



Memo to the Mayors

December 22, 2006

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
177 North State Street
Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Independent Voices. One Vision.

Happy Holidays!

It's time to send to one and all our glad tidings. On behalf of our Executive Board and staff, thank you for your support of and involvement in the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. We wish you and your loved ones a very merry Holiday Season and a New Year filled with happiness!

December 14 Quarterly Meeting Recap

We were very pleased with the turnout for last week's quarterly Caucus business meeting. Fifty-two Mayors from the region's nine COGs and the City of Chicago attended. Here's a brief recap of the action taken:

- The Diversity Issues Task Force's proposed Action Agenda was approved. It provides a menu of short-term and long-term activities the Task Force will focus on to promote increased understanding of economic, ethnic and racial diversity in the Chicago region. Special thanks to *Schaumburg President Al Larson* for pinch-hitting for Task Force Chair, *Mayor Larry Hartwig of Addison*, and presenting the Agenda;
- Approval was given to the CREATE Task Force's recommended Advocacy Strategy that was presented by *Task Force Co-Chairs Mayors Donald Peloquin of Blue Island and Daniel Pritchett of Franklin Park*. The strategy calls for the Caucus to urge the State of Illinois to honor its previous commitment to match the \$100 million provided for the project in the recent federal transportation funding reauthorization bill with \$100 million of its own and to support efforts to obtain additional funding through available federal discretionary programs;
- The Caucus' recommended 2007 Legislative Priorities were approved. For additional details on what they are, please see the related news item on the following page. Caucus staff would like to thank *Mayors Gayle Smolinski of Roselle, Jeffery Schielke of Batavia, George Van Dusen of Skokie and Gerald Bennett of Palos Hills* for presenting the Priorities;
- *Elgin Mayor Edward Schock* reported on the Education Reform Committee's proposed strategy to make 2007 the year for education funding and accountability reform. The discussion which resulted from this report was among the best we have ever had at a quarterly meeting. The Mayors gathered confirmed the Committee's proposed strategy;
- *Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago and Patrick Ryan, Chairman of the Chicago Olympics Committee* updated the Caucus on their efforts to bring the 2016 Games to the Chicago region. In an impromptu moment, the Mayors present voted unanimously to support Chicago's bid;
- *Mayor Daley and Presidents Thomas Murawski of Midlothian and Gene Marks of Northbrook* issued a challenge to the region's Mayors to work together toward making the Chicago region the "greenest region" in the United States. The Environmental Committee, which *President Murawski* chairs, will provide a menu of implementation options and a model Greenest Region Compact at the next quarterly meeting;
- *Palatine Mayor Rita Mullins, Co-Chair of the Housing Committee* presented the Caucus' newest publication, a best practices guidebook entitled, *Home Grown: Local Housing Strategies in Action*;
- *Mayor Richard Reinbold of Richton Park* gave a brief report on what Mayors and their municipalities need to do to prepare for a potential avian flu pandemic; and
- *Mayors Murawski and Marks* presented Clean Air Communities Awards to thirteen communities. Please see the related news item on the following page for additional information on these recent awardees.

Finally, we would also like to offer a big thank you to Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw for hosting our meeting and providing a delicious breakfast.

If you have any questions about any of the items above, please call Caucus staff. **Staff contact:** *Dave Bennett* (dbennett@mayorscaucus.org, 312.201.4505)

Continued on following page...

Memo to the Mayors

December 22, 2006

Page 2

Recommended 2007 Legislative Priorities

Here's a brief summary of the Caucus' recommended legislative priorities for 2007 which were approved at the December 14 Caucus meeting:

Federal Issues

National Video Franchising - The Caucus opposes efforts by the Federal Communications Commission to establish a national policy on the issuance of video service franchise agreements to telephone companies on the grounds that this is beyond the Commission's authority. Federal law gives local governments, not the FCC, the authority to decide cable television franchise terms.

Electronic Commerce - Congress is urged to adopt legislation that will allow states and municipalities the ability to impose and collect sales tax on goods purchased via the Internet or through catalogues.

CREATE Project Funding - The Caucus will work with the railroads, the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago to secure additional federal funding for the CREATE Freight Rail Project.

State Issues

State Capital Improvement Plan - The Caucus generally supports the need for a state capital improvement plan. It calls for the State to establish certain criteria for projects to be included in the plan. It withholds its complete support for a plan until its final details are known.

Transit Funding - Funding for public transit is a significant regional issue. The Mayors Caucus will collaborate with the RTA in making the case for improving the Chicago region's transit system and promoting additional funding. It also reserves judgment on the final legislative package until its details are known.

Protecting Municipal Revenues - The Mayors Caucus will work to oppose any efforts to erode local revenue sources or to impose any new costs or mandates on local governments.

DROP - The Caucus opposes Deferred Retirement Option Programs or similar police and fire pension enhancements that would allow personnel to begin receiving retirement benefits without terminating employment.

Statewide Video Franchising - The Mayors Caucus opposes any legislation that would allow statewide video service/cable franchising.

CMAP Amendments - The Mayors Caucus played a significant role in the creation of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. It supports any technical amendments to its enabling legislation and transfers of authority from existing planning statutes that will improve its effectiveness.

If you have any questions about our recommended priorities or you are interested in getting involved in our Legislative Action Team, please contact us. **Staff contact: Dave Bennett (dbennett@mayorscaucus.org, 312.201.4505)**

City, COG Approval Needed on Actions Taken at Caucus Meeting

It has been a longstanding policy of the Mayors Caucus that any recommendations approved at our quarterly business meetings must be adopted by the City of Chicago and our participating COGs in order for them to become formal positions or activities implemented by the Caucus. FYI, all of the recommendations adopted last week will be forwarded to the City and the COGs for their consideration and adoption at their January meetings. **Staff contact: Dave Bennett (dbennett@mayorscaucus.org, 312.201.4505)**

Continued on following page...

Memo to the Mayors

December 22, 2006

Page 3

Congrats to New Clean Air Counts Communities!

The Mayors Caucus would like to congratulate those towns that joined the ranks of Clean Air Communities at last week's Caucus meeting. *Arlington Heights, Aurora, Evanston, Oak Forest, Bartlett, Burr Ridge, Deerfield, Indian Head Park, Niles, Palatine and Riverside* with Bronze Awards for their participation in the Clean Air Counts program. *Algonquin, Aurora, Evanston and Midlothian* received Silver Awards for implementing air quality improvement strategies like using air-friendly and energy efficient products.

Over forty of the Chicago region's municipalities have now received a Clean Air Counts Award. If you are interested in applying, please note that the deadline for the next round of Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum awards is April 15, 2007.

In addition to giving awards to the above communities, *Mayor Thomas Murawski, Clean Air Counts' Chairman*, distributed copies of the *Toolkit for Municipal Leaders* at the December 14 meeting. The *Toolkit* contains outreach tools, ordinances, grant and award applications. The *Toolkit* also contains a CD insert with the aforementioned documents and a photo album featuring pictures from *Oak Forest, Chicago, Midlothian, Aurora and Evanston*. Communities will receive two copies of the *Toolkit* in January. If you would like to access the Toolkit immediately, it may be downloaded from www.cleanaircounts.org. **Staff contact:** *Eve Pytel (epytel@mayorscaucus.org, 312.201.4506)*

MEC Offers Assistance with Electric Rate Hikes

In June, 2006, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus partnered with **enterpriz** Cook County to offer the Municipal Energy Collaborative to its member municipalities. The Collaborative spent the summer and early fall months facilitating meetings with our consultant – Energy Choices – to assist municipalities interested in exploring third party electricity supply.

To date, sixteen municipalities have signed contracts with Alternative Retail Electricity Suppliers (ARES). On average, municipalities participating in the Municipal Energy Collaborative have negotiated contracts **26.9%** in price than the ComEd auction price. For customers with annual electricity consumption greater than 400kW, savings is around 30%. Savings for communities with significantly less electricity usage is less.

Energy Choices offers municipalities much more technical expertise than the typical electric power purchasing group. For example, several large users were able to save an additional 2% by negotiating an off-cycle switch to third party supply. Normally, customers switch supplier service on their meter-read date (usually the 15th of the month). By switching service on January 2, 2007, the City of Waukegan was able to save an additional \$20,000.

Twenty-one additional municipalities have negotiated contracts with Energy Choices, but have not yet signed a contract with an ARES. Of these twenty-one, some communities have electricity load profiles, excluding street lighting, which may not be able to purchase power better than the ComEd auction price. Energy Choices is continuing to work with these municipalities and bid out their loads.

If you would like to find out how your communities can take advantage of these valuable consulting services and, thus, mitigate the effects of the electric rate hike that will occur on January 1, 2007, please give us a call. **Staff contact:** *Kate Agasie (kagasie@mayorscaucus.org, 312-201-4508)*

Home Grown: Local Housing Strategies in Action

On December 14, the Caucus released *Home Grown: Local Housing Strategies in Action*. *Home Grown* is a collection of more than 30 housing-related Best Practices from the Chicago region. *Home Grown* was created in partnership with Chicago Metropolitan 2020 and the Metropolitan Planning Council.

This Best Practices Guide shows municipal officials how their peers are addressing housing issues and provides ideas for replicating or improving upon these approaches to address their own local housing challenges. This collection demonstrates that

Continued on following page...

Memo to the Mayors

December 22, 2006

Page 4

Home Grown (cont.)

many exciting, innovative, local efforts are contributing to a quality, diverse housing stock that meets the needs of a variety of residents in our region.

Each best practices summary focuses on how a program, policy or development came about, how it works, why it has been successful, and how it is financed. While many of the best practices address affordable housing issues, other topics, such as fair housing and accessibility, are included in the binder. In many cases, we include information on how the public was involved in the process, and what lessons the community learned, including what local leaders would do differently in hindsight.

This publication is meant to be an ongoing resource. Therefore, the partners will update the binder regularly with new best practices summaries. If any community would like to submit a program or development, please contact Beth Dever with the Caucus. She, along with the other partners, will be visiting each of the local Councils of Government in January and February to distribute Home Grown.

We hope that you find this binder useful as you consider housing issues in your municipality. As we all know, the solution for one community may not be exactly right for another. However, as *Home Grown* shows, many of our cities and villages have found successful ways to create a range of housing options. Their efforts can serve as a starting point for others facing similar challenges and opportunities. **Staff contact: Beth Dever (beth.dever@mayorscaucus.org, 312.201.4507)**

Upcoming Caucus Meetings

Executive Board: Monday, January 8, 2007 at the Caucus offices, 177 North State Street, Suite 500, Chicago at 9:00 a.m.

CMAP Task Force: Friday, January 12, 2007 at the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, 1220 Oakbrook Road, Oak Brook at 9:30 a.m.

Education Reform Committee: Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at the Forest Park Village Hall, 517 Des Plaines Avenue in Forest Park at 9:30 a.m.

Environmental Committee: Thursday, January 18, 2007 at the Western Springs Village Hall, 740 Hillgrove Avenue, Western Springs at 9:00 a.m.

Legislative Committee: Monday, January 22, 2007 at the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference, 1220 Oakbrook Road, Oak Brook at 9:30 a.m.

CREATE Task Force: Monday, January 22, 2007 at the Franklin Park Village Hall, 9500 West Belmont Avenue, Franklin Park at 1:00 p.m.

Diversity Issues Task Force: Monday, January 29, 2007 in the Addison Village Hall, One Friendship Plaza, Addison at 10:00 a.m.