For Immediate Release

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SACRAMENTO, CA MAYOR KEVIN JOHNSON BECOMES THE 72nd PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Sacramento, CA – Mayor Kevin M. Johnson today became the 72nd President of The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) at a gavel passing ceremony in Sacramento on Wednesday, April 16th.

This special inauguration was scheduled because the former President of USCM, Mesa, AZ Mayor Scott Smith announced his candidacy for the office of Governor of Arizona; and local law in Mesa dictated that Mayor Smith vacate his seat as mayor for his gubernatorial run. Mayor Johnson, who previously served as the Vice-President of USCM, will serve the balance of Mayor Smith’s presidential term, which would have ended in June 2014, in addition to a full one-year term as President of the organization until June 2015. As President, Mayor Johnson will preside over all official meetings, develop and advocate for the bipartisan agenda adopted by the nation’s mayors, appoint committee and task force chairs to serve in the leadership of the organization, as well as serve as the organization’s national and global spokesperson.

"It is a privilege and an honor to serve in this role, representing the nation's mayors," said Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson during his inaugural speech. "Mayors are at the helm of America's cities and represent the best of this country developing innovative, pragmatic solutions to the challenges they face. I look forward to learning from them while delivering results for Sacramento."

While Mayor Johnson’s the entire speech can be found at www.usmayors.org, it is notable that he reminded the audience of the economic strength of America's cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas. "Though our work with IHS Global Insight, we know the nation’s 362 metropolitan areas account for 86 percent of all jobs, and 90 percent of the nation's labor income and gross domestic product. Out of the world’s largest 100 economies, 49 are U.S. metropolitan areas. So legally, we are a nation of states within a federal system; but economically, we function as a conglomeration of metro economies that are powerhouses not just within the U.S., but also within the global marketplace."

Mayor Johnson laid out the goals of his Presidency and shared what makes mayors unique from other elected officials. "During my Presidency, we will engage in a full-court press in Washington so we can get the dollars we need to get things done. We will unleash our political capital to create new partnerships, create jobs, and keep the momentum going so that America maintains its competitive advantage in the global economy. … Unlike other politicians, mayors don't have the luxury of pointing fingers or arguing on ideological grounds, because we’re elected to be responsible for the day-to-day services that make the difference between a great city and a failing one. We are the faces of practical action."

Mayor Johnson also explained, "There could not be a better time to be at the helm of this organization because cities are back! Just a few years ago, in the midst of the economic recession, our metro areas were experiencing declining or flattening growth. Today, cities are pulling this country out of the recession, and Washington is beginning to take notice."

Mayor Johnson will preside over his first official meeting in June in Dallas, TX at the 82nd Annual Meeting of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, when the nation’s mayors assemble to develop their bipartisan agenda, highlighting the ways mayors are solving problems in their cities. Mayor Johnson's USCM presidency will focus on improving education outcomes in the nation's public schools, building cities' resilience to economic and natural disasters, and rebuilding the country's infrastructure through stronger federal-local and public-private partnerships. In addition, Mayor Johnson will also continue to look to other mayors for input and ideas, emphasizing that The U.S. Conference of Mayors will embrace an inclusive and representative agenda for all of America's mayors.

"We are pleased to welcome Mayor Johnson to lead this great organization," said USCM CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran. "As President of USCM, he will hold the highest honor that an American mayor can have. He will represent Sacramento and all of the mayors and cities of the USA to the nation and to the world, and we welcome his bold style of leadership."

Mayor Johnson was elected as the 55th mayor of the City of Sacramento in November 2008 and re-elected to a second term in June 2012. He is the first African American to be elected to the office in the city. Mayor Johnson will be the first Mayor of Sacramento and the sixth mayor from the state of California to serve as President in the history of The U.S. Conference of Mayors (Arthur Selland from Fresno in 1963, Jack Maltester from San Leandro from 1969-1970, Joseph Alioto from San Francisco from 1974-1975, Beverly O'Neill from Long Beach, CA from 2005-2006 and Antonio Villaraigosa from Los Angeles in 2011-2012).

Before running for public office, Johnson had a diverse career as a professional athlete, entrepreneur and nonprofit executive. From 1987 to 1999, Johnson played professional basketball in the National Basketball Association (NBA) for both the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Phoenix Suns.

Based in Washington, D.C., The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1,400 such cities in the country today, and 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. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.

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