



The United States Conference of Mayors

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Mayors Host Special Arts Meeting in New Orleans: *Focus Is Restoring City's Arts and Cultural Programs*

New Orleans – Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz, Chair of The United States Conference of Mayors' Committee on Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports (TAPES), held a special committee meeting in New Orleans May 3-5 at the Omni Royal Orleans to help the city restore arts and cultural programs. In addition to Mayor Diaz, seven other mayors along with arts community experts attended the meeting. At the top of the agenda was identifying creative ways to help the city preserve public arts programs and establish additional cultural districts.

TAPES Committee Chair, Miami Mayor Diaz underscored how eager mayors are to assist Mayor Nagin and the city of New Orleans revive its cultural community saying, "Mayors understand all too well the connection between the cultural industry and city revenue. We are pleased to be able to support the city's economy by working to expose New Orleans' heritage and traditions with the rest of the country on a broad scale."

Scott Aiges, Director of Louisiana's Music Export Office, and Shirley Trusty Corey, Director of the New Orleans Arts Council, encouraged the mayors to support local artists and musicians by bringing them to their respective cities for performances. Officials from Americans for the Arts addressed the group about the use of urban design tools to help revitalize communities, successful travel and tourism programs, and establishing community trees programs.

New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin welcomed the group and its expertise to the city. "Since Katrina, mayors from around the nation have offered their support, detailed advice, human resources and technical assistance to the City of New Orleans. I sincerely thank them for assisting us during our recovery efforts to rebuild and maintain our tourism industry and our diverse culture that makes us the most unique city in America."

The highlight of the meeting was a tour of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (the local high school where Wynton Marsalis and Harry Connick, Jr. got their start); and Musicians' Village, a housing development for musicians who lost their homes to Hurricane Katrina. While on the tour, the mayors planted a tree in the historic Esplanade Ridge neighborhood in partnership with The Home Depot Foundation Community Trees Program, and presented a check for \$20,000 to the Parkway Partners Non-Profit Organization to continue its work of planting new trees in areas that lost trees to Hurricane Katrina.

Parkway Partners, which supports the restoration of the city's parks and green spaces through grassroots volunteers, expressed their gratitude for the gift saying, "New Orleans has been traditionally known for its lush landscape and its numerous tree-lined streets. This gift from The Home Depot Foundation in partnership The Conference of Mayors will help us continue our work of replacing this city's signature symbol of beauty – its trees. With this donation, we are introducing our *ReLeaf New Orleans* program, an action agenda for tree replacement."

The TAPES Committee Meeting was a part of the U.S. Conference of Mayors' ongoing effort to help the City of New Orleans recover from Hurricane Katrina. Immediately following the storm, the Conference's leadership met in Baton Rouge with Mayor Nagin, Lt. Governor Landrieu and members of the New Orleans City Council to offer aid. The Conference has also brought architects and urban design experts to the city and assisted with acquiring maintenance equipment for the city's green spaces.

Along with Mayor Diaz, the following mayors participated in the meeting:

Akron, OH Mayor Donald L. Plusquellic

Dearborn, MI Mayor Michael A. Guido

Franklin, TN Mayor Tom Miller

Macon, GA Mayor Jack Ellis

Mt. Vernon, NY Mayor Ernest Davis

North Miami, FL Mayor Kevin A. Burns

Rochester, MN Mayor Ardell F. Brede

Tom Cochran, Executive Director, The U.S. Conference of Mayors

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