FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Monday, June 20, 2011

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LOS ANGELES MAYOR ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA SWORN IN AS 69TH PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Baltimore, MD – The presidential gavel was officially handed to Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa today, by outgoing USCM President Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz appointing him head of the organization, during The 79th Annual Meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors in Baltimore.

During the gathering, mayors met to discuss a broad range of policy issues impacting America’s cities including infrastructure and education reform. As Conference President, Mayor Villaraigosa will set the organization’s agenda, appoint committee and task force chairs and serve as the national spokesperson.

In his inaugural remarks Mayor Villaraigosa said, “With our economic heart faintly beating in our cities, our investments must be more metropolitan-focused, more forward-looking, and more environmentally sustainable. It’s time to prioritize spending on our pressing metropolitan transportation infrastructure needs. We need to demand investments that connect people to jobs.” To view the full speech, click here.

In the midst of a fragile economic climate that has led to states passing budget woes onto cities, a central focus of the meeting was on job creation and preserving local services. On Monday, the Conference released an economic report projecting that by the end of the year, 75 metro areas will have double-digit unemployment rates, and 193 (53%) will have rates higher than 8%. View report here: http://www.usmayors.org/metroeconomies/2011.

“As mayor of the second largest city in America, Mayor Villaraigosa understands the challenges facing every city in America, as well as the opportunities for innovation and growth,” said Tom Cochran, USCM CEO and Executive Director. “At a time when cities are being forced to lay-off their public servants and struggling to recover from this recession, we couldn’t ask for a better leader.”

Prior to becoming the Conference’s President, Mayor Villaraigosa served as Vice President of the organization over the past year. He also served as chair of the Conference’s Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force, where he challenged mayors to think differently and proposed a recalculation of measuring poverty in America.

At the concluding session, the mayors also debated and voted on policy recommendations to present to the Administration including a resolution to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and redirect war dollars to domestic priorities. The latest adopted resolutions and policy of the Conference, can be found at www.usmayors.org.

Newly elected leadership appointed during the meeting is as follows: President: Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Vice President: Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter. Second Vice President: Mesa AZ Mayor Scott Smith. Trustees: Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson; Tallahassee Mayor John Marks; Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake; and Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengen. Advisory Board Members: Columbia (SC) Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin; Rochester (MN) Mayor Ardell F. Brede; West Sacramento Mayor Christopher L. Cabaldon; Charlotte Mayor Anthony R. Foxx; Hilo (Hawaii) Mayor William P. Kenoi; New Orleans Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu; Clarksville (TN) Mayor Kim McMillan; Las Cruces Mayor Kenneth D. Miyagishima; Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra; and Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola.

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