



# JOINT UrbanStudies CENTER

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## A Letter from the Executive Director

In October 2006, the Joint Urban Studies Center (JUSC) held the 16th Conference on the Small City.

The conference offered workshops, roundtable discussions, and academic research panels on a variety of subjects, all of which raised questions and offered solutions to problems facing small- and mid-sized cities, particularly those related to revitalization and sustainability. The event featured five keynote speakers along with several presentations, including one from the award winning City of Philadelphia Planning Commission.



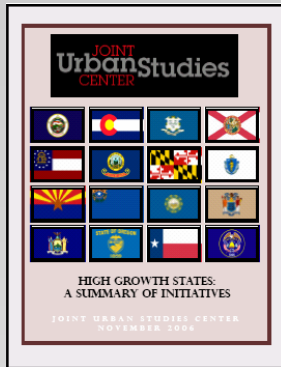
The collection of keynotes featured internationally renowned speakers, authors, and consultants that have worked around the globe. The speaking agenda included: William Hudnut III, Mayor of Indianapolis (1976 – 1991), Senior Resident Fellow in Public Policy at the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and author of *Halfway to Everywhere: A Portrait of America's First Tier Suburbs*; Joel Kotkin, Irvine Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation and author of *The City: A Global History and The New Geography: How the Digital Revolution is Reshaping the American Landscape*; Jennifer S. Vey, Senior Research Associate of the Brookings Institution and author of *Higher Education in Pennsylvania: A Competitive Asset for Communities*; Don Kettl, Professor of Political Science, Director of the Fels Center of Government at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics*; and Owen D. Gutfreund, Professor of History and Urban Studies, Director of the joint Barnard-Columbia Undergraduate Urban Studies Program and author of *20th Century Sprawl: Cities, Highways, and the Decentralization of the United States*.

JUSC's three-day event kicked off on Sunday, October 15th, with a reception featuring Mayor Thomas Leighton, City of Wilkes-Barre, and concluded Tuesday night, with a reception featuring Paul M. Raetsch, Regional Director of the U.S. Economic Development Agency. Breakout session presenting agencies included the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Michigan Suburbs Alliance. The event attracted attendees from many locations, including one from the University of Leipzig, in Germany.

JUSC thanks all sponsors that made the 16th Conference on the Small City possible. A special note of appreciation goes out to Dr. Thomas Baldino from Wilkes University, along with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Center for the Small City. The Center, under the direction of Robert P. Wolensky and Edward J. Miller, was instrumental in bringing the conference to downtown Wilkes-Barre and Scranton—which marked the first time the event was held on the East Coast. JUSC applauds all participating businesses and organizations for making the Conference unique and unforgettable.



## Excerpt from “High Growth States: A Summary of Initiatives”



**“Now that global competitiveness is shrinking the world and strong education infrastructure and high education attainment affect the wealth and long-term sustainability of a region or state, K-12 is even more important.”**  
**-JUSC**



### I. Executive Summary

A high growth state is one that displays a growing economy on a number of levels. Determinants of high growth include: overall population increases, percent change in real gross product, positive job growth, wage increases, and evidence of the majority of the citizenry going on to higher education - specifically those obtaining either primary degrees or terminal degrees. The top five states in five categories have been identified through information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Adjustment, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A summary of each state’s attributes have been identified according to:

- Quality of life
- Education [K-12 and higher education]
- Cost of doing business and economic development policies
- Land use
- Transportation
- Cost of living
- Housing affordability

Quality of life (QOL) statistics are critical to analyzing states. Often, QOL factors are of the utmost importance to those looking to relocate - seeking security and comfort for themselves and their families. While QOL may mean different things to different people, determinants like housing costs, K-12 infrastructure, arts and cultural offerings, sports and recreation opportunities, houses of worship, crime statistics, and government services may be determining factors in the decision to settle in a specific community, region or state.

In addition to a description, which includes climate, natural resources, recreation, arts & culture amenities, each state has a crime index and a Better Living Index. The crime index (with 100.00 representing a low crime rate and 50.00 being the national average) is a weighted index of all crime by degree of violence. The Better Living Index includes a weighted measurement of crime, cost of living and higher education attainment. The national average is 50.00 and the best is 100.00.



Most people strive to live comfortably in order to enjoy their lives. Nonetheless, QOL is a term that describes intangible feelings of happiness. Employers and communities are learning that QOL indicators are keys to retaining qualified workers with strong productivity; for communities, such indicators can help grow populations of responsible, tax paying citizens. Most people don’t want to live in an area that has a poor physical appearance or limited entertainment and recreation opportunities. Therefore, a state’s offerings such as parks, attractions, public safety, aesthetics, and climate, are keys to its ability to develop and promote a strong QOL.

*Continued on page 3*

## JUSC Convenes Housing Committee Meeting

On Thursday, November 2nd, JUSC held its first Housing Committee meeting, during which meeting participants reviewed the short- and long-term goals established at last April's 2006 Indicators Forum. The committee aimed to reprioritize housing-related goals as needed and review organizations and programs available to assist in the accomplishment of such goals. Representatives from various segments of the housing industry participated, including: Charles Kasko (Luzerne County Partnership/BIA), Joseph Terrana (Fannie Mae), Mike Elick (Consumer Credit Counseling Services), Dennis Butler (Citizens Bank), Tom Williams (Congressman Paul Kanjorski's Office), Joseph Dessoye (Terrana Law), and Teri Ooms, Marla Doddo, and Joe Boylan (JUSC).

The 2006 Indicators Forum focused on four main areas - Education and Workforce Development, Housing, Landuse and Transportation, and Economic Development. Housing panelists included Charles Kasko (Luzerne County Housing Partnership), Mike Hanley (United Neighborhood Center), Rhea Simms (Lewith & Freeman), and Gerry Zaboski (University of Scranton).

The Housing Committee will meet on a quarterly basis, with the next meeting scheduled for 9 a.m. on January 18th in the Innovation Center's second floor conference room. During upcoming meetings, the Housing Committee will continue to develop strategies toward achievement of previously established goals.



## *“High Growth States: A Summary of Initiatives” Excerpt Continued*

K-12 education is always an important factor, particularly for families with children. Now that global competitiveness is shrinking the marketplace and strong education infrastructure and high education attainment affect the wealth and long-term sustainability of a region or state, K-12 education is even more important. Several years ago, President George W. Bush passed the No Child Left Behind Act in order to implement common operating and performance standards in public schools. With this Act, all schools are required by law to implement specific achievement standards to ensure that students receive equal education opportunities – regardless of where they live.

National publication Education Week produces a study entitled “Quality Counts.” This resource was selected for use in this report's data collection as it accounts for each of the nation's states and utilizes the same criteria for side-by-side analysis. Through the Quality Counts study, states are rated on: standards and accountability, efforts to improve teacher quality, school climate, and resource equity. In each of the four categories, states are ranked on the following criteria:

- Standards and accountability: standards, assessments, and school accountability;
- Teacher quality: teacher education and qualification, teacher assessments, professional support and training, and teacher accountability for quality;
- School climate: engagement, safety, parental involvement, choice and autonomy, class size, school size, and facilities;
- Resource equity: wealth, McLoone Index and coefficient of variation

*“High Growth States: A Summary of Initiatives” will be available on the JUSC website, January 2007.*

**For the  
comprehensive  
“High Growth  
States: A  
Summary of  
Initiatives”  
Report, please  
visit our website**

**at:  
[www.urbanstudies.org](http://www.urbanstudies.org)**

## JUSC Intern Update

This fall semester, JUSC has utilized the talents and expertise of four interns representing King's College, Penn State University, University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Scranton.



Eric Fulmer, a senior at King's College, is a History/Secondary Education major. He has worked on several JUSC projects including the 2007 Indicators Report, a Landuse and Transportation research project, and the 16th Conference on the Small City. Eric anticipates a June 2007 graduation.

Noelle Vetrosky, a junior at the University of Scranton, is majoring in Communications with a minor in Art History. Noelle also worked on several JUSC projects including the 2007 Indicators Report, Smart Tool, and the 16th Conference on the Small City.

Ed Choma, a senior at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, is an Information Technology major. Ed spent his time at JUSC working on a project entitled The Smart Tool.

Kristen Rucinski, a Graduate student from the University of Pittsburgh, is working on behalf of the Legislative Office of Research Liason (LORL). Kristen has assisted the JUSC with research on the 2007 Indicators Report.

All three interns displayed excellent research skills and analytical abilities. We are very pleased to have them as part of our team.

**For more  
information on  
internships,  
contact Marla**

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**or by calling:  
570-408-9850**

## Education and Workforce Development Meeting Scheduled

The Education and Workforce Development Committee meeting has been scheduled for December 11th. The meeting will take place at 9:00 a.m. at the Innovation Center's second floor conference room. The meeting will include a review of the education and workforce development related goals identified at the 2006 Indicators Forum; a follow up on Pre-K research, indicators for 2007, potential pilot projects, identification of other stakeholder groups, and next steps. All forum invitees are invited.

Last April's 2006 Indicators Forum included an Education and Workforce Development panel comprised of Dr. Tim Gilmour (Wilkes University), Ms. Nancy Tkatch (Northwest Area School District), and Dr. Peter Balsamo (Luzerne County Community College).

## Municipal Cooperation Commission Awards JUSC

On October 15th, JUSC was recognized by the Luzerne County Municipal Cooperation Commission (MCC) for its innovation in advancing regional municipal cooperation. JUSC was presented with an award at MCC's annual summit by its Chairman - State Representative John Yudichak.



The MCC works with representatives from Luzerne County's 76 municipalities on finding common solutions to shared problems. MCC members include Rep. John Yudichak, John Bushko, Therese Conahan-Tedesco, Daniel N. Frascella Sr., Jill Garrett, William Goldsworthy, Jr., James Hankey, Kathy Kane, Michael Lombardo, Marie Manganiello, Patricia L. Peiffer, Maryann Petrilla, Andy Reilly, Frank Semanski, John J. Sipper, Michele Sparich, Barbara Talunowski, Todd Vonderheid, and Luise Wasserott. The Pennsylvania Economy League serves as staff to the MCC.

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## JUSC Mission Statement

JUSC's mission is to assist in the revitalization of small to mid-sized cities through the utilization of the center's expertise and resources. These include its member university, colleges, and their respective faculties and students. JUSC serves as a resource and consultant for effective and efficient government, best practices, preparation of applied research, strategy development, and the process for implementation. Based upon these efforts, we develop a model for replication by other small and mid-size cities confronting similar challenges.



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