

CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

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America's To-Do List points to boosting R&D, workforce retraining, infrastructure investment

List stems from National Summit conference held in Detroit

By Nancy Kaffer

Organizers of The National Summit presented "America's To-Do List" to U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke today in Washington, D.C.

The National Summit, convened by the Detroit Economic Club, was a three-day conference held in Detroit that brought about 4,000 attendees to hear c-level speakers from around the country. The conference's purpose was to produce suggestions to revitalize the national economy; Locke, who spoke at the conference, invited summit organizers to present the to-do list to him in D.C.

Summit co-chair Bill Ford, executive chairman of Ford Motor Co., Economic Club President and CEO Beth Chappell and Thomas Dekar, principal and vice chairman of Deloitte L.L.P., traveled to Washington to meet with Locke.

"We're all looking to get to the same place an American economy firing on all cylinders again and creating good jobs at good wages," Locke said in a statement released today by the Economic Club. "I don't care if an idea comes from the right or the left, from business or union leaders. If it can work, and if it can grow sustainable jobs, this administration wants to know about it."

Four professional services firms worked to coordinate the discussion at The National Summit, according to the statement: Ernst & Young, PricewaterhouseCoopers, McKinsey & Co. and Deloitte, which also oversaw the development of the to-do list, a summary of recommendations from The National Summit.

America's To-Do List calls for the following actions:

1. Develop a comprehensive national energy strategy that includes a clear carbon policy.
2. Develop a national manufacturing strategy that reestablishes an environment for U.S. businesses to thrive and compete on a global basis.

3. Support and encourage R&D and innovation as catalysts for economic growth, job creation and environmental improvement.
4. Encourage sustainability in business practices, including conservation and efficiency from producers to consumers.
5. Improve and promote science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) education in primary through graduate schools.
6. Focus on skill-building and workforce retraining to provide just-in-time talent to meet changing business needs.
7. Shift perception of national stars :beyond athletes and entertainers” to include engineers, scientists and thinkers.
8. Upgrade and integrate infrastructure to support 21st century business needs, such as airports, sea ports, highway systems, water systems and waterways.
9. Expand and coordinate smart grid activities to balance energy needs and connect new energy sources.
10. Create transportation infrastructure to support electric vehicles and alternative fuels.

A more detailed account of discussions and recommendations called “The Book of Proceedings,” has also been published, according to the statement.