

National League of Cities Congress of Cities

Denver, CO, Nov 30-Dec 4, 2010

Attendance report from Nancy Chaney

Some of the most valuable aspects of this meeting involve the myriad of networking opportunities...Some by design; others, by happenstance. Moscow has already welcomed NLC conference attendee and Concord NH City Council Member Rob Werner, who was in the area Dec 10-12 for his nephew's graduation from WSU (PhD Geology/Geochemistry).

At the Denver meeting, I appreciated interacting with vendors in the exhibit hall. A conference program and full list of contact info accompanies the hard copy of this report. Some of my contacts are as follows:

- a) U-Haul International emphasizes sustainable practices <http://www.uhaul.com/about/sustainability.aspx> Dr. Allen Yang is Director of Corporate Sustainability (sustainability@uhaul.com or (602)263-6588). Michelle Sullivan is Manager of Corporate Sustainability (msullivan@uhaul.com or (602)263-6528). Programs include Zip Cars, which could be part of Moscow's intermodal transit center and augment UI's sustainable transportation choices. I mentioned that Moscow U-Haul's neighboring Wal-Mart envisions a complementary resource-conserving remodeling project.
- b) Home Depot and Home Depot Foundation www.HomeDepotFoundation.org remain prominent in green building, sustainable purchasing practices, tree-planting efforts, grants and awards to like-minded communities, etc., as well as other shared interests in sustainable community planning and economic development. www.SustainableCitiesInstitute.org
- c) I checked out LED Roadway Lighting www.ledroadwaylighting.com RE evolving technology in street lights and luminaires (Jeff Brassard (615)879-4196; jbrassard@ledroadwaylighting.com and Mike Morrow (902)450-0489 or mmorrow@ledroadwaylighting.com) They seemed particularly interested in problems encountered by Moscow-Pullman Airport that resulted in removal of LED lights there.
- d) Stopped by the ESRI booth www.esri.com to discuss the business sense of integrating GIS across all City departments and among various partners, including the University, County, emergency services; and other governmental agencies. Printed materials collected for review by City staff, Council, and other interested parties. Contact: (909)793-2853 or info@esri.com
- e) I looked at a piece of equipment that grinds up and recycles asphalt on-site in road re-building projects (apparently, not economically feasible at this time).
- f) Picked up a business card from Ryan Fugler, Regional Accounts Manager for EADS North America www.plantcml-eads.com (public notification solutions and services) as regards use of social media like Twitter to notify university students and the public at large about emergency situations: (303)600-8028 or ryan.fugler@dccusa.com

g) Sister Cities International www.sister-cities.org has a variety of offerings for members (info@sister-cities.org or Membership Director Laura Giroux lgiroux@sister-cities.org (202)347-8630). Although Moscow's Council resolution calls for a grassroots initiative to add up to one sister city per continent, it couldn't hurt to plant the seed in area schools. This is particularly timely on the heels of my CLAIR Fellowship in Japan, where the prospect of a sister city relationship is ripe. (At this NLC conference, I met with Taichi Hanzawa, Assistant Director and Miyagi Representative for Japan Local Government Center (CLAIR), 3 Park Avenue, 20th Floor, NY, New York 10016-5902 (212-246-5542, hanzawa@jlgc.org); Hotaka Kawasaki, Counsellor and Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, CLAIR, NY (kawasaki@jlgc.org); Keizo Ishibashi, Assistant Director, CLAIR, NY (ishibashi@jlgc.org); and my 'fellow Fellow,' Kevin Frazell, Member Services Director for the League of Minnesota Cities www.lmc.org, (651)281-1215, kfrazell@lmc.org to discuss our ongoing involvement with CLAIR and its associated JET (English language education) Program.)

The conference afforded opportunities to discuss common challenges and share experiences and best practices with counterparts from around the Country. My colleagues on the University Communities Council are anxious to learn from Moscow's experience with the so-called boarding house ordinance and our successes at strengthening town-gown relations. UCC has a model website to facilitate interaction among members and to share BMPs. One attendee introduced me to a mayor whose community is trying to get a fledgling arts program off the ground, and was seeking ideas. A number of member cities expressed concern over escalating demands on services in a climate of declining revenues. Immigration reform was a topic of interest, particularly in the contexts of human rights and economic realities. Renewable energy technology (and the job creation that comes with it) and stormwater management were also popular topics.

Moscow is earning a place on the national scene, as we are represented on committees and in various NLC forums. This year, NLC President Ron Loveridge asked me to serve on the Nominating Committee for NLC's incoming President, and First and second Vice Presidents, and the organization's Board of Directors. New President James Mitchell asked me to serve as Chair of the University Communities Council for 2011, and I have been invited (though not yet confirmed) to become part of the Steering Committee for the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee. We are continuing to work on the possibility that a team from UI Bioregional Planning will be able to present at the Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C. in March. USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack registered interest in Moscow's efforts to support a statewide farmers market association and to develop a commercial facility with kitchen in Moscow for value-added regional food production and distribution.

Many of the topics at Leadership Training Institutes, leadership meetings, workshops/mobile workshops, council/committee/constituent group meetings, and general sessions have direct application to things Moscow is doing or considering. (A copy of the Annual Business Meeting Report, including resolutions and clarification of abbreviations, below, accompanies the hard copy of this attendance report.) Policies endorsed by the NLC voting members at this meeting addressed resolving state v. federal issues concerning marijuana (FAIR); the Property-Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE) (though Idaho hasn't supported legislation to allow it) (EENR); Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), foreclosures,

green affordable housing + financing (see resolution #29 on sustainable development) (CED); aging in place, same-sex relationships, early childhood development, safe schools/bullying, immigration (Human Development); funding for transportation infrastructure (TIS); interoperability, wildland fires, links among poverty-race-imprisonment (Public Safety); and new social media-privacy-security, support for broadband as related to economic development (ITC).

- a) I regret that other commitments at the conference precluded my participating in a mobile workshop to the National Renewable Energy Lab (N-REL) <http://www.nrel.gov/> but they were kind enough to respond to my phone message about general public access and bus #20 service to that highly-regarded facility (303)384-6566.
- b) Philadelphia has a multi-departmental watershed management program, commitment to green infrastructure (including a loan fund for homeowners), a stormwater management protocol, and a “Greenworks Roadmap” www.phillywatersheds.org (267)625-0589.
- c) Robert Goo of EPA’s Assessment & Watershed Protection Division suggested modeling sustainability programs after North Carolina’s state vision. I spoke with him about some of the challenges we face here as an MS4 and as we discharge treated effluent from the WWTP so near the stateline.
- d) Tours of the Denver Rapid’s field and Infinity Park in Glendale were large-scale examples of public-private partnerships. A large wildlife refuge on an EPA clean-up site is isolated from migratory corridors.

As conference schedules allow, it’s interesting to explore host cities. Downtown Denver has a transit center with rail and bus service, a loaner bike program, a nice pedestrian mall lined with restaurants and shops, public art, street trees, open-air pianos for public use, a popular two-night holiday parade, and (in contrast to the whole of that sprawling city) good walkability. With my outbound flight not until early evening, I was able to visit Denver’s performing arts complex downtown, take some photos, and attend the Colorado Symphony’s performance of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 2 and selections from The Nutcracker (Peter Oundijan, Conductor and Stephen Hough, piano). Regrettably, I had to leave at intermission to catch my plane!