



News Release

Mayors from New Orleans and Mississippi Gulf Cities to Attend Mayors' Institute on City Design

Design Resource Team Led by Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

New Orleans and Biloxi, MS – November 10, 2005—The Mayors' Institute on City Design, one of the country's most established city planning and design programs, will host mayors from New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulfport and other Mississippi Gulf cities impacted by Hurricane Katrina during two special design institutes on November 14-15, 2005.

The first Mayors' Institute on City Design session will be held in Biloxi on Monday, November 14 for the mayors from impacted communities in the Gulf Coast area. Mayors expected to attend the Biloxi event are: Brent Warr, Gulfport; A.J. Holloway, Biloxi; Matthew Avara, Pascagoula; Billy Skellie, Long Beach; Connie Moran, Ocean Springs; Xavier Bishop, Moss Point; Pete Pope, Gautier; Edward Favre, Bay St. Louis; Rusty Quave, D'Iberville; Tommy Longo, Waveland; Billy McDonald, Pass Christian.

The second event is in New Orleans on November 15 and will be attended by Mayor C. Ray Nagin and other city leaders.

The Mayors' Institute on City Design is a partnership program of the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Architectural Foundation, and the United States Conference of Mayors.

The local mayors will have the opportunity to discuss design principles, priorities and strategies for rebuilding their communities with a nationally-renowned team of experts headed by Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr., who founded the Mayors' Institute on City Design in 1986 and led his city's revitalization following the devastation of Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

"The mayors of the Gulf Region have tremendous responsibilities for overseeing the design decisions that will shape the direction of their cities," said Mayor Riley. "We have assembled a resource team of other mayors, architects, urban designers, engineers and landscape architects to listen to the mayors' chief rebuilding concerns and help them think through design considerations for the work ahead."

The Mayors' Institute on City Design resource team for the Gulf Cities Institutes consists of the following individuals:

The Honorable Joseph P. Riley Jr., Mayor of Charleston, S.C., a founder of the Mayors' Institute on City Design and leading expert on urban design

Jaquelin Robertson, Partner, Cooper Robertson & Partners, former Dean of the University of Virginia School of Architecture, and founder of the Mayors' Institute on City Design

Maurice Cox, Associate Professor at the University of Virginia's School of Architecture and former Mayor of Charlottesville, VA

Mary Margaret Jones, President, Hargreaves Associates and noted landscape architect

Maxine Griffith, Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, Columbia University and former Executive Director for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Stanley Lowe, Vice President of Community Revitalization, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Harvey Gantt, Founder and Partner, Gantt Huberman Architects and former Mayor of Charlotte, NC (New Orleans only)

Rick Chellman, Principal, TND Engineering, expert on traffic and transportation issues (New Orleans only)

Grover Mouton III, Director, Tulane Regional Urban Design Center (New Orleans only)

Kimberly Brown, Assistant Professor, Mississippi State University College of Architecture and Director of the Carl Small Town Center (Biloxi only)

"We understand that the Gulf Coast mayors are not in need of more design proposals; they are getting them from every angle," said Jeff B. Speck, Director of Design at the National Endowment for the Arts, who oversees the program. "Rather, what they need is the opportunity to revisit the basic principles of design and the fundamentals of good city-making so they can wisely interpret and weigh all the advice they are receiving."

"The United States Conference of Mayors has been working closely with the mayors of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The nation's mayors are in full support of these cities as they begin to regroup and rebuild. The Mayors' Institute on City Design is a valuable resource that can benefit the mayors and their cities during their rebuilding efforts." said Tom Cochran, Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors."

Design Institutes Create Lasting Legacy Across America

For nearly two decades the Mayors' Institute on City Design has helped transform communities through design by preparing mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities. Over 625 mayors and hundreds of design professionals have attend design institutes dealing with such urban planning issues as downtown and waterfront developments, transportation, housing, schools, and public facilities such as libraries and arts centers.

"The Mayors' Institute on City Design provides mayors a greater appreciation of how design and planning can improve the quality of life for citizens and transform their communities," said Ronald Bogle, President and CEO of the American Architectural Foundation. "We are mindful that it is the mayors and citizens who will decide how their communities shall be rebuilt. As managing partner of the Mayors' Institute on City Design, AAF is committed to supporting this historic rebuilding process in any way we can."

The program has been recognized for its contributions with the Presidential Award for Design Excellence, a Progressive Architecture Award from *Architecture* magazine, and an Institute Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects. Additionally, a number of books have featured the work of the Institute, including "*The Mayors' Institute: Excellence in City Design*," by James S. Russell.

Many mayors who have participated in the program over the years have gained tremendous value from their experience. Below are some examples:

Jerry Abramson, the mayor of Louisville, attended the 1992 Institute to discuss his vision for Louisville's downtown. After attending, he set up planning groups to reconnect Louisville's downtown to its waterfront, an area that had been neglected for many years. Today, 72 acres of waterfront have been converted from industrial to public space. More than one million people visit the city's waterfront each year now.

Kay Granger, Fort Worth's former mayor and now a U.S. Congresswoman, attributes to the Institute three success stories: the creation of a grand boulevard in the place of a torn-down overpass, the rebuilding of its downtown library, and the reorientation of the city toward its waterfront.

Jim Marshall, former mayor of Macon, GA and now a U.S. Congressman, credited the Institute with helping him decide to oppose a plan to replace the city's main street with a 45-mph throughway. The decision helped saved the city's downtown core.

Editor's Note: Although the Mayors' Institute on City Design working session is closed to the press as has been the case during its nearly 20-year history, Mayor Riley and the participating mayors will host the following media briefings: in Biloxi at the City Hall, 140 Lameuse Street on Monday, November 14 at 12:30 p.m. and in New Orleans at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, 300 Bourbon Street, on Tuesday, November 15 at 12:30 p.m.

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The **United States Conference of Mayors** is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor. For more information, please visit www.usmayors.org.

The **American Architectural Foundation** (AAF) is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that educates individuals and communities about the power of architecture to transform lives and improve the places where we live, learn, work, and play. Through its outreach programs, grants, exhibitions, and educational resources, the AAF helps people become thoughtful and engaged stewards of the world around them. For more information, please visit www.archfoundation.org.

The **National Endowment for the Arts** is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts - both new and established - bringing the arts to all Americans and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. For more information, please visit www.arts.gov.

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