By Paul Leroux and Conference of Mayors Staff

Asserting their voice in the 2012 election debate, almost 50 mayors traveled to Philadelphia for the 2012 Summer Leadership Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Hosted by Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, the mayors engaged in two days of dialogue, both with each other and with national experts.

To kick off the discussions, the Conference of Mayors released a new Metro Economy report, prepared by IHS Global, which found the nation needs to dramatically increase its investment in transportation infrastructure in order to take advantage of international trade opportunities over the next decade. It also found that U.S. metros would absorb an additional 84 million people over the next 30 years, further citing the need for increased investment in infrastructure.

During an opening press conference, Nutter said, “The importance of cities and their metropolitan economies cannot be overstated. Cities are pushing the economic recovery of this country forward and we are key to the future growth of America… We are calling for smart investments today, particularly by modernizing our transportation infrastructure, to ensure that cities will grow in the future and pay dividends.

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Mayors React to Tragic Shootings in Aurora

President Barack Obama shakes hands with Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan upon arrival July 22 at Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora (CO) with Aurora Police Chief Dan Oates, left, and 460th Space Wing Command Chief William Ward, right. See Story on page 3.

Nutter Stresses Jobs, Voting Rights at National Urban League

See LEADERSHIP on page 4
Conference President Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter brought mayors to his great city of Philadelphia last week to forge a bipartisan agenda directed at the Presidential Candidates President Obama and Governor Mitt Romney.

This is the first Leadership meeting of the Conference since Mayor Nutter became our President in June. The Nutter leadership style is to bring the mayors to the table to develop and own an action agenda as we go through the challenges before us. To put it in simple terms, the mayors very much appreciated Mayor Nutter encouraging and pushing them to talk, and talk they did.

Conference staff had worked with key mayors developing a draft action agenda titled “Building a Better America.” It was a detailed paper and the majority of mayors felt it had to be streamlined and condensed focusing on our main priorities. So it is back to the redrafting we go. It’s all about Governor Romney’s tax deductions and President Obama sending the stimulus money to foreign countries. It’s ridiculous.

But we are trying. This past weekend Conference President Nutter as a drafting member of the Democratic Party Platform went to Minneapolis to hear citizens talk about the real issues before the American people. Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson testified on behalf of the Conference of Mayors. He carried our message and got good press, and we need more. He focused on three issues, public education, infrastructure (which includes transportation, water and energy) and public safety.

There was a time when the party platforms meant more than they do today. But, still we have to put our message forth now if we are going to have any impact on the three Presidential debates and one Vice Presidential debate that will take place all in October.

President Nutter has announced that we must have strong partners as we go forth with our action agenda through the Presidential campaign, the transition to inauguration and the forming of a new Congress.

This past week Mayor Nutter joined with the National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial at the NUL’s Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Mayor Nutter, before the plenary session, called on the National Urban League to join with The United States Conference of Mayors to work together for an infrastructure investment agenda to build a better America. Mayor Nutter was well received in New Orleans and there will be follow-up meetings between USCM and NUL as we go forward.

Democratic & Republican Conventions

We have sent out a questionnaire to all mayors to determine if you are attending the Republican Convention in Tampa, Florida August 27–30, or the Democratic Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina September 4–6.

We are planning events at both and we want you to let us know if you are attending so we can include you in our activities. So please follow up and get that information to us.

Leadership Meeting – Dallas, Texas – September 23-24

Our Fall Leadership meeting on developing next generation leadership in cities through workforce development will be held in Dallas, Texas September 23–24. Mayor Mike Rawlings is working closely to design a dynamic meeting. In addition to skill gaps and workforce issues, the Dallas meeting will have a component on security as it relates to stadiums with a tour of the Dallas Cowboys Stadium and attendance of the Tampa/Dallas game. We will send out a leadership meeting memo soon. Please come to Dallas, the workforce skills gap issue is a top issue of our organizations as mayors work with us to build a better America. If you have any questions about reservations or attendance, please call Carol Edwards at 202-293-7330 or e-mail at cedwards@usmayors.org.
Mayors React to Tragic Shootings in Aurora

Statement by Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan to the Media, July 20

Clearly this is a tragic day for this community and for this city. But as tragic as it is for this city, it is an absolute hor- ror for all of those people who were in those theaters and their families. Our hearts go out to them. We will always wish that no matter how much we do realize that that’s a relatively rare event.

We need to thank everybody who responded as quickly as they did: the police department, the fire department, the hospital staffs in the emergency rooms. Everyone who addressed this situation deserves to be thanked. I want to thank also all of the jurisdictions in the metropolitan area that have contacted me this morning offering whatever help that we need: whether it’s from Denver or Arapahoe County or the State of Colorado or the United States government.

We have a blow today, but we will get back on our feet and we will move ahead.

If I can say anything to our citizens, and particularly to those folks who have kids, no matter whether they’re small or teenagers, it’s talk to them, talk to them. They’re going to feel this and it’s going to come out. And we have to do our duty as parents and as civic officials and as caregivers, whether it’s Aurora Mental Health or any other organization, we’ve got to talk to our kids and let them know that this is an isolated instance. It’s tragic, it’s horrible, but it’s isolated. We’ve got to talk about it.

It’s a tough day. I’m joined back here by a number of the Aurora City Council members, state senators, state reps, the Aurora Mayor’s office, all of the boroughs. We will all come together. We’ll stand behind this. But there’s no way around it, it’s tough. You can’t have that many people die and that many more people be injured in an absolutely senseless situation and not see it as anything but tough.

Statement by Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter on the Mass Shooting in Aurora, July 20

Again our nation’s attention is riv- ed on a single act of violence that has claimed a dozen lives and left dozens more injured.

The nation’s mayors express their shock at a mass shooting and send their condolences to the victims, their families, and their community. Our friend and col- league Aurora Mayor Steve Hogan is in our thoughts and prayers this morning as he helps his city cope with this tragedy.

While we don’t yet have all of the facts in the case, we do know that all evidence this morning points to a heavily armed assailant now in police custody.

While questions about his motives and about how he obtained his weapons will be answered in the hours and days ahead, the fact remains that once again guns have been used in a mass killing of innocent people.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is repeating its call for reasonable chang- es in our gun laws and regulations that could help to prevent senseless tragedies such as the one that has rocked Aurora and the nation this morning.

New Poll of Gun Owners Shows Strong Support For Common-Sense Gun Laws

Mayors Against Illegal Guns on July 24 released the findings of a survey by GOP pollster Frank Luntz showing that NRA members and gun owners overwhelmingly support a variety of laws designed to keep firearms out of dangerous hands. Among the survey’s key findings:

• 87 percent of NRA members and 83 percent of non-NRA gun owners agree that support for Second Amendment rights goes hand-in-hand with keeping guns out of the hands of criminals.

• There is very strong support for crimi- nal background checks among NRA members and gun owners:

• 74 percent of NRA members and 87 percent of non-NRA gun owners support requiring criminal background checks of anyone purchasing a gun.

• 79 percent of NRA members and 80 percent of non-NRA gun owners support requiring gun retailers to perform background checks on all employees — a measure recently endorsed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the trade associa- tion of gun and firearms industry.

NRA members strongly support allowing states — not the Federal gov- ernment — to set basic eligibility require- ments for people who want to carry concealed, loaded guns in public places, with 91 percent of NRA members stat- ing states should decide. By contrast, the NRA is pushing federal legislation that would establish national reciprocity for concealed carry permits, forcing every state to allow non-residents with con- cealed carry permits to carry concealed guns even if they would not qualify for a local permit.

NRA members support many com- mon state eligibility rules for concealed carrying:

• 75 percent of NRA members believe concealed carry permits should only be granted to applicants who have completed gun safety training.

• 74 percent believe permits should only be granted to applicants who have completed gun safety training.

• 68 percent believe permits should only be granted to applicants who do not have prior arrests for domestic violence.

• 63 percent believe permits should only be granted to applicants 21 years of age or older.

“Gun owners and NRA members overwhelmingly support common sense steps to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, even as the NRA leadership opposes the,” said Mayors Against Illegal Guns Co-Chair New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. “It’s time for those in Washington — and those running for President — to stand with gun owning citizens who are concerned about public safety, rather than influence peddling lobbyists who are obsessed with ideology. I join with NRA members in urging Washington to pass a law requir- ing universal background checks for all gun sales — and to take other common sense steps that will save lives.”

The poll shows We’ve taken a blow today, but we move ahead.

If I can say anything to our citizens, and particularly to those folks who have kids, no matter whether they’re small or teenagers, it’s talk to them, talk to them. They’re going to feel this and it’s going to come out. And we have to do our duty as parents and as civic officials and as caregivers, whether it’s Aurora Mental Health or any other organization, we’ve got to talk to our kids and let them know that this is an isolated instance. It’s tragic, it’s horrible, but it’s isolated. We’ve got to talk about it.

It’s a tough day. I’m joined back here by a number of the Aurora City Council members, state senators, state reps, the Aurora Mayor’s office, all of the boroughs. We will all come together. We’ll stand behind this. But there’s no way around it, it’s tough. You can’t have that many people die and that many more people be injured in an absolutely senseless situation and not see it as anything but tough.

excerpt of Violence, Guns from President Barack Obama’s Speech to Urban League, July 25 in New Orleans

Our hearts break for the victims of this massacre in Aurora. We pray for those who were lost and we pray for those who lived. We pray for those who are recovering with courage and with hope. And we also pray for those who succumb to the less-publici- zed acts of violence that plague our communities in so many cities across the country every single day. We can’t for- get about that.

Every day – in fact, every day and a half, the number of young people we lose to violence is about the same as the number of people we lose in that movie theater. For every Columbine or Virginia Tech, there are dozens gunned down on the streets of Chicago and Atlanta, and here in New Orleans. For every Tucson or Aurora, there is daily heartbreak over young Americans shot in Milwaukee or Cleveland. Violence plagues the biggest cities, but it also plagues the smallest towns. It claims the lives of Americans of different ages and different races, and it’s tied together by the fact that these young people had dreams and had futures that were cut tragically short.

And when there is an extraordinarily heartbreaking tragedy like the one we saw, there’s always an outcry immedi- ately after for action. And there’s talk of new reforms, and there’s talk of new legislation. And too often, those efforts are defeated by politics and by lobbying and eventually by the pull of our collect- 2
cive attention elsewhere.

But what I said in the wake of Tuc- son was we were going to stay on this, persistently. So we’ve been able to take some actions on our own, recognizing that it’s not always easy to get things through Congress. But it’s our call for background checks for all firearms purchasers and a ban on high-capaci- ty ammunition magazines at a July 26 news conference in Washington (DC)

Excerpts from Violence, Guns from President Barack Obama’s Speech to Urban League, July 25 in New Orleans

Both are strongly supported by the Con- ference of Mayors. The National Law Enforcement Part- nership to Prevent Gun Violence, an alli- ance of major cities, also is co-chairing this effort.

“The nation is waiting for lawmak- ers to move beyond hand-wringing and shoulder-shrugging in response to these mass catastrophes,” said Hubert Wil- liams, Chair of the Partnership and Pres- ident of the Police Foundation. “These mass murders are neither acceptable, nor inevitable. There are numerous pub- lic safety initiatives – that are backed by the public and law enforcement – that will reduce the frequency and severity of this type of carnage. Our nation must establish as a top priority addressing this horrific gun violence that threatens our safety and security.”

In addition to the Police Foundation, the Partnership’s members include the International Association of Chiefs of Poli- cies, Major Cities Chiefs Association, and the Police Executive Research Forum.

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U.S. MAYOR
for decades to come. We also want to remind Congress, both presidential candidates, and Washington in general that when you invest in cities, you invest in the recovery of America, and you put Americans back to work."

This sentiment was echoed by Conference of Mayors Vice President Mesa Mayor Scott Smith who said, “Cities have dealt with the most serious financial crisis since the great depression in a way that no other level of government has. And while we are on the road to recovery, our call is to do what we have done in the past and commit resources to the next generation. My parents, grandparents and great-grandparents invested in America so that we could benefit from the economic prosperity we now enjoy. The question now is—are we [in this generation] going to invest in our country so that our children can enjoy economic prosperity in the future?”

Conference of Mayors Second Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson expanded the traditional notion of “infrastructure” to include America’s young people. “Our country’s most valuable resource is our children, and the investment that can make the biggest difference is in their education. We must make sure that we are doing everything we can to prepare our children to compete in the global workforce,” he said.

### Election 2012 Bi-Partisan Agenda

The mayors in Philadelphia devoted a significant amount of time to working on the “Building a Better America” Agenda, which outlines the key priorities of metro areas in the 2012 election. The bipartisan agenda, when released, will demonstrate a uniform and substantive way that mayors and cities can hold national candidates accountable.

The draft document calls for greater commitments to key infrastructure investments and critical reforms that generate easier access for metro areas and their residents. It represents a critical step between adopted policies of Conference of Mayors and decisive action at the federal level.

Going into the meeting, mayors worked with Conference of Mayors staff on their areas of leadership, identifying sectors they believed the United States can no longer afford to not invest in. Priority areas identified in the first draft of the paper include: Surface Transportation; Exports, Advance Manufacturing, and Small Business; Investing in the American Workforce; Safe Cities; Energy Independence and Jobs; Safe and Affordable Water and Wastewater Systems; Community Development and Housing; Innovation in Cities and Access to Technology; Local Food Economies; and Tax Reform.

### Presidential Campaigns Dialogue with Mayors

Representatives of both major presidential campaigns were on hand in Philadelphia for the Leadership Meeting, outlining competing visions of the next four years, and what those would mean for local governments.

Patrick Gaspard, Executive Director of the Democratic National Committee, participated on behalf of President Obama’s reelection campaign. Gaspard spoke of many of the efforts that the Obama administration has undertaken to assist cities and make partnerships between levels of government. But he stressed that the President would need four more years to see all of these efforts to fruition. Gaspard spoke to the mayors with the experience of his own service both in the Obama administration and in the office of then-Mayor David Dinkins in New York.

Alan Novak, former Chairman of the Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania, spoke on behalf of presumptive Republican nominee Mitt Romney. Novak reiterated the points that former Senator Norm Coleman made on behalf of Romney during the Orlando Annual Meeting in June—that a Romney administration would mean more jobs for cities, and give local government more control. Novak spoke his experiences both as a party official and as a government affairs strategist.

### Avoiding the “Fiscal Cliff”

Ellen Nissenbaum, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, provided the mayors with a bleak but educational overview of the fiscal situation facing the United States in the next year. According to Nissenbaum and the CBPP, at the end of 2012, the U.S. faces a five-part budget situation known as the “fiscal cliff.” The Bush tax cuts are set to expire, as are the Obama tax cuts for low-income working families. A deal reached to avoid defaulting last summer means across-the-board spending cuts in defense and non-defense programs will kick in, at the same as we hit yet another debt ceiling limit. And finally, Medicare payments to physicians will be cut by 31 percent.

Although most of these circumstances are up to Congress and the Administration to sort out, Nissenbaum urged mayors to take action to protect cities. She warned that direct spending cuts and cost shifts could be particularly damaging to local governments.

Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran told the assembled mayors that action would be required in the coming months to address the fiscal cliff, with mayors needed in Washington immediately following the election.

### Education Reform: Won’t Back Down

Nutter, Johnson—who is also Chair of the Education Reform Task Force—and Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch participated in a panel discussion on the state of

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public education system and its impact on disadvantaged communities during the Summer Leadership Meeting. The panel was held in conjunction with a screening of the film “Won’t Back Down,” inspired by the impact of key education reforms, including parent trigger policies, taking shape across the country.

The mayors were joined by education advocates Michelle Rhee, founder and CEO of StudentsFirst; Ben Austin, Executive Director of Parent Revolution; Dr. Lori Shorr, Executive Advisor to the Philadelphia Public School District; and Mark Johnson, the film’s producer.

“Education is the most important issue of our generation,” said Nutter. “It has the power to provide a vehicle out of poverty as well as bring children a step closer to grasping a piece of the American Dream. This year – as shown through our adopted resolutions – the leadership of the Conference has placed a high priority on ensuring every child is in a high quality seat in a top performing school.”

Johnson, a long-time advocate for education reform, echoed Nutter’s sentiments. “We are too great a nation not to guarantee that every child, no matter their ZIP code, has an effective teacher in the classroom and quality school options available,” Johnson said. “To ensure this, leaders on both sides of the aisle must work to put in place policies that stand up to the status quo, and put our children first.”

Finch, whose own state this year passed transformative education reforms – including measures to help turn around the state’s worst-performing schools – said every child can achieve at a high level. “The parents of Connecticut made their voices heard and forced the legislature to focus on the interests of children instead of those of the special interests,” Finch said. “Though “Won’t Back Down” is just a film, the resolve of the parents shown is a direct portrayal of the tenacity of the parents in my own city who demand change.”

“Won’t Back Down” was inspired by the impact of key education reforms, including the parent trigger. A single mother portrayed by Maggie Gyllenhaal and a teacher portrayed by Viola Davis organize parents to take control of their failing school in the face of aggressive efforts by those fighting to preserve the status quo.

Advanced Manufacturing: Great Potential, Workforce Challenges

Advanced manufacturing, broadly defined as the improvement of manufacturing processes and products through the use of advanced technology, is seen increasingly as an integral and essential element in the nation’s economic recovery and in its ability to compete globally. A panel presentation on the topic was designed to give mayors a better understanding of the potential held by advanced manufacturing can be realized in their cities – if barriers to progress can be overcome.

Representative Chaka Fattah (PA) said that while the U.S. has seen the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs over the past years, the situation is beginning to turn around. Through the Advanced Manufacturing initiative launched last year by the Administration, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been invested in Philadelphia and in other cities, Fattah said, and $128 million now is being used to fund a hands-on partnership program that helps small and medium-size manufacturers.

Of particular interest, said Fattah, is the National Innovation Marketplace established by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to link manufacturers to technology and business opportunities that lead to the new markets and new products needed for success in the global marketplace.

NIST Director Dr. Patrick Gallagher said it was helpful to think of advanced manufacturing as part of R&D, of technology transfer, and of supply chains. Gallagher explained that 70 percent of the R&D investments in the U.S. are made by the private sector. The proportionately smaller public investments, he said, must be made in the areas having the greatest potential to benefit manufacturers.

Panelist Bill Hunt of Agusta Aerospace Corporation, a Philadelphia-based helicopter manufacturer, described how his company had successfully expanded its operations over the years with the help of the city, and how each expansion had brought more advanced technology to the manufacture of their highly-technical products. Ron Harwood of Intellistreets said that the skilled worker shortage in manufacturing is made worse by the fact that half of the students are from other countries, and “we can’t keep them in the U.S. when they graduate.”

Manufacturing Institute Vice President Gardner Carrick reported on a skills gap analysis that found about 80 percent of manufacturers having difficulty finding skilled workers. One of the problems, he said, is that there is no clear education or training pathway that students can follow into manufacturing jobs. This, in combination with negative reports on manufacturing in the news media, has resulted in manufacturing being “dead last” as a career option.

Dr. Tom Peterson, Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation, recommended that mayors wanting to promote advanced manufacturing work closely with the universities in their areas. “They are the innovators that can add to economic development” in cities, he said.

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The Philadelphia panel was moderated by Marek Gootman, Director of Strategic Partnerships in the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution.

Pension Reform

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer led the discussion on pension reform, reminding mayors that earlier this year as Chair of the Metro Economies Committee he asked Conference of Mayors staff to survey cities to get a feel for both the problems they are experiencing with their pension plans and how they are responding. The report, released this past June in Orlando, revealed that local pension plans lost much of their value due to the declining stock market and the economic downturn in 2008 and 2009, causing an increase in unfunded pension liabilities.

In response, cities are increasing annual contributions, eliminating benefit increases for current employees and offering fewer benefits to new employees, offering new employees defined contribution instead of defined benefit plans, lowering cost of living increases for current employees and retirees, increasing the retirement age and service requirements.

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake told mayors that her city faced enormous fiscal stress, which led her to push through pension reforms for police and fire department employees. The cost of pension benefits grew from $50 million in 2003 to $125 million in 2010, with police and fire accounting for about $65 million of the increase. She said everyone agreed the city could not support this level of increase in benefits, but employees should be provided benefits that the city could afford. She said the city adopted reforms that included an increase in employee contributions, changes in the cost of living increase, and an increase in service years from 20 to 25 to qualify for retirement. These changes will save an estimated to save $800 million over the next decade.

San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed explained that voters in his city approved a ballot measure to help control rising retirement costs. The measure was approved by almost 70 percent of the vote on June 5. He said the measure was successful because voters were presented a clear choice in addressing skyrocketing retirement costs — either cut services or the cost of services. For employees it was either cut employees’ pay, layoff more workers or ask employees to contribute more for their benefits. Under the measure, new employees will be placed in a new, lower cost plan; current employees will retain the benefits they have earned but looking forward, they will have the option of either paying more to keep their current plan or choosing a new, lower cost plan.

Reed thanked the Conference of Mayors for adopting a resolution endorsing San Jose’s pension reforms at the June Annual Meeting. The resolution urges the U.S. Treasury Department to issue the necessary letter ruling, and urges Congress to pass any necessary legislation to give local governments the option of offering their employees lower cost benefits.

Preserving the Safety Net

A session moderated by Frazerita Klasen, Director of the Pew Fund for Health and Human Services, provided a framework that cities can use when connecting residents to needed services.

Hiram Carmona, Manager of Housing Counseling for Philadelphia, described the city’s Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Program, which “offers homeowners who are facing foreclosure the opportunity to meet with their lender in order to negotiate an alternative to foreclosure.” Carmona said that homeowners who have defaulted received notice from the court describing the foreclosure prevention program. Pro bono attorneys and city-funded legal assistance are made available, and housing counseling agencies — of which Philadelphia has 27 — help the homeowners prepare a proposal to resolve the mortgage default in an affordable and realistic way. Carmona said that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding of $3 million is used to run the prevention foreclosure program.

Of the 19,000 homeowners eligible for the program between June 2008 and May 2012, 13,000 participated, with nearly 5,000 saving their homes and another 5,000 still in the process of trying to save their homes; 3,100 homeowners did not save their homes which went to Sheriff sale. A number of reasons can be attributed to the 6,400 homeowners who did not participate in the program: properties were vacant, properties were not owner-occupied or owner-occupants failed to appear at their first conference.

Ginger Zielinskie, Executive Director, Benefits Data Trust (BDT), presented on “BenePhilly Enrollment Center,” which helps low-income older Philadelphians access federal and state benefit programs such as food, shelter and health care. The Center utilizes BDT’s data driven, public/private partnership model to secure an estimated $54 million in benefits to low-income seniors.

Zielinskie stated that BDT relies on six major program strategies to accomplish its mission including key stakeholder partnerships; target identification; effective outreach; follow-up and submission; and evaluation. The partnerships with state, local, federal and private agencies provides BDT will access to value data in order to identify and target low-income seniors who are eligible for low income programs but are currently enrolled. By identifying individuals who are eligible for at least one public benefit, the program implement a strategy outreach model to inform the seniors of other benefits to which they may be entitled. Through the outreach process, the seniors receive a letter from the mayor alerting them to benefits they may qualify for and directing them to the proper assistance needed to complete the application process.

Once seniors are identified, the highly trained staff begins the process See LEADERSHIP on page 7

“Cities are pushing the economic recovery of this country forward and we are key to the future growth of America.”

— Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter

Left to right, Pew Fund for Health and Human Services Director and Pew Charitable Trusts Deputy Director of the Philadelphia Program Frazerita Klasen, Philadelphia Manager of Housing Counseling Hiram Carmona, and Benefits Data Trust Executive Director Ginger Zielinskie conduct a panel on Strengthening the Safety net in Philadelphia.

Left to right, USCM Past President Akron Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic, Greenworks panelists: Philadelphia Office of Sustainability Director Katherine Gajewski, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Senior Vice President of Programs and Planning Maitreyi Roy, and Siemens Vice President of U.S. Cities Initiatives Sven Hackman.
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of following up and assisting with the application process and submission. Then finally, through BDT’s customized database they can manage every step of the enrollment model to evaluate the programs effectiveness and efficiencies as well as identify any barriers or areas in need of improvement. The Philadelphia BenePhilly program, which is a joint initiative of the city, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other non-profits, has identified that on average Philadelphia seniors qualify for about $1,700 in annual benefits.

Greenworks Philadelphia

Philadelphia Director of Sustainability Katherine Gajewski described the sustainability plan that aims to make Philadelphia one of the greenest cities in the nation. The plan, which is known as Greenworks Philadelphia, is designed around five areas: Energy, Environment, Equity, Economy, and Engagement. Gajewski reported that since implementation in 2009, energy use has been reduced by five percent, curbside recycling has increased, water and wastewater infrastructure systems have been improved, and many other successful actions have contributed to the meaningful progress of their plan.

The mayors also heard from Maitreyi Roy, Senior Vice President for Programs and Planning for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, who stressed the need to connect horticulture activity to the quality of life in cities, specifically linking community gardens and food farms to citizens.

Sven Hackmann, Vice President for U.S. Cities Initiatives for Siemens Corporation, emphasized the strong role that public-private partnerships can play with implementing city sustainability plans. He noted that Siemens remains committed to their work with making cities more green and energy efficient and that they stand ready to lend their expertise to assist cities with their sustainability efforts.

Participating Mayors

Michael A. Nutter, Philadelphia, PA, President
Scott Smith, Mesa, AZ, Vice President
Kevin Johnson, Sacramento, CA, 2nd Vice President
Gregory A. Ballard, Indianapolis, IN
Ralph Becker, Salt Lake City, UT
Stephen Bannamin, Columbus, SC
Michael Bissinnette, Chicopee, MA
J. Christian Bolinove, Elizabeth, NJ

James Brainard, Carmel, IN
Alvin Brown, Jacksonville, FL
Christopher Cabaldon, West Sacramento, CA
Robert Clay, Arlington, TX
Michael Coleman, Columbus, OH
Mick Cornett, Oklahoma City, OK
T. M. Franklin Cowinie, Des Moines, IA
John Dickert, Racine, WI
Buddy Dyer, Orlando, FL
Bill Finch, Bridgeport, CT
Greg Fischer, Louisville, KY
Anthony Fox, Charlotte, NC
Mike Gin, Redondo Beach, CA
Carolyn Goodman, Las Vegas, NV
Patrick Henry Hays, North Little Rock, AR
Sly James, Kansas City, MO
Harvey Johnson, Jackson, MS
Edwin Lee, San Francisco, CA
Ron Littlefield, Chattanoogoa, TN
Mark Mallory, Cincinnati, OH
Joseph McElveen, Sumter, SC
Kim McMillan, Clarksville, TN
Ken Miyagishima, Las Cruces, NM
Gus Morrison, Fremont, CA
Lori C. Mosley, Miramar, FL
Frank C. Ortiz, Pembroke Pines, FL
Annise Parker, Houston, TX
Ed Pawlowski, Allentown, PA
Donald L. Plusquellic, Akron, OH
David Pope, Oak Park, IL
Jean Quan, Oakland, CA
Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Baltimore, MD
Chuck Reed, San Jose, CA
Robert Reichert, Macion, GA
Paul Segin, Madison, WI
Mark Stabile, Little Rock, AR
Marilyn Strickland, Tacoma, WA
James Suttle, Omaha, NE
Ashley Swearengin, Fresno, CA
Brian Wahler, Piscataway, NJ
Setti Warren, Newton, MA

Mayors Bid Farewell to Trustee
Patrick Henry Hays

North Little Rock Mayor Patrick Henry Hays, after serving six terms as mayor, will be retiring in December.

Hays was elected to the Conference of Mayors Advisory Board in 1996, and became a Trustee in 1999. In 1995, Hays was appointed to serve as Chair of the Conference of Mayors Membership Standing Committee, and membership reached record levels under his leadership.

Additionally, he has served as Vice Chair for Rail Policy for the Transportation and Communications Committee; Vice Chair of the Conference of Mayors High-Speed-Rail Intercity Rail Task Force; Chair of the Conference of Mayors Gas and Electric Utility Restructuring Task Force; Chair of the Amtrak Advisory Council; and Co-Chair of the Rail Restoration Transition Team.

Thank You Title Sponsor of the 2012 Summer Leadership Meeting
SIEMENS
Mayors See Steady Growth in Metro Economies, Warn that Nation Needs Dramatic Increase in Infrastructure Funding

By Dave Gatton

Meeting in Philadelphia at their Summer leadership meeting July 18-20, the nation’s mayors said they continue to see steady progress in the economic growth of U.S. metro economies from the Great Recession, even though they would prefer a quicker pace to the recovery.

According to a report released by The U.S. Conference of Mayors and prepared by IHS Global, over 300 metro economies are expected to see real (inflation adjusted) growth in economic output by the end of 2012, up from the 267 experiencing growth in 2011.

Overall in 2012, 50 metros will achieve real gross metropolitan growth (GMP) growth rates of three percent or more, led by Austin and Houston among the largest. More than 110 metros will see growth of two percent or better, including Phoenix, San Francisco, Denver and Boston, while over 220 metros will increase their GMP by one percent or higher.

“This report clearly shows that economic recovery is improving slowly, but surely. It’s yet another indication that the nation’s mayors stepped up to the plate when Congress would not. If Congress would stop the bickering, we could realize even greater growth and prove this report wrong,” said Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter.

The report, “U.S. Metro Economies: Gross Metropolitan Product, and the Critical Role of Transportation Infrastructure,” also projected that the nation’s real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would be two percent by the end of year and employment growth would reach 1.4 percent. It predicted that household budgets would receive a boost from expected declines in gas prices to $3.11/gallon by the Fall.

The mayors continued to make the point that the nation’s cities are key to the nation’s economic prosperity, citing updated numbers that the 363 U.S. metro economies now account for 90.7 percent of GDP; 89.9 percent of wage and salary income; and 85.8 percent of all jobs. “When you look at these facts, you see that the cities are the American economy,” said Nutter.

Need for Infrastructure Investment

Yet the mayors are faced with sobering statistics that show the U.S. is slipping in its international rankings on infrastructure and competitiveness. They cited a recent World Economic Forum report ranking the U.S. 24th in the quality of infrastructure, also projecting that household incomes would reach $3.11/gallon by the Fall.

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See METRO ECONOMIES on page 9
overall infrastructure, just above Taiwan and behind many European and Asian nations. That same report said that the U.S. had slipped from second place in global economic competitiveness to fifth place over the last two years.

They also pointed to a recent Congressional Budget Office report showing that the U.S. spends only 2.4 percent of its GDP on transportation and water infrastructure, compared to five percent in Europe and nine percent in China. “We need to hear from the Presidential candidates about their plan to make America competitive and increase our market share in the global economy,” said Conference of Mayors Vice President Mesa (AZ) Mayor Scott Smith.

To bolster their case for more infrastructure funding, the mayors pointed to the report’s findings that U.S. metro economies will see a 32 percent increase in population over the next 30 years, absorbing an additional 84 million people. Already, under current transportation systems, U.S. metro economies lose over $101 billion per year because of congestion, costing the average consumer $713 annually.

The mayors said the costs of congestion could double over the next decade unless the nation commits itself to long-term infrastructure investments focused on congestion mitigation and a national freight policy.

In addition to the dramatic increase in people and commuters, the report projected that the nation’s exports and imports will see dramatic growth over the coming decade, expanding from $4.12 trillion in 2012 to $6.04 trillion in 2020 as international trade becomes an even larger part of the economy. With the proper infrastructure investment, the nation could become a net exporter by 2020, according to the report’s authors.

Given these projections, Smith said, “A status quo approach to funding is not the answer. In this era of tight budgets in both Washington and our cities, we must make smart, strategic investments that further our goals to increase economic growth and job creation.”

Over the next 30 years, 92 percent of the nation’s employment and population growth will occur in U.S. metro areas, and 94 percent of the nation’s economic growth.

The entire report may be found online at usmayors.org.
2013 Prescription Drug Abuse Recognition Program

The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) and pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma LP have partnered to sponsor the “2013 Prescription Drug Abuse Recognition Program,” to honor outstanding educational, public awareness and other initiatives that address the issue of prescription drug misuse and abuse in America’s cities.

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IMPORTANT DATES:
Launch of Online Application: July 2012
Application Deadline: September 14th, 2012
Announcement of Winners: January 2013

Learn more about the 2013 Drug Abuse Recognition Program at www.usmayors.org/drugawareness

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Sequestration’s Impact on Nondefense Spending Detailed in Harkin Report

A report released July 25 by Iowa Senator Tom Harkin, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies, details the wide range of cuts in education and health benefits for children and young adults if Congress cannot produce an alternative to the automatic across-the-board cuts in federal agency budgets set to begin January 2. This sequestration of funds, required under the Budget Control Act adopted last summer, could produce cuts as high as 17.6 percent overall, according to Harkin. Results of this, he said, would include 1.1 million fewer students served through the State Grants for Career and Technical Education program, 110,000 fewer low-income students receiving Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and nearly 52,000 fewer students getting federal Work-Study money. Grants to school districts under Title I would be cut by about $1.1 billion, which translates into more than 15,500 lost jobs. Special education state grants would be cut by $900 million, and 75 fewer schools would receive grants under the School Improvement Grant program.

The report, Under Threat: Sequestration’s Impact on Nondefense Job S and Services, was prepared by the majority staff of Harkin’s subcommittee and includes a state-by-state breakdown of individual program cuts, service cuts, and job losses. In a rally held on the Capitol grounds following the release of his report, Harkin was sharply critical of proposals that have made to exempt defense spending from the sequestration imposed by the Budget Control Act, thereby shifting all required cuts to the nondefense discretionary area of the budget. Joined by other Democrats in the Senate and House and by Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, Harkin appealed for a balanced approach to deficit reduction that includes increased revenues, not just spending cuts that focus disproportionately on nondefense agencies.

For months, Stanton, who chairs the U.S. Conference of Mayors Task Force on Defense Transition, has been a vocal critic of sequestration, stressing the destructive impact it would have on the defense industries that contribute significantly to the economies of so many U.S. cities, including Phoenix. In the rally with Harkin, Stanton shifted to the impact sequestration would have on programs such as Head Start and Title I, declaring that he can’t run the city that he wants to run “if we slash and burn Head Start. That’s our future.” Stanton also referred to the critical role education programs play in the nation’s security. “There is nothing more important to the national defense of this country than a strong education system,” he said.

2.14 Million Jobs Would Be Real Cost of Sequestration, Report Asserts

The mayors of Phoenix and San Diego travelled to Washington July 17 to participate in the release of an analysis of the devastating economic impact of the Budget Control Act’s sequestration mandate that will take effect on January 2, barring Congressional agreement on an alternative federal deficit reduction strategy for the decade ahead, and to underscore the severity of the damage that this sequestration would have on the nation’s cities.

A new economic impact analysis by Dr. Stephen Fuller of George Mason University concludes that 2.14 million American jobs are at stake if the sequestration crisis is not averted and automatic across-the-board budget cuts of $1.2 trillion begin to be imposed on both defense and domestic government spending.

“The results are bleak but clear-cut,” Fuller said in a press conference sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association. “The unemployment rate will climb above nine percent, pushing the economy toward recession and reducing projected growth in 2013 by two-thirds. An already weak economy will be undercut as the paychecks of thousands of workers across the economy will be affected, from teachers, nurses, construction workers to key federal employees such as border patrol and FBI agents, food inspectors and others.”

Fuller’s study, conducted on behalf of AIA, indicates that, in the first year of implementation alone, the automatic spending cuts will reduce the nation’s GDP by $215 billion and decrease personal earnings of the workforce by $109.4 billion. The largest year-over-year spending reduction would occur in FY 2013. Fuller reports, with spending reduced 12.1 percent – for the Department of Defense (DOD), an 11.5 percent reduction following a small nominal increase in FY 2012; for non-DOD agencies, a 9.8 percent reduction from FY 2012 levels.

Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Task Force on Defense Transition, has been a vocal critic of sequestration, stressing the destructive impact it would have on the defense industries that contribute significantly to the economies of so many U.S. cities, including Phoenix. In the rally with Harkin, Stanton shifted to the impact sequestration would have on programs such as Head Start and Title I, declaring that he can’t run the city that he wants to run “if we slash and burn Head Start. That’s our future.” Stanton also referred to the critical role education programs play in the nation’s security. “There is nothing more important to the national defense of this country than a strong education system,” he said.
Mayors Oppose Federal Budget Sequestration

By Mike Brown

A full year after President Obama signed the Budget Control Act requiring automatic, across-the-board cuts in federal spending if the Congress failed to produce a budget-balancing alternative by the end of 2012, little progress has been made in efforts to craft such an alternative, and the potential impact of $1.2 trillion in budget cuts over the next ten years is becoming a much more visible issue in Washington. As it now stands, beginning on January 2, automatic cuts of $109.3 billion will be made each year from 2013 to 2021. These cuts will be evenly divided between national defense budget functions and all other budget functions.

In 2013, the $54.7 billion in nondefense cuts will be made in both discretionary programs (cut $38.5 billion) and mandatory programs (cut $16.2 billion). If the President opts to exempt some or all military personnel from sequestration, the $54.7 billion defense budget would be focused on the remaining defense accounts and could amount to 9.5 percent of those accounts. The Defense Department is arguing that the sequestration of funds at this level will compromise the nation’s defense capabilities.

The 80th Annual Conference of Mayors in Orlando produced two policy resolutions seeking an alternative to sequestration. The first, titled “Supporting Defense Transition and U.S. Cities,” focuses on the impact of sequestration on defense spending and the potential consequences of defense cuts on the workforces and economies of U.S. cities. In it, the Conference of Mayors encourages Congress and the Administration to:

- Be cognizant of the impact of any realignment of the defense budget on the cities and metro areas in which defense industrial activity plays a significant role in the workforce and economy;
- Ensure that any realignment of defense spending that occurs does not result in significant and/or abrupt dislocations in workforces that are involved, directly or indirectly, in defense-related work;
- Support the development of alternative applications of defense technologies and alternative uses of defense facilities that have the potential to open new opportunities for business and job development;
- Establish an open channel of communication with the nation’s mayors on continuing efforts to maintain stability in the local economies in which defense-related activity plays a role; and
- Agree on a budget for FY 2013 and a plan to reduce federal budget deficits without resorting to the sequestration process to be imposed in January 2013 under the Budget Control Act – sequestration that ignores both short-term and long-term policy impacts to health and welfare of our military forces and our Nation’s security.

In the second resolution, titled “Calling on Congressional Leaders and the President to Work in the Spirit of Compromise to Approve a Comprehensive, Balanced Deficit Reduction Plan Immediately,” the Conference of Mayors “calls on leaders in Washington to return immediately to the negotiating table in order to reach a comprehensive, balanced deficit reduction agreement, in the spirit of the Simpson-Bowles Commission, that will foster long-term economic growth and prevent the implementation of a draconian budget sequestration that ignores the nation’s priorities.”

The full text of both resolutions can be found on the Conference of Mayors website at http://usmayors.org/resolutions/80th_Conference/

SEQUESTRATION
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Force on Defense Transition, said sequestration was the number-one threat to the economy of his city. The report’s findings, he said, “are proof that Arizona faces serious job loss – nearly 50,000 high-wage jobs – at the expense of Congress’s failure to deal with looming, indiscriminate cuts to our aerospace and defense industries. We can’t afford to take that kind of a hit. We know some cuts will happen, but we need to be strategic, propose a solution and protect jobs to keep our momentum going forward out of the recession, not backward.”

“Like every other city in the country, San Diego has been struggling to recover from the worst national recession in nine decades,” said Mayor Jerry Sanders. “Arbitrary, politically motivated cuts to the national defense budget are the last thing our city needs right now, given that a quarter of all jobs in this region are tied to the defense industry.”

Fuller’s analysis, which details both defense and domestic job loss by occupational category, projects the loss of 48,059 jobs in healthcare, 98,953 in construction, 473,250 in manufacturing, and 617,449 in the federal workforce. His state-by-state analysis finds that combined DOD and non-DOD cuts would hit California, Virginia, Texas, District of Columbia, and Maryland the hardest in terms of job loss.

“This report shows that sequestration is not just a defense problem, it’s an American problem,” said AIA President and CEO Marion C. Blakey. “Unless our leaders in Washington take action, massive cuts have the potential to devastate our economy.”

Also present for the release of the Fuller study were New Hampshire U.S. Senators Kelly Ayotte and Jeanne Shaheen. “Military leaders have been clear that defense sequestration will deprive our troops of the resources they need and undermine our national security for generations,” said Senator Ayotte, who is the Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee. “Republicans and Democrats must work together now to find alternate spending reductions that will not add a national security crisis to our fiscal crisis.”

Shaheen thanked AIA for covering both defense and domestic impacts of sequestration: “Focusing on only one half of the problem creates the impression that we only need half a solution, but that won’t work,” she said. “We cannot continue to avoid tough decisions on the future of our debt and deficit. We should continue to work on a comprehensive solution that puts everything on the table.”


AURORA
from page 3

actions, they’re not enough. Other steps to reduce violence have been met with opposition in Congress. This has been true for some time – particularly when it touches on the issues of guns. And I, like most Americans, believe that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual the right to bear arms. And we recognize the traditions of gun ownership that passed on from generation to generation – that hunting and shooting are part of a cherished national heritage.

But I also believe that a lot of gun owners would agree that AK-47s belong in the hands of soldiers, not in the hands of criminals – that they belong on the battlefield of war, not on the streets of our cities. I believe the majority of gun owners would agree that we should do everything possible to prevent criminals and fugitives from purchasing weapons; that we should check someone’s criminal record before they can check out a gun seller; that a mentally unbalanced individual should not be able to get his hands on a gun so easily. These steps shouldn’t be controversial. They should be common sense...”

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House Panel Urged to Grant State, Local Governments the Option of Collecting Taxes on Internet, Mail-Order Sales

By Larry Jones

Three members of Congress, a governor and representatives from various organizations appeared before the House Judiciary Committee on July 24 to urge support for legislation that would grant state and local governments the option of collecting taxes on Internet and mail order sales. Representative Steve Womack (AR), the key sponsor of the Marketplace Equity Act (H.R. 3179), told members of the panel that the legislation is needed to level the playing field in the world of retail. The bill has broad base bipartisan support. Currently there are 49 cosponsors from across the nation.

Womack, a former mayor of Rogers (AR), told members of the committee a loophole in current law has given Internet merchants an unfair competitive advantage over their main street competitors. He reminded members that under the Supreme Court’s 1992 decision in Quill v. North Dakota, state and local governments are prohibited from requiring out-of-state merchants (such as Internet and mail-order sales companies) to collect their taxes while merchants on Main Street are required to do so under existing state laws. This unfair competition, he said, is driving more shoppers away from Main Street to the Internet where they can purchase items tax free.

Representative Jackie Speier (CA), a cosponsor of the bill, told members of the committee that unfairness in the marketplace between merchants who sell on main street and those who sell over the Internet is projected to worsen. Citing a recent report from the U.S. Commerce Department, she said online retail sales have increased 300 percent to $224 billion over the past eight years, and sales are projected to triple again over the next eight years to more than $600 billion. “If a Republican from Arkansas and a Democrat from California can come together on a bill that deals with tax issues, then the time really has come to finally resolve this issue,” she said.

In response to critics who claimed the bill would raise taxes, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam told the panel, “I am a Republican Governor that does not believe in increasing taxes. … This discussion isn’t about raising taxes or adding new taxes. This is about states having the flexibility to collect taxes that are already owed by their own in-state residents.”

Commenting on the bill In a July 23 letter to the Committee leadership, the Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties and Government Finance Officers said the Marketplace Equity Act would provide state and local governments a mechanism to require the collection of taxes on Internet and mail-order sales, and help level the playing field between merchants on Main Street and the Internet. However, they expressed concerns about two aspects of the bill: (1) a provision that would allow states to exclude local sales and use taxes from being collected; and (2) the exclusion of the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement, which provides important administrative, definitional and procedural guidance for states and retailers to follow. The groups expressed a willingness to work with the committee and sponsors of the bill to address these concerns.

Sacramento Mayor Johnson to DNC Platform Committee: Invest in Infrastructure, Public Safety, Education

By Dave Gatton and Laura Waxman

“It is essential for the federal government to strongly invest in cities if we hope to restart this nation’s economy.” This was the central message of Conference of Mayors Second Vice President Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson in his July 27 testimony before the Democratic National Committee’s Platform Committee. Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter is a member of the Platform Committee, and arranged for Johnson to testify.

Johnson reminded the Committee, which met in Minneapolis, that cities and their metro regions are “global powerhouses” which are key to the strength of the U.S. economy. New York City’s metro economy is larger than Mexico and South Korea’s, he explained, and Chicago’s is larger than Sweden’s. Johnson made the case for more direct federal funding of cities, saying that their metro economies are often larger than states. “Miami has a larger economy than Arizona; Houston’s GDP is higher than the State of Georgia,” he explained.

Referring to the latest U.S. Metro Economies Report released in Philadelphia July 19 by The U.S. Conference of Mayors, Johnson said that U.S. metros are slated to grow 32 percent, or by nearly 84 million people, over the next 30 years, making the role of cities in the national and global economies even stronger in the future. “We as mayors are ready to be part of the solution,” he told the Committee.

Infrastructure

To stimulate the economy, Johnson called for an aggressive federal infrastructure program to keep America strong and competitive in the 21st Century. He said that such an initiative could transcend partisanship and create jobs to spur economic growth. “By investing in infrastructure, we provide both short and long-term jobs, protect our ports and exports, and reduce congestion,” he told the Committee. He warned the Committee, however, that the nation was not making the level of investment necessary to remain globally competitive.

Public Safety

Johnson highlighted the importance of keeping cities and their residents secure through public safety, and pointed out, “With budgets already stretched thin, cities are increasingly having to cut…services fundamental to their citizen’s well-being.” He called on the federal government to provide support for local law enforcement through key programs like COPS Hiring grants, Byrne JAG, and Second Chance; emphasize crime prevention “to save lives and sustain our city economies,” specifically calling for prioritizing efforts to prevent youth violence; and control gangs and illegal drugs through a strong intergovernmental partnership and a combination of tough enforcement and prevention measures.

Education

To remain globally competitive, Johnson said that cities must develop a well-educated and highly skilled workforce. He warned, however, that America is in the midst of an education crisis, with only 32 percent of fourth-graders reading at grade level and international education rankings on the decline.

Johnson called for prioritization of early childhood education; reform of K-12 education to increase graduation rates and prepare students for college and the workforce; improved access to affordable higher education; creation of a skilled workforce by keeping the best and the brightest in the country through visa reform and improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education; expansion and improvement of the community college system to provide alternative pathways for students; and reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Johnson told the Committee that infrastructure, public safety and education are “priorities that are both transformational and attainable.” “The urban agenda is critical to moving this country forward. By focusing on infrastructure improvement, public safety, and education at the city level, the federal government will begin the work necessary to building this nation’s prosperity,” he concluded.
**Issues of Affordability Raised**

By Judy Sheahan

Lima (OH) Mayor Dave Berger, representing the Conference of Mayors, and Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker, representing the National League of Cities, testified on July 25 before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment. The hearing focused on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) newly released Integrated Planning and Permitting Framework which allows municipalities the opportunity to develop a plan that balances competing Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements and the need for flexibility and embraces both green infrastructure and adaptive management; it recognizes that cities have limited resources and uses priority setting to provide partial relief; it recognizes that there will be disproportionate burdens on low income households, and allows consideration of those burdens; and it acknowledges that in some cases integrated plans can be implemented in permits,” Berger said.

However, Berger pointed out that the Framework does not go far enough. Berger discussed how the only substantive relief was in the scheduling of mandates which allows cities to prioritize cost-effective actions but low priority, low benefit actions appear to still be mandated at a later date. The Framework also limits the use of permits for implementation, with the result that, in most cases, EPA will continue to use enforcement tools that treat cities as criminals. The Framework also does not provide for consideration of safe drinking water regulations when setting priorities. And the fundamental problem of affordability was not addressed.

Becker echoed Berger’s comments. “We struggle with the reality that each federal regulatory program and federal mandate is assessed on communities independent of other program requirements,” Becker said. “Water rate and tax increases placed upon our residents to fund regulatory mandates should be reasonably affordable, and affordability within a community should be assessed based on impacts to the lowest economic level.”

These citizens need substantive relief that the current Framework does not provide and according to EPA, the Clean Water Act ties their hands from providing more substantive relief,” Berger said. “So we need Congress to act.” He added, “Either provide us with relief or give us cash.”

Berger outlined what Congress should do including: impose a cap on federal clean and safe drinking water mandates; provide for water federal financial assistance than current State Revolving Fund loan programs and in the form of grants; provide a shield for cities from third party lawsuits for cities that are working toward long term compliance under a permit; direct EPA to halt enforcement campaigns against local governments in favor of EPA programs for integrated planning, watershed planning, and water quality permitting; and prohibit EPA from exacting fines and penalties against local governments that are engaged in good faith efforts, and are investing capital, to comply with water/wastewater regulations under permits.

“Cities are not criminals or enterprises tempted to ‘pollute more’ to make more profit and should not be treated as such,” Berger concluded. “Cities are stewards of the public trust, a responsibility that we share with the state and federal governments and should be accorded the respect of a shared stewardship of our environment.”

**Mayors Testify on Benefits, Shortcomings of EPA’s Integrated Planning for Sewer Overflows, Stormwater**

At left, Lima Mayor Dave Berger and Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker testify before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment.
Congressional Leaders Agree on Deal to Avoid Government Shutdown

By Larry Jones

With the end of the fiscal year fast approaching and none of the appropriate bills anywhere near completion, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV) announced on July 31 that he and House Speaker John A. Boehner (OH) have reached agreement on a deal to keep the federal government and federal programs funded through March 31, 2013. This action should eliminate the threat of a government shutdown, which could have angered voters before the November elections. But it is just one of several critical actions Congress must grapple with before the end of the year. Still remaining are: what to do about extending the Bush era tax cuts, the payroll tax cuts, the alternative minimum tax cut; and what can leaders agree on to avoid sequestration or automatic across-the-board spending cuts.

Under the deal discretionary spending, which includes both defense and domestic programs, would continue to be funded at an annual rate of $1.047 trillion, the spending limit agreed to in last year’s deficit reduction law. This is $19 billion more than the $1.028 trillion approved by the Republican controlled House last March for discretionary spending in Fiscal Year 2013. To make up for the budget gap, the House bill called for the elimination of many programs and significant cuts in others including the elimination of the Community Development Block Grant program; and significant cuts in Head Start, student aid, Medicaid and Medicare.

House and Senate leaders are expected to work on specific language for the so called “continuing resolution” during the August recess so it can be ready to be considered and adopted by both chambers and signed by the President by September 30. After the November elections, the President and Congress are expected to consider both temporary and long term solutions to the expiring tax cuts, sequestration and other critical issues.
Nutter Focuses on Educational Attainment, Employment Opportunities for Ex-Offenders During Mass Incarceration Discussion at National Youth Empowerment Conference

By Crystal Swann

The Children’s Defense Fund held its national conference, “Pursuing Justice for Children and the Poor with Urgency and Persistence: A Community and Youth Empowerment Conference,” in Cincinnati July 22-25. Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter spoke on July 24, before an audience of more than 2,000 child advocates and young adult leaders, as part of a panel entitled “Ending the Cradle to Prison Pipeline and Mass Incarceration: the New American Jim Crow.” The plenary discussion, facilitated by renowned Harvard law professor Dr. Charles Ogletree, took place as part of the four-day community and youth empowerment conference.

To date, Black male incarceration rates are nearly seven times higher than white males; Hispanic males have a rate twice as high as white males; and there are more adult African Americans under correctional control today than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began. It’s under this mass incarceration framework that the panel discussion began, as each speaker was asked to first give their remarks on the state of the issue and then field questions from the audience members.

Nutter, the only chief elected official on the panel, was asked to address the issue first. He outlined the many challenges facing many communities today including a mix of poverty, racial and economic disparities, limited educational opportunities and issues of pervasive community violence. These issues “create a barrier to productive and happy lives that far too many people cannot overcome. The heart and soul of this issue, at least in Philadelphia, it’s about too many guns and too much access to those weapons, in enough investment in education at all levels, whether it’s early childhood education on up through high school,” said Nutter in describing Philadelphia’s challenges.

In Philadelphia, more than 75 percent of all murder victims in 2011 were African American men, and roughly African American men committed 80 percent of last year’s murders; that’s a major concern for Nutter. While outlining the challenges, he also focused on successful program underway in Philadelphia called Philly Rising, a program that works within a community to connect that community with resources to address crime and quality of life issues. Nutter’s goal is to increase the high school graduation rates while increasing the college education attainment rates in his city. He also stated that his focus is on providing those returning to his city from incarceration with a second chance at becoming productive members of society

In his opening remarks, Ogletree, Founder and Executive Director of Harvard’s Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, pointed out that many of the same issues that fuel mass incarceration in this country also fuels the Cradle to Prison Pipeline crisis. In this country, one in three Black boys and one in six Latino boys born in 2001 is at a real risk of imprisonment during their lifetime.

Alexander, legal scholar and author of The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness supported that statement. “This system of mass incarceration isn’t simply a broken criminal justice system but rather a new system of racial and social control that operates in a manner that’s stunningly similar to systems of racial and social control we supposedly left behind,” Alexander stated. She pointed out that in the height of unemployment and joblessness that afflicted segregated communities in many urban cities, the institutional and political response was to end the war on poverty and declare a war on drugs — thus beginning this new system of racial and social control resulting in the confinement and mass incarceration of millions of poor people and people of color.

Stevenson, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, remarked that “this system of punishment is written into the Constitution and operates in a manner that’s stunningly similar to systems of racial and social control that we supposedly left behind…” He stated. According to Stevenson, once an individual is swept up in the criminal justice system they are relegated to a new “caste system” that has them living below not just the public benefits system, but subjects them (due to their criminal record) to a legalized system of social and racial discrimination. Other panelists included:

• Patricia Martin – Presiding Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois Child Protection Division; President, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
• Rev. Janet Wolf, National Program Coordinator and Director of Nonviolent Organizing to End the Cradle to Prison Pipeline at CDF’s Haley Farm;
• Ndume Olaniyi, formerly incarcerated prisoner for almost 28 years, including 19 years on death row;
• Zach Schiller, Research Director for Policy Matters Ohio; and
• Preston Shipp, former prosecutor in Nashville (TN) and currently Dis
ciplinary Counsel at the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of Tennessee.

This was one of many panels highlighted at CDF’s national conference. For more information on this panel and other highlights of the conference, visit the CDF’s national conference. For more information on this panel and other highlights of the conference, visit the CDF website at www.childrensdefensefund.org.
Mayors Bloomberg, Cornett Address Leaders on Park, Green Space Innovation

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett was a plenary speaker at an international urban parks summit held in New York City July 14-17. Co-sponsored by City Parks Alliance and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, the “Greater & Greener: Re-Imagining Parks for 21st Century Cities” conference brought together 900 of the world’s top thinkers and practitioners in urban park and green space innovation. Cornett spoke during a plenary panel about “Funding the Next American City,” highlighting his visionary infrastructure program known as MAPS 3 (Metropolitan Area Projects). This $777 million investment will dramatically reshape Oklahoma City and enhance the quality of life of its residents. MAPS 3 projects include a 70-acre downtown park, improved sidewalks and hike and bike trails, a modern streetcar system, a new convention center, senior wellness/aquatic centers and other amenities.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg delivered the keynote address. For more information about the conference, see www.urbanparks2012.org

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August 6, 2012
Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Nutter Addresses National Urban League Annual Gathering in New Orleans

By Elena Temple-Webb

U.S. Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter addressed the National Urban League (NUL) conference during its Annual Meeting in New Orleans last week.

Nutter’s remarks came during a plenary session on voting rights on the heels of President Obama’s address to the Urban League. Titled “Occupying the Vote: Are Voting Rights Under Attack?” the goal of the panel was to educate attendees about the move in many states to change laws regarding the type of identification needed to vote.

Explaining that these changes could potentially threaten the voting rights of millions of people, disproportionately impacting African Americans, Nutter said, “I am especially pleased with the work that the NUL is doing to raise awareness of voting rights because everyday mayors are on the frontlines working to make sustainable policy changes that give people the opportunities to succeed.”

Nutter also expressed concern about the pending new voting requirements in Pennsylvania. “With this new voter identification law, there is the potential for hundreds of thousands of registered voters in Pennsylvania to be disenfranchised. In a state that has [had] no documented cases of in-person voter fraud, is a law demanding state issued identification [to vote] really necessary?” he asked.

Nutter praised NUL CEO and President Marc Morial for his leadership and assured conference attendees that mayors are working in partnership with the Urban League’s agenda.

“I look forward to a continuing relationship with the National Urban League in the months and years ahead. This year’s conference shares the same concerns that so many mayors across this country do: How do we make the lives of our constituents better? How can we improve public education, create jobs, expand opportunities for education and employment.”

True to Urban League form, Nutter was not the only mayor who addressed the NUL Conference.

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, who started his career with the NUL, also addressed the conference on the issue of equal opportunity. At 29 years old, Hancock was the youngest leader of an Urban League chapter anywhere in America.

To help expand educational opportunities, President Obama announced the establishment of a White House Initiative for Educational Excellence African Americans, “so that every child has greater access to a complete and competitive education from the time they’re born all through the time they get a career.”

When sharing his thoughts on the current state of the nation’s economy, President Obama said, “Today we’re battling our way back from a once-in-a-lifetime economic crisis. When I took office, we were losing hundreds of thousands of jobs a month. … We’ve gone through almost a decade in which job growth had been sluggish, incomes had declined, costs were going up — all culminating in the financial system coming close to a breakdown. … Today, three and a half years later, we’ve had 28 straight months of private sector job growth. [Yet], We still have much more work to do. There’s still too many out of work, too many homes underwater, too many Americans struggling to stay afloat.”

The President noted, “What’s holding us back is a stalemate in Washington between two fundamentally different views about which path we should take as a country. And it’s up to the American people to decide what direction we should go,” as he encouraged the NUL attendees to be actively engaged in guiding that direction.

The National Urban League Annual Conference is the nation’s largest civil rights and social justice conference, which attracts thousands of the nation’s most influential community leaders, together with top policy-makers, academicians, business leaders and artists for three days of dynamic dialogue, intellectual exchange and community service.
DollarWise Launches Summer Youth Jobs Contest

By James Kirby

This summer, mayors partnered with the Conference of Mayors DollarWise Campaign and Workforce Development Council to launch its 2012 Summer Youth Jobs Contest. Cities and summer youth jobs programs across the United States were invited to participate in the Contest in an effort to promote financial education in summer youth jobs.

The Summer Youth Jobs Contest was an online, six-week, financial education curriculum designed to help youth plan for their financial future, and to win an assortment of prizes for participating. The contest ran June 22 until July 27. In the sixth week, participants were asked to submit a short video clip on their summer job experience to win additional prizes. The contest was part of a broader initiative designed to help the DollarWise Campaign reach its goal of incorporating a financial education curriculum into every summer youth jobs program in the nation by 2015.

This year, DollarWise selected winners from 14 different cities across the United States. DollarWise encouraged participation from the mayor’s office of each city with which it partnered, and asked them to personally present prizes won by participants in the Summer Youth Jobs Contest. Corpus Christi Mayor Joe Adame, Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, and Akron Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic each presented DollarWise prizes to the winners of their respective cities. Mayoral presentations from Cincinnati, Baltimore, Wichita, and Oklahoma City will take place in August.

Additional cities that won prizes through the Summer Youth Jobs Contest include: Portland, Boston, North Miami Beach, Dallas, Columbus (GA), Philadelphia, and Tulsa. Overall, DollarWise had over 625 youth participate from more than thirty cities across the United States.

Flyers and other materials were provided to summer youth jobs directors, who were encouraged to promote the contest within their programs. DollarWise also urged directors to include short financial education sessions during their summer youth jobs orientations, and recommend that youth set a summer savings goal and explain what is “in” their first paycheck, e.g. take home pay, federal and state withholding, etc.

Summer youth jobs programs were very excited to be participating in the DollarWise Summer Youth Contest. Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas, in Wichita, served 146 youth in its summer youth jobs program this year and promoted their own contest based on the DollarWise online financial education curriculum. Their program held a raffle where two youth, who completed all of the online modules, each won a laptop computer.

The DollarWise Campaign is pleased and appreciative of the exceptional participation in the Summer Youth Jobs Contest from cities and organizations across the United States. It plans to vastly increase participation, particularly in the number of summer youth employees, during next year’s contest.

New Officers, Executive Director for Counties Organization

By Larry Jones

NACo leaders announced on July 16 during the 77th Annual Conference of the National Association of Counties in Pittsburgh that Matthew D. Chase has been named the new Executive Director of NACo replacing Larry Naake, who is retiring after 21 years of service. Chase will assume the duties of NACo executive director later this year on September 17.

For the past nine years, Chase has served as executive director of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), a Washington (DC) based advocacy group for regional planning and development organizations. He started at NADO in 1997 and previously served as director of legislative affairs and deputy executive director. Chase is recognized for building NADO into a strong national association with a prominent voice for regional approaches and solutions.

County leaders also elected Douglas County (NE) Commissioner Chris Rodgers as the new NACo president. Rodgers has served as commissioner in Douglas County (Omaha) since 2005 and has shown a strong interest in increasing public health resources, strengthening community corrections programs, reforming the juvenile justice system, and controlling spending through better use of taxpayer dollars. He also served as an assistant to former Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey.

Rounding out the top officers of NACo, county officials also elected Linn County (IA) Commissioner Linda Longston as First Vice President; Maui County (HI) Commissioner Riki Hokama as Second Vice President; and Athens County (OH) Commissioner Lenny Eliason as immediate Past President.

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August 6, 2012
Conference of Mayors, Purdue Pharma LP Announce 2013 Prescription Drug Abuse Recognition Awards Program

Top Winners to Receive $10,000 for Drug Awareness Initiatives

For the past three years, The United States Conference of Mayors has partnered with Purdue Pharma LP to conduct the very successful and popular “Safe-guard My Meds” public awareness campaign to address the issue of prescription drug abuse. Working together, Purdue and the Conference of Mayors have recorded hundreds of radio and television public service announcements (PSAs) featuring mayors warning against the dangers of prescription drug abuse, and offering tips on proper safeguarding and disposal of medications. These PSAs have received significant airtime in media markets across the country, reaching an audience estimated in the tens of millions.

Building upon that success, this year, the Conference of Mayors and Purdue have partnered to sponsor the 2013 Prescription Drug Abuse Recognition Program to honor outstanding educational, public awareness and other initiatives that address the issue of prescription drug misuse and abuse in America’s cities. Awards will be made in two categories:

- Large City – Population greater than 100,000
- Small City – Population of 100,000 or smaller

Two awards will be made in each category – second place winners will receive $5,000 and first place winners will receive $10,000. All Conference of Mayors member cities are eligible to apply.

The deadline for receipt of applications is September 14. Winners will be announced at the Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting in January 2013. All applications must be submitted online at www.usmayors.org/drugawareness.

If you have any questions about the 2013 Prescription Drug Abuse Recognition Program or need additional information, contact Crystal Swann by telephone at 202-861-6707 or by e-mail at cswann@usmayors.org.

Save Money on Employee Benefits Costs with Wellness Initiatives

By Jeannie Fanning, Part One of a five-part series on controlling the cost of employee benefits

Trimming costs from a city’s benefits budget doesn’t have to come from reducing benefits: savings can come from wellness initiatives. Mayors and cities are expanding and implementing wellness initiatives to do just that. In a recent survey of government finance officers, nearly 80 percent said they’ve added wellness initiatives to their benefits programs, and 90 percent of them would recommend this cost-savings strategy to others.1 With an estimated ROI of $6 for every dollar invested, wellness programs are a great way to save money long term while giving employees an additional benefit now.2

Wellness initiatives can take many forms and work for all sizes of cities. Benefits can range from on-site fitness centers to nutritional counseling to employer-subsidized gym memberships. Other wellness efforts can include health risk assessments such as lifestyle questionnaires, biometric evaluations, self-help educational materials, and behavior modification programs.

The case for wellness

Regardless of the type, most wellness initiatives typically have one goal in common—weight loss, and for good reason. Nearly two-thirds of adults today are overweight, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. This health issue alone results in 36 percent higher spending on health care and 77 percent higher spending on medications than on employees with a healthy weight.3

Overweight, unhealthy workers tend to be absent more than their colleagues, too, according to a 2011 Gallup poll. Workers with average-normal weight who have three or more chronic health conditions report an average of 3.5 unhealthy days a month, translating into 42 days per year.4 Absenteeism among unhealthy workers costs our economy $153 billion annually.5 Coming to work while unwell also negatively affects employee productivity and morale.

Wellness works for cities and their employees

Wellness initiatives work for cities, and the results can be measured through fewer sick days, reduced preventable chronic conditions, increased employee productivity, and a more positive work environment that leads to better morale and employee retention.6

The cost savings are also tangible. Lewiston (ME) offers a great example of how cities can benefit from wellness initiatives. Lewiston implemented a wellness program for its 443 employees in 2006. The city consequently reduced its health insurance costs by $980,000 through 2011.7

Employees gain indirect benefits from these initiatives as well. A survey of employees who work at small and mid-sized businesses gives good insight into the additional benefits realized by employees.8 Nearly half of employees (48 percent) in the survey agree that having an employer-sponsored wellness program would encourage them to stay in their current job.

Fifty-three percent agree that wellness benefits encourage them to work harder and perform better. Thirty-seven percent of employees agree they have more energy to be more productive at work by participating in a wellness program.

Make your program successful

The challenge for mayors and their leadership is to educate employees and increase both awareness and participation in wellness programs. In fact, 58 percent of employers report low engagement as the greatest obstacle to the success of their wellness initiatives.9 Targeting the specific health risks of a city’s employees helps ensure the components of a wellness program are a good fit for employees, which increases participation. This targeting can be done through biometric evaluations, surveys, and analysis of health claims. A precise, tailored wellness initiative has a greater chance of success.

Communication is also important. Employees can’t participate in wellness activities if there isn’t the proper awareness. Internal communications efforts need to be frequent and effective. This can drive up participation rates and generate the enthusiasm needed for the program’s success. Partnering with a workplace benefits provider that has experience in employee communications can help take some of this burden off of the city. Some companies offer these services at no charge as part of their enrollment process.

To enhance the value of a wellness program already provided, make sure communications are effective and consistent. For cities beginning a new wellness initiative, now is the time. Wellness activities offer a proven way to save money in a day and time when city governments need it most.

To learn more about expanding or implementing a wellness program in your city, please contact Jeannie Fanning with the Conference at 240-393-9672 or e-mail fanning@usmayors.org.

References

Conference of Mayors President Nutter Appoints Chicago Mayor Emanuel to Lead New Task Force on Innovative Infrastructure Financing

By Kevin McCarty

Conference of Mayors President Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter recently appointed Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to lead a new mayors’ task force on innovative financing of local infrastructure.

The action reflects the priority Nutter, as Conference of Mayors President, has placed on raising investment levels to address growing city infrastructure needs. In recent remarks praising Emanuel for his leadership on these issues, Nutter said, “We support the Emanuel Administration’s emphasis on investing in Chicago’s urban infrastructure as well as looking outside the box to leverage private financing for these critical projects.”

The newly-established Chicago Infrastructure Trust championed by Emanuel is already being seen as a model for the public-private financing of infrastructure in cities throughout the country. “In this era of tight budgets, mayors across the country are looking for new ways to keep their urban infrastructure from crumbling through smart and strategic investments that increase economic growth and job creation as well as keep cities modern,” Nutter said.

Emanuel, who will chair the new mayors’ panel, officially named the Innovative Infrastructure Financing Task Force, addressed a group of Washington (DC) policy-makers last month on his efforts in Chicago. Specifically, he made the case that improving local infrastructure is crucial to the future of cities, touting innovative ways urban centers across the country can support infrastructure investment during this period of economic challenges and constrained public spending, especially at the federal and state levels.

In his remarks before a Center for American Progress-sponsored session, Emanuel talked about his strategy for infrastructure improvements and why such investments are so vital to the city’s future. “You can’t have 21st century economy operating on a 20th century foundation. It is unsustainable. It just can’t happen.”

He explained that his Chicago Infrastructure Trust is “…a way for mayors to make progress when Washington has slowed down [its investment].” Citing successful efforts to include an expanded TIFIA program in the new federal transportation law (P.L. 112-141), he said, “TIFIA is one of the most innovative pieces of this legislation. It is kind of a cousin of the Chicago Infrastructure Trust.”

Acknowledging the urgency of finding new solutions to the nation’s infrastructure challenges, Emanuel said, “No city can survive with an aging infrastructure.”

In a related action, the Conference of Mayors released a new metro economies report (http://www.usmayors.org/metroeconomies/) as part of last month’s Summer Leadership Meeting in Philadelphia, with findings that underscored the need for increased investment in infrastructure, particularly transportation infrastructure in metro areas, to ensure steady progress toward full economic recovery.

“...a way for mayors to make progress when Washington has slowed down [its investment].”

– Conference of Mayors President

Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel

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Driving SCIENCE, a professional development institute sponsored by DuPont Motorsports, Clemson University - International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR) and Daytona International Speedway took place at Daytona International Speedway July 5-6. The aim of the program is to introduce the concepts of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through NASCAR racing. Participants included a team of teachers from the city of Orlando sponsored by DuPont as part of their partnership with The United States Conference of Mayors.

Alan Lambert, one of the teachers from Orange County Public Schools, sponsored by DuPont through their partnership with the Conference of Mayors, said of his experience, “Driving SCIENCE was an unbelievable learning opportunity for me. Learning the many ways science is utilized in NASCAR and being able to participate in hands-on activities will benefit me and my ability to relate science to my students.”

The analysis of speed, understanding force, energy and motion, experimenting with “mouse trap” cars and figuring out how safety applies to major super speedways are all a part of the curriculum. Inquiry-based teaching techniques are used and learned during this professional development course. The institute concluded with a “day at the races,” applying STEM knowledge and motorsport career awareness during a garage tour where participants made connections to STEM and its careers and the cars being prepared for the races.

“DuPont is a leader in supporting STEM education. We all win when we help develop a greater understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, including local communities, businesses like DuPont, the United States and the world,” said DuPont Motorsports Manager Larry Deas, one of the Driving SCIENCE speakers.

During the Daytona STEM Cup Challenge, participants experienced an engineering design cycle. They built a car that was powered by a mouse trap and modified it for greater speed. Presentation of the Daytona STEM Cup Trophy to the winning team of Mary Back, Carey Potter-Whiting, and Richard Costa, all Volusia County teachers, was the penultimate event of the institute, with participants then heading for the Daytona International Speedway and the Nationwide Series Subway Jalapeno 250.

DuPont and the Conference of Mayors will continue to work to expand their science education outreach building off the successful Science in the School Day program. The next Driving SCIENCE event will be in September in Dover (DE) and the DuPont/Conference of Mayors partnership will be sponsoring another team of teachers from the Mid-Atlantic region.

For more information on Driving SCIENCE or to schedule a Science in the School Day event, contact scienceintheclassroom@verizon.net or 703-980-8099.
Castro to Keynote DNC in Charlotte

San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro will deliver the keynote address to the 2012 Democratic National Convention in Charlotte. Castro, 37, was first elected mayor in 2009, and was reelected in 2011 with 82 percent of the vote. In commenting on his selection, Castro said, “I’ve got some pretty big shoes to fill,” referencing President Obama’s keynote address two conventions ago and praising the President for his leadership.


MAYORS BUSINESS COUNCIL
Member Profile

Keolis Transit America

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In the United States, Keolis specializes in bus (fixed-route) services, paratransit services, shuttle, light rail and taxi services, municipal fleet maintenance, and call center management. We also operate the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) system that connects Washington DC to the surrounding areas. Whether it’s managing the day-to-day operations for a fully functioning public transit system, or integrating innovative technology into new operations, we stand by our motto and do things the right way, every day.

Areas of Special Interest or Expertise: Transportation

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August 6, 2012
Sometimes it takes people new to the community to call attention to things that may not always be apparent to those who live and work here on a daily basis. That’s what happened last year when a site selector came to Evansville scouting locations for a new business venture. After visiting a few possible locations the person commented that our city appeared dirty. The perception was that Evansville was not a clean city and lacked a sense of community pride. I asked myself, if that was the case why would a company invest money in a city where outward appearances no one cared.

As a candidate running for mayor, those comments stuck with me. I pledged if elected, I would take steps to clean up Evansville one neighborhood at a time. After taking office on January 1, I announced the Clean Evansville Initiative. I asked the community to join me picking up trash for two hours on the first Saturday of each month. On January 7, we held our first clean-up. Temperatures were in the 20s, but that didn't stop 201 people from volunteering to pick up trash along the city's riverfront and throughout the Downtown area. They filled more than 250 bags with over 2,000 pounds of trash and hauled away one couch and six tires.

The first Saturday of February was even colder. Still, 67 volunteers came out and collected 82 bags of trash. As the weather began to warm up the following months, the number of volunteers picked up. In March, we had 173 volunteers, followed by 250 each in April and May. Our monthly efforts have included civic leaders and elected officials, individuals and families, business owners, scouting groups and clubs. We targeted neighborhoods all over the community, from the inner city to suburban shopping areas.

Since January, more than 1,400 volunteers have participated in Clean Evansville picking up over 13,600 pounds of trash. That's 6.8 tons of trash that is no longer on our city streets! And people are starting to take the initiative on their own to keep the city clean. The parent of an elementary school student told me her child's teacher had assigned each student in class to pick up three pieces of litter. As mayor of Evansville, I am proud to report that our city is much cleaner today, and our civic pride is growing and showing.