

## **Weekly ULCT Staff Report December 11-17, 2011**

Monday, December 12 was the final Legislative Policy Committee meeting for 2011. The agenda focused on transportation options, and included speakers from different levels of government. Representatives from Senator Orrin Hatch's office, Federal Transportation Administration, Utah State Legislature, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), Wasatch Front Regional Council, and the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) spoke on the financial reality facing transportation appropriations and what the lack of money could mean to Utah's entire transportation infrastructure. In DC, Republicans and Democrats are bickering between their respective plans and the President's current Jobs Bill, and Senator Hatch's staffer warned that transportation money could dry up in 2013. Meanwhile, the Utah Legislature is discussing increasing either sales tax or the gas tax though all options are still in just the discussion phase. UDOT warned that more than half of Utah's surface roads are in poor condition and estimated the operations and maintenance cost for Utah's current transportation surfaces to be in excess of \$50 billion without any new transportation construction. As such, it was a sobering but informative meeting on a topic that ULCT will continue to monitor closely. If you missed it, don't worry, we have plenty of upcoming LPCs in 2012 and will have the information from the meeting available soon on our website.

In the spirit of Christmas, ULCT participated in a Christmas store for needy families at North Star Elementary School in Salt Lake City. ULCT's Cameron Diehl worked at the school for three years and students at North Star hail from over 25 nations. ULCT staff contributed money and toys for the North Star store. Over 50 families participated in the store, which provided the donated toys to the needy families at no cost.

ULCT also hosted five mayors from the nation of Mali last week. You may recall that ULCT had intended to host over 20 mayors and managers from Mali for a week long summit on local government. Due to visa problems, we postponed the overall summit but five of them arrived on Friday. ULCT hosted them at our offices on Friday afternoon and evening and at LPC on Monday. West Valley City, Midvale, and Ogden all graciously hosted the group at their city halls and council meetings on Tuesday. It was a successful few days for the Malian mayors, who left excited about the prospective relationships with Utah cities as they attempt to build their nation one city at a time.

ULCT also attended the monthly Utah Intergovernmental Roundtable (UIR) meeting at the state capitol. UIR consists of representatives from state agencies, the legislature, counties, academia, and cities and we gather to discuss the political and policy interaction between governments. UIR is now overseen by Dr. Jenny Robinson, the new Director at the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Utah, and she is re-evaluating UIR's mission. She wants to ensure that UIR's work is beneficial to its members, and will meet with ULCT soon to discuss how UIR can assist Utah cities.

On Friday ULCT staff also had the great opportunity to meet with the Conference of Mayors for Salt Lake County to discuss upcoming legislative issues for the 2012 session. In addition we discussed future opportunities for collaboration with Salt Lake County on municipal service delivery and a comprehensive tax burden analysis for Salt Lake County Cities. It was a great opportunity to begin what will be a long dialogue on comprehensive evaluation of service delivery in Salt Lake County. It seems like county reform is becoming a major priority for many cities, and furthermore, the County.

To cap off Friday, we also met with UDOT to discuss federal funds issues that involve municipal projects. In that meeting we discussed an education effort to inform cities and towns on how federal grants are administered, and the role of UDOT in overseeing the municipal projects. While there has been some frustration with the administrative process, it appears both the cities and UDOT are committed to working on a more streamlined process that removes unnecessary expenses and hurdles. A follow-up meeting will be held in Mid-January, at which time, more information and details we be available

All in all it was a great week, to not be out done, we continued on to Saturday, were we held another successful Newly Elected Officials training on Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> in Cedar City. We had roughly 50 newly elected municipal officials in attendance, mostly from Southern Utah. It was a great opportunity to not only acquaint them with the ULCT services, but also give a brief primer on what to expect as an elected official. Thanks to all of those who attended!

We hope this quick update finds you well and we wish you all a happy holiday season.

Your ULCT Policy Team!