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**Mayor Dixon Joined Mayors from Across the Country to
Launch “Cities of Service” to Mobilize Americans in Era of
Service**

Baltimore, MD (September 10, 2009) – Mayor Sheila Dixon joined New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and mayors from 15 other cities to launch *Cities of Service*, a bipartisan coalition of mayors representing more than 20 million Americans, who will work together to engage millions more volunteers in service. The founding mayors met for a half-day summit at Gracie Mansion where they signed a Declaration of Service, a commitment to finding new ways to tap the power of volunteers to address each city’s most pressing challenges.

“It is an honor to stand with Mayors from other cities to promote community service, volunteerism, and being caring neighbors to one another,” said Mayor Dixon. “American families are facing pivotal times in our country’s history, and reinforcing services of support for those most vulnerable is critical. I applaud Mayor Bloomberg for his leadership in pulling together a diverse coalition of leaders with a common focus.”

The coalition will share strategies on how best to engage citizens at the local level, and it will provide a platform for the mayors to make their voices heard – and their priorities known – in Washington. The coalition will utilize lead support from the Rockefeller Foundation to provide technical assistance and other support to member mayors.

The summit at Gracie Mansion occurred just five months after the passage of the bipartisan Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act and the day before the anniversary of the attacks of September 11th, the newly designated National Day of Service and Remembrance. The 17 founding mayors were joined at the summit by Entertainment Industry Foundation President Lisa Paulsen, Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin, film and television star and social media innovator Ashton Kutcher and leaders from service organizations.

The founding members of the *Cities of Service* coalition are Atlanta, GA Mayor Shirley Franklin; Baltimore, MD Mayor Sheila Dixon; Chicago, IL Mayor Richard Daley;

Dublin, OH Mayor Marilee Chinnici-Zuercher; Jacksonville, FL Mayor John Peyton; Los Angeles, CA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Nashville, TN Mayor Karl Dean; Newark, NJ Mayor Cory Booker; Phoenix, AZ Mayor Phil Gordon; Pittsburgh, PA Mayor Luke Ravenstahl; Providence, RI Mayor David Cicilline; Sacramento, CA Mayor Kevin Johnson; Trenton, NJ Mayor Douglas Palmer; Vicksburg, MS Mayor Paul Winfield; Washington, DC Mayor Adrian Fenty; West Palm Beach, FL Mayor Lois Frankel and Mayor Bloomberg.

The *Cities of Service* coalition will lead a multi-year effort to engage other mayors from across the country by:

- Developing a comprehensive service plan and a coordinated strategy focused on matching volunteers and established community partners to the areas of greatest local need;
- Working with other mayors and elected officials to advance strategies and best practices that accelerate the service movement and produce measurable results;
- Encouraging other mayors to join this national effort to engage our citizens; and
- Ensuring that the voice of cities is heard in federal legislative, policy, and program discussions related to service, which will help the country achieve the ambitious goals of the Serve America Act.

The bipartisan coalition will be open to other mayors who sign onto the Declaration of Service; they can do so by visiting www.citiesofservice.org. The coalition is also supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and a number of nonprofit and advocacy organizations including Service Nation, HandsOn Network, and the American Association of Retired Persons. Representatives from each organization have been assisting the *Cities of Service* coalition and were present at the summit.

Tomorrow, Mayor Sheila Dixon and members of her cabinet will join staff and volunteers from Rebuilding Together Baltimore, the Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge and Constellation Energy to perform a community service project in the Park Heights community to raise awareness about energy efficiency. The outreach event will kick-off at the Harry & Jeannette Weinberg Afya Center on Park Heights Avenue.

Rebuilding Together Baltimore (RTB) is one of the nation's leading nonprofits working to preserve affordable homeownership and revitalize communities. RTB provides free rehabilitation and critical repairs to the homes of low-income residents. Their services include energy efficiency upgrades and weatherization. Park Heights is a target neighborhood for their work in Baltimore.

The toolkits delivered to residents will include resource materials about energy conservation and energy efficient light bulbs. Residents will also be provided with pledge kits about the Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge (BNEC). They will also contain materials on fire safety and energy assistance programs. Kicked off last month by the Mayor, the goal of BNEC is to help reduce Baltimore's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2015.

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