

Achievements of the Legislators Forum (LF) 2001-2013

The Legislators Forum (2001 through 2011) has discussed, developed agreements and taken action on:

- **Secured** a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from respective legislative leaders in all four jurisdictions to continue the annual meetings.
- **Learned** about differences in structure and process in the respective states and provinces.
- **Learned** that the delegates share many of the same issues and values and wish to learn more from each other about best practices for addressing them together.
- **Interacted** annually with the Canadian Consul General, based in Minneapolis, and the US Consul and Principal Officer in Winnipeg, both of whom have been significant supporters of the LF efforts.
- **Shared** information and agreements reached at the LF meetings with the federal governments in both countries through the respective Consuls.
- **Sponsored** and helped initiate what became “2Nation Tours,” involving the travel and tourism agencies of all four jurisdictions.
- **Supported** the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), especially in the states because it is aimed at enhancing the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the US.
- **Supported** the establishment of a 600-mile “Greenway” from the source of the Red River and on its tributaries to its termination in Lake Winnipeg. The efforts to develop it have expanded and continue today.
- **Supported** the Prairie Public Television/Radio “River Watch” program, which was linked to the Greenway and other flood control and mitigation efforts throughout the region and helped to secure multiple years of funding for that program, as well as the Greenway, from the Otto Bremer Foundation.
- **Discussed** mutual water quality issues and the many water quality problems that are shared among the jurisdictions and **agreed** that it will be essential to work together to address those issues.
- **Advanced** the discussion about the enhancement of renewable fuels and energy transmission capacity in the region, which was responsible, in significant part, for the work done by the Great Plains Institute (GPI), Powering the Plains (PTP) process and the work of the Midwest Governors Association.
- **Encouraged** agricultural harmonization legislation and regulation at the national levels in both countries and contacted the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) in support of the work of the Agriculture Harmonization Working Group and broadening, expediting and prioritizing that work.
- **Supported** pilot projects for pesticide labeling applicable across US and Canadian borders - now applied to 3 pesticides.

- **Authored** letters of support to appropriate agencies in the US and Canadian federal governments to encourage the adoption of a regional inter-jurisdictional action process in case of disease outbreak to ensure the containment and quick eradication of these outbreaks in the region. These included handling food safety and security in an economical and efficient manner by using inter-jurisdictional expertise and scientific technology and brought responsible agency people from all four jurisdictions together between several annual LF meetings to begin their work together in this area.
- **Supported** an emergency management mutual aid agreement and emergency management experts working together across borders.
- **Facilitated** a meeting of the three Attorneys General and the Justice Minister to provide updates on inter-jurisdictional criminal justice issues, progress on dealing with methamphetamine, and to sign an agreement to develop an “Amber Alert” system throughout the four jurisdictions to assure quick, coordinated service in the event of child abductions.
- **Supported** inter-jurisdictional sharing of best practices in “healthy living.”
- **Supported** greater rural access to medicine to ensure access to appropriate health care for all citizens in the region.
- **Encouraged** the public and private sectors in this region to work together to enhance broadband technology and other infrastructure, especially in rural areas.
- **Supported** a regional effort to enhance rural and community development, beyond simply economic development and including support for immigration.
- **Contacted** the Department of Homeland Security, other relevant agencies and states’ Congressional offices and **requested** that they ensure border crossings for citizens in the US and Canada remain as seamless as possible. Emphasizing the belief that the two countries share so much in terms of history, culture, mutual relations and issues that: “Whatever decisions are made with regard to implementation (of cross-border identification requirements), there needs to be sufficient time to develop a thorough, comprehensive and accurate cost-benefit analysis of all proposed solutions; sufficient time to implement the regulations; and sufficient time to ensure that all privacy concerns are adequately addressed. Finally, the regulations need to be affordable by states and provinces and their citizens.” The delegates share a belief that their input has had a significant impact on achieving the delay and reconsideration of many border-crossing identification regulations.
- **Recommended** the development of mutually supportive research and development initiatives and agreements that would clarify and enhance collaborative efforts.
- **Agreed** that water issues relative to the Red and Missouri Rivers be considered and addressed from a “basin-wide” perspective.
- **Acknowledged and supported** trade and border policies that foster cooperation, coordination, collaboration and are efficient, effective and economical.