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Greater Louisville and Lexington to Discuss Global Competitiveness

Global Cities Initiative Forum to Bring Leaders Together to Announce New Projects

LOUISVILLE, KY— Regional leaders from diverse economic sectors will meet in Louisville today to discuss new workforce and innovation development strategies that will help strengthen the region’s global competitiveness at *Global Cities Louisville-Lexington: Building and Sustaining a Competitive Region*. This forum, hosted by the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase, will be held at the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville and will feature announcements from Mayor Greg Fischer and Mayor Jim Gray, as well as local business leaders.

“As the Louisville and Lexington region emerges as a global manufacturing hub, we have put into place considerable programs to ensure workers are given quality opportunities for training and education to stay ahead of changing technology and needs,” said Mayor Fischer. “Maintaining a talented, trained and innovative workforce will ensure that we secure our reputation as a top location for American manufacturing.”

“There’s an enormous amount of excitement around Kentucky manufacturing right now,” said Mayor Jim Gray of Lexington. “This Global Cities Initiative forum is an opportunity for Kentucky’s world-class advanced manufacturers to unite around lessons from local and national leaders in the fields of workforce development and product innovation.”

During the forum, local leaders will announce two new efforts to strengthen the region’s ability to innovate in advanced manufacturing and workforce development. First, Mayors Fischer and Gray will announce another Bluegrass Economic Advancement Movement initiative: the first Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Conference, designed to connect Kentucky manufacturers with cutting-edge processes and technologies, will be held in Lexington this October.

Second, Rena Sharpe, vice president of North American Operations, Westport Axle Corp. will announce the launch of “A Blueprint for Bridging the Industrial Skills Gap”—a new effort by a coalition of greater Louisville manufacturers outlining the actions stakeholders must take to create a better-prepared workforce equipped to meet the needs of local employers.

“Louisville and Lexington are the prime example of collaborating to compete,” said Bruce Katz, Brookings vice president, co-director of the Metropolitan Policy Program and co-director of the Global Cities Initiative. “In a globalized economy, traditional boundaries and antiquated rivalries don’t cut it. Impressively, leaders from across various sectors—public, private, and university—and across metropolitan areas, have come together to make the BEAM region more globally competitive.”

Today’s Global Cities Initiative forum builds on the BEAM region’s collaborative business plan and export plan, developed with assistance from the Brookings Institution. Louisville-Lexington is also a part of the Global Cities Initiative’s Exchange, a network of metropolitan areas working together to develop customized global engagement strategies. The implementation of the region’s export strategy has been further supported by a donation from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation. The resulting BEAM Kentucky Export Promotion Program offers grant awards of up to \$4,500 to qualifying small companies to help them increase their export capacity and activity.

“Today’s convening is a natural continuation of the BEAM partnership and is another boost to our region’s momentum in advanced manufacturing and investments in an innovative workforce,” said Paul Costel, Kentucky market president, JPMorgan Chase and chair, BEAM advisory committee. “The Global Cities Initiative provides an excellent opportunity for our public, private and nonprofit sectors to continue building on our distinct strengths to create an even stronger, more globally competitive economy for our region’s future.”

Ultimately, the Global Cities Initiative will create a network of metropolitan leaders who are deepening global trade relationships and collaborating to compete more effectively. Previous Global Cities Initiative events have been held in Atlanta; Beijing; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas; Denver; Hong Kong; Houston; London; Los Angeles.; México City; Miami; Phoenix; Querétaro, Mex. ; San Diego; São Paulo; Seattle; Singapore and Tampa, Fla. The next forum will be held in Munich, Germany.

*Launched in 2012, the **Global Cities Initiative** is a five-year joint project of Brookings and JPMorgan Chase aimed at helping city and metropolitan leaders become more globally fluent by providing an in-depth and data-driven look at their regional standing on crucial global economic measures, highlighting best policy and practice innovations from around the world, and creating an international network of leaders who ultimately trade and grow together. The Initiative is chaired by Richard M. Daley, the former mayor of Chicago, and directed by Bruce Katz and Amy Liu, co-directors of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program. For more information please visit <http://www.brookings.edu/projects/global-cities.aspx> or www.jpmorganchase.com/globalcities.*

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