



Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative 2009 Annual Meeting and Conference

June 17-19 Trois-Rivières, Québec

Members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative gathered in Trois-Rivières, Québec for the 2009 Annual Conference and Member Meeting, June 16, 17, 18, 2009. Mayor Yves Lévesque and the city hosted the delegation of 160 conference attendees during the city's 375th anniversary celebration. The conference theme "*St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes Shoreline Cities: What's In It For Us?*" explored the opportunities of the shorelines that Trois-Rivières' landscape was able to highlight. The Annual Meeting and Conference granted a great opportunity for government leaders and other stakeholders to broaden their knowledge on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River issues. In addition, attendees were treated to forums, exhibits and dialogue on protecting and restoring the waters and cities of the region.

The conference kicked off with a visit to Trois-Rivières University's research vessel, Lampsilis. The vessel has been used in fresh water ecological research and conference attendees were shown progress in the studies done from the Lampsilis. Following was a boat tour on the M/V Le Draveur of the St. Lawrence and St. Maurice Rivers. Guests soaked in the beautiful city sights as they toured both historic and contemporary Trois-Rivières.



Member's Meeting & Conference

Thursday's Member Meeting began with a welcoming address from Mayor Levesque to the conference. Mayor Levesque focused on the one voice that the people of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River have together. Mr. Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec, addressed the conference via videoconference and expressed his faith that the Cities Initiative will continue to be successful in advancing the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Mayor Richard M. Daley of the City of Chicago, founding United States Chair, continued the conference welcome via videoconference with his praise for all the great accomplishments of the Cities Initiative. Mayor Daley noted that from its beginning only six years ago the Cities Initiative has grown to become a powerful municipal force.

The Cities Initiative Member Meeting began with opening comments from Chair Lynn Peterson where she thanked the Cities Initiative for a fantastic year. Mayor George Heartwell of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was elected as the 2009-2010 Chair, Mayor Denis

Lapointe of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Québec the Vice Chair and Mayor Brian McMullan of St. Catharines, Ontario became the Secretary/Treasurer. The Cities Initiative discussed and approved 18 new Resolutions including the comprehensive renegotiation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the need for Climate Action plans among our cities and the introduction of the Cities Initiative Pharmaceutical and Personal Care Products Program. The resolutions will provide the policy direction for the organization for the upcoming year.

The first panel of the Conference detailed the opportunities of *Maritime Transportation* including intermodal transportation and short sea-shipping. With growing world trade, the Continental Gateway offers an optimal system for shipping goods in the Great Lakes Basin. Mayor Gerald Tremblay of Montreal kicked off the panel with an overview of the 2020 Montreal project on sustainable development. He emphasized sustainable development for all cities to evolve and incorporate maritime transportation into their city planning. Bertrand Fournier, Director of Planning in the Quebec Ministry of Transportation, discussed Quebec's "Continental Gateway Strategy," which includes utilizing the ideal location for trade and transportation of the Quebec basin. Dr. Richard Stewart, Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Superior was able to highlight the many benefits of maritime transportation including higher efficiency, and lowered energy prices. Craig Middlebrook, Deputy Administrator of the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation emphasized the significance of The Seaway to both the U.S. and Canada. In addition to its economic impact, the Seaway has opened political doors across U.S./Canada border.



At a noon press conference, Mayor Heartwell announced the launch of the Cities Initiative Pharmaceutical and Personal Care Products (PPCP) Framework. Mayor Heartwell affirmed the program will encourage communities to hold collection events to help keep PPCP's out of our waterways. The program will look to track collections, demonstrate to our federal governments the magnitude of the issue and push for action and accountability by drug producers. The Conference attendees were honored to have a lunchtime keynote speech from Mr. Brock Carlton. Mr. Carlton is the Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.



The untapped treasures of the Great Lakes were the topic of the next panel on *Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Maritime Tourism*. The immense opportunities of boating, ecotourism and cruising offered a variety of talks from our four panelists. Mayor Denis Lapointe of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield moderated the panel. President of the Cooperative and Reserve World Biosphere of Lake St. Pierre, Christian Hart, provided details on creating sustainable tourism around Lake St. Pierre. Ryck Lydecker, Chair of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council emphasized the need for Nautical Tourism wherever possible along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Finally, Yves Paquette of the Quebec marine Association demonstrated the importance of enhancing marinas across the basin.

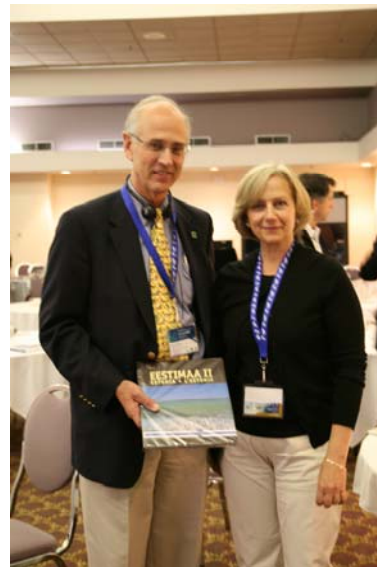
Mayor Heartwell began the afternoon with an address on the importance of the renegotiation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. He applauded the announcement

of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and Minister Lawrence Cannon of Foreign Affairs to open the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement for renegotiation, but encouraged the accountability of the two governments in tailoring the new agreement in a forward-thinking and modern manner. He urged the need for pressure on both sides for an agreement that can be successful for the next 25 years.

The infrastructure deficit in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence continues to grow, but with the technologies expanding in green infrastructure, it is the time to capitalize for the future. Our panelists for *Infrastructure: The Foundation For the Future* offered up methods to achieve sustainable infrastructure. Mayor Dave Ross of Superior began the panel as moderator. The Executive Director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Kevin Shafer shared the many green ideas in infrastructure that the MMSD has been putting into place. By using an integrated water management plan, Milwaukee and its surrounding areas have been able to reduce sewer overflow, enhance infrastructure with habitat and increase awareness and education on storm and wastewater issues. Dr. Gilbert Cabana, a Professor from Quebec University at Trois-Rivières, discussed opportunities in watershed land use from his work on St. Lawrence River research vessels.



As the day came to a close, we were delighted to have Mr. Gaétan Boivin, President and CEO of the Port of Trois-Rivières gave an afternoon keynote address on the status of the Port. The conference then moved on to an elegant dinner banquet at the Naval Reserve with music from the Naval Reserve Music Branch.



Friday morning's activities began with a keynote address from Mr. Scott Fulton, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for International Affairs with the United States Environmental Protection Agency. A focus of the conference was the ability of Municipalities to make a difference in on Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. The panel *Municipalities: A Force for a Better Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River* kicked off Friday's final group of panel discussions. Mayor Brian McMullan of St. Catharines, Ontario moderated the Municipalities panel. Mrs. Urve Tiidus, Mayor of Kuressaare Estonia and Vice-President of the Union of Baltic Cities provide a broader international perspective on the role of municipalities. Brock Carlton, spoke on the work of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Mr. Patrick Parenteau, a Law Professor from Vermont Law School's Environment and Natural Resources Law Clinic concluded the panel discussion.

Mr. Pierre Trépanier, Commissioner of the International Joint Commission gave the conference's final keynote remarks. The last panel of the conference, *Gateways to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River* rounded out the conference with presentations on municipal shorelines from mayors of both U.S. and Canadian cities. Mayor Yves Lévesque moderated the panel. Mayor Régis Labeaume of Québec City presented waterfront plans that Québec City has implemented in recent years. Mayor Richard Harvey of Nipigon, Ontario

presented the rebirth of his city on the waterfront. Finally, Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee, Wisconsin closed out the panel with some of the work that Milwaukee has done to bring art and culture to their waterfront.

Awards Luncheon

Wrapping up the 2009 Annual Conference, the Cities Initiative hosted the Awards Luncheon to honor various member cities for their outstanding work to protect and restore the Lakes and River. For the third year in a row, the Cities Initiative was pleased to present the Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award to a member city with a population of less than 100,000, making strides on environmental, social and economic levels benefitting their city. The award encourages small cities to act big with a sustainable project to improve the quality of water resources for future generations. The \$5,000 grant from the Wege Foundation would be used to further the city's sustainable practice. The City of Sheffield Lake, Ohio received this year's award for their project incorporating stormwater management and rain barrel programs. Last year's award recipient, Town of Ajax, gave a brief summary of their continued efforts to improve their near shore water quality.



For the first year, the Cities Initiative honored participants of its Water Conservation Framework Program for work they have done. The Cities Initiative Framework Program involves more than 30 cities who strive to achieve a 15 percent reduction in water use from year 2000 levels by the year 2015. The City of Kingston, Ontario was recognized for their innovation on water conservation and also the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan was recognized for their progress on water conservation.

The Awards Luncheon closed with a presentation and video from Mayor Barrett on the 2010 Cities Initiative Annual Member Meeting and Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mayor Barrett invited all conference attendees to Milwaukee in June of 2010 for what promises to be another exciting conference.

Conclusion

The 2009 Cities Initiative Annual Member Meeting and Conference was a success in sharing vital information on protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Members passed a number of key resolutions setting the policy direction for the year and establishing some important goals for the organization. The next year looks to be a busy and exciting one as we continue to work to ensure the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.