



Regional Council of Mayors April 4, 2011

New RCM Co-Chair

Mayor Jim Hovland of Edina introduced Mayor Sandy Martin of Shoreview as RCM's new co-chair. She was recruited by the executive committee to replace Mayor Elizabeth Kautz of Burnsville, who stepped down to devote more time to her duties as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

"I wasn't looking for any additional responsibilities," Martin said. "But RCM is something I really care about. We can learn a great deal from one another and have an impact beyond the boundaries of our respective communities."

Executive Director's Report

Caren Dewar said members of the group had discussed ways to honor the memory of Brooklyn Park Mayor Steve Lampi, who died earlier this year, and had settled on establishing a scholarship in his name for the ULI Minnesota Young Leaders program. By acclamation, the mayors supported the establishment of this scholarship fund.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

Regional Cluster Initiative

RCM and its partners are making progress toward achieving the objectives of the Regional Cluster Initiative, Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead reported.

Winstead reviewed the objectives of the initiative and focused on the progress that has been made in nurturing the Medical Devices cluster, which ranks as one of the region's great economic assets. Indeed, he said, Minnesota is second only to California in employment and annual payroll from his sector of the economy.

He listed the four objectives of this initiative:

- Analyze the region's competitive clusters and corporate headquarters concentration.
- Convene an industry-led Medical Devices Cluster Board.

- Deepen the linkages with other regional economic initiatives.
- Retain, attract and grow jobs and the regional economy.

Winstead said RCM representatives and partners already have met with a number of corporate CEOs and executives, and have identified four emerging themes: the need to (1) develop the regional talent pool by reducing gaps in student achievement and strengthening workforce development; (2) invest in University-based research to spawn new ideas; (3) showcase the region's quality of life to help attract business and enhance corporate recruiting; and (4) improve the regulatory and tax climate.

He invited more mayors to become involved in the corporate outreach effort, and said they could be helpful in opening doors and forging relationships. Thus far, he said, a number of corporations have declined to meet or have not responded to invitations.

Winstead said progress also has been made in forming a Medical Devices Cluster Board and that a meeting of the group was scheduled for later in the day (April 4).

Among the next steps in this effort:

- Building on the momentum from the corporate outreach effort, integrating their ideas in action plans and maintaining meaningful dialogue.
- Integrating the Regional Cluster Initiative findings in local comprehensive plans.
- Nurturing the creation of more regional cluster boards.
- Advocating the cluster approach for state and regional economic and workforce strategies.

Regulatory Best Practices

Identifying and promoting the use of regulatory "best practices" could be an important tool to enhance the economic competitiveness of the region.

Jeremy Hanson, Mayor Rybak's chief of staff, and Todd Klingel, president of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, discussed a proposal for RCM and the chambers to partner in a study to identify, understand and promote the adoption of best practices.

"Incorporating a system of regulations that is more consistent within multiple jurisdictions, and is based on best practices, will aid in economic growth and development for the entire region," said a position paper they prepared.

They outlined a four-pronged strategy:

1. Conducting an inventory of all commercial licenses and permits for the 11-county region.
2. Facilitating panels of employers operating in multiple locations to help identify which cities are employing the best practices.
3. Inviting representatives from cities identified as leaders to meetings with RCM and the chambers to discuss their processes, procedures and outcomes.
4. Encouraging mayors to return to their respective cities and promote greater regional consistency in regulations to help foster more regional growth.

Both Hanson and Klingel stressed that they don't necessarily view Minneapolis as the regional "model" and that their city stands to learn as much as anyone from the process.

Several mayors expressed interest in the idea, saying they would like to know how their city stacks up. However, Mayor Mary Hershberger Thun of Victoria voiced some reservations about the idea. She said that one size may not fit all – that "there are some unique differences among cities."

Caren Dewar, executive director of ULI Minnesota, said the project is still in its early stages and that she would be happy to provide more information. She also said that, as in the case of any RCM project, each mayor will be free to decide "whether you want to participate or not."

Regional Transit Funding Cuts

Proposed cuts in state funding for regional transit would force significant reductions in existing service and "destroy the capacity of this region to move forward with transit expansion," Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin warned.

McLaughlin, chair of the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), said the House transportation bill would zero out state general fund dollars for regional transit service, forcing sharp fare increases and service cuts. The Senate bill also includes significant funding cuts, he said.

"Over at the Capitol, it's like playing whack-a-mole at the Fair," he said. "There's a bad idea every day."

For a time, McLaughlin said, the House was proposing to "steal" the revenue from the counties' quarter-cent transit sales tax and use it to help backfill the

proposed cuts in state funding for transit operations. Those sales tax dollars were levied to expand the current transit system, not fund current operations, he said.

Such legislative proposals would destroy the ability of the region to complete the Central Corridor LRT line, move forward with the proposed Southwest Corridor LRT line and undertake other transit improvements, McLaughlin said.

McLaughlin urged the mayors to help deliver these messages:

1. Don't stop the Central Corridor LRT line, which already is well under construction and expected to receive a Full Funding Grant Agreement from the FTA by the end of the month.
2. Don't destroy service for existing transit riders, 80 percent of whom are traveling to work and to school.
3. Don't destroy the capacity of the region to plan further transit improvements and compete for federal funding to help finance them.

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman added that the proposed transit cuts are among many, including education and local government aid, that would harm cities. "It's so misguided," he said.

Caren Dewar said RCM will draft a resolution articulating the concerns about transit funding cuts and circulate it among mayors would might want to sign on.

Regional Indicators Project

Richfield Mayor Debbie Goettel and architect Rick Carter provided a brief update on the Regional Indicators Project, which will help cities establish benchmarks and measure the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the use of best practices in land use, transportation, building design and other areas.

Carter reported that two years of data has been collected in Falcon Heights and St. Louis Park for consumption of energy and water, vehicle miles traveled and waste generated "for everything that happens in each city."

The goal of the project, he said, is to establish a process for collecting data for the next two years, evaluate the specific best management practices selected by each city and correlate them to the outcomes being measured, and produce a final report that measures each metric individually as well as in total dollars and tons of carbon.

Potential CDBG Cuts

Kevin Frazell of the League of Minnesota Cities urged mayors to communicate with members of the Minnesota congressional delegation about the value of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which has been targeted for cuts by some members of Congress.

He said representatives of the League have met with members of the delegation to discuss the importance of this program, but that this message needs to be reinforced with examples of specific projects that have benefited communities in their districts.

World Peace and Prayer Day

Representing the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota (Sioux) nations, Stephanie Smith invited mayors to participate in the 16th annual World Peace and Prayer Day events June 18-21 at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers near Fort Snelling.

The four-day event will include the welcoming of Peace Riders after a two-week trip from South Dakota. "I hope you will look at it not just as an event, but also as an amazing opportunity for healing and building relationships with this community," Smith said.

More information is available at www.worldpeaceandprayerday2011.org

COMING UP

RCM meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at Dorsey & Whitney. The next RCM meeting will be held on Monday, May 9, 2011 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.

ATTENDEES

The following individuals were in attendance on April 4, 2011:

Mayors

Doug Anderson	City of Dayton
Ardell Brede	City of Rochester
Chris Coleman	City of St. Paul
Bill Droste	City of Rosemount
Jerry Faust	City of St. Anthony
Tom Furlong	City of Chanhassen
Mary Giuliani Stephens	City of Woodbury
Debbie Goettel	City of Richfield
Mary Hershberger Thun	City of Victoria
James Hovland	City of Edina
Tim Howe	City of Coon Rapids
Tim Hultmann	City of Long Lake
Marvin Johnson	City of Independence
Dean Johnston	City of Lake Elmo
Sandra Krebsbach	City of Mendota Heights
Peter Lindstrom	City of Falcon Heights
Mike Maguire	City of Eagan
Judson Marshall	City of Mahtomedi
Sandy Martin	City of Shoreview
Lili McMillan	City of Orono
Nick Ruehl	City of Excelsior
Terry Schneider	City of Minnetonka
John Sweeney	City of Maple Plain
Nancy Tyra-Lukens	City of Eden Prairie
Ken Willcox	City of Wayzata
Gene Winstead	City of Bloomington

Guests

Chuck Ackman	US Senator Amy Klobuchar's Office
John Adams	University of Minnesota
Steve Berg	MinnPost
Rick Carter	LHB
Steve Dornfeld	
Andrea Ferstan	Greater Twin Cities United Way
Kevin Frazell	League of MN Cities
Matt Fulton	City of Coon Rapids
Hector Garcia	CLAC
Jeremy Hanson Willis	City of Minneapolis
Michael Huber	Blue Cross Blue Shield
Todd Klingel	Minneapolis Regional Chamber
Larry Lee	City of Bloomington
Peter McLaughlin	Hennepin County
Doug Menikheim	City of Stillwater
Bruce Nordquist	City of Apple Valley
Guy Peterson	Metropolitan Council
Elizabeth Ryan	Family Housing Fund
Bob Schreier	City of Brooklyn Park
Jennifer Schuller	Regional Cluster Initiative, University of MN
Stephanie Smith	Global Athlete Village
Jamie Verbrugge	City of Brooklyn Park
Luke Weisberg	Greater Metro Workforce Council

Staff

Cathy Capone Bennett	ULI Minnesota
Caren Dewar	ULI Minnesota
Tasha Kimmet	ULI Minnesota