Mayors Support Trade Promotion Authority

By Dave Gatton

Conference of Mayors President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson led a press conference May 11 to call on the Senate to adopt Trade Promotion Authority (TPA 2015) giving the Administration fast track authority to conclude major trade deals such as the Trans Pacific Partnership and the Trans Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, based on policy passed at the Conference of Mayors 82 annual meeting in Dallas last year.
Washington (DC)  
May 22, 2015

Last week there were a number of activities that may be of interest to you.

**Trade Bill Action**

On Monday, Conference President Johnson led a telephone press conference with a number of mayors urging the Senate to give President Obama the fast track authority on the trade bill he needs to move forward with a new trade agreement with 11 nations.

President Obama has strong opposition from his top Democratic Leaders, and our mayor members are split; some are against the trade bill and some are supporting it.

Last June we adopted a resolution supporting trade in Dallas and thus we have policy supporting the trade initiatives. Conference President Kevin Johnson and I, following USCM policy, have issued statements supporting the trade legislation.

As U.S. Mayor goes to press, Senate Leader Mitch McConnell says he’s not going to let the Senators go home for the Memorial Day recess until there is a vote on the fast track authority bill.

There is progress in the Senate and most think now, with the amendments to be offered, the Senate will reach an agreement.

Still, there is the House and the rhetoric against the trade bill is as strong if not stronger on the House side. So there’s still work to be done.

The question is will the trade bill be voted up or down before we get to San Francisco next month. No doubt, mayors will be debating this issue through our resolution process that is part of our Annual Meeting.

**Lobby Day Transportation**

A significant number of strong influential lobby groups and national associations all endorsed last week as “Infrastructure Week” here in Washington and throughout the nation.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors with New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and other mayors worked the Hill on both sides of the aisle last week all uniting on a long term transportation bill. It was very strategic with certain groups of mayors meetings with key Congressional leaders in the House and Senate.

This day of lobbying is needed because the funds for the Highway Trust Fund will expire at the end of this month. While the Congress will no doubt pass a short term bill, mayors all day agreed in all of the our meetings and at a successful press conference that mayors cannot plan and implement transportation projects without some long term certainty. The takeaway from all of the meetings was that Congress will eventually pass a long term bill before the year is out but until then, there will be monthly or short term extensions.

A number of mayors participated in the press conference led by Mayor de Blasio and Mayor Cornett on Capitol Hill. We had just had the terrible train wreck on the Amtrak line near Philadelphia killing eight people and injuring hundreds so there were many questions about our rail infrastructure and safety of trains. Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett came out swinging at Congress for not supporting Amtrak and his being a Republican set a bipartisan tone that he and Mayor de Blasio honored all the way through, in all of the meetings with key members and the press, including our dinner the night before.

The elephant in the room in all of our discussions was how the long term transportation bill will be funded. Many Congressional leaders are arguing for an increase in the gas tax. But it’s controversial and many House members and a few Senators came to town promising no new taxes period. No doubt, the funding is key to this most serious issue. The Conference...
Mayors Press Congress to Act on Stalled Surface Transportation Law

Mayors Cornett, de Blasio Lead Mayors on Capitol Hill

By Kevin McCarty

Mayors throughout the U.S. came to Washington (DC) May 13 to meet with key Congressional leaders as well as their own Congressional delegations to call for prompt action on a long-term surface transportation bill, legislation that invests more in improvements and expansions to the nation’s highway and transit systems.

The group of more than two dozen mayors was led by Conference of Mayors Second Vice President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and Cities of Opportunities Task Force Chair New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, who all joined together to deliver the simple message: act now on a long-term surface transportation renewal law that increases overall resources and directs more funding to mayors and other local decision-makers to decide investment priorities.

Convening on Capitol Hill for meetings with key leaders and home state members, the mayoral delegation added its voice to others – transportation leaders and representatives of business and labor organizations – who joined as part of “Infrastructure Week” to raise public awareness about the need to invest in the nation’s infrastructure, especially surface transportation, and to urge Congress to act.

In addition to those mayors on Capitol Hill, many more took action in their own cities, local press events and other events, to call public attention to the importance of transportation infrastructure and its role in improving cities and supporting regional and national economic growth.

In statements on what was called “Mayors’ Transportation Lobby Day,” Cornett spoke about this economic growth and the need for transportation investment. “U.S. metropolitan areas contribute significantly to our national economy and quality of life, generating 90 percent of the nation’s GDP and representing 85 percent of its population. Cities and their metros are expected to account for 92 percent of the nation’s...
future economic growth and attract 66 million more people over the next three decades. This growth will bring dramatic and increasing pressures on our transportation systems,” said Cornett. “We need a strong long-term renewal bill so our cities and metro areas can continue their current trend of driving the national economy forward.”

“This bipartisan coalition is here in Washington, and in districts around the country, fighting for increased funding for our transit, roads, and bridges – because nothing less than our safety and economic future are at stake,” said de Blasio. “New Yorkers feel the lack of investment every single day, from subways too crowded to even board, to century-old bridges in dire need of repair. We shouldn’t be standing on the brink of the next crisis. The time for Congress to act is right now, by passing a long-term bill that increases funding and directs more to cities and our vital infrastructure needs.”

“It is our firm belief that local elected officials who are responsible for the vast majority of the nation’s transportation system are best suited to direct available transportation resources to projects that best serve their communities and regions,” commented Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. “They know the local need and they clearly understand how expanding transportation options can improve the quality-of-life for people in our nation’s cities.”

Expiration of Current Law

As mayors and others were meeting with Congressional leaders and their own delegations, the May 31 expiration date of the underlying federal law, known as MAP-21, loomed large, often drawing attention away from the mayors’ broader message about the need for a long-term bill.

In meetings with key Congressional transportation leaders, notably Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (OK) and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (PA), mayors heard from the key authorizers of MAP-21, who assured them that another extension would be enacted and that they would continue moving forward on a long-term renewal bill.

In other meetings, the mayors heard from top House and Senate leaders, with both Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (NV) and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA) pledging their support for action. Both leaders invited their key colleagues to join with them for their meetings with the mayors.

Subsequent to the May 13 visits, the Senate and House passed a simple, two-month extension of the MAP-21 law, allowing more time for Congressional
tax-writers to find additional revenues to replenish the Transportation Trust Fund, allowing the key authorizing panels, led by Inhofe and Shuster, to move forward with their renewal plans. President Obama has announced his intention to sign the two-month extension when it reaches his desk.

**Mayors’ Press Event Sends Unified Message**

In the afternoon, Cornett, de Blasio and other mayors taking part in Lobby Day stood on the Capitol grounds, delivering a unified message that it was time for Congress to act on a long-term bill that adequately addresses funding needs and allocates more resources to mayors and other local decision-makers in their local areas.

“We stand here, collectively, as members of The United States Conference of Mayors,” Cornett told the large entourage of press representatives covering the event. “We also know that we have a priority and a responsibility of protecting the public safety and the economies of our local communities. Every day in America, lives are lost and productivity is lessened because of an inadequate system of infrastructure. It’s underfunded and the deferred maintenance that continue to pile up in this system should scare everyone who hears this message.”

In his remarks, de Blasio emphasized the need for federal action. “We are here to get a message across from the grassroots that only here in Washington [DC] can we get the decision we need to move our cities and our nation forward and to invest in our infrastructure.”

He reminded reporters why federal government action is so important at this time. “This is a decisive moment in history because we know we have been falling behind [in infrastructure investment]. We know our competitors are investing,” he said.

Mayor de Blasio outlined the basic elements of the message, explaining the mayors are “united on a simple set of ideas.” First, he emphasized, “We need a long-term bill, a six-year bill that we can plan around and that will save money for the taxpayers if that planning can be done, not hand to mouth and year to year.”

“We need a more robust bill. We have seen seven years of flat funding. And, we all believe in what we call ‘localization.’ We all believe if the resources come into our cities, we guarantee they will be spent well and quickly. This is a simple vision of how we move forward,” he said.

All of the mayors were welcomed to the press event by Washington (DC) Mayor Muriel Bowser, who emphasized why additional transportation resources are so important to her city, noting that two-thirds of her city’s surface transportation funding comes from the federal government. “Washington [DC] is growing rapidly, and this region is growing rapidly, and we need these investments to stay competitive,” Bowser said.

After several mayors spoke and responded to initial queries related to renewal of the surface transportation legislation, reporters shifted their questions to the Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia the night before. Bowser, Cornett and de Blasio, whose cities are directly involved with Amtrak and its services, responded to a number of questions pertaining to the accident.

At a morning “Infrastructure Week” event on Capitol Hill, Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait joined with business and other transportation leaders, stating, “This is not a partisan issue. Infrastructure repair is something that mayors have to deal with every day. In Orange County, we’ve voted to tax ourselves for transportation needs because our freeway congestion is getting to the breaking point. Even at six o’clock am, we expect gridlock traffic. Clearly, this is not sustainable. When mothers and fathers cannot get home at night like they should, children suffer and adults can’t get involved in their local communities. We want help now and we want local control.”

Joining with Tait for the event was Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, who also spoke on behalf of the National League of Cities where he serves as President. “We hope the Members of Congress will understand with our report today that when they are ready to solve this seemingly intractable issue of transportation investment, mayors will have their backs. We need a strong local-federal government partnership,” he said.
Joining Johnson on the call were Past President Charleston Mayor Joe Riley, Past President Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, both Conference of Mayors Trustees, and Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran.

“Exports have been key to the economic recovery,” Johnson told reporters.

“In 2014, we hit record high exports in goods and services of $2.35 trillion; that’s 50 percent greater than just five years earlier.” According to the Conference of Mayors U.S. Metro Economies Reports, nearly one-third of the nation’s future economic growth will come from expanding exports.

Cochran reviewed for reporters how the current TPA 2015 legislation was significantly stronger from its predecessor in 2002. He pointed to TPA 2015’s requirement that trading partners must adopt and maintain core international labor standards, with trade sanctions if they do not comply. The same applies to multilateral international environmental agreements, such as those related to protecting the oceans and illegal logging. The TPA law passed in 2002 had no such enforceable labor and environmental standards.

Riley said, “The world is fast-changing and in some instances not getting safer. By engaging economically with countries, we lay the groundwork for positive relations that over time build the foundation for international cooperation and peace.”

Both Nutter and Landrieu said that advancing the trade deals will level the playing field for U.S. businesses and workers. On the whole, the uniform tariff systems contained in the trade agreements will benefit the U.S. more because U.S. tariffs are already lower than most of our trading partners.

TPA 2015 Advances on Hill

After an initial setback by a failed closure vote, the Senate reached a compromise allowing TPA to move forward to final debate when agreement was reached that Trade Adjustment Assistance would move in tandem with TPA and that an African trade bill and a customs bill would also be voted on. Support in the Senate is bi-partisan.

Johnson, Conference of Mayors Vice President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Cochran, along with 40 other mayors sent a letter to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Harry Reid in support of the TPA 2015 bill.

“We believe that inclusion of enforceable labor and environmental standards, transparency, uniform tariffs, protection of intellectual property rights, and other standards and objectives will result in increased global trade that promotes fairness throughout the global trading system, and therefore increased U.S. competitiveness,” the letter stated.

Final passage of the Senate TPA bill is expected; the bill will then be considered by the House where it has strong House Republican leadership support, but less support from their Democratic colleagues.

The Obama Administration strongly supports the measure.

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TRADE
from page 1

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Calendar of Events
(Updated 05/20/15)

**2015**

**June 19-22**
83rd Annual Conference of Mayors, San Francisco. Contact: Carol Edwards cedwards@usmayors.org / 202-293-7330; Sponsorship: Geri Powell gpowell@usmayors.org / 202-861-6774. Registration Now Open

**2016**

**January 20-22**
84th Winter Meeting, Washington (DC). Contact: Carol Edwards cedwards@usmayors.org / 202-293-7330; Sponsorship: Geri Powell gpowell@usmayors.org / 202-861-6774. Registration Opens Fall 2015

For updates or changes, check our web site at usmayors.org
2015 Conference of Mayors Nominating Committee

Conference of Mayors President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, as of May 7, has appointed the following mayors to The United States Conference of Mayors 2015 Nominating Committee for the upcoming Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

The Nominating Committee will meet at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square Hotel on Saturday, June 20 from 3:15 pm to 4:30 pm. The Nominating Committee will recommend candidates for Officers, Trustees and Advisory Board vacancies. The recommendations will be voted on by the assembled membership in San Francisco on Monday, June 22 during the Business Session.

Member mayors seeking office should submit a letter of interest to each member of the Nominating Committee, with a copy to The United States Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran by fax 202-293-9063 or e-mail a copy to Sue Fredeen at sfredeen@usmayors.org.

Following are the current Leadership openings as of May 7, 2015:

Second Vice President – One (1)
Trustees – Five (5)
Advisory Board – Eight (8)

USCM Nominating Committee as of May 7, 2015:
Columbia (SC) Mayor Stephen Benjamin, Chair
Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz
Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter
Akron Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic
Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.
Rochester (MN) Mayor Ardell Brede
Beaverton Mayor Denny Doyle
Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson
New Haven Mayor Toni Harp
Green Bay Mayor James J. Schmitt
Anaheim Mayor Tom Tait

Alternates
Jacksonville (FL) Mayor Alvin Brown
Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido
Portland (OR) Mayor Charlie Hales

JOIN THE 2015 DOLLARWISE SUMMER YOUTH CONTEST!

Youth in summer jobs and programs have the chance to win iPads, Kindles and iPods for completing online financial education modules that help them save for their future.

Weekly raffles will be held every Friday, from June 26 until July 30, for youth who have completed each of the six online modules.

Youth can go to the website www.bedollarwise.org/syc to complete the contest modules.

Contact DollarWise Manager James Kirby at jkirby@usmayors.org for more information.
There’s now a better way for buyers in your city to buy or refinance a home

We’re celebrating National Homeownership Month in June by introducing your LoanTracker.

Homebuyers can now track their loan’s progress and securely upload documents with a computer, smartphone, or tablet — any day, any time. And, coming soon, they’ll even be able to sign select documents electronically. All with the support of a dedicated home mortgage consultant.

To determine if a home loan is available with your LoanTracker features, buyers should talk with their local home mortgage consultant.

Visit us at the U.S. Conference of Mayors 83rd Annual Conference to learn how else we can help homebuyers in your city.

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage wants to help citizens in your communities be better prepared to become homeowners. By working with us, you can:

• Rely on our commitment to helping customers in your city enjoy the benefits of homeownership.
• Expect us to work closely with customers to explore and explain options for their budget and goals.
• Know we work hard to help customers stay in their homes in times of financial difficulty.
Soglin Showcases Madison’s Bicycling Efforts During Mayors’ Bike Summit

Participating Mayors Share Successes, Challenges

By Kevin McCarty

Madison Mayor Paul Soglin hosted mayors from throughout the nation for a special summit to consider how city leaders can promote and expand bicycling in cities, with participating mayors touting their successes, while acknowledging some challenges, during the two-day meeting.

Convening mayors for the “Mayors’ Bike Summit” May 13-15, Soglin opened a series of mayoral-led sessions with an overview of Madison’s efforts over four decades to make bicycling a viable transportation option for work, recreation and even competitive racing.

Soglin told the mayors that a 1972 council resolution directing the Public Works Director “to consider bicycle routes as part of all street construction and reconstruction projects” and adoption of the city’s first bicycle transportation plan – “Long Range Bikeway Program” – in 1975 were key to growing bicycle use in the city. These actions laid the foundation for many subsequent actions and projects that have made Madison “one of the best biking cities in the country,” he told his colleagues.

Today, Madison today boasts 52 miles of off-street shared use paths, 121 miles of on-street bike lanes, six miles of streets with wide curb lanes, and 116 mile signed bike route network, with Soglin reminding mayors that the city’s early efforts were modest, “taking those small opportunities when and where we could.”

Shortly after returning to the mayor’s office in 2011, Soglin began a bike sharing program in partnership with BCycle, which last year accounted for more than 100,000 rides.

“You Can Never Build Enough Trails”

Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard discussed his efforts, underscoring the importance of bicycling and trails to the future development of his city. “You can’t build enough trails,” Ballard said, repeat-
ing the phrase often during his presentation. “We are trying to attract talent to the city,” explaining how trails are now what companies and their workforces are demanding.

Ballard talked about his city’s “Cultural Trail” as an investment that is “reshaping city development patterns.” With a $63 million commitment, raised mostly from private sector partners, he explained how one investment has resulted in more than $300 million in private development in and around the trail. After his remarks, a colleague and summit participant, Koko-mo Mayor Greg Goodnight, praised Ball-lard for his leadership, stating, “It [India-napolis] is a different city. What you have done has transformed the city.”

Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price’s presentation invited mayors to think about bicy-cling as a new means for engaging citi-zens, where she regularly leads rides and other bicycle activities with her citizens.

Rides with the mayor, she explained, offer unique opportunities to engage the public on what is going on in the city, riding through neighborhoods and other areas to see firsthand what is changing in the city and what needs attention. “You pick up suggestions for city actions and reforms,” said Price. Bike rides, she noted, are particularly beneficial because you hear from citizens in a more casual manner, in contrast to “hearing from them only when there is trouble.”

Involvement of the mayor in bicycling also opens up other avenues for dia-logue with citizens, such as safety issues, noting her advocacy for helmet use fol-low ing a serious bicycle accident of her own. Price now meets with children in schools and in other venues to tout good safety practices, often encouraging resi-dents to use helmets.

At the opening luncheon session, PeopleForBikes President Tim Blumen-thal moderated a session with Madison-based bicycling firms, which included representatives from BCycle, Pacific Cycle and Saris Cycling Group, for a panel discussion of the economic ben-efits of bicycling and how private sec-tor firms can support mayoral efforts to expand bicycling options in their cities. Following the panel discussion, PeopleForBikes Vice President Martha Roskowski presented on protected bike lanes, with BCycle’s President Bob Burns and Field Operations Manager Claire Hurley discussing bike sharing programs in cities. These groups and firms, along with HNTB and Trek, joined together to sponsor the Mayors’ Bike Summit.

New Residents Want Bicycling Options

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett talked about the travel and car ownership patterns in his city, discussing how increased investment in bicycling facili-ties also responds to “young people who are returning to the downtown and the heart of the city.”

Barrett explained how his efforts are part of a broader commitment to improved, safer streets, better transit options including a new streetcar, and an expanded bicycling network. He cited his city’s recent progress in increasing the number of bike lanes, constructing nearly 40 miles of new bike lanes over the last few years, including raised bike lanes.

One source of funding for these proj-ects has been tax increment financing where a portion of the funding has been directed to bicycling improvements. Follow-ing his presentation, there was discus-sion about how to build support for bicy-cling improvements, with Barrett urging mayors to do it as part of your infrastruc-ture improvements.

Other presenters throughout the two

At right, Soglin leads mayors and other summit participants on a tour of Capitol Square following the opening day of sessions with Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, left.
days brought their various perspectives to the issues before cities in expanding bicycling. Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt has always linked bicycling to his emphasis on “city wellness and health.” Schmitt also talked about how he had attracted private support to his efforts, touting his city’s helmet giveaway program. He explained that for many cities this might be an easy way to get the private sector sponsorship of city bicycling safety efforts.

Tourism and Bicycling
Among the more unique strategies, Duluth Mayor Don Ness told the mayors how he is making his city a destination for mountain biking, explaining how his single track trails are used almost all year inside his city and connecting to other parts of his region. Ness explained that this emphasis in building a brand for Duluth throughout the country, attracting bicycling tourism and the benefits that come with it.

Bellevue (NE) Mayor Rita Sanders explained how the air show in her city is now an opportunity to promote bicycling as one of the transportation options to join with the thousands who attend that event, which is an example of the representative of the many special events that occur in cities throughout the U.S.

Other presenters focused on selected topics of interest to mayors, with Soglin leading a discussion on serving universities and colleges, Carmel (IN) Mayor Jim Brainard delivering a broad overview on how to retrofit a suburban city for bicycling, with a focus on the safety and bicycling benefits of incorporating traffic circles, and Austin Bicycle Coordinator Adrian Lipscombe discussing ways to ensure that bicycling efforts better serve the equity needs of cities. Lipscombe explained that “communities of color don’t perceive biking as a person of color issue,” urging mayors to make extra effort to work with minority and low-income communities to educate them before making street improvements for bicycling.

Finally, the last day of the summit included presentations by Piscataway Mayor Brian Wahler on the outlook for Congressional action on surface transportation legislation and how that might affect ongoing efforts to improve street networks to support more travel options in corridors, with Sheboygan Mayor Michael Vandersteen presenting a case study on an earlier federally-funded pilot on non-motorized travel in his area.

Joining with the mayors at the summit was Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran, who talked about the many Mayors’ Institutes for City Design he had attended and how often “mayors talked about street design challenges” in providing more bicycling options in their cities. He also explained how state departments of transportation were often cited as an “obstacle to bicycling” and how often mayors expressed their frustration that they didn’t get more support from their states.
Hartford Mayor Segarra Wins GRO1000 Garden and Green Spaces Grant to Expand “Hartford Grown” Project

By Crystal Swann

Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra, on behalf of the Hartford-based non-profit KNOX, Inc., received this year’s GRO1000 Garden and Green Spaces Award to fund the expansion of the Hartford’s community garden and horticulture education program. The expanded area will be known as the Hartford Grown Headquarters, an all-inclusive space where residents can participate in urban agriculture, environmental education programs and learn about horticulture best practices. The expansion is supported by The ScottsMiracle-Gro Company and The U.S. Conference of Mayors national GRO1000 gardens and green spaces program.

A partnership with the city, the Hartford Grown Headquarters will serve as a demonstration and teaching tool for area residents to learn about gardening and nutrition. The centerpiece of the headquarters will be an urban farm where community gardeners can learn and practice micro farming. The project will also help beautify and revitalize the historic Franklin Avenue district in Hartford. The expansion will include floral planters and tree plantings along the city’s iconic Franklin Avenue, educational programs and public events and activities.

The Hartford Grown Project will improve the lives of Hartford residents by:

- Creating a hands-on educational setting for residents to learn about urban agriculture.
- Providing an environment where healthy living is encouraged through agricultural training programs.
- Creating a sustainable urban farm business model to revitalize the local economy.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles through better nutrition and outdoor activities.
- Inspiring youth and community members to create a local food source that fosters community stewardship.

See HARTFORD on page 13
HARTFORD
from page 12

• Providing direct access to fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables.
• Promoting cultural awareness.

“Hartford, with significant help from KNOX, has made great strides in providing gardening opportunities throughout the community. Urban agriculture gives Hartford residents access to healthy, affordable foods and makes them the source of their own economic empowerment and food security. This is a true achievement, and I want to thank The U.S. Conference of Mayors and ScottsMiracle-Gro for investing in the future of Hartford’s green economy,” said Segarra.

Youth gardeners learn about plantings and soil maintenance during the GRO1000 Garden dedication ceremony.

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Send your press releases and photos for U.S. Mayor newspaper to

USCM Public Affairs Office:

etemple@usmayors.org
202-861-6719

MAYORS BUSINESS COUNCIL
Member Profile

VERIZON COMMUNICATIONS

Verizon Communications Inc. is a leader in delivering broadband and other wireline and wireless communication innovations to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America’s most reliable wireless network, serving more than 80 million customers nationwide. Verizon’s Wireline operations include Verizon Business, which delivers innovative and seamless business solutions to customers around the world, and Verizon Telecom, which brings customers the benefits of converged communications, information and entertainment services over the nation’s most advanced fiber-optic network. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of nearly 224,000 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of more than $97 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

Special Interests: Cable Television, Homeland Security, Tax Legislation, Telecommunications, Utilities Issues

For more Business Council profiles visit the Conference of Mayors website at usmayors.org/buscouncil
President Obama Announces Recommendations, Initiatives Aimed at Improving Police-Community Relations

Johnson Praises Actions

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

President Barack Obama released the final report of his Task Force on 21st Century Policing May 18 in Camden, and announced several efforts aimed at helping cities build and maintain trust between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. Immediately following the President’s remarks, Conference of Mayors President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson released a statement commending the President “for his strong commitment to improving policing in America and to strengthening the relationship between the police and the communities.” He said the actions he announced “show how serious he is about doing this now and doing this right.” Johnson’s full statement appears on page 16.

In his remarks, Obama acknowledged that building police-community trust would require responses that go beyond what the police can do. “If we as a society don’t do more to expand opportunity to everybody who’s willing to work for it, then we’ll end up seeing conflicts between law enforcement and residents. If we as a society aren’t willing to deal honestly with issue of race, then we can’t just expect police departments to solve these problems. If communities are being isolated and segregated, without opportunity and without investment and without jobs – if we politicians are simply ramping up long sentences for nonviolent drug crimes that end up devastating communities, we can’t then ask the police to be the ones to solve the problem when there are no able-bodied men in the community, or kids are growing up without intact households.”

The final Task Force Report (available online at http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/TaskForce_FinalReport.pdf) is intended as a blueprint for cities and towns to utilize as they develop policing strategies that work best for building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve while enhancing public safety. The report contains a total of 64 recommendations, with numerous specific action items aimed at achieving them, the vast majority of which are outlined under six pillars: Building Trust and Legitimacy, Policy and Oversight, Technology and Social Media, Community Policing and Crime Reduction, Training and Education, and Officer Wellness and Safety. The efforts the President announced include:

- **Community Policing Grants**: The COPS Office at the Department of Justice has begun accepting applications for grants designed to advance the practice of community policing in law enforcement agencies through hiring, training and technical assistance, the development of innovative community policing strategies, applied research, guidebooks, and best practices that are national in scope.

- **A Body-Worn Camera Tool Kit**: Earlier this month, the Justice Department announced a new pilot grant program that will help local law enforcement agencies develop, implement, and evaluate body-worn camera programs. Justice is now making available an online clearinghouse of resources designed to help law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve plan and implement body-worn camera programs.

- **Partnerships with National Law Enforcement Focused Organizations to Implement Recommendations**: With support from the COPS Office, nine law enforcement-focused organizations and the U.S. Conference of Mayors will develop national-level, industry-wide projects for several of the pillars outlined in the Task Force Report.

- **The White House Police Data Initiative**: Leading jurisdictions have joined technologists, community organizations and police associations to commit to use data and technology in ways that build community trust and reduce unnecessary uses of force.

**Military-Style Equipment Executive Order**

In addition, the President announced an executive order that will govern the provision of certain military-style equipment to local law enforcement agencies. The Executive Order is based on the final report of a federal interagency working group that reviewed federal programs that support the acquisition of equipment by state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies and developed a series recommendations intended to enhance accountability, increase transparency, and better serve the needs of law enforcement and local communities.

The working group developed a list of prohibited equipment (including tracked armored vehicles, weaponized aircraft and vehicles, bayonets, grenade launchers, and large-caliber firearms), and a list of equipment (including armored vehicles, tactical vehicles, riot gear, and special-

See POLICING on page 15
House Appropriations Bill Would End COPS Programs

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

The House Appropriations Committee reported out a FY 2016 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill that would zero-out COPS hiring grants and transfer nearly all of the COPS Office’s other programs to other agencies within the Department of Justice, primarily the Office of Justice Programs. The bill was reported out of full Committee May 20 and subcommittee May 14 on a voice vote.

In all, the bill would provide $27.5 billion to the Department of Justice, an increase of $852 million above this year’s level. According to the Committee release, “This funding will strengthen critical investigation, law enforcement, and prosecution activities to protect the safety and well-being of communities across the country.”

The bill includes a total of $2 billion for the various Justice Department grant programs, a reduction of $334 million below the fiscal year 2015 enacted level. Within this amount, funds are targeted to what the Subcommittee considers the highest-priority national programs, including $474 million for Violence Against Women programs (an increase of $44 million), $409 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (an increase of $33 million), $220 million for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (which the President proposed to eliminate), and $68 million for missing and exploited children programs.

The bill would create a new $50 million “Community Trust Initiative” that would fund efforts to improve the safety of local communities and support police training and research. Specifically it would provide $15 million for body camera pilots and research, $2.5 million for collaborative reform, $27.5 million for justice reinvestment, and $5 million for improved statistics collection.

It also would provide $75 million for the comprehensive school safety initiative, $73 million for improving the National Instant Check System, $68 million for Second Chance/offender reentry grants, and $25 million for victims of trafficking grants.

POLICING
from page 14

The Major Cities Chiefs Association announced the organization’s support for the recommendations. “These recommendations, developed in consultation with law enforcement, ensure that we can acquire and utilize needed equipment in a manner that ensures transparency and maintains public confidence,” commented Montgomery County (MD) Police Chief Thomas Manger, the group’s President. The Major Cities Chiefs Association’s full statement appears on page 17.

USCM on the WEB

usmayors.org
U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS PRESIDENT SACRAMENTO MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSON COMMENDS PRESIDENT OBAMA ON HIS COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHENING POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Conference of Mayors President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson today issued the following statement on the report from President Obama’s announcements in Camden today:

“The nation’s mayors commend President Obama for his remarks in Camden today, which demonstrate his strong commitment to improving policing in America and to strengthening the relationship between the police and the communities they serve. The specific actions he is already taking – including the White House Police Data Initiative, the Community Policing Grants, the Body-Worn Camera Tool Kit, and the new policies and procedures governing the acquisition of equipment by police departments and other law enforcement agencies – show how serious he is about doing this now and doing this right.

“We also commend the President for issuing the final report of his Task Force on 21st Century Policing. The Task Force produced an excellent report and a comprehensive set of common-sense recommendations that, as the President said, “can serve as a blueprint for building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve while enhancing public safety.”

“We are especially pleased that it includes many of the recommendations developed by the Conference of Mayors working group of mayors and police chiefs, which I appointed in November and which presented its report to the President’s Task Force leaders on January 22 during our annual Winter Meeting in Washington.

“The Conference of Mayors is honored to be among the organizations that the President announced today will be working with the Administration to implement the Task Force’s recommendations.

“When the interim report came out March 2 we urged the Administration, mayors and their police departments, state and local law enforcement agencies to move quickly to implement its recommendations. While we know this is already happening, we also know there is much work to do, as recent events in Baltimore have shown. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has taken decisive steps to reform policing practices and hold officers accountable for misconduct. At the same time it is important to remember, as Mayor Rawlings-Blake so eloquently said, that the vast majority of police officers serve their communities with pride, courage, honor, and distinction.

“Again, let me say that we appreciate the leadership that President Obama and the U.S. Department of Justice have shown. We also appreciate the substantial effort made by the co-chairs – Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and George Mason University Professor Laurie Robinson – and the members of the President’s Task Force, and by COPS Office Director Ron Davis, who served as Executive Director, and his staff. The Conference of Mayors stands ready to continue to work with the President and his Administration to strengthen police-community relations in our cities.”

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Executive Director
704-714-7378

MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS SUPPORT
EXECUTIVE ORDER ON MILITARY EQUIPMENT

WASHINGTON, DC May 18, 2015

The Major Cities Chiefs Association today announced its support for the recommendations developed by the Federal Interagency Law Enforcement Working Group, the review of Federal assistance to law enforcement agencies ordered by President Obama. In response to the White House, the Chiefs considered ways to restructure the Federal program. The Working Group consulted extensively with the Chiefs, which represents the 67 largest metropolitan law enforcement agencies in the Nation, to ensure that recommendations support law enforcement needs and also promote a relationship of trust between police and communities they serve.

Equipment that protects the lives of the public and their police must continue to be available, but the Chiefs agreed that the Federal programs could be strengthened. The Chiefs noted that a number of listed military equipment items are either not required by police or not appropriate for law enforcement agencies. As Federal support to acquire law enforcement equipment for law enforcement is critical, the Chiefs have sought to continue these Federal programs with better policies, training and procedures to maintain public trust.

Chief Thomas Manger, President of the Major Cities Chiefs and Montgomery County, MD Chief of Police said, “These recommendations, developed in consultation with law enforcement, ensure that we can acquire and utilize needed equipment in a manner that ensures transparency and maintains public confidence.” He added, “We thank the White House for the opportunity to provide input into these recommendations and for the Working Group members for incorporating our ideas and concerns into this document.”

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Major Cities Chiefs Association is a professional association of Chiefs and Sheriffs representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada. MCC membership is comprised of Chiefs and Sheriffs of the 67 largest law enforcement agencies in the United States, 8 largest in Canada, and 3 in the United Kingdom who share ideas and innovation for urban policing. They serve over 97 million people (75.74 US, 9.73 Canada and 11.93 United Kingdom).
House Panel Approves Insufficient Funds for Critical Census Efforts

By Larry Jones

The House Appropriations Committee approved by voice-vote a fiscal year 2016 spending bill for Commerce, Justice and Science on May 20 that threatens to curtail a number of important census activities, including the American Community Survey (ACS). Information from the survey is critical to state and local governments because it provides the nation's only source of comparable, consistent, timely, high quality demographic and socio-economic data for all communities across the nation.

Due to its level of importance, individual response to the survey is required by law to encourage participation, maintain high response rates, and control costs. The data is used, for example, to allocate $415 billion annually to state and local governments for critical programs such as education, housing, health care, public safety, transportation, economic development and home energy assistance.

The panel's bill includes $1.1 billion for the Census Bureau, which is $387 million less than the amount requested by the President. In a May 18 letter, Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran told the House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rep. Harold Rogers (KY) and Ranking Member Rep. Nita M. Lowey (NY) that the reduction “...will undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the Census Bureau’s ability to conduct the American Community Survey, and on efforts to prepare for the next census.”

Also, in a May 19 letter, White House Office of Management and Budget Director Shaun Donovan said the reductions would “...curtail testing, scale-up, and implementation of efforts to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the 2020 Census, increasing future costs by up to $5 billion.” According to a recent report released by The Census Project, “A significant cut to the ACS budget will force the Census Bureau to cut the survey sample size, making it impossible to produce reliable data for a majority of U.S. counties, rural and remote areas, small cities and towns, American Indian reservations, and neighborhoods.”

During the Committee’s markup, Rep. Mike Honda offered an amendment to increase funding for the Census Bureau by $387 million but it was later withdrawn due to lack of offsetting revenue sources. The Conference will continue to urge members to provide full funding for the 2020 Census as the bill prepares to move to the House floor, and as the Senate prepare to take up the measure.

COCHRAN

from page 2

ence of Mayors presently does not have a position on increasing the gas tax.

Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, Chair of our Transportation Committee, will be chairing our policy committee on the transportation legislation next month. With his leadership along with Mayors Johnson, de Blasio and Cornett and others, we will continue to push Congress for a long term transportation bill with funding to meet the basic needs of our crumbling infrastructure throughout the nation.

Bikes – our first ever summit!

We had a great meeting in Madison, Wisconsin last week, thanks to the leadership of Madison Mayor Paul Soglin. It was our first ever Bicycle Summit. Mayors came from all over to share power points and best practices of how bicycles are now an important part of our city transportation systems. This is a growing issue in our cities. It has surfaced in our Mayors Institute of City Design and the Summit we had in Madison tells me that we must have more on this issue because there is a strong trend developing for city dwellers demanding more and better biking accommodations that are user friendly and safe.

Thank you Mayor Soglin. Let’s continue to provide more for our members on this issue.

Our 83rd Annual Meeting.

We are weeks away from an Annual Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors that you do not want to miss. You can go online at usmayors.org to see our lineup for our program. Conference President Kevin Johnson is working to make the daytime sessions meaningful and productive for you during the meeting and at the same time giving you takeaway best practices for you once you return to your home city.

Host Mayor Ed Lee is showcasing his great city of San Francisco. We open the first night celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the magnificent San Francisco City Hall. And each evening following will be enjoyable and an opportunity for you to network with mayors and business representatives and federal officials who are our guests at our Annual Meeting. So register now. Contact Carol Edwards at cedwards@usmayors.org or (202) 861-6747.

See you in San Francisco soon!
By Mick Cornett

When the clock struck noon on April 22, 1889, approximately 50,000 people raced to claim settlements across 2 million open acres comprising present-day Oklahoma. By the time the sun set that evening, the population of Oklahoma City had gone from zero to 10,000 and was on its way to becoming the capital of our great state.

More than a century later, we’re still running an urgent race here: this time, to better health.

We tend to associate good health with health care. There’s no question that accessible, high-quality medical care is essential to how well and how long we live. But health care is only one piece of the health puzzle. Much of what affects our health actually happens outside the doctor’s office.

That’s the key takeaway from the County Health Rankings, an annual collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute that measures the health of nearly every county in the nation. The 2015 rankings, released on March 25, examine access to and quality of health care, but also take into account education, employment, diet and exercise, housing, transportation and several other factors.

For instance, research shows that good jobs and steady income help families live in neighborhoods with quality schools and safe streets—all of which affect health.

That broader view of health has been the driving force behind Oklahoma City’s renaissance.

Our city has long been home to some of the finest physicians, hospitals and medical research centers in the United States. Yet as recently as 25 years ago, Oklahoma City had one of the worst economies in the nation. Unemployment was high. Economic development had stalled. Companies were closing their doors. Residents, especially young people, were fleeing the city and looking elsewhere for brighter prospects.

We were falling backward on jobs and opportunity, so we were falling behind on health. In Oklahoma County— for which our city is the county seat — the percentage of the population living in poverty increased by 40 percent between 1980 and 1990.

Fast forward to today. Oklahoma City is one of the most affordable and fastest-growing big cities in America. We have one of the lowest big-city unemployment rates (3.6 percent) in the United States. We are the best place in the country to start a small business. Our city is attracting more highly educated young people, families and new businesses than ever before.

What changed?

We invested. Starting in 1993—well before I became mayor—and continuing to present day, a series of groundbreaking economic development commitments known as Metropolitan Area Projects Plan has funded the construction or renovation of schools, libraries, commercial real estate, convention centers and mass transit. The economic impact of the original MAPS alone was nearly $5 billion.

We engaged business. Eleven years in this office has taught me that good health and robust economic development are two sides of the same coin; you simply can’t have one without the other.

Our businesses care about the city and its people. They help keep our parks clean and fully operational. They have rallied around our health department’s Wellness Now campaign, which focuses on obesity-prevention efforts in our hardest-hit neighborhoods. They have established wellness programs to help our workforce stay healthy.

We changed the culture. Even during previous economic heydays, Oklahoma City had a notorious reputation for having been built for cars, not people. That came to a head in 2006, two years into my first term, when we were named one of the fattest cities in America. So the whole city went on a diet and together we lost 1 million pounds. We’ve built hundreds of miles of walking paths and biking trails and are building a new 70-acre downtown central park.

In short, our entire city is dedicated to improving quality of life for our residents and the economic climate for our businesses and employers. Everybody wins when we prioritize health.

A number of city leaders have visited Oklahoma City to get a firsthand look at our transformation. I am honored to show them what we’ve built. But I’m even prouder to show them who we are—a united community committed to achieving better health one day at a time.

There’s no reason our elected officials in Washington can’t also be part of this success story—by championing and supporting innovative efforts in their home districts that promote health and wellness. With each step we take and with every milestone we achieve together along the journey, our communities can flourish like never before.

Mick Cornett is the mayor of Oklahoma City.
USCM 62nd President, Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic Announces Retirement

By Elena Temple Webb

Conference of Mayors President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson on May 9 issued the following statement in response to Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic announcing his retirement:

“Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic’s public service to the city of Akron spans 42 years. Elected in 1973 as a city councilman at the age of 24, later as mayor in 1988, he demonstrated great leadership in promoting the transformation of Akron’s economy through tough times. The modern city that stands today is truly a better place for Akron citizens today to work, play and live.

“Due to his leadership, Akron has received many national awards, but the true test for any mayor is the ballot box. The people of Akron have showed through every election that they appreciated and wanted more of Mayor Plusquellic’s vision.

“Mayor Plusquellic served as the 62nd President of The United States Conference of Mayors in 2004. He fought and led the effort to save the Community Development Block Grant program from being abolished. On the national level, he has been a champion for mayors with the federal government.

“We accept and respect his personal decision to step down. His doing so is a loss to Akron, The United States Conference of Mayors and to the cities of our nation.”

May Mayoral Elections Bring Changes in Jacksonville, Arlington

By David W. Burns

Another round of mayoral elections took place over these past few weeks of May. While not a large number of elections were held, a number of high-profile runoffs and primaries took place.

Jacksonville businessman and former Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida Lenny Curry defeated current Mayor and Conference of Mayors Trustee Alvin Brown with 51 percent of the vote on May 19. Curry will take over as mayor on July 1.

Also on May 19, former Philadelphia councilmember Jim Kenney won the democratic mayoral primary in a race featuring six candidates. Kenny will face Republican Melissa Murray Baily in November. Former Conference of Mayors President Michael Nutter could not seek reelection due to term limits.

Earlier this month on May 9th, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings cruised to an early victory with 73 percent of the vote, defeating Marcos Ronquillo. In Arlington (TX), Jeff Williams defeated current mayor and Conference of Mayors Advisory Board member Robert Cluck, M.D. with 58 percent of the vote. Mayor-elect Williams will enter into office on May 26.

In San Antonio, interim Mayor Ivy Taylor will face Leticia Van de Putte in a runoff on June 13 with neither candidate winning a majority of votes. Van de Putte narrowly held the most votes in the May 9th election with 30 percent of the vote to Taylor’s 28 percent.

For the most up-to-date results and a list of upcoming elections throughout the year, visit the website umayors.org/elections.
SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR ED LEE
“Rolls Out Red Carpet” for the 83rd Annual Conference

San Francisco
June 19-22

Host City Events:
• Welcome Gala: San Francisco City Hall – Friday Night
• Sunrise Walk Across the Bay: The Golden Gate Bridge – Saturday Morning
• Color of Life Global Celebration: California Academy of Sciences – Saturday Night
• Celebration of Faith and Community Service: Glide Memorial Church – Sunday Morning
• Bash by the Bay: The Embarcadero – Sunday Night
• Morning in the Park: Golden Gate Park – Monday Morning
• San Francisco Tech and Innovation Tour: Autodesk, Twitter and Uber – Monday Afternoon
• Year of the Goat Chinese Celebration: Chinatown – Monday Evening
• Family Activity Programs – Throughout the conference, families and guests will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities including boat rides to Alcatraz Island, Wine Country tours, visits to Muir Woods, Fisherman’s Wharf, and the Exploratorium, and a Presidio Play Day for the kids.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN AT USMAYORS.ORG