

For Immediate Release
June 18, 2009

Contact:
Carmen Hickerson
502.625.0204
chickerson@greaterlouisville.com

Business and community leaders push for passage of transportation authority legislation

Louisville, Ky. – Citing strong community support and the need for jobs, Mayor Jerry Abramson joined business and community leaders in urging the Kentucky General Assembly to adopt urgently needed legislation to ensure progress on the Ohio River Bridges Project.

Greater Louisville Inc. – the Metro Chamber of Commerce, representing thousands of businesses in the Louisville area, thanked the Kentucky House of Representatives for its overwhelming support in passing HB 4, a bill that would establish an authority to oversee financing and construction of transportation mega projects. GLI further urged the Senate to pass the bill as well, and work with the House to finalize the legislation before the end of the special session.

“There is great urgency in completing this legislation during the current special session,” said Joe Reagan, president and CEO of GLI. “The Ohio River Bridges Project is a top priority for this community and the time to act is now. We encourage our legislative leaders to work together and resolve any differences of opinion they may have regarding the specifics of the legislation.”

The entire Jefferson County House delegation voted for the authority legislation, which passed the House Tuesday 89-9. This strong show of support from the delegation underscores their recognition of the project's importance to job creation and the economic future of Jefferson County and all of Kentucky.

"The delegation, led by Speaker Pro Tem Larry Clark and Chairman Darryl Owens, deserves credit for their hard work and leadership in developing and supporting this legislation," said Mayor Jerry Abramson.

Kentucky Senate President David Williams and members of the Senate Transportation Committee also expressed today the importance of authority legislation being adopted during the special session. Williams said there is a commitment for the committee to pass a substitute bill tomorrow. From there it will go to the full Senate for approval as early as tomorrow afternoon.

- more -

Mayor Abramson said, “There has been broad support for this type of legislation in three legislative sessions now. It’s encouraging to see leaders from both chambers recognize the significant need for this legislation to be adopted as soon as possible.”

C. Edward Glasscock, chairman of The Bridges Coalition, a broad-based organization of business, labor, civic and elected officials from Kentucky and Indiana advocating for the Ohio River Bridges Project, said he is confident legislators can reach agreement and adopt the legislation. “This is too important to delay any longer and we’re pleased about with the progress being made by the Kentucky General Assembly,” added Glasscock.

The Bridges Project’s two new Ohio River bridges and rebuild of Spaghetti Junction where I-65, I-71 and I-64 converge was authorized nearly six years ago. Work has stalled considerably in the past two years while the Kentucky General Assembly has considered funding options. Indiana has its share of funding secured and is waiting for Kentucky to work out a funding solution.

In the past week, longstanding and major regional employers – including UPS, Ford, GE, Brown-Forman, Humana and Norton Healthcare – have voiced their support for the project and the need for the authority legislation. Seventy companies in the advanced manufacturing and logistics industries signed onto a full-page ad in Sunday’s edition of the *Courier-Journal*. Another full-page ad appeared in last Friday’s edition of *Business First*, sponsored by a dozen regional commercial real estate firms.

The legislation is also supported by both Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels and Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear.

An economic analysis of the Ohio River Bridges Project determined 56,000 jobs would be created during construction – and that does not include thousands of jobs that would be created after the project’s completion. Safety improvement, reduced congestion and pollution from traffic, and fewer miles of travel in the region are other important benefits. The project also provides more than 45 acres of land adjacent to Louisville’s waterfront and cross-river lanes for biking and walking.

###