



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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For Immediate Release
Sunday, June 4, 2006

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MAYORS FOCUS ON VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES

*New Publications Describe Successful Strategies, Effective City Programs
To Deal With Vacant And Abandoned Properties*

Las Vegas, NV – The U.S. Conference of Mayors has created a new mayoral Task Force on Vacant and Abandoned Properties to examine the problems of vacant and abandoned properties in America's cities. Chaired by Bridgeport (CT) Mayor John M. Fabrizi, the task force will meet in Las Vegas during the Conference's Annual Meeting, and will release two publications for mayors to use as a guide in combating the challenge of vacant and abandoned properties in U.S. cities.

With support from the Fannie Mae Foundation, the Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force has worked with the National Housing Institute on a *Mayors' Resource Guide on Vacant and Abandoned Properties*, which spells out the role of mayors in turning abandoned properties into opportunities for their cities.

The guide lays out the elements of an abandoned property strategy – preventing abandonment, gaining control of abandoned properties, and fostering reuse of those properties – as well as describes in detail the steps to be taken to implement the strategy. The guide calls on mayors to use their unique position in city government to provide community leadership, bring governmental and nongovernmental partners together, and advocate for change at the state level where statutes and funding programs shape local abandoned property initiatives.

Earlier this year, the Task Force requested that mayors submit descriptions of the approaches they have taken in their cities to convert vacant and abandoned properties from costly liabilities into productive assets. The information provided has been included in a report entitled *Combating Problems of Vacant and Abandoned Properties: Best Practices in 27 Cities*, which describes successful, well-established, large-scale efforts in several of the nation's largest cities, as well as successful efforts underway in mid-size and smaller cities.

“The exchange of best practices among mayors is one of the simplest and most effective things we can do to help one another tackle the complex and costly problems these abandoned properties create,” said Mayor Fabrizi.

The Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force will meet Sunday, June 4, at 8:00 a.m. in the Skyview 1 Room on the 26th floor of Bally's Hotel. In addition to the release and discussion of the two reports, the agenda includes presentations on vacant and abandoned property initiatives that have been launched Columbus (OH), Louisville Metro (KY), and Wilmington (DE).

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The U.S. 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.