Senate Passes Long-Term Surface Transportation Renewal Bill
Outlook Brightens for Final Action This Year

By Kevin McCarty

After more than one week of deliberations, the Senate voted 65-34 to approve legislation renewing the nation’s surface transportation law for six years, an action that breathes new life into the broad-based campaign by Administration leaders, mayors, other local leaders, state officials, transit providers, labor and industry advocates, business leaders and others who have been urging Congress to enact a long-term renewal this year.

Concluding action July 30, just days before adjourning for

See TRANSPORTATION on page 19

Obama Unveils Signature Climate Protection Strategy
Carbon Pollution to be Cut by 32% by 2030

By Judy Sheahan

President Barak Obama, on August 3, released the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) final Clean Power Plan Rule, which will, for the first time ever, regulate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from power plants. The rule will cut U.S. carbon pollution from the power sector by 870 million tons, or 32 percent below 2005 levels, by 2030.

Obama said, “The Clean Power Plan significantly reduces carbon pollution from the electric power sector while advancing clean energy innovation, development, and deployment. It ensures the U.S. will stay on a path of long-term clean energy investments that will maintain the reliability of our electric grid, promote affordable and clean energy for all Americans, and continue United States leadership on climate action.”

Conference of Mayors’ President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie

See CLIMATE on page 8

Congress Moves to Deny Funding to “Sanctuary Cities”
CDBG Added to Target List

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

Since Congress returned from the July 4 recess, there have been significant efforts to penalize so-called “sanctuary cities” by denying them federal public safety funding.” The stakes for cities became greater August 5 when CDBG was added to the list of programs for which funding would be denied. (See S. 1814 below.) The efforts are in response in part to the tragic July 1 murder of Kathryn Steinle in San Francisco by an undocumented felon.

On July 16 Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran and National League of Cities CEO and Executive Director Clarence Anthony sent a letter to all members of Congress on behalf of the nation’s mayors and their city governments registering strong opposition to legislation that would withhold federal law enforcement assistance from so-called “sanctuary cities.” Since then the Conference has
At the Milan Expo this year, the entire theme of the world event is food: how we grow it, move it, and the challenges we face in coping with world hunger and how we provide the people on our planet healthy food.

USA mayors came to this world’s fair, which occurs every five years, to show the world best practices of food growth and consumption in the USA. At a Food Forum, USA mayors joined Italian mayors to learn from one another and appreciate the differences in the food culture between Italian cities and American cities.

In recent years, the importance of the food issue has grown. Through our Food Policy Task Force meetings we are seeing an emerging need to put food higher on the list of our priorities. There is a trend now to raise the question of what percentage of the food consumed is from food that is actually locally grown. All USA mayors participating in our Food Forum at the Milan Expo showed examples of what they are doing to increase the consumption percentage of locally grown food. Two issues come into play when mayors support locally grown food: First, reducing the carbon footprint of moving food from other states or even nations. Second, the local economic benefits and job creation that comes as a result of citizens consuming locally grown food.

In addition to the Food Forum, a town hall type “Terrace Talk” on the top of the USA Pavilion, and an international press conference, the USA mayors engaged in a day-long session the day before in Turin, Italy, where we had formal sessions on infrastructure needs and the mobility of urban residents. Turin Mayor Piero Fassino, the President of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), had reached out to me in March and requested that The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) have a more formal relationship with ANCI. Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, Vice President of the Conference, and I signed an agreed-upon Memorandum of Cooperation in the Turin City Hall with Mayor Fassino and ANCI Secretary General Veronica Nicotra. It is our hope to bring a delegation of Italian Mayors to join us for more sessions here in the USA next year.

National Urban League

Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson represented the Conference of Mayors in a dynamic panel during the National Urban League Meeting in Fort Lauderdale last week. The panel, moderated by Roland Martin, centered on criminal justice and police accountability. Mayor Freeman-Wilson was the only mayor serving on the panel and she did a masterful job of giving the realistic challenges all mayors face as we find ways to have police accountability and also protect our police officers as so many risk their lives every day.

The National Urban League (NUL) President Marc Morial brought five 2016 presidential candidates before his meeting. He introduced them all and after they spoke alone, one after another, he followed up to let them know they were expected to answer a substantive policy questionnaire that had been given to them. This session marked the first time in this election that presidential candidates from both parties have addressed an annual meeting of an organization. We commend NUL President Marc Morial for his leadership and his continuing to support the longstanding partnership between the National Urban League and The U.S. Conference of Mayors.
Bollwage Testifies to Reauthorize Brownfields Law
House and Senate Looking to Move Forward on Legislation

By Judy Sheahan

The Conference of Mayors Brownfields Task Force Chair Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment on July 22. Bollwage testified on the importance of reauthorizing the Small Business Liability and Brownfields Revitalization Act, more commonly known as the Brownfields Law.

Brownfields are defined as abandoned or underutilized properties whose redevelopment is hindered by either real or perceived environmental contamination. The Conference of Mayors made brownfields redevelopment one of its top priorities throughout the 1990s and worked with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a program and for Congress to pass a law, which provided brownfield assessment and cleanup grants as well as some liability relief for innocent new owners and developers of brownfield sites.

Bollwage told the Committee, “I testified before the House and Senate numerous times between 1994-2001 and was pleased that it had such strong bipartisan support. The bill passed in the Senate with a 99-0 vote, passed by unanimous consent in the House, and signed by President George W. Bush, which demonstrates the vast appeal of this issue.”

“The Brownfields Law has had a positive impact on communities throughout the nation,” Bollwage said, “According to EPA, there has been over 24,000 assessments, over 1,200 cleanups, and over $23 billion dollars leveraged. In fact, for every EPA dollar spent leverages $17.79 in other investments.”

Bollwage outlined results of the last Conference of Mayors survey in which 84 percent of cities said they successfully redeveloped a brownfield site with 150 cities redeveloping nearly 2,100 sites, comprising more than 18,000 acres of land and 106 cities reported the creation of 187,000 new jobs and 62 cities reported actual tax revenues of $408 million with a potential for $1.3 - $3.8 billion.

Representative Bob Gibbs (OH), Chairman of the Subcommittee, echoed those sentiments. “The Brownfields Program has been a successful partnership between EPA, states, communities, investors, and developers. Because it applies to so many sites and generates such a high return on investment it is an incredibly popular program throughout the country. But like any good program, there may be ways to make it more effective.”

See BOLLWAGE on page 23
Major Cities Chiefs’ Respond to Violent Crime Surge

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

Police chiefs, prosecutors, and other law enforcement officials from approximately 30 jurisdictions, met in Washington August 3 in an emergency summit convened by the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) to discuss the uptick in violent crime occurring in a number of cities across the country. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay participated in the meeting, representing both his City and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The summit produced a set of recommendations released by MCCA President Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Chief Tom Manger during a press conference at its conclusion:

- Repeat Offenders/Prosecution and Sentencing Reform: A small number of people are committing the vast majority of violent crimes, and many of them are under supervision – on probation or parole. The chiefs believe that they need to be held accountable and face consequences for their actions, and called for prosecution and sentencing reform to assure that repeat violent offenders, especially those who use firearms in the commission of a crime, remain behind bars. At the same time they noted that diversion programs should be available for low level offenders so that they do not become repeat offenders, and stated that as people are released from prisons and jails, they should be provided needed reentry services, including substance abuse treatment, education, and job training, so that they can return to the community with the skills they need to succeed and avoid returning to crime.

- Synthetic Drugs: The chiefs called for the development of accurate field tests and drug screening that identifies synthetic drugs. These drugs, especially ‘weaponized’ marijuana, have been linked to erratic, dangerous behavior and testing for these drugs should be required for those in supervision.

- Guns: In many recent gun violence cases, police have responded to crime scenes that involve multiple shooters, multiple victims, and firearms that have high-capacity magazines. Investigating and prosecuting violent gun crime needs to be a priority through funding, staffing, and sentencing. The Chiefs called for stronger gun laws that allow for enhanced penalties for gun crimes involving the use of high-capacity magazines, which are more likely to hit and kill bystanders. They also reiterated their past support of strengthening the background check system.

- Community Education: The chiefs believe that police departments need to do a better job of explaining to the community what they do and why. Related to this is building community trust and assuring transparency. They recognized the need for a whole community approach to reducing violent crime, synthetic drug use, and gang affiliation. For example, cooperation between the police, prosecutors, and community organizations will be essential, they said, to increasing the percentage of cooperating witnesses to increase the clearance rate of homicide prosecutions.

- Crime Statistics: The chiefs called on the Justice Department to maintain a database on crime statistics for the largest cities that would make information available on a monthly basis, making it possible to quickly spot trends.

- National Commission on Crime/Criminal Justice Reform: There has not been a thorough review of the justice system since the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, which was established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 and issued its report in 1967. The chiefs called for a National Commission on Crime to examine and make recommendations regarding the entire justice system and its impact on public safety.

Speaking at the press conference, Slay commented “we can’t police ourselves out of crime.” He said mayors are responsible for making sure their police departments have the tools they need to do their job. “The Conference of Mayors will take the chiefs’ recommendations to heart,” Slay promised, “and stands ready to work with the Major Cities Chiefs Association on these and other public safety recommendations.” MCCA Executive Director Darrel Stephens quickly scheduled the Summit following a
Last month in Turin, five American mayors from the Leadership of the U.S. Conference of Mayors formalized an historic relationship between U.S. and Italian cities. Hosted by Turin Mayor Piero Fassino, the President of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), the group met with a total of seven members of ANCI’s leadership on Friday, July 17. At the conclusion of their meetings, Conference of Mayors Vice President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran joined with Fassino and ANCI Secretary General Veronica Nicotra to sign the first-ever Memorandum of Cooperation between the two organizations.

**Working Session**

Convening first in the newly constructed headquarters of the Intesa Sanpaolo banking group, the U.S. and Italian mayors engaged in a thorough discussion of urban transformation and local economic development. As the venue suggested, the focus was heavily on the future, both in terms of the strategies that mayors discussed and the hope for future collaboration. Cochran noted, “We look at this as an opportunity for our future...We look forward for you to come to our country and to continue exchange visits.” Elaborating, West Sacramento Mayor Christopher L. Cabaldon talked about a shared responsibility that mayors have looking forward. “We have an obligation and an opportunity to innovate in ways that can show the way for the entire planet in addition to our own communities,” he said.

As the discussion of best practices continued, the U.S. and Italian Mayors compared the individual responsibilities and powers that they have to spur growth and innovation. Speaking about the Italian system, Fassino emphasized, “There is no significant policy for the community which is not managed by the municipalities...The institutional system sees at its core municipalities, so they play a central role.” By contrast, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer said, “We oftentimes don’t have a lot of power, but what we do in our cities is use the power of the mayor’s office to convene.”

The conversation then turned to how cities can collaborate, both within the United States and across cultural divides, to further economic development and maximize resources. Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley articulated this priority when discussing her own region, saying that she had a responsibility to, “Collaborate with those cities recognizing that our economies are all connected and recognizing that they have a sense of place, and at the same time we have to drive the overall economic vision for the region.” Columbia (SC) Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin reiterated this point, saying, “We recognize that if we’re going to be successful and competitive...cooperation is so important. We’re forced to work together.”

**Memorandum of Cooperation**

Following their working session, the delegations of U.S. and Italian moved to the Turin City Hall, which dates back to the

See U.S. AND ITALIAN on page 18
U.S. and Italian Mayors Discuss Food Policy at Expo 2015

By Crystal D. Swann

On July 18, a delegation of United States mayors met with their Italian mayoral counterparts to discuss their respective roles in helping to shape a healthy and sustainable local food environment, as well as successes and challenges in their cities. The three-hour meeting held at USA Pavilion of Expo Milano 2015 included presentations by both the Italian and U.S. mayors.

“I am pleased to bring the leadership of The United States Conference of Mayors to EXPO Milan as the nations of our world comes together to discuss food policy and best practices to meet the needs of overwhelming majority of people now living in the cities of the world. In the USA, Mayors of The United States Conference of Mayors are leading the way for a national conversation and a healthy food policy for all Americans. We will share best practices between Mayors in Italy and the USA and leave with takeaways as we continue to meet the food challenges in each of our cities,” stated Tom Cochran, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The previous day The United States Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Italian Municipalities signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Turin Italy, at the invitation of Mayor Piero Fassino, President of National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) where each group committed to sharing best practices and exchange of ideas on how to establish cross-cultural exchanges between local municipalities in the U.S. and Italy to explore and share best practices not only on food but transport, culture and tourism, innovations, mobility and other ways of achieving healthier cities and citizens in both countries.

Piero Fassino, Mayor of Turin and President of ANCI, echoed the comments from U.S. mayors on how a city needs to possess a strong link between food and identity. “This is cultural heritage,” he said. “Citizens no longer express a wish and desire to eat and drink well, they now demand this as a right,” he commented during the session. “Food is an indication of culture. Food is an element of identity.”

Following are brief summaries of the presentations:

The July 18th meeting included exchanges of best practices and ideas on how mayors can help create sustainable and healthy local food environment. The mayors also discussed the connection between food and culture with a few of the U.S. mayors commenting on the need to get back to food basics, including a focus on buying locally sourced foods.

The U.S. and Italian Mayors participate in a Terrace Talk at the USA Pavilion of EXPO 2015 in Milan on July 18, 2015.

See EXPO 2015 on page 21
Homeland Security Briefs Mayors on Priority Enforcement Program

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

The Department of Homeland Security recently announced the details of its Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), which replaces the often-criticized Secure Communities program. PEP provides guidance for local policies relating to handling undocumented persons, particularly those who pose a serious threat to public safety. The Conference organized a July 30 conference-call briefing on PEP for mayors by the Department’s Deputy Secretary, Alejandro Mayorkas.

PEP is intended to target individuals convicted of significant criminal offenses or who otherwise pose a threat to public safety. Through it U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will seek the transfer of a removable individual when that individual has been convicted of certain serious offenses, has intentionally participated in an organized criminal gang to further the illegal activity of the gang, or poses a danger to national security.

PEP builds on the enforcement priorities set forth in a November 20, 2014 Memorandum for DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson, Policies for the Apprehension, Detention and Removal of Undocumented Immigrants. Secretary Johnson briefed the Conference’s Immigration Reform Task Force on the memorandum during our Winter Meeting in January.

Deputy Secretary Mayorkas commented during the call that PEP provides an alternative for cities and local jurisdictions to work cooperatively with DHS as opposed to the various legislative proposals now in Congress. Participation in PEP is voluntary. Mayorkas stressed that PEP is not a one-size-fits all program and that it can be tailored to fit the needs and policies of individual jurisdictions.

Information on PEP is available at http://www.ice.gov/pep.

SANCTUARY CITIES

from page 1

worked hard to monitor developments on the Hill and keep mayors informed of upcoming bills.

On July 27 San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee sent a letter to Congressional leaders registering his strong opposition to the proposals in Congress to withhold federal funding from communities with “sanctuary city” policies. “The recent actions in Washington come as a response to the senseless killing of Kathryn Steinle in San Francisco. Ms. Steinle’s death is a tragedy that, along with other victims at the hands of undocumented felons, deserves our deepest sympathies and collective action,” Lee wrote. “Local and federal officials have a shared responsibility to examine procedures for handling and deporting undocumented felons, an undertaking that has already begun in cities across the country, including San Francisco. Instead of proposing dangerous funding cuts, let’s work together in a thoughtful and comprehensive effort to make our cities safer.”

Here’s a chronology of what’s happened on the Hill:

• **Yoder Amendment:** On July 14 Kansas Representative Kevin Yoder offered an amendment to the homeland security spending bill, which was adopted by House Appropriations Committee on a 28-21 vote. That amendment would deny sanctuary cities state and local FEMA funds: the State Homeland Security Grant Program, the Urban Area Security Initiative, Port Security Grants, Transit Security Grants, and Education, Training & Exercises. Firefighter Grants and Emergency Management Performance Grants are in a different account so would not be affected. The bill defines sanctuary cities as a state or local government that has a statute, policy, or practice that prohibits its law enforcement officers from assisting or cooperating with Federal immigration law enforcement in the course of carrying out their routine law enforcement duties.

• **Judiciary Committee Hearings:** During the week of July 20 both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees held hearings on the issue. Witnesses in both hearings included family members of individuals who had been killed by illegal aliens, advocates on both sides of the issue, and police chiefs. The Senate hearing also included the heads of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services within Homeland Security. Both hearings were quite emotional and acrimonious at times.

• **HR 3009:** On July 23 the House passed HR 3009, a bill sponsored by California Representative Duncan Hunter that would deny COPS, Byrne JAG and State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) funding to sanctuary cities. HR 3009 was introduced two weeks earlier and never considered by the Judiciary Committee. It went directly to the Rules Committee on July 22 and was sent to the floor for consideration the next day, where it passed on a 241-179 party-line vote, with six Democrats voting for the bill and five Republicans voting against it. The bill defines a sanctuary city as a state or political subdivision of a state that

See SANCTUARY CITIES on page 9
Senate Energy Committee Passes Bipartisan Energy Bill

By Debra DeHaney-Howard

Following months of hearings and negotiations, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on July 30 passed by a vote of 18-4 a comprehensive, bipartisan energy legislation that addresses a number of energy-related issues including energy efficiency, renewable energy and infrastructure.

The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 unveiled on July 22 by the Committee's Chair, Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK) and Ranking Member Senator Maria Cantwell (WA) includes a broad array of energy policy measures, that includes modernizing the nation's electrical grid to increasing energy efficiency in buildings, homes and appliances to expediting the development and deployment of renewable energy including geothermal, solar, wind and hydropower.

The legislation also includes the Shaheen-Portman bipartisan energy efficiency bill (S. 720), which has been supported by a wide range of groups, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

“Our energy renaissance has taken us from a position of energy scarcity to one of energy abundance, but current law rarely reflects that fact. We have assembled a robust bill with priorities from many senators that will promote our economic growth, national security, and global competitiveness,” Chairman Murkowski said. During her opening remarks, Ranking Member Cantwell said, “The legislation before us today represents this committee’s first attempt to craft broad, bipartisan energy legislation since 2009. It addresses the emerging energy policies that are important for our country.”

Key titles in the legislation include:

• Energy Efficiency – Title includes agreements on everything from longer-term utility energy service contracts to the reauthorization of the weatherization and state energy programs.

• Infrastructure – Title modernizes our electrical grid, enhance cybersecurity safeguards, maintain the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, provide a streamlined process for natural gas export projects, and ensure a qualified, well-trained workforce.

• Supply – Title provides for an energy supply that is increasingly abundant, affordable, clean, diverse, and secure, this title focuses on the development of renewable energy, traditional resources, and non-fuel minerals alike.

• Accountability – Title reauthorizes certain energy-related components of the America COMPETES Act, better interagency coordination of energy/water initiatives, and the repeal of numerous provisions within the U.S. Code that are outdated or redundant.

• Conservation – Title permanently reauthorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund in a way that balances land acquisition with other conservation programs important to states and permanently reauthorizes the Historic Preservation Fund, both set to expire this fall. It also creates a new National Park Maintenance and Revitalization Fund, to address the maintenance backlog at some of our nation’s most treasured public places.

The Senate is expected to begin floor debate after the August recess.

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CLIMATE

from page 1

Rawlings-Blake said, “The U.S. Conference of Mayors congratulates the Obama Administration on issuing the Clean Power Plan that will reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from new and existing energy utilities. The Mayors of this nation applaud the Administration for making this significant step and look forward to reviewing the final rule.”

According to EPA, the final rule establishes guidelines for states to follow in developing and implementing their plans, including requirements that vulnerable communities have a seat at the table with other stakeholders. EPA is proposing a model rule states can adopt, as well as a federal plan that the EPA will put in place if a state fails to submit an adequate plan. Both the proposed model rule and federal plan focus on emissions trading mechanisms to make sure utilities have broad flexibility to reach their carbon pollution reduction goals. EPA also finalized standards to limit carbon pollution from new, modified and reconstructed power plants.

The Clean Power Plan utilizes the Clean Air Act with EPA setting a goal and states choosing how they will meet it. States will develop and implement plans that ensure that the power plants in their state – either individually, together or in combination with other measures – achieve the interim CO2 emissions performance rates over the period of 2022 to 2029 and the final CO2 emission performance rates, rate-based goals or mass-based goals by 2030.

It will be vitally important for cities to work with their states, utilities, and businesses so that their states establish implementation plans that are in line with current city efforts and practices that reduce energy consumption, promote renewable energy, increase energy efficiency, and other mechanisms that cities are currently employing to reduce their own GHG emissions.

“Cities have been leading the way since 2005 with over 1,000 Mayors pledging to reduce their carbon emissions below 1990 levels,” Rawlings-Blake said, “the Mayors of this nation look forward to working with their states and engaging more with the utilities to implement sustainable GHG emission reductions that will not only protect the environment but also realize cost savings for consumers and businesses in their communities.”

For more information about the Clean Power Plan, please go to http://www2.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan
SANCTUARY CITIES

from page 7

has in effect any law or policy that “prohibits State or local law enforcement officials from gathering information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual.” It is believed that several hundred jurisdictions have policies that would fit this description and that would lose funding if the bill were to become law.

• S. 1814: The Senate Judiciary Committee was scheduled to markup S. 1814, legislation introduced by Louisiana Senator David Vitter on July 30 which would have denied Byrne JAG funds to sanctuary cities. The bill was held over and a new markup scheduled for August 6. That markup was then postponed until after the August recess.

On August 5 a substitute amendment to be offered by Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley of Iowa on behalf of himself and Senator Vitter was released. It would deny CDBG, COPS, and SCAAP funding to sanctuary cities as defined in the bill. The bill, which could affect as many as 300 jurisdictions, defines a sanctuary city as a state or local jurisdiction which:

- has a policy that prohibits or restricts sending to, or receiving from the Department of Homeland Security information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual, or
- fails to comply with a detainer or a DHS notification request about the release from custody of an alien.

Conference CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran sent an August 5 alert to mayors asking them to contact their Senators over the August recess and urge them to oppose S. 1814. He suggested they provide the Senators with information on how important the targeted programs, particularly CDBG and COPS, have been to their city and how harmful this punitive legislation would be.

Several other bills have been introduced in addition to those mentioned above. Each bill defines sanctuary city a bit differently and penalizes different programs. Among them:

- On July 21, Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, introduced legislation that would deny SCAAP and Second Chance funding to jurisdictions that do “not cooperate with Federal officials with respect to criminal aliens or other aliens deemed to be a priority for removal by the Secretary of Homeland Security by refusing to detain or transfer custody of such aliens pursuant to detainers placed upon such aliens; or to notify a Federal law enforcement agency, upon request, of the release of such aliens.” In addition it would give discretion to the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security to deny such jurisdictions other law enforcement grants administered by their agencies.

- On July 23 Arizona Senator Jeff Flake introduced a bill that would establish a nationwide, two-way notification system between federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement. It would require:
  - Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to alert state, tribal and local law enforcement when and where an illegal alien with a criminal record is being released from federal custody;
  - State, tribal and local law enforcement to alert ICE when they are releasing an illegal alien who has been convicted of a deportable offense; and
  - State courts to alert ICE when a protective order is issued against an illegal alien under ICE supervision.

- Also on July 23 Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions and Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson announced legislation that would deny SCAAP, COPS, any other law enforcement, and any Homeland Security grants to state or local jurisdictions that have a statute, policy, or practice that prohibits law enforcement officers from assisting or cooperating with federal immigration enforcement in the course of carrying out their routine law enforcement duties.

COCHRAN

from page 2

nounced our next Leadership Meeting will be in Baltimore on October 2-4. In her inaugural speech, she challenged our leadership to develop an action agenda composed of our top priorities to be presented to the 2016 presidential candidates. Last week, the top three officers signed off on our top ten priorities that will be developed and approved in Baltimore, and then we will engage across the board with all the nation’s mayors to do their part in supporting our priorities as they communicate with the presidential candidates this fall and through the primary and nominating season next year. We look forward to working closely with all of you as we push our agenda forward with all candidates of both parties, as we enter the presidential season which begins with the first presidential debate this week.

We will need your help as we go forward. President Rawlings-Blake’s strong desire is to make sure that our mayors own the the Conference of Mayors 2016 agenda. We have strong consensus on our main issues with Republican and Democratic mayors. Working together on the priority issues for an overwhelming majority of people now living in our cities, mayors can make the difference in 2016.
Mayors Gather at White House to Discuss Community Policing

By Laura DeKoven Waxman

A dozen mayors joined police chiefs and other law enforcement officials at the White House July 23 to discuss the recommendations of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and how they are being implemented. Among the Administration officials who addressed the group are Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Senior Advisor and assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement Valerie Jarrett, White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Jerry Abramson, Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason, and COPS Office Director Ronald Davis.

Several mayors made presentations on their city’s efforts. Spokane Mayor David Condon and his City’s Police Chief Frank Staub discussed their efforts to work closely with the clergy to strengthen police-community relations, including the development of a clergy response team which works to prevent violence and responds to victims’ homes when a police shooting occurs. They also discussed the City’s Use of Force Commission, which conducted a culture audit of the Spokane Police Department, rewrote it’s mission statement, and developed a comprehensive set of recommendations for police department reforms, including the implementation of body cameras.

Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, Chair of the Conference’s Working Group of Mayors and Police Chiefs, described a number of efforts underway in her city, several of which aim at strengthening the relationship between police officers and the community. She said that they host impromptu community forums, sometimes on residents’ front porches, and work closely with the religious community. She also discussed the need to focus on other issues which affect the relationship between the police and the community, including poverty, education, and race relations and the need to work on all of these issues in a multi-faceted way to be successful in combatting crime.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer discussed his city’s Office of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, which grew out of community concern following a triple homicide in 2012. He said that through the work of that office residents had an outlet to voice frustration and be listened to on the night the police officer who killed Michael Brown in Ferguson was not indicted. He also commented that based on recent conversations he’s had with a number of mayors, “no one thinks their city cannot be the next Baltimore or Ferguson.” He said that all of the actions they take in Louisville are based on the city’s three big values: lifelong learning, health, and compassion.

Attorney General Lynch, who spoke at the meeting’s conclusion, described her department’s commitment to implementing the President’s Task Force’s recommendations. She said that the “Civil Rights Division is working with police departments around the country to ensure constitutional policing – in part by combating discrimination, ending excessive use of force and promoting accountability systems – in order to help rebuild community trust where it has eroded.” The Bureau of Justice Assistance is administering a $20 million Body-Worn Camera Pilot Partnership Program. The COPS Office has focused its grant solicitations this year to support state, local and tribal law enforcement implementation of the report’s recommendations.
Newton Mayor Setti Warren Hosts CDBG Regional Roundtable with Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty

By Gene Lowe

U.S. Conference of Mayors Community Development and Housing Committee Chair, Newton, MA Mayor Setti Warren co-hosted a roundtable at Clark University with Worcester Mayor Joseph Petty to bring attention to the importance Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding plays in supporting individuals and their communities across the country. Brockton Mayor Bill Carpenter, Revere Mayor Dan Rizzo, State Representative Mary Keefe, State Representative Dan Donahue, HUD Regional Director Robert Shumeyko and CDBG recipients participated in the regional roundtable and a tour of the Gardner-Kilby-Hammond project.

“Mayors are leaders in innovation in the country – and we have to, to solve our communities’ most complex issues like lack of economic opportunity, job creation and investment in education and infrastructure, even as we see the resources at our disposal, such as CDBG funding, dwindle. CDBG funding is critical for the City of Newton as well as cities across our country, and, as we saw here in Worcester today, even one project in one neighborhood has a ripple effect that will strengthen the whole city by creating jobs and increasing economic development. This project in Worcester has multiple components that make it stand out – the elements of making homeownership more possible for low-income residents, the work with Youthbuild to create jobs and job training opportunities for career advancement and a strong community partnership with the new Boys and Girls Club and Clark University,” Mayor Warren said.

“The Gardner-Kilby-Hammond project is an example of how we do things in Worcester. It’s about collaboration and partnerships that raise up an entire neighborhood and ultimately our City. This is not just about safe and affordable housing, but about keeping our children active and safe with the new Boys and Girls Club. The bike path that Congressman Jim McGovern has helped make a reality is under construction even as we speak. And Clark University has been a partner with Main South CDC throughout this process. Without all of these partners at the table and pulling towards a common goal, we would not be where we are today,” Mayor Petty said.

For Newton, the number one critical issue is ensuring that people of diverse backgrounds have an opportunity to live in Newton, which has a long history of being a place where people of all income levels are able to locate, take advantage of available resources, and thrive. For low-income residents this opportunity has been the key to successfully moving into the middle class. Newton’s location close to major job centers in the Boston region, with transit access and excellent public services has meant that housing prices are often out of reach for low, and even middle-income households.

Newton’s CDBG funds are an essential tool for creating housing choices for low and moderate-income households and retaining the City’s essential characteristic as a community of opportunity.

In recent years Newton has used these funds, in combination with other local funding sources, to support projects like Myrtle Village, a low and moderate-income housing project. The City also funds a homebuyer program that provides the financing for low and moderate income households to buy homes in Newton. Beyond housing, Newton has also used CDGB funds to make the City more accessible for people with disabilities by updating intersection crossings and sidewalks.

The event began with a tour of the nearby Gardner-Kilby-Hammond Street Revitalization Project, a public-private partnership shared by the City of Worcester, Clark University, Main South CDC and the Boys and Girls Club. This CDBG-funded project created affordable housing, a state-of-the-art Boys and Girls Club, and other amenities that are currently under construction, including a track and field center to be shared by Clark University and the Boys and Girls Club or in the planning phase; improving the overall quality of life and livability in the neighborhood.

Following the tour, the group held a panel discussion to address the way CDBG-supported programs encourage regional economic growth as well as individual financial independence in communities throughout Massachusetts. At this year’s Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA, through Mayor Warren’s Community Development and Housing Committee, The U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution calling on the U.S. Congress to approve at least $3.3 billion in CDBG funding, as the level has fallen by almost $1 billion, from $3.9 billion in FY 2010 to $3 billion in FY 2015, resulting in the cancellation of projects, even as the need for these programs has risen.

MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS from page 4

conference call among several chiefs who discussed the increase in violent crime, particularly the rise in homicides, and saw several commonalities. “In a conversation about what was going on in their cities, it was remarkable to me how many of them were seeing the same thing, some with very striking similarities,” commented Washington, D.C. Chief Cathy Lanier, who was on the call and hosted the Summit. “The goal of the Summit is to identify potential gaps and propose solutions that will help us stop this escalating violence. We have come too far to lose traction now,” she continued.

Among the police chiefs in attendance at the Summit were those from Atlanta, Baltimore, Baltimore County, Chicago, Houston, Long Beach, Miami-Dade, Milwaukee, Montgomery County (MD), New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Tampa, Virginia Beach, and Washington, D.C.
Walmart U.S. Manufacturing Innovation Fund to Award Millions in 2015

Walmart, The Walmart Foundation, and The U.S. Conference of Mayors have teamed up to provide $10 million in grants for research and development in domestic manufacturing over five years.

For the Fund’s second year, the Request for Proposals focuses on innovations that will reduce the barriers to manufacturing textiles and apparel in the United States. Proposals will be accepted from 501(c)(3) organizations as well as public research and academic institutions.

Please encourage members of your local research communities to apply!

Letter of Intent Due Date: August 24, 2015 at 11:59pm (EDT)

To Apply, Visit: www.usmanufacturingfund.com

Questions: Contact USCM Program Director Paul Leroux at pleroux@usmayors.org / 202-861-6722
Mayors Urged to Help Line Up Cosponsors of the Remote Transactions Parity Act

By Larry Jones

In an August 3 action alert, Conference CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran asked mayors across the nation to make arrangements to meet with their Representatives during the August recess and urge them to cosponsor the Remote Transaction Parity Act (H.R. 2775). The bipartisan bill is similar to the Marketplace Fairness Act, legislation approved by the Senate in 2013 that would enable state and local governments to collect taxes on remote sales.

Although the bill enjoys strong bipartisan support with 41 cosponsors (22 Republicans and 19 Democrats), it has been stalled in the House due to opposition from Rep. Bob Goodlatte (VA), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee which has primary jurisdiction over the proposal. Among the reasons he offers for opposing the bill is it would impose a huge burden on small businesses, although the bill would exempt just about all small businesses.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (UT) worked very closely with stakeholders and key sponsors of the Senate bill in crafting the Remote Transactions Parity Act. It was introduced on June 16 to modernize the nation’s outdated sales tax collection process. Like its Senate companion, it has attracted strong bipartisan support from members of both parties including Representatives Steve Womack (AR), John Conyers (MI), Jackie Speier (CA), Kristi Noem (SD), Steve Stivers (OH), Peter Welch (VT), and Susan DelBene (WA).

To convince the House leadership to take action on the Remote Transactions Parity Act, the Conference of Mayors and other groups are urging their members to make a special effort to meet personally with their Representatives and explain the importance of cosponsoring this legislation: it will level the playing field between remote sellers (Internet retailers, catalogue mail order companies, and telemarketers) and local merchants on Main Street by requiring both to collect the same sale tax; it is not a mandate, it merely places the decision in the hands of states to collect or not collect taxes on remote sales; and it will not impose a new tax but enable state and local governments to collect an estimated $26 billion in taxes that are currently due on remote sales.

DOLLARWISE

MAYORS FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY

DollarWise Has Extended the 2015 Summer Youth Contest for an Additional Two Weeks!

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

Two final raffles will be held for youth in summer programs Friday, August 7th and Friday, August 14th for youth who have completed each of the six online modules.

Go to www.bedollarwise.org/syc to complete the contest modules.

Contact DollarWise Manager James Kirby at jkirby@usmayors.org for more information.
On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson served as a panelist during the plenary session titled “SAVE OUR CITIES: Voting rights, Criminal Justice and Police Accountability” at the National Urban League Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Freeman-Wilson, who chairs the USCM Working Group of Mayors and Police Chiefs formed following the tragedy in Ferguson, discussed the mayors’ collective recommendations for improving community policing - STRENGTHENING POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN AMERICA’S CITIES. First unveiled at the USCM’s Winter Meeting in January and presented to President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, the Working Group’s recommendations focus on the following topic areas:

1. Building police-community trust
2. Improving police department practices
3. Assuring timely and accurate communications
4. Conducting independent investigations
5. Addressing racial and economic disparities
6. Providing national leadership

Moderated by TV1’s Roland Martin, the NUL’s Save Our Cities session also included Attorney Benjamin Crump, Esq.; Pastor and Founder of The Empowerment Temple Reverend Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant; St. Louis Metro Urban League CEO Michael McMillan; and National Coalition on Black Civic Participation President & CEO Melanie Campbell.

While all panel participants acknowledged the need for police-officer body cameras as well as other reforms, Freeman-Wilson also stressed the need for additional training to enable officers to de-escalate situations that could potentially become violent, explaining that “peacekeeping should always be part of the equation when appropriate,” and noting the violence that has occurred in several cities in the past year could, in fact, occur in ‘any-city U.S.A.’

“Mayors and police chiefs know full well that effective community policing is

See GARY MAYOR on page 20
Major League Baseball and Minor League Baseball, in conjunction with the U.S. Conference of Mayors announced on August 3 that more than 125 cities, covering 34 U.S. States, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, have signed on as designated PLAY BALL Cities for the inaugural “PLAY BALL Month” of August 2015. The cities are being designated based on the commitment by each city’s Mayor to sponsor a baseball or softball-related activity during August. Mayors will report their activities to http://www.usmayors.org/playball.

Major League Baseball and the U.S. Conference of Mayors announced their PLAY BALL partnership at USCM’s 83rd Annual Meeting in June.

“For decades, baseball has had a unique ability to bring communities together, and today, Major League Baseball is seeking to strengthen that connection between our sport and cities across the country through our new PLAY BALL initiative,” said Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. “We are thrilled to begin this new and innovative partnership with Minor League Baseball and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and I thank all the mayors who have stepped up to support this effort to provide fun experiences for kids and families during PLAY BALL Month.”

“The PLAY BALL initiative is baseball in its purest form, building relationships between the game and its future generations,” said Pat O’Conner, Minor League Baseball President & CEO. “It is incredibly important for us to encourage participation at the grassroots level and Minor League Baseball fully supports these efforts.”

Mayors are pleased to join Major League Baseball and Minor League Baseball in bringing fun baseball and softball activities to our cities,” said USCM President Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “I am proud to have already participated in a PLAY BALL event in my community and look forward to hearing how other mayors across the country celebrate baseball - our Great National Pastime.”

During this month, mayors across the country will host activities to engage children, citizens, families and city departments to organize individual and community-based, baseball and softball-related events, such as playing catch, running bases and more. The activities will be focused on strengthening bonds between families, communities and the game.

Conference of Mayors announced their PLAY BALL partnership at USCM’s 83rd Annual Meeting in June.

See PLAY BALL on page 16
PLAY BALL
from page 15

PlayBall.org serves as the initiative’s online home and is accessible via MLB.com, USABaseball.com and other partner websites. Coaching tips and parent resources are prominent components of the site. PlayBall.org also gives parents, coaches and kids information on how to participate in PLAY BALL activities, links to youth-related news and events, and searchable maps to help find local community leagues. Health and safety information, including the Pitch Smart and Play Sun Smart programs, also are available.

“The Conference of Mayors is honored to have joined Major League Baseball and Minor League Baseball in helping to inspire a renewed enthusiasm for the game,” said USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. “We are pleased with the number of mayors who have made commitments to sponsor a Play Ball activity, and look to involving more mayors in the future.”

Below is a list of 2015 PLAY BALL cities so far. The list is subject to change and additional cities may be added. For details on each city’s event, please visit http://www.usmayors.org/playball/registrymonitor.asp

2015 PLAY BALL CITIES

Alexandria, VA
Anaheim, CA
Apopka, FL
Arlington, TX
Baltimore, MD
Birmingham, AL
Baltimore, MD
Boston, MA
Branson, MO
Bridgeport, CT
Camuy, PR
Chapel Hill, NC
Charleston, SC
Cincinnati, OH
Clarence, NY
Clarksville, TN
Cleveland, OH
Columbus, SC
Columbus, OH
Corona, CA
Corpus Christi, TX
Cupertino, CA
Dayton, OH
Des Moines, IA
Doral, FL
Dublin, CA
Dubuque, IA
Durham, NC
Elizabeth, NJ
Elk Grove, CA
Erie, PA
Fort Myers, FL
Fort Wayne, IN
Frederick, MD
Fremont, CA
Frisco, TX
Gary, IN
Greenville, NC
Gresham, OR
Hallandale Beach, FL
Hayward, CA
Hempstead, NJ
Hialeah, FL
Hillsboro, OR
Hoffman Estates, IL
Houston, TX
Huntersville, NC
Indianapolis, IN
Irvine, CA
Irving, TX
Johns Creek, GA
Kansas City, MO
Knoxville, TN
Lakeland, FL
Las Cruces, NM
Las Vegas, NV
Lexington, KY
Lima, OH
Little Rock, AR
Livermore, CA
Los Altos, CA
Louisville, KY
Macon, GA
Madison, WI
Manhattan Beach, CA
Mesa, AZ
Millstone, NJ
Milwaukee, WI
Miramar, FL
Monroe, LA
Mount Vernon, NY
Myrtle Beach, SC
Nashville, TN
New Orleans, LA
Newark, NJ
Newport News, VA
Newton, MA
Niagara Falls, NY
North Miami, FL
North Wilkesboro, NC
Oakland, CA
Ocala, FL
Oklahoma City, OK
Orlando, FL
Orlando, FL
Oroville, CA
Palm Bay, FL
Paterson, NJ
Pembroke Pines, FL
Philadelphia, PA
Phoenix, AZ
Piscataway, NJ
Pittsburgh, PA
Plano, TX
Providence, RI
Quincy, IL
Racine, WI
Rochester, MN
Rochester Hills, MI
Roseville, CA
Sacramento, CA
Salen, VA
Salt Lake City, UT
San Antonio, TX
San Francisco, CA
San Gabriel, CA
San Leandro, CA
Seattle, WA
Socorro, TX
St. Louis, MO
St. Petersburg, FL
Tacoma, WA
Tallahassee, FL
Tempe, AZ
Tigard, OR
Torrance, CA
Trenton, NJ
Washington, DC
West Covina, CA
West Hollywood, CA
West Sacramento, CA
Westlake, OH
Wilmington, DE
Woodland, CA
York, PA
Yuba, CA

August 4, 2015

Sincerely,

Robert D. Manfred, Jr.
Commissioner of Baseball

Robert D. Manfred, Jr.
Commissioner of Baseball

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10167 (212) 931-7800

ROBERT D. MANFRED, JR.
Commissioner of Baseball
Hattiesburg
On July 23, 2015 Hattiesburg Mayor Johnny DuPree held a local ceremony to honor community partners for their contribution to the city’s First Place Small City Livability Award for its Education Initiatives. The Education Initiatives were developed to broaden and elevate services for youth in the city of Hattiesburg. Programming included 31 little free libraries, as well as eight public art sculptures with literary themes. The city released the “Hub City Access-Hattiesburg Area Youth Master Plan,” which created a blueprint for ways to broaden services for youth. The initiative is the product of a yearlong collaboration between the City, The University of Southern Mississippi School of Social Work, and the community.

Philadelphia
Fun Safe Philly Summer is a pilot program to provide five free, take-home books to children who receive free summer meals at outdoor meal sites throughout the city. To implement this program, city staff worked closely with the Philadelphia affiliate of First Book, a national nonprofit that provides take-home books to children. The city also partnered with the Foster Grandparents program, a Senior Corps program, to do literacy assessments for the children. This assures that they receive the correct books for their reading level. Then, for a total of five weeks, the Foster Grandparents return to the playstreet each week to do literacy games and activities with the children. To date, nearly 400 children have received 2,000 books at 13 sites. On July 28, 2015 Mayor Nutter held the final drop off at a playstreet in the Point Breeze section of the city.

Orland Park
Orland Park’s Mayor Daniel J. McLaughlin was honored for his Outstanding Achievement Award winning Anti-Bullying Program to eradicate bullying in his community at the August 3, 2015 Orland Park Village Board Meeting. The program utilizes Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media to engage young people. The city has worked closely with The Bridge Teen Center to identify problems and solutions surrounding the issue. By using no- and low-cost mediums, Orland Park created a model of efficiency in dealing with bullying.
On July 16, HUD released the final Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule and a notice that opened the second round of comments on the revised draft AFFH Assessment Tool. Comments on the Assessment Tool, also called the AFH Template, must be received by August 17, 2015.

The Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule provides clear guidelines, new tools and data for cities and states to meet fair housing obligations required by law. HUD will assist cities and states through technical assistance to affirmatively further fair housing. Much of HUD’s assistance will be data and the template for conducting a fair housing analysis.

The fair housing rule requires CPD formula grantees to replace the existing Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing with a new Assessment of Fair Housing. CPD grantees will incorporate fair housing planning into the consolidated plan. HUD will review the assessments. HUD says that these changes will make the department a “better partner with its grantees by providing a clearer path to meeting AFFH requirements, easing some of the burden of analysis by providing and packaging relevant data, and integrating fair housing into planning and investment strategies.”

Cities will have time to work on the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) as HUD says “the rule will be implemented on a rolling basis. The due date for the first AFH is 270 days prior to the program year that begins on or after January 1, 2017 (or January 1, 2018, depending on grantee type), for which a jurisdiction submits a consolidated plan. HUD will also provide grantees at least 9 months from the publication of a final AFH template applicable to the grantee type before the AFH is due.”


The Assessment Tool—along with HUD-provided data tables and maps—is available at: http://www.huduser.org/portal/affhpt.html#affhassess-tab


17th Century and conveys the historic nature of the partnership. There, Cornett, Cochran, Fassino, and Nicotra all signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the two organizations, which Cochran described as, “Long overdue.”

In the Memorandum, the two parties agreed to develop a stable partnership with frequent meetings, to share information about best practices, to explore issues of shared importance, to encourage exchange processes and knowledge of metro areas, and to construct a network of Italian and American mayors. Fassino stated that the first six areas of discussion would be smart cities programs, climate change, sustainable mobility, innovation, democratic participation, and resources.

Praising the exchange, Cornett said, “Whenever you get a group of mayors in the same room to discuss issues, I think it is surprising for many of us to see just how many similarities there are...We look forward for this to be the beginning and not the end of a relationship and to see that we can continue this far beyond the tenures of each of us.”

Indeed, the exchange continued almost immediately, when the Conference of Mayors hosted a session on food policy best practices at the USA Pavilion of the Milan Expo the following day. The U.S. Mayors were joined there by Fassino, Nicotra, and four additional Italian mayors. For more on that exchange, see U.S. and Italian Mayors Discuss Food Policy at Expo 2015 on page 6.

**Participating Mayors**

The U.S. delegation for the first exchange consisted of USCM Vice President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, Columbia (SC) Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin, West Sacramento Mayor Christopher L. Cabaldon, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, and Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, and USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran.

The Italian delegation consisted of ANCI President Turin Mayor Piero Fassino, ANCI Assembly President Catania Mayor Enzo Bianco, ANCI Vice President for Small Cities Valdengo Mayor Roberto Pella, Novara Mayor Andrea Ballarè, Genoa Mayor Marco Doria, Parma Mayor Federico Pizzarotti, and Alessandria Mayor Maria Rita Rossa, and ANCI Secretary General Veronica Nicotra.
the August recess, Senators approved a MAP-21 renewal plan, called Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act (DRIVE Act), that raises federal highway, bridge and transit investment over the next six years, incorporates a number of targeted policy chang- es, and provides funding for Amtrak and state-supported intercity passenger rail services over the next four years.

Senate proponents of the measure, including Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (OK) and Ranking Committee Member Barbara Boxer (CA), were initially hopeful that successful Senate action on a long-term bill might prompt House leaders to simply take up the Senate bill. In the end, the House voted to approve (as did the Senate) legislation to extend the MAP-21 law again, moving the July 31 expiration date by 90 days until October 29. House leaders are optimistic this new deadline will provide the necessary time for their committees – and even the full House – to act on a long-term renewal measure.

“We applaud our colleagues in the Senate for taking an historical step forward in our country’s transportation and infrastructure. We are proud to see such strong bipartisan support in the Senate’s passage of the DRIVE Act. Americans have had enough with short-term extensions and no longer want to see Congress kicking the can down the road,” said Inhofe and Boxer in their joint statement on the Senate action.

“We now have three more months to work to advance a long-term funding solution with the U.S. House of Representatives, which is ample time to break the cycle of short-term patches. We encourage constituents, businesses, and local leaders to maximize their representatives’ August work period and share the critical need for safer bridges and more efficient roads,” said the Senators.

New Revenues Are Top Hurdle

Among the key challenges before the Senate and House is finding revenues to fill the shortfall in the Transportation Trust Fund, with about $90 billion in additional revenues needed to maintain current funding commitments over the six years of the legislation.

The renewal bill (H.R. 22) as passed by the Senate provides for nearly half of the new revenues to pay for the six years of planned spending. This means the next Congress will have to find additional revenues to fully fund years 4-6 (FYs ‘19-21) of the legislation. The revenue-raising provisions used to pay for the initial three years (FYs ‘16-18) were advanced without the bipartisan agreement that characterized efforts on other key portions of the bill. At this point, transportation users (e.g., through increased gas taxes or higher taxes on heavy vehicles) are not contributing any additional revenues to pay for this renewal, as prior renewal laws have generally required.

Developing sufficient revenues to support a long-term renewal bill in the House of Representatives is expected to be the top impediment in reaching agreement in that chamber on companion legislation, which can be subsequently conferenced with the Senate in reaching a final agreement by the end of the calendar year.

Improvements for Local Areas

In addition to slightly higher annual funding for many highway and transit programs, the legislation revisits a number of funding provisions included in the MAP-21 law, enacted just three years ago.

Bus Discretionary Funding: The Senate measure restores funding to the Federal Transit Administration’s discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities Program, making $180 million in grants competitively available in FY’16 (and adjusted slightly thereafter). Restoration of this discretionary funding is especially helpful to local areas with high bus ridership, aging bus fleets or those seeking to expand their bus fleets and facilities, providing additional FTA resources beyond those available under bus formula grants. Notably, $55 million is reserved each year to transit providers in procuring no or low-emission buses.

Bridge Funding: The legislation also seeks to further remedy some of the unintended consequences wrought by the elimination of the Bridge Program in MAP-21, when more than $5.6 billion in annual bridge funding was mostly directed at underwriting a large increase in funding to the states under the National Highway Performance Program. This change left a significant funding gap for bridges not on the National Highway System (NHS). Under MAP-21, only off-system bridges received specified funding – nearly $800 million annually – that is allocated by states for local bridge projects. The Senate bill strengthens this commitment, directing states to commit actual dollars (i.e., obligate funding) to eligible projects on these off-system bridges, most of which are owned by cities and counties. For bridges on the Federal-aid Highway System but not on the National Highway System, the Senate bill adds a provision that requires states to reserve an identical amount – nearly $800 million annually – for these bridges where the ownership is roughly shared between states and local governments.

Transportation Alternatives Program: In MAP-21, the longstanding Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program was modified and renamed the Transportation Alternatives Program or TAP, whereby nearly $820 million annually is allocated equally between states and MPOs/local areas for a range of eligible projects serving mostly local communities as well as both motorized and non-motorized system users. The Senate bill allocates all (100 percent) available TAP funds to MPOs/local areas, not the 50 percent share provided under MAP-21, totaling $850 million annually for each of the six years of the bill. Importantly, the bill does not direct states to also allocate obligation authority to local TAP projects leading to actual investments, as current law now requires for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds provided to MPOs/local areas.

See TRANSPORTATION on page 20
TRANSPORTATION
from page 19

National Freight Program: The Senate bill includes new planning and financial commitments to address the challenges of growing freight movements throughout the U.S., providing $1 billion in formula funds to the states in FY’16 and growing annual commitments to nearly $2.5 billion in FY’21. The legislation, however, stipulates that 90 percent of all available funds must be directed to highway-related projects, a provision that will ultimately prove too limiting as local, metropolitan, and state leaders work to address mounting freight bottlenecks in the system. Nonetheless, improving freight networks, especially last-mile connections, has been a priority for the Conference and many other organizations.

Setbacks for Local Areas

Despite raising overall funding commitments to highway programs by about 20 percent and to transit program by about 25 percent over the six-year period, the legislation surprisingly reduces funding in key program areas, changes that undermine local infrastructure development projects to serve a growing U.S. population and overlook the dominant role of cities and counties in managing most of the nation’s transportation infrastructure, including 43 percent of the Federal-aid Highway System.

Surface Transportation Program (STP): The Senate bill reduces the share of STP funds to be allocated directly to the nation’s larger metro areas and to states for projects in smaller urbanized and local areas. Specifically, due to a combination of funding adjustments and other changes, the Senate-passed bill will again reduce funding shares to metro and local areas, by roughly seven percent in FY’16, as compared to current funding levels. STP funding to local areas would not be restored to current levels until year four of the Senate’s bill, reduced funding commitments that contrast to the 20 percent growth rate for highway program funding categories directed mostly to state transportation departments. In MAP-21, the share of all STP funds being allocated to MPOs and other local areas was reduced by 20 percent, a change that reduced STP funding to many metro and local areas throughout the U.S. Notably, the Senate-passed bill will reduce STP funding shares to all MPOs and local areas for the first time, beginning next fiscal year.

Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA): In a significant departure, the Senate bill substantially reduces funding to the TIFIA program, cutting the current $1 billion annual commitment to $300 million for each of the six years of the renewal period. The expansion of federal commitments to the TIFIA program was a key feature of MAP-21, an action that was back strongly by the Conference of Mayors and others.

Other Key Provisions

The Senate bill also incorporates provisions reauthorizing funding in support of Amtrak and state intercity passenger rail services, providing $6.6 billion in Amtrak funding over four fiscal years (FYs ’16-’19) and nearly $2.3 billion in grant funding to rail agencies. Among provisions in this package, priority is given to applicants using resources under the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program to implement positive train control (PTC). Efforts in one Senate committee to repeal the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program, a top Administration priority, were turned back during negotiation on the rail title, allowing for continued funding for this program as part of the annual appropriations process. Other efforts to include rail funding alongside highway and transit commitments inside the Transportation Trust Fund again fell short, despite the fact that none of the new revenues supporting H.R. 22 are to be collected from highway users.

For all highway programs, H.R. 22 provides total authorizations of $41.1 billion in FY’16, increasing to $49.2 billion in FY’21. For transit programs, the Senate bill provides $11.6 billion in FY’16, increasing to nearly $13.4 billion in FY’21.

Included in the Senate’s bill is a top legislative priority for the Administration, the Conference of Mayors, leading business organizations and many others and that is renewal of the Export-Import Bank, which expired the end of June. This issue is certain to be an item for negotiations when Senate and House conference committees hammer out a conference committee agreement later this year, if all goes according to plan.

When Congress returns in September, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (PA) and Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (OR) will lead the debate and committee action on most transportation policy issues, with tax-writers on the House Ways and Means Committee tackling the revenue-raising provisions of the legislation.
Mayoral Best Practices
Oklahoma City – 1 Million Pound Challenge

Conference Vice President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett shared how his personal weight loss journey began a citywide movement to change the culture and behavior of his citizens. In 2008, Mayor Cornett, taking note that his city’s last place ranking on the healthiest city list, decided to put his city on a diet. He established a website; created a media outreach strategy; and established deadlines for achieving his city’s goal of losing one million pounds. He noted what started out as a lead by example model soon because a change in culture for his city; a city he noted was known for being more car centered not pedestrian centered.

“As a mayor I can relate, when your city has a problem, and you perceive yourself to be an example of that problem, that’s an uncomfortable situation to be in.”

“One of the interesting things about this very obvious problem was that we were not talking about it,” stated Mayor Cornett.

As an example, Cornett walked the mayors through how the process of being focused on weight loss and obesity risk turned into a focus on city redesign and enhancing his city’s urban landscape. The city reached its goal of losing a million pounds and in the process gained more sidewalks, more pedestrian friendly walkways; a new downtown park area; more senior wellness centers and a upcoming new light rail system.

West Sacramento, California – Global Food Hub

West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon shared with the international mayors how his city is devoting large amounts of time, effort and energy to develop into a global food industry hub attracting international companies like Raley’s Grocers, Nor Cal Beverage, and Bayer CropScience to name a few to his city. Mayor Cabaldon outlined how urban farming is making a resurgence in West Sacramento as a tool to address blighted, vacant lands and also as an opportunity for transitional use for sites slated for development in the future but can now serve as urban farms.

Finally, Mayor Cabaldon stressed that his city isn’t trying to return to an agrarian based economy but is trying to emerge as a major food hub for the region. He pointed out that all the food produced in West Sacramento only about “5% is consumed locally” and he is committed to changing those numbers by focusing on workforce development; agricultural economic sustainability; neighborhood revitalization; economic development; food security; affordability and sustainable/institutional markets.

“We’re building economic development in these neighborhoods, we’re removing crime and blight, we’re activating development parcels that otherwise have been sitting for decades, we’re creating real employment for people by want that employment...we’re creating the real kinds of markets that are sustainable...as well as creating the food innovation space,” stated Cabaldon.

Dayton, Ohio – From Brownfields to Green Fields

Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley discussed how her city was turning blighted areas into community gardens and urban agriculture. The blighted areas, most commonly called ‘brownfields’ were often times previously industrial or commercial use sites. Mayor Whaley discussed how those sites were reused as community gardens and how immigrant populations are using those areas to grow vegetables that are indigenous to their countries.

The affect is that the Dayton community is now experiencing different types of foods that are being grown by those immigrant farmers and sold at local markets. This sharing and cultural exchange is creating opportunities for learning about different cultures through food. “There’s such a demand for local foods. “How do we make this a social issue and a social innovation issue?” Whaley remarked during her presentation.

Columbia, South Carolina—Bringing Slow Foods Downtown

Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin focused his presentation on how his city is working to create a slow food movement to bring food and culture back into the Columbia experience. The “Slow Food Columbia” movement is fostering a new, sustainable culinary culture that is attracting world-class chefs and restaurateurs from major markets to Columbia, South Carolina. The initiative, which is associated with Slow Food USA, is a designed integrates education, food workshops, and chef showcases into a food celebration in Columbia.

The mayor explained the City Roots, an award winning urban farm built on city-owned brownfield site, is becoming a food center for everything from urban farming and community gardens to beekeeping; chicken husbandry and aquaponics. This combined with the slow food ecosystem creates a network farmers, chefs, public markets, food events, and restaurants working together to make Columbia a food destination in the south.

“We’ve used this for all of the honorable benefits that we’ve discussed here around the table, but we’ve primarily used it as an opportunity to regenerate interest in our downtown. ...The focus has been on trying to make slow foods much more common in a place where obesity has much more been the order of the day as opposed to healthy eating. How do we bring more people to our urban core and create a sense of excitement,” Mayor Benjamin remarked on the economic benefits of focusing of food as a cultural experience.

Louisville, Kentucky—West Louisville FoodPort

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer focused his presentation on how his city is developing a new foodport in West Louisville. After an extensive research study revealed that when combined (residential and commercial needs), his metro area had an unmet demand for local food of nearly $300 million. Fischer set out a bold plan to meet that demand with the creation of the West Louisville FoodPort. The foodport will go beyond being just a normal foodhub. The foodport will included everything from farming and processing to retail, recycling and marketing. It is anticipated to generate 251 permanent jobs and 275 temporary construction jobs.

“If we can think about the original production of food as agriculture, with an emphasis on...
Families are always evolving — sometimes through marriages and births, other times through divorce and death. And when they do, the last thing on some employees’ minds is updating dependents with their benefits companies. This can not only cause them stress, it can cost you money. And, with most budgets already tight, public employers are looking at every option available to save money. Dependent verification can help cities make better use of their total benefits budget.

A reported 8 percent of the dependents enrolled in an employer’s medical plan are actually ineligible to receive benefits according to their plan’s own criteria, according to a study released this June by Colonial Life and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Ineligible dependents subject public employers to increased legal exposure. The issue also heightens the compliance risk associated with paying claims for ineligible dependents, which is prohibited by federal law. In addition, ineligible dependents assume they have coverage they actually don’t have, which can create unpleasant surprises when they eventually learn the truth.

For the employers, providing insurance benefits for dependents who are no longer eligible for coverage can be expensive. Recent estimates suggest that employers pay an average of $3,500 annually to provide coverage for a single dependent. At this rate, cities can rack up big price tags in a hurry by funding dependents who aren’t qualified for coverage.

Who are ineligible dependents? They can include those who are over the age for eligibility, former employees, family members who aren’t blood relatives or spouses and children who are no longer eligible for dependent coverage after a divorce.

One Texas city saved more than $1 million in the first year
In 2013, the City of Corpus Christi, Texas, was surprised to find that 9 percent of dependents covered by its health plans were ineligible for coverage. Considering the national average-annual-price tag of roughly $3,500 per dependent, the dependent eligibility audit resulted in the City of Corpus Christi saving roughly $1.1 million in the first year.

The recent Colonial Life-GFOA study examined 17 local governments that conducted audits in 2013. These included cities, counties and school districts. The average number of ineligible dependents across all 17 governments was greater than 7 percent. The five largest jurisdictions reviewed (which ranged from 3,500 to 7,500 employees) would be able to save between $590,000 and $1.3 million annually by removing the ineligible dependents.

Consider outside providers for dependent verification
Dependent eligibility audits can be time consuming, detail-oriented, and resource intensive. There’s also potential for damaged moral and friction among employees as they are asked to obtain various personal records and demonstrate the eligibility of their dependents. However, by working with a third-party auditor, the human resource department is not placed in the uncomfortable position of asking personal questions of employees, such as marital status.

An alternative to an extensive audit is a dependent review as part of a benefits enrollment with individual counseling sessions. The process is seamless: Since benefits counselors are already personally reviewing the offered benefits plan, they’re able to have a more unguarded conversation about eligibility criteria and easily add or remove dependents from the plan as needed. Conducted at the time of enrollment, employees sign an affidavit verifying their dependents and the accuracy of their records.

If you’re looking for a way to keep your employees engaged and motivated with strong benefits, while protecting your taxpayers and your bottom line, consider partnering with a strong benefits provider who can work with you on a dependent verification program.

About the Author:
Carey Adamson is vice president of public sector market services for Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Company. For more information about Colonial Life and the product and services they provide cities, please contact Kathryn Kretschmer Weyland at kweyland@usmayors.org.

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August 7, 2015 usmayors.org U.S. MAYOR Page 22
EXPO 2015
from page 21

the word culture, and then we think about the conversion to agribusiness, with an emphasis on the word business, what we have seen is the elimination of many of the farms in America and very large corporations have taken the production of food over,” Mayor Fischer commented echoing a theme that pervaded the discussion. The theme was how can food become apart of culture again and not just a “fast” experience.

Best Practices from Italian Cities

The Italian mayors presentation centered on how in Italy the food experience is a slow and cultural experience and how they are working to infuse more diverse cultures into that experience. The Italian cities are looking for more energy efficient ways to convert waste to energy as well as highlighting their “zero kilometer” focus. The “zero kilometer food” initiative refers to the food produced, sold and eaten locally – the food which travelled zero kilometers. Mainly it refers to non-industrial fruits, vegetables, cheese, meat, honey etc, which does not go through global trade chains, therefore it does not have big price margins and quality lose during long storage in international supermarkets. It also has an important ecological aspect, which cannot be overseen – since there is no transport involved the environment does not suffer from direct and indirect pollution.

In Italy, it is a matter of regional and local pride to use foods, oils, etc. grown in that region. If a chef is in Tuscany, Tuscan olive oil goes into the dish, and hardly anything else from another region. It also focuses on what is grown seasonally during the time of preparation, if it is not in season it is barely found in an Italian dish. ‘

The following Italian mayors presented during the best practices session:

• Turin Mayor and ANCI President Piero Fassino
• Asti Mayor Fabrizio Brignolo
• Pavia Mayor Massimo Depaoli
• Sasso Marconi Mayor Stefano Mazzetti
• Cosenza Mayor Mario Occhiuto
• ANCI Secretary General Veronica Nicotra

Terrace Talk

Following the best practice sharing, the mayors participated in that day’s edition of the “Terrace Talk” series, sponsored by the USA Pavilion followed by a 30-minute media avail with the U.S. and Italian mayors. The theme chosen for the 2015 Milan Universal Exposition, which runs from May 1 through October 31, 2105, is Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life. This theme embraces technology, innovation, culture, traditions and creativity and how they relate to food and diet. The Expo serves as a platform for the exchange of ideas and shared solutions on the theme of food, stimulating each country’s creativity and promoting innovation for a sustainable future.

BOLLWAGE
from page 3

Bollwage outlined some minor changes to the Brownfields Law and program that would help spur on additional redevelopment projects and economic growth. They include:

• Additional funding - At current funding levels (on average $90 million for cleanup, assessment and job training grants), EPA only funds about 30 percent of the applications that arrive at EPA Headquarters. According to USCM policy, Bollwage told the committee that the brownfields program should not only be fully funded at the previously authorized levels of $250 million but even at higher levels.
• Creation of a Multi-Purpose Grant - Cities could use a more market friendly tool in order to be able to assess properties or provide cleanup grants and loans depending on which site is chosen for redevelopment.
• Increase in Amount for Cleanup Grants – According to Bollwage, many of the “easy” brownfield redevelopment projects are already underway and what we have left are brownfields that are more complicated. The Conference of Mayors would like an increase in the funding ceiling for cleanup grants to be $1 million and in special circumstances, $2 million. The current cap is at $200,000.
• Allowance for Cities to Apply for Brownfields Grants for Properties Acquired Before 2002 - The Conference believes that as long as a local government did not cause or contribute to the contamination of the property but just happened to own the property prior to 2002, when the law was enacted, they should be allowed to apply for EPA funding for that property.
• Liability Relief for Local and State Governments as well as Good Samarians - The Act should also exempt local and state governments from CERCLA liability if the government owns a brownfield, did not cause or contribute to contamination; and (c) exercises due care with regard to the contamination. The Act should also provide an owner-operator exemption from CERCLA liability for good Samaritans that take cleanup action but do not take ownership.

Members of the House expressed interest in introducing a Brownfields Re-authorization Bill while the Senate has already introduced the bipartisan bill, S. 1479, the “Brownfields Utilization, Investment, and Local Development Act of 2015” or “BUILD Act”. Senator James Inhofe (OK), who co-sponsored the bill and chairs the Environment and Public Works Committee, has indicated that passing a Brownfields Bill is one of his priorities as Chairman.

“Brownfields redevelopment is a win-win for everyone involved,” Bollwage said, “it creates jobs, it cleans up the environment, it’s pro-business, and pro-community. The reauthorization of this law should be a top priority for this Congress.”
In mid-July, U.S. Communities launched a new contract for public sector consulting with Alvarez & Marsal (A&M), a group that enables government entities, organizations and leaders to solve complex problems, improve performance, maximize value for citizens, and produce a social impact. The multi-year contract was awarded through a competitive solicitation process conducted by lead public agency Fairfax County, Virginia as part of the Innovative Solutions, Applications, Products and Services proposal solicitation. Alvarez & Marsal was chosen not only for its ability to help public entities streamline operations and reduce costs – an important and urgent imperative for cities as they face growing pressure to absorb budget cuts and “do more with less” – but also because its goals align so gracefully with those of U.S. Communities. Both organizations seek to bring a hands-on approach that helps city officials accomplish their mission while being prudent stewards of taxpayers’ money.

Founded in 1983, A&M is a global professional services firm whose corporate experience with turnaround situations includes companies ranging from Lehman Brothers to HealthSouth. Cities that use A&M through U.S. Communities will receive direct insight from professionals who have held senior positions in government, education and the private sector – an important component of A&M’s “hands-on” approach, which involves the development of plans that are actionable over the short-term and transformative over the long-term. The Public Sector Services consulting group was launched in 2003 and aims to serve the unique needs of government, focusing on government-wide turnaround strategies, health and human services solutions, and K-12 turnaround initiatives.

Because cities and local government entities are responsible for so much within a community, they can be hit with a myriad of unexpected challenges, especially in an uncertain economic climate. A&M is fully aware and has set out to provide world-class performance improvement, turnaround management, and corporate restructuring services, as well as multi-disciplinary industry expertise. Its mission is to help cities not only face the unexpected challenges, but also recover from them in efficient and transformative ways. If the pressures are financial, A&M will help cities maximize human capital and leverage other resources to institute fiscal control. If the pressures are technological, A&M will provide an independent assessment and develop a plan for cyber and risk management. And if the pressures are operational, A&M will offer expertise on leadership and interim management, including governance and policy development, strategic planning and organizational design, recruitment, and crisis management. It’s a comprehensive offering from U.S. Communities with an established track record of helping public agencies.

For example, A&M has served as financial advisor to medium and large urban districts to address general fund deficits and operating shortfalls. It was engaged by a large southwestern city to address its general government permitting process, a project that included an analysis of revenue leakage through improved permit compliance identification techniques to increase the permitting capacity within the current cost structure. Thanks to A&M’s assessment, the city’s collections / revenue have increased by over $20 million annually.

It has worked with school districts (A&M was instrumental in the recovery of the New Orleans public school system in the wake of Hurricane Katrina), forming a restructuring team for the New York City schools that reallocated $200 million a year from central administration into classrooms, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, identifying $1.7 billion a year in recurring savings and non-tax revenue enhancements.

A&M also validated the financial information provided by a county’s master developer in an Adaptive Reuse Area located in a former historic prison. It provided the county with a financial roadmap outlining the strengths and potential weaknesses of the development’s financial plan. The reuse project is currently underway and has been noted as a prime example of adapting a site while preserving its historical integrity.

U.S. Communities is optimistic that city users will turn to Alvarez & Marsal when conventional approaches are not enough to activate change and achieve results. A&M is geared toward going beyond basic recommendations and reports – it is interested in improving the operations of local government entities by identifying opportunities that might be missed by others. It also has a reputation for its ability to support clients’ efforts publicly, with an understanding of political and regulatory issues as well as the media. By using A&M through U.S. Communities, cities nationwide will have access to this unique and valuable offering with its lowest public sector pricing for consulting services.

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Contact:
Carol Edwards
cedwards@usmayors.org
202-293-7330

Sponsorship:
Geri Powell
gpowell@usmayors.org
202-861-6774