforce Education Assistance Collaboration (TWEAC), which is a collaboration of military installations, community colleges, technical schools, higher educational institutions that have good transitional education programs that help returning veterans prepare for jobs in the private sector.



At left, Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Tommy Sowers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs spoke to members of the Veterans Affairs Task Force during their January 24 meeting with USCM Veterans Affairs Task Force Co-Chair Rochester (MN) Mayor Ardele Brede, right.

Commerce, Labor Departments Partner on Skills Training

By Kathy Wiggins

"To quote Secretary Perez, we can no longer 'Train and Pray' — meaning we can no longer invest in training that doesn't lead to an in-demand job AND a career path," said Kate McAdams, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce, told mayors at the Jobs, Education and the Workforce Standing Committee meeting on January 22. Chaired by Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis, the session brought McAdams together with Seema Nanda, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Labor, to discuss their partnership on the Open for Business Agenda. "Whether we call it a skills gap, or something else, we know that training and workforce development is critical to creating sturdy ladders of opportunity for economic advancement," said Nanda.

"Our 'Skilled Workforce's focus is within the innovation area because without a trained and innovative workforce, firms can't grow and workers won't prosper," said McAdams. "Skills training is essential for economic growth and global competitiveness, and right now there is



Left to right, Pembroke Pines Mayor Frank Ortis, U.S. Department of Labor Deputy Chief of Staff Seema Nanda, and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce Kate McAdams.

an urgency to focus on better aligning employers' needs with the ecosystem of training providers."

"Secretary Pritzker (and many of you)

are hearing from countless business leaders about the difficulty they are having finding the right workers," said McAdams. "The government can do more." Commerce Secretary Pritzker is partnering with the Secretaries of Labor and Education and others in the Administration to do just that. While the Department of Commerce does not directly fund training in the way that Labor or Education do, they directly touch industry-driven workforce development in a few areas, and they want to elevate this work.

"Secretary Perez has been going across the country and meeting with business, local leaders, the long term unemployed, and foundations," said Nanda. "He has an acute realization that the solutions are, more often than not, local. One size clearly is not going to fit all in workforce development. And, while there is a critical role for the federal government to play in the workforce system, so much is and should be driven at the state and local level."

At the federal level, Labor has been working together across the Cabinet, with Commerce and Education playing critical

roles, to look at what steps can be taken throughout government to make sure that there is alignment at all levels, and how all three departments can improve the system.

"Our collaboration with Commerce is in this exact space: finding strategies to bring employers to participate in workforce development programs," Nanda said.

McAdams outlined how the Economic Development Administration (EDA) is making connections between economic development and workforce development — making sure a region is attractive to investment and supports innovative workers and firms.

EDA, for example, has provided over \$25 million dollars since 2011 for training facilities and related infrastructure that meet the workforce needs of local businesses. Additionally, many of Commerce's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers, located all across the U.S., help small and medium manufacturers assess their workforce needs — current and future — and address their workforce challenges as they plan for new product development, selling in new markets, or streamlining operations.

Technology and Innovation Task Force Showcases Tech for Entrepreneurship, Open Data Projects

By David W. Burns

The Technology and Innovation Task Force, chaired by San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee met January 22 during the 82nd Winter Meeting. The theme for the task force focused on using technology for entrepreneurship. The task force also showcased how to get started with open data along with a use-case of data for citizens.

"Jobs are very important to me and the topic for this year's conference is 'Innovations that Lead' so this task force meeting will focus on entrepreneurship and the new types of jobs that we must support and enable," said Lee. "We have lined up a truly remarkable group of people who will inspire you to think differently about how to create jobs in your cities—they are true leaders," he said.

Kicking off the discussion was Marc Roth, an entrepreneur who went from being homeless to launch his own "maker shop"

called the Learning Shelter, which specifically caters to other homeless individuals and allows them to learn about 3D printing, woodworking, metal work, and more.

Kimberly Bryant, founder of Black Girls Code. Black Girls Code is an organization that helps train girls of color, ages 7 to 17 learn programming and design. Over 1,500 girls have participated in the program to date.

Dana Mauriello from Etsy provided some insights into crafters making and selling items from their home. Women make up 88 percent of all sellers on Etsy, many of which are using their skills to supplement income from another job or creating full businesses in cities.

The last two speakers on the task force turned the focus to open data, a favorite topic of the Technology and Innovation Task Force. Rebecca Williams from Sunlight Foundation. Sunlight had recently published an open data toolkit that helps cities with the initial steps and provides



Left to right, Craig Kunkle of Angie's List; Jim Wilson of SafeTown.org; Rebecca Williams of Sunlight Foundation; Dana Mauriello of Etsy; USCM Technology and Innovation Task Force Chair San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee; and Marc Roth of the Learning Shelter.

how-tos when it comes to opening data in city government.

The final discussion featured a best practice from Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard and Craig Kunkle from Angie's List which worked together with a partner, SafeTown.org to help create Band of Neighbors, a hyper-local networking tool that provides local alerts from government and provides a method for neighbors

to communicate with each other. It is an example of a practical use of open data sets inside an easy-to-use dashboard.

The task force meeting successfully shared stories about the potential of technology for entrepreneurship along with the promise of open data and practical use cases of it. The task force plans to meet again in Dallas at the 82nd Annual Conference of Mayors.

Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness Focuses on Eliminating Homelessness Among Veterans

By Eugene T. Lowe

The Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness met on January 24 to be briefed on the innovative work of the city of Saint Paul on homelessness, and to hear the most recent homeless activities of three federal agencies. Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider and Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton, Co-Chairs of the Conference of Mayors Hunger and Homelessness Task Force, opened the meeting by citing some of the findings of the Hunger and Homelessness Report released December 2013. In general, the mayors said that the 25-city survey found that requests for emergency food assistance increased by seven percent, and the overall increase of the number of persons experiencing homelessness increased by three percent.

Saint Paul Mayor Christopher B. Coleman, the President of the National League of Cities, began his remarks by saying that he was "truly inspired and in awe of what Salt Lake City and Phoenix had accomplished to end homelessness among their veterans populations." Phoenix and Salt Lake City had a friendly competition that helped each city reach its goal. Similarly, Coleman said that Saint Paul is challenging Columbus (OH) and Des Moines on which city would end veterans homelessness. While they will compete, the three cities will also work together to solve the problem.

As for Saint Paul, Coleman said that his city has a "huge challenge". The city's largest provider for the homeless is the Dorothy Day Center, run by Catholic Charities, built in the early 90s as a day center for people to drop in to get off the streets during the

day. But over the years it has evolved into a men and women's overnight shelter, "a purpose it was never intended to serve," the mayor said. A new center is being planned that will consist of an overnight shelter and provide for transitional housing into more permanent or stable housing.

In a coordinated briefing, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development presented updates of their activities to eliminate homelessness. United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Deputy Director Laura Zeilinger said, "Homelessness is a complex problem, though a problem where solutions are largely known. Implementation of the solutions, however, requires coordination across government entities." Zeilinger spoke of "Opening Doors," the first ever federal strategic plan that guides the work of 19 federal agencies to prevent and end homelessness. Opening Doors, Zeilinger said, "Is a strong example of the collaboration and coordination that can help at the federal level and more importantly together with states and cities across the country to achieve the vision that everyone has a safe and stable place to call home." Opening Doors includes four bold goals: finishing the job of ending chronic homelessness and ending homelessness among veterans in 2015, preventing and ending homelessness for families, youth and children in 2020. On these goals, Zeilinger said, "We are seeing progress." Overall homelessness has decreased to six percent.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs Director Lisa Pape said that there is over 57,000 homeless veterans on the streets on any given night. But she added, "Homelessness among veterans has been reduced by 24 percent over the last four years." President Obama has made it a goal to end veterans' homelessness by 2015. Pape said that the Veterans Administration has the largest integrated homeless system in the nation. VA homeless programs include prevention, outreach, transitional housing, permanent housing, and justice programs. Pape also told the mayors about the Supportive Services for Veterans Families Grant program that will provide \$600 million in grants to communities in 2014 and 2015 for homeless prevention and rapid rehousing.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Planning and Development Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Johnston told the task force about the Notice of Funding Availability for \$1.7 billion for which continuums of care will apply for in a couple of weeks. He briefly discussed what communities should focus on when applying for the funds. One, Johnston said, is "to focus on chronic homelessness." He said, "If you are going to be using permanent supportive housing and you are going to be creating new permanent supportive housing projects, use it for the people who need it most, people who without that housing will continue to be homeless."



Left to right, USICH Executive Director Barbara Poppe, HUD Office of Community Planning and Development Acting Assistant Secretary Mark Johnston, Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider, Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton, Washington (DC) Mayor Vincent Gray, USICH Deputy Director Laura Green Zeilinger, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Programs Director Lisa Pape, and Saint Paul Mayor Christopher B. Coleman.

HUD Secretary Donovan: "Continue to Make the Case for CDBG, HOME"

By Eugene T. Lowe

HUD Secretary Donovan did not take long in his remarks to the Community Development and Housing Committee to comment about two of the nation's largest block grants — the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships program. The Housing Committee, chaired by Newton Mayor Setti Warren, also heard presentations on Innovative Public Private Partnerships and Intergenerational Mobility.

Donovan described CDBG and HOME as "critical" programs for our nation. He urged the mayors to also focus on HOME because the program doesn't often get the same attention as CDBG. Together, he said the two programs leverage four dollars. But the programs have been squeezed with HOME down almost fifty percent and CDBG down about twenty-five percent from when our fiscal crisis started. The FY14 funding for CDBG "is a big victory for all of us." The Secretary added, "I tell you over the past five years, I have never seen better work than I saw last year, the partnership between HUD and all of you made the case for CDBG and HOME. When you go from \$1.6 billion in the House Bill to \$3 billion (the enacted funding level), that is a real



Left to right, City Community Development and Microfinance Global Director Bob Annibale, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, Committee Chair Newton Mayor Setti Warren, Allentown Mayor Ed Palowski, and Brookings Institution Center on Children and Families Associate Director Kerry Searle Grannis.

victory." Donovan said that he would love to see the programs at the level they were funded a few years ago. But he said, "It is important that we show that we're thinking in innovative ways, creative ways and that we are looking at common sense, smart reforms to these programs so that we can make an even better case." The Secretary talked about the dialogue initiated by HUD called Moving CDBG

Forward. "We had 20 different listening sessions, with all of you, with grantees, with other stakeholders to get your ideas about smart reforms, how we streamline, simplify the programs so we can work better and make sure we can make the argument that we are using these dollars in the most effective and accountable ways as possible."

City Community Development and Microfinance Global Director Bob Annibale spoke on innovative public private partnerships. He said that Citi and other financial institutions have known for years that housing is the cornerstone of the work done in community development. Annibale said that whereas Citi is not the largest bank in terms of footprint in the United States, it is the "largest arranger of affordable housing." Much of the work has been supporting the Community Reinvestment Act which many cities have received benefits. Many more communities have not received such benefits. It is important, according to Annibale, "...that institutions invest where the need is greatest and not just where there is a regulatory incentive or requirement to do it."

Brookings Institution Center on Children and Families Associate Director Kerry Searle Grannis spoke on the subject, "A Strategic Framework for Improving Intergenerational Mobility." She talked about "...how we can delink the circumstances of a child's birth from their later outcome." Grannis added, "We want to make that link less about destiny." She said, "Politically, Americans respond more to the idea of opportunity than inequality." Opportunity can be measured, for instance, with jobs and growth. "But we don't know how to measure opportunity as well as we do with jobs and growth where we have numbers," Grannis said.

Task Force Members Review President's Climate Action Plan

By Kevin McCarty

Conference of Mayors Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force Co-chairs Carmel (IN) Mayor Jim Brainard and Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch convened the Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force to hear details of the President's Climate Action Plan at a January 22 session during the Conference of Mayors 82nd Winter Meeting in Washington (DC).

Brainard told the panel members, "Our new energy survey adds to the record of achievement by mayors and their cities, showing how we are making progress on energy and addressing climate protection and adaptation."

Noting his interest in fuel cell technology, Finch said, "We want to continue to support efforts to look at these investments (in new technologies), and find ways to bring them to fruition." He also cited his interest in seeing the panel give some attention to hydro power in the future.

Dan Utech, Special Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate, discussed key elements of the President's Climate Action Plan with the task force members. "We are building a foundation of commitment and leadership," he said. "The plan



Left to right, Special Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Dan Utech, USCM Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force Co-chair Carmel (IN) Mayor James Brainard, USCM Energy Independence and Climate Protection Task Force Co-chair Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch, Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero, and Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker.

represents our best effort to move the ball forward." In his remarks, he also recognized mayors for their leadership, citing the pledge of more than 1,000 mayors to take action on climate protection.

He joined with the task force members for the entire session, responding

to questions on a number of energy and climate issues, including a discussion on the President's recently-established State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. Several mayors, who serve of the President's new task force including Brainard,

shared their views on the panel's agenda.

Explaining why it is important to involve mayors in this federal government-wide review, Conference of Mayors Past President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter said, "Climate change ultimately happens on the ground, in cities." Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero talked about her plans to host a symposium in her area to "raise awareness" about climate issues.

Another member of the President's task force, Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker talked about how the panel provided the opportunity to consider "what we are seeing in our communities" and "how we [mayors] are addressing it."

Utech pointed out that the new federal advisory group will help identify what the Administration can do to support cities and local areas in adapting to climate change. In responding to a question about the Administration providing additional funds in its budgets for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, Utech said, "Whether it is refunded or not, we want to find ways to support you."

City Best Practices Featured at Vacant Properties Task Force Meeting

By Eugene T. Lowe

Two cities, Milwaukee and Gresham, have developed approaches to vacant and abandoned properties that were highlighted at the Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force Meeting. Wells Fargo also briefed the task force

on property preservation. Co-chairs Columbia (SC) Mayor Steve Benjamin and Dubuque Mayor Roy Buol served as moderators of the session.

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett discussed his city's unique role and three-year, \$11.6 million approach to tax foreclosures — the "Echo" of the financial

crisis. In addressing what is "echo" of the initial foreclosure crisis, where many families are still facing foreclosure, Barrett said, "We know that newspaper articles says foreclosures are decreasing, but as a city we are still going through the healing process. Milwaukee has developed a program with four components: prevention, elimination (which includes demolition), revitalization, and renewal. The mayor said, "Demolition can be controversial." But, he added, "When a house gets to the point that it is no longer salvageable, you must demolish the dwelling." In terms of revitalization and renewal, Barrett said that church groups have been very effective in renovating homes.

Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis described his city's project for transforming vacant properties into a vibrant commercial district. Bemis said that during the recession, they started to notice vacant storefronts in an area of his city named Rockwood. There was an idea to incentivize these small businesses. The concern was the vacancies would be condemned and the area would economically spiral

downward. Recommendations to solve the problem were solicited. It was eventually decided to waive a number of city fees such as the water system development fee, the park system development fee, and the business license fee and other fees to businesses with 5,000 feet or less of retail. Some 144 businesses were established, turning an area of the city with vacancies into a vibrant area of the city.

Finally, Wells Fargo REO Community Development for Premier Asset Services Vice President Tyler Smith briefed the task force on a roadmap for property preservation. Smith explained how Wells Fargo manages vacant and abandoned properties. He said that when a loan is 30 days delinquent, "we start to inspect the property, and if it is vacant, we secure the property." Smith said, "Seven out of ten times when a customer contacts us we are able to avoid foreclosure." When a property is taken into Wells Fargo's REO inventory, the goal is responsible disposition of the property. The first step is the repair strategy. Smith said, "The expectation is that every property that we touch is going to have some level of repairs." Wells Fargo's goal is sell the repaired property to a borrower that will occupy the property as a primary residence.



Left to right, Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, Wells Fargo REO Vice President Tyler Smith, Columbia (SC) Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin, Dubuque Mayor Roy Buol, and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Alternative Fuels Top Committee's Agenda

By Debra DeHaney-Howard

Energy Committee Chair Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis convened his colleagues for a January 22 committee meeting during the 82nd Winter Meeting of the Conference of Mayors. At the meeting, committee members heard from Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Ernest Moniz, Philips Lighting Americas President/CEO Bruno Biasiotta, and Energy Committee Vice Chairs Monrovia Mayor MaryAnn Lutz and New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell.

In his remarks, Bemis reported on an earlier meeting with Moniz and Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith, noting the Secretary's commitment to establishing a stronger relationship with the nation's mayors, including working on ways to accelerate local action on energy and climate protection.

Citing the Conference of Mayors *Energy Efficiency and Technologies in America's Cities* survey, which was released during the Winter Meeting, Bemis said, "Cities are expanding their investment in energy technologies, with two-thirds of the nearly 300 cities in the survey expecting increased deployments of new energy systems over the next five years." "Whether we are talking about technology, energy efficiency or even energy emergency response, mayors



Left to right, Philips Lighting Americas President/CEO Bruno Biasiotta, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, USCM Staff Debra DeHaney-Howard, New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell, and Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz.

are leading on these challenges and others," Bemis added.

DOE Secretary Addresses Energy Committee

Moniz told members of the committee that, "Cities will continue to play a significant role in addressing energy and climate issues and are recognized as leaders in this area." Speaking to the need for federal energy policy, Moniz stated that it "...needs to be built from the bottom up."

On the issue of climate change, Moniz said, "Existing authority will be used, but without legislation, we are going to be limited in what we can do."

Moniz highlighted a number of DOE resources offered to cities that cover energy-related issues such as alternative fuels, building retrofits, energy financing, and deploying new energy technology.

When asked about the rise in natural gas and its impact on the environment, Moniz said, "Issues around the environ-

mental footprint have to be resolved. There's a lot of data that still needs to be collected, if you look at the challenges that are out there, each one of them looks challenging but manageable."

Mayors' Lighting Partnership

Philips Lighting Americas President/CEO Bruno Biasiotta gave remarks on the *Mayors' Lighting Partnership*, a program, which was launched last January with the Conference of Mayors, is designed to be a practical resource for mayors to make their cities more energy efficient. "Through the Mayors' Lighting Partnership, we have seen how lighting technology spurs economic development in cities," remarked Biasiotta. Noting the benefits of LEDs, Biasiotta said, "While many of your cities have benefited from LED outdoor lighting, interior LED lighting presents a new opportunity for making your city buildings more sustainable and energy efficient."

Biasiotta also highlighted some of the key findings from the survey, *Energy Efficiency and Technologies in America's Cities* that was released during the meeting. Biasiotta told panel members that, "More than four out of five mayors completing the survey identified LED and energy efficient lighting as the most promising technology for reducing city energy use and carbon emissions."

Biasiotta also talked about how new lighting technologies are benefiting cities in multiple ways, including lowering energy and maintenance costs, improv-

See ENERGY on page 35

Membership Committee Holds Roundtable Discussion on Local Mayoral Priorities

By Katie Pirolt

A record number of newly elected mayors were in attendance at the 82nd Winter Meeting, many of whom were sworn in just a few weeks prior to the meeting. To engage these mayors and other first-time attendees, Membership Standing Committee Chair Piscataway

Mayor Brian C. Wahler led a roundtable discussion on local mayoral priorities at the January 22 Membership Standing Committee. Wahler opened the discussion by saying, "One of the most significant benefits you'll get from this meeting is the opportunity to network with over 275 of your colleagues who all have best practices to share."

Throughout this session, mayors had an opportunity to describe their city's initiatives such as downtown and transit oriented development, disaster recovery, crime initiatives, and pension reform. A common theme among many of the mayors was the urgent need for infrastructure and economic development. For instance, Greenwood Mayor Mark Myers discussed a new style of interchange, a diverging diamond exchange that will begin construction in his city this year. He noted that this new project will relieve traffic and significantly promote new economic growth in his city. Quincy (IL) Mayor Kyle A. Moore also highlighted the need for economic development and pension reform. Menifee Mayor Scott Mann described the challenges and nuances of governing a newly formed city, such as contracting police services through the county and the development of a downtown.

Expanding on the "Innovations that Lead" theme of the Winter Meeting, Conference of Mayors President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith called on several newly elected mayors to share their initiatives as new mayors. They included Charlotte Mayor Patrick D. Cannon, Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine, Pittsburgh Mayor William



**USCM Membership Chair
Piscataway Mayor Brian C. Wahler**

Peduto, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, and Compton Mayor Aja Brown. As new mayors, they described a desire to develop their city government so that it may be as innovative as their citizens, businesses, and non-profits in addressing issues such as climate change, public safety, economic development, and coalition building. Smith welcomed all the new mayors and expressed the importance of membership by saying, "If you are active with the Conference, you will be a better mayor."



Left to right, Cape Coral Mayor Marni Sawicki, Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry, West Haven Mayor Edward O'Brien, Oak Park Mayor Anan Abutaleb, Quincy (IL) Mayor Kyle Moore, Stamford Mayor David Martin, and East Hartford Mayor Marcia Leclerc.

New Mayor Greetings



Seattle Mayor Ed Murray



Charlotte Mayor Patrick D. Cannon



Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine



Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto



Compton Mayor Aja Brown

ENERGY from page 34

ing safety and security, enhancing city services, and creating local jobs.

Energy Committee Vice Chairs Share Best Practices

Conference of Mayors Energy Committee Vice Chairs Monrovia Mayor MaryAnn Lutz and New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell focused their remarks on two issues important to the Conference of Mayors: alternative fuels and off-shore wind energy. Lutz told committee mem-

bers that in 2007 the city of Monrovia adopted its Environmental Accords, which calls on the city to implement a number of environment-friendly programs, including using alternative fuels in its fleet.

Mitchell provided an update on New Bedford's efforts to develop an off shore wind hub, noting the economic benefits of this new project. He also described New Bedford's Wind Energy Center, a newly established public-private partnership that creates local capacity on issues that address off shore wind business and work force development, land use, and education outreach.



Left to right, Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, Philips Lighting Americas President/CEO Bruno Biasiotta, New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell, and Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz.

Access to Healthy Foods, Nutrition Programs Top Food Policy Task Force Agenda

By Crystal Swann

Madison Mayor Paul Soglin chaired the Food Policy Task Force session during the 82nd Winter Meeting, which focused on federal support for healthy food access and the importance of the reauthorization of the farm bill in providing nutrition programs. The task force meeting was supported by a grant from the Leadership for Healthy Communities (LHC), a national program office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Staff Associate Craig Moschetti brought greeting from LHC and describe the myriad of programmatic and technical assistance tools they have available for cities. The session also featured two mayoral best practices.

Audrey Rowe, administrator for the Food and Nutrition Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), led off by applauding the mayors for making healthy foods access a priority in their cities. "We know that there are many mayors who are working hard on creating healthier options in their cities. One



LHC Associate Craig Moschetti, USCM Food Policy Task Force Chair Madison Mayor Paul Soglin, Baton Rouge Mayor Melvin "Kip" Holden, Congressman James McGovern Rules Associate Keith Stern, FNS Administrator Audrey Rowe, and Lima Mayor Dave Berger.

of things that I think has been exceedingly important is the whole conversation about farmer's markets and what we do with regard to corner stores and creating healthier options in communities for families," commented Rowe. In underscoring the importance of the healthy corner store initiatives, Rowe stated that only 15 percent of SNAP participants purchase their food in larger grocery stores, while the balance, a full 85 percent, buy their foods from corner stores.

Rowe also highlighted other FNS and USDA priorities including increasing farmers markets in cities; improving employment and training opportunities; and increasing the utilization of the summer feeding program.

"During the school year, we serve 21 million, but during the summer, only 3.5 million," Rowe said. "1.3 percent of children live in a household where they don't know if there will be food on the table... where parents are making the decision, do I feed my teenager or my toddler. I think we should be able to close the gap on those children. I am asking for your help to insure that any child who needs food can get it."

See FOOD on page 37

DOT Secretary Foxx Joins Committee to Discuss Mayoral Transportation Priorities

By Kevin McCarty

Panel members discussed their top transportation concerns with U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx at the January 23 meeting of the Conference of Mayors Transportation and Communications Committee, where he told mayors that, "Reauthorization [of the surface transportation law] is a large issue for this country and for you."

Foxx warned mayors that the challenges before Congress were significant and immediate. "The trust fund runs out of money in August. Attacking costs on the revenue end won't get us where we need to be," Foxx said in describing the financial challenges before Congress in renewing the federal surface transportation law, known as MAP21.

After opening remarks, Foxx responded to mayors on issues of concern to their cities and the Conference. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel led off with a statement on the surge in freight rail traffic, especially the growing volume of hazardous materials including unrefined oil passing through cities. "We are at the early stages of an increasing amount of this material passing through our cities," he said.

Explaining that about 30 percent of



Left to right, USCM Transportation and Communications Committee Acting Chair Tallahassee Mayor John Marks, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

all rail freight passes through Chicago, Emanuel called for the adoption of a national hazardous freight fee, whereby

these funds could be invested in rail safety, in equipping and training first responders at the local level, and in establishing

a reinsurance policy so that local areas are kept whole in the event of release or explosion of hazardous cargo.

Conference of Mayors Past President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Madison Mayor Paul Soglin, and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, among others, signaled support for Emanuel's proposal and his efforts to call attention to this growing safety concern for cities. Barrett said mayors "...take great pride in trying to solve this themselves" but it is "an issue under federal control."

Responding to Emanuel and others, Foxx indicated he "...would welcome a solution from mayors." He explained there had already been a lot of discussion on tank car safety. "We will work hard with you on this, and on continue this dialogue," Foxx pledged to the mayors.

Conference of Mayors Transportation and Communications Committee Vice Chair Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas urged the Secretary to come to his city to see the infrastructure needs and challenges on the border as more freight moves north in the United States.

Marks talked about his interest in seeing intercity passenger rail around the Gulf Coast restored. The committee's new Aviation Vice Chair Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell called attention to the Federal Aviation Administration renewal to be considered in the next Congress, and

See TRANSPORTATION on page 37

STANDING COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

FOOD from page 36

Rowe called on the mayors to leverage the power of their “bully pulpits” to promote and increase awareness about summer feeding programs in their cities. She highlighted the USDA toll-free hotline, 1-800-HUNGER, as a resource for citizens to learn about summer programs operating in their cities.

Keith Stern, rules associate in Massachusetts Congressman James McGovern’s office, spoke about the congressional outlook for a farm bill this year and the work Congressman McGovern is working on to combat hunger in the U.S. “When we talk about hunger and nutrition we link the two. For many of our low income and now many of our middle income [families], we are seeing the choice between nutritious food and quantity of food when they can afford the food,” stated Stern. “We talk about hunger and nutrition as a political condition — we as a nation have made the choice to allow hunger and obesity to become this bad.” Stern noted that the cuts Congress is poised to make to essential nutrition programs would in some cases amount to \$90-\$120 cuts in monthly food assistance to a household. Stern urged the mayors to share information about innovative local programs and policies that increase access to healthy foods with their members of Congress, noting that there are very few members of Congress talking about food as an economic driver — a situation that needs to change.

Mayoral Best Practices Highlight Healthy Lifestyles

Lima Mayor Dave Berger highlighted his city’s work to increase access to healthy food through his mobile produce market initiative. The program, unveiled in September 2013, aims to lower obesity rates and increase nutrition awareness and access to affordable, fresh produce, for residents in high poverty areas of Lima.

Residents in three Healthy Living Hubs, located in areas of Lima identified as “food deserts,” will gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables delivered weekly via mobile fresh produce bus, as well as nutrition and fitness classes. Schools are an integral part of the initiative — the bus will also make regular visits to local schools, and school district wellness policies will be evaluated for possible improvements.

Baton Rouge Mayor Melvin “Kip” Holden presented on his “Healthy Baton Rouge” initiative, launched in 2008, to enhance communication, coordination and collaboration on the city’s health priorities. The city is focusing some of its work on combating obesity in the city. With a \$1 million grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation, the city will promote food access, healthy lifestyles, and active living in three targeted zip codes. The city will utilize three programs to increase access to healthy foods: “Red Stick Mobile Farmers Market; “Healthy Corner Store Initiative;” and “Food Access Policy Commission.”

local areas.

Best Best and Krieger Partner Joseph Van Eaton discussed a pending FCC proposal that threatens longstanding city/local government authorities to regulate the placement of wireless towers, calling for a large-scale effort by the national local government organization, including the Conference of Mayors, as well as cities to urge the agency to change its proposed rules. Van Eaton was joined by another firm partner, Gerard Lavery Lederer who assessed a recent decision by the DC Circuit on the FCC’s rules on net neutrality, warning mayors of potentially significant impacts on their cities due to the court’s action.

Finally, The Weather Company’s Chief Operating Officer Chris Walters talked about a number of opportunities for cities to partner with The Weather Channel during severe weather events.

Latino Leaders Awards



Latino Leaders Network Tribute to Mayors honorees accepting Antonio Villaraigosa Leadership Award on January 23. Left to right, USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, Mickey Ibarra, Former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, and Washington (DC) Mayor Vincent C. Gray.

TRANSPORTATION from page 36

the importance of ensuring that airport capital needs are addressed in the legislation. “Funding for infrastructure for our airports is critical to cities for economic health and growth,” Leffingwell said.

Broadband Deployment Considered

CTC Technology and Energy President Joanne Hovis discussed how mayors could work to streamline local processes and practices as part of a strategy to attract private sector investment in constructing very high-speed networks in cities.

Federal Communications Commission Electromagnetic Compatibility Division Chief Walter Johnson discussed an agency initiative to make available an app at no cost to the public that measures broadband speeds in cities and other

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Montgomery, Mayor Strange Take Hands-on Approach to Ensuring Supplemental Health Benefits for Employees

By Jen Mosca

Over the years, mayors and The U.S. Conference of Mayors staff have proudly worked together to tackle the tough issues facing our nation's cities. Because of today's economic pressure and the new health care laws, many public sector employees are facing changes to their health care and other benefits. Mayors are constantly under pressure to make these modifications to help the bottom line, yet still provide the best for those who have dedicated their careers to working in our cities.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors Platinum Partnership with Colonial Life is able to provide a suite of proven solutions to help city governments of all sizes manage the ever-increasing cost of employee benefits, while also providing excellent services and education to employees.

Montgomery (AL) understood that Colonial's focus on cost-saving measures could have a minimal impact on their employees and that through the Colonial Life program they could continue to offer a stable benefits package in a more financially sustainable way.

When the city decided to work with Colonial Life, they had no shortage of challenges when it came to communicating and enrolling their annual benefits package. With more than 2,700 employees spread out over 59 locations with every possible level of educational background, there was not a one-size-fits-all approach for employee education. As a result, the city wanted a more comprehensive plan to ensure their employees understood their offerings and were able to get the most out of their rich benefits package. The city also did not want to overload their HR staff worrying about billing and claims issues.

Colonial Life and the city's HR team have partnered together for 46 years and, throughout the last 11 years, have truly worked hand-in-hand to plan and deliver an extensive communication and enrollment plan that ensured a consistent message was being delivered to all city employees during enrollment. Benefits communication and education is key for the employees, but a dedicated service team to handle any billing and claims issues was just as important for the city's HR team.

Colonial's educational focus helped lessen the burden for city staff who did not have the time or resources to thoroughly educate employees and their benefits, especially in times of change. The city and Colonial worked together to devise a plan that included group meetings, e-mail blasts, website content, customized benefit booklets, one-to-one benefits counseling sessions for each employee, daily enrollment reports so that the city could monitor the course of the enrollment and a customized electronic data return file consisting of the benefit choices elected by each employee that fed directly into the city's HR administration system.

Colonial Life provided all of the enrollment services above at no cost to the city in exchange for their support and assistance with ensuring that all benefit eligible employees were able to meet with a Colonial Life benefits counselor during enrollment. In fact, the city was so committed to the process that they strongly suggested all their employees attend the group meetings and one-to-one counseling sessions. The results speak for themselves: 91 percent of employees met with Colonial Life benefit counselors for one-

to-one educational meetings, and there has been increased employee awareness and understanding of the benefits package. Colonial Life also tripled the number of participants in Flexible Spending Account, which serves as a key element of benefit financial planning for employees, while more than 1,700 voluntary policies were written including FSA, Vision, LTC, Life, Accident, Supplemental Health and Disability.

Montgomery is committed to providing for its employees, and continuously improving the utilization and understanding of benefits. "Montgomery values its employee and we appreciate the relationship with Colonial and its ability to make us competitive with other municipal employers," said Mayor Todd Strange.

To learn more about how your city can benefit from the Colonial Life partnership, contact Jen Mosca at jmosca@usmayors.org or Jeff Bean at jbean@usmayors.org to learn more.

Local Workforce Professionals Emphasize Importance of Job Investment Programs

By Megan Cardiff

The United States Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council (WDC) held its 2014 Annual Board and Winter Meeting January 22-23 to focus on advocacy and funding for job training initiatives as well as partnerships between Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and other organizations.

WDC members work with mayors and local elected officials in cities to meet the high demands of the nation's businesses and improve the economic status for job-seekers and their families through career development programs.

In his keynote speech to the Council, Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Seleznow

discussed the importance of workforce development agencies, highlighting that they helped place 1.1 million Americans in jobs in 2012.

Seleznow talked about the goal of federal agency secretaries to enhance inter-agency partnerships and build alignment between departments on many issues — including workforce and career-oriented programs. He also discussed the importance of focusing on the needs of the long-term unemployed, stating, "This is an issue that requires a great sense of urgency. We need to either get them [long-term unemployed] in a job as quick as possible, retool and retrain their skills, or get them in a short-term job." He added, "As workforce leaders across the country you are key in helping make things easier for job-seekers as well as employers. We have to be targeted and focused in putting people in jobs."

Following up on a dynamic joint meeting in November 2013, the Council heard from American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) President and CEO Dr. Walter Bumphus on how WIBs and community colleges can further collaborate and drive successful local and regional partnerships. "On a national basis, community colleges serve 12.7 million students across America, but we can't do it alone. Thirty-one percent of workforce organizations cite 'lack of a skilled workforce' as the top challenge facing them — we need a strong partnership

between the two institutions if we want to make a real change," he said.

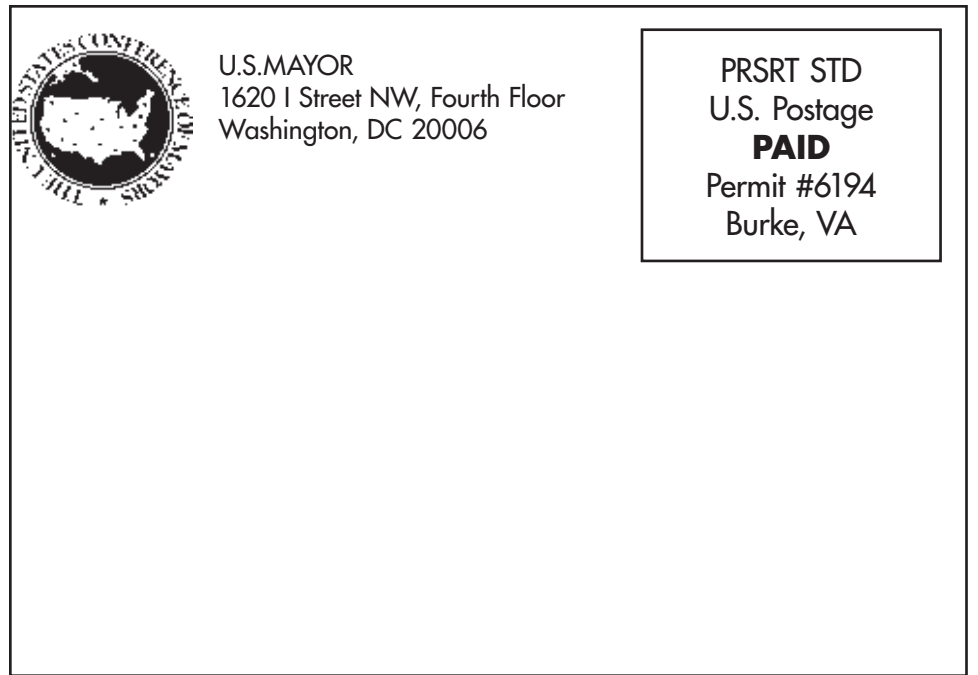
As the primary advocacy organization for community colleges at a national level, the AACC promotes a new vision for community colleges in order to serve the 21st century student. This vision is based in redesigning students' educational experiences, reinventing institutional roles and resetting the system to create incentives for student and institutional success.

WDC members learned what programs their peers across the country are implementing to improve America's workforce. KentuckianaWorks Executive Director Michael Gritton talked about the Kentucky Manufacturing Career Center (KMCC), a "one-stop" center for manufacturers to post open positions, jobseekers to access free or low-cost training, and employees to continue building their careers in the industry through training and certifications. KMCC is a partnership between the local WIB KentuckianaWorks, Jefferson Community & Technical College and Jefferson County Public Schools.

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services Interim Director Thomas Luparello presented a best practice on the District's locally funded Summer Youth Employment Program. The program provides city youth aged 14 to 21 with summer work experiences where they can earn money and develop skills necessary to succeed in today's world of work. The short-term employment and training program seeks to impact youth in a way that will last a lifetime by helping them gain exposure to various career industries and interaction with working professionals.



Left to right, USCM WDC in-coming Vice President South Florida WIB Executive Director Rick Beasley, USCM WDC out-going President CEO Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County Marlena Sessions, Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric Seleznow, Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary, and USCM WDC in-coming President Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas President Laurie Bouillion Larrea.



USCM 2014 **The United States Conference of Mayors** **82nd Annual** **Conference of Mayors**

Dallas, June 20-23 (Friday to Monday)

HIGHLIGHTS:

Friday Night:

AT&T (Cowboys) Stadium – Performances by The Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. Asleep at The Wheel, and Leann Rimes

Saturday Night:

Perot Museum of Nature and Science, and Klyde Warren Park – Barbeque Feast and Performance by Grammy Award Winning Lyle Lovett and His Full Band

Sunday Night:

Arts District and Once-in-a-Lifetime Concert by Award-Winning Bonnie Raitt

Monday Night:

Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Gardens – Backyard Bash



*Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings,
Host*

Registration Available Early March
Contact Carol Edwards (202-293-7330)
Sponsorship Information Contact: Geri Powell (202-861-6774)