



# **The United States Conference of Mayors**

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## **200+ MAYORS GATHER TO DISCUSS SHARED CHALLENGES**

### *Homeland and Economic Security, Sustainable Development Top Agenda*

DENVER, June 6, 2003 – More than 200 mayors from across the United States and around the world are gathering here this week to discuss the key challenges facing their cities, including how to ensure homeland security, spur economic and job growth, and promote sustainable development.

During the combined 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Mayors, mayors will hear from Bush Administration officials and prominent policy experts, and they will share information and ideas. U.S. mayors will also adopt policy resolutions on a range of important issues to guide legislative and lobbying efforts for the next year.

“The key issues facing America’s cities today are the key issues facing our nation and the world,” said Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. “Ensuring security, boosting the economy, and promoting sustainable development are challenges that every city across the country and around the world must confront in order to thrive and grow. During these five days, mayors will exchange information and ideas on how to meet these and other challenges. We can learn a lot from one another.”

Today, Barcelona Mayor Clos I Matheu, President of the World Association of Major Metropolises, will speak on sustainable development and United Nations Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor will address the relevancy of the United Nations. Dr. Ed Thompson from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will discuss the SARS epidemic. Mayors meeting to discuss criminal justice issues will hear from U.S. Drug Czar John Walters.

Tomorrow, mayors will release a new employment outlook for U.S. metropolitan areas. They will also hear from author Richard Florida and Alphonso Jackson, Deputy HUD Secretary. Awards will be presented to recognize leadership and achievement in developing programs to enhance the livability of America’s cities.

Mayors will focus on homeland security issues Sunday with remarks by the mayors of Chicago and Seattle, cities that recently participated in the nation’s largest terrorism preparedness exercise. Focusing on the economy, mayors will host Commerce Secretary

Don Evans and Congressman Charles Rangel on Monday. The Conference will also release a new report on the economic potential of redeveloping the nation's brownfields.

On Tuesday, new Conference leaders will be installed. Throughout the five days, mayors will enjoy Denver's sights and sounds, including a reception at the Museum of Nature and Science, music festival at Red Rocks, and tours of the city's new Blair-Caldwell African-American Research Library.

"I am delighted to host this important meeting of mayors from across the country and around the world here in Denver," said Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, who chairs the Conference's International Affairs Committee. "I want them to see what we have done well here and learn from them about their successes in improving the world's cities."

Cities have borne the burden of additional security costs since September 11. A study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors estimated that cities nationwide spent more than \$2.6 billion in additional security costs between September 11, 2001 and the end of 2002. Costs have continued to rise dramatically since then – recently estimated at an extra \$70 million per week nationwide due to the war and national high threat alert. To date, Washington has provided little assistance. Most cities will receive their first federal dollar for homeland security in July, nearly two years after the attack. Ensuring that cities receive direct and sufficient homeland security funding is a top priority for mayors.

The need to increase significantly homeland security efforts comes at a time when most city budgets are struggling due to a weak national economy, massive job losses over the past three years, loss of travel and tourism and related income and jobs, and cuts in state aid. Although the U.S. Senate recently earmarked \$4 billion for fiscal relief for local governments, this provision was dropped from the final tax package. Mayors will continue their efforts to work with Congress and the Administration to stimulate and strengthen the economy for working families.

Additional information about the mayors meeting, including the latest updated agenda and list of pre-registered mayors, is available online at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).

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*The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of the nation's 1183 U.S. cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. The primary roles of the Conference are to promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy; strengthen federal-city relationships; ensure that federal policy meets urban needs; provide mayors with leadership and management tools; and create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information. The Conference has assumed historically a national leadership role, calling early attention to serious urban problems and pressing successfully for solutions. More information is available at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).*

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