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NATION'S LT. GOVERNORS TACKLE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SECURITY

Also discuss trends in manufacturing and societal aging

The second-highest ranking officials in the state and territorial governments gathered in Washington D.C. February 6 – 8, 2006, for the National Lieutenant Governors Association Winter Meeting. Lieutenant governors and those serving as first in line of gubernatorial succession spent a half-day training on homeland security and shared public health concerns.

“A three-hour security simulation focusing on the vital succession role of these members was conducted by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security, who also trained the governors,” said NLGA Director Julia Hurst. “Additionally, the Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. John Agwunobi, held an eye-opening round-table discussion with members focusing on coordinated efforts in public health response, including work on the avian flu.”

“Many issues lieutenant governors address, such as public health and safety, cross state lines and borders,” said Hurst. “This preparation ensures the best response for the citizenry. But, also, going through the scenarios sitting side-by-side with colleagues from around the country provides the added value of developing relationships – relationships that can become key during a time of crisis.”

The meeting also overviewed legislative efforts, including best practices in addressing sexual predators and efforts to reduce the cost of textbooks in schools. Members heard forecasts for the manufacturing sectors including the automobile, mining, and steel industries. Finally, members heard recommendations from the White House Conference on Aging on how states should handle the growing aging population.

Recognizing the increasing globalization of the world, NLGA members met with the German Embassy’s Deputy Chief of Mission, the Hon. Peter Gottwald. And, a project was highlighted which allows American health providers to recycle unused medical goods, no longer viable in the United States but critical abroad, to be collected and redistributed to international areas of dire need.

“The meeting ended with a Congressional reception, an opportunity for the states’ local and federal leaders to get together and discuss impacts of pending Congressional action,” said Hurst.

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