



## Mayors Take on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Challenges

*Cities Initiative launches climate adaptation service for municipalities*

Embargoed until Thursday, June 20, 2013 at 1:45 EDT, 12:45 pm CDT

**Marquette, MI, June 20th, 2013** – Today, American and Canadian mayors from around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, representing over sixteen million people, met in Marquette for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary annual conference of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

As part of its 10<sup>th</sup> year celebrations, mayors heard from a long standing Great Lakes champion, former Mayor of Chicago and founder of the Cities Initiative, Richard M. Daley. In his remarks, Mr. Daley said, “The Mayors of the Cities Initiative have shown over the last 10 years how creating key partnerships is the way to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.”

### Great Lakes and St. Lawrence challenges

At the conference, mayors from across the basin discussed actions and adopted resolutions to address the impact of historically low water levels on shoreline communities, the expansion of crude oil pipeline capacity around the Great Lakes, and a proposal to locate a nuclear waste repository close to the shores of Lake Huron, among other issues.

“We mayors can tackle the complex issues facing Great Lakes and St. Lawrence communities much more effectively together than individually,” said Thunder Bay Mayor Keith Hobbs, incoming chair of the Cities Initiative, “The Cities Initiative gives mayors a strong, collective voice to protect and promote the resource and the region .”

### Climate Adaptation Service Launched

At the conference, the Cities Initiative launched its Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Service for municipalities. The program will provide mayors and municipals staff with

- an interactive forum to learn from each other about climate impacts and adaptation
- up to date weather and climate information and other resources
- training for staff on integrating climate adaptation into municipal operations and services ; and
- a pledge to commit to progress on adaptation over the next 5 years

“Adaptation is not something to consider tomorrow. Changing weather patterns are having an effect on our communities today,” said past chair Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. “Our cities realize that they need to adapt their operations and services now to respond to longer heat waves and droughts, more extreme storms and low water levels that will only become more common into the future.”



## Awards

Also at the conference, cities were honored for their outstanding efforts in water conservation and sustainability planning.

- Peel Region, Ontario received the award for the *Innovation in Water Conservation*.
- Collingwood, Ontario received the seventh annual *Wege Small Cities Sustainability Best Practices Award*.

## New Executive

At the meeting, Mayor Keith Hobbs of Thunder Bay, ON, was elected the 2013-2014 Chair of the Cities Initiative, succeeding Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee.

“I feel privileged and excited to serve as chairman of the Cities Initiative for this next year. We are a growing and dynamic organization, now over 100 mayors strong and with ten years of history under our belt. I will continue to uphold our long held principle of leading by example and expressing a strong collective voice for mayors in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. I would also like to thank Mayor Tom Barrett for his exceptional efforts at leading the organization over this past year,” said Mayor Keith Hobbs.

## Next Year’s Conference

The 2013 Cities Initiative Annual General Meeting concluded with a presentation and invitation from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to the 2014 Cities Initiative Annual General Meeting.

For more information on award winners and the annual general meeting, please see our media backgrounder and visit <http://www.gslscities.org/annual-meetings/2013.cfm> .

*The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative ([www.gslscities.org](http://www.gslscities.org)) is a binational coalition of 103 mayors and other local officials that works actively with federal, state, tribal, first nation and provincial governments and other stakeholders to advance the protection, restoration and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.*

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