

IFTI Plays Key Role in Two US Secretaries' Visits

The Intermodal Freight Transportation Institute (IFTI) welcomed not one, but two members of the President's cabinet to the University of Memphis campus in one week!

On Monday, April 9th, approximately 75 local elected officials and business professionals arrived on the University of Memphis campus at 9 am to attend "The Aerotropolis University" where they learned about the Aerotropolis concept directly from Dr. John Kasarda, the man who coined the phrase. After the Aerotropolis University meeting, IFTI invited a small group of legislative aides and other "friends of IFTI" to learn more about the transportation industry in Memphis. The group toured IDEXX Laboratories, the CN Hump Yard and the BSNF Intermodal Yard.



IFTI Director Dr. Martin Lipinski, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, University of Memphis President Shirley Raines, & Congressman Steve Cohen

On Tuesday, April 10th, IFTI welcomed 300 people to the university for the Mid-South Aerotropolis Conference co-hosted by IFTI and the Greater Memphis Chamber. Participants included local and national elected officials and business professionals from the Memphis area. Dr. Shirley Raines, president of the University of Memphis, opened up the conference by greeting this exceptional group. The speakers for this event were outstanding and included Secretary Shaun Donovan – the Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, TN Senator Lamar Alexander, TN Representative Steve Cohen, TN Representative Jimmy Duncan, Jr., AR Representative Rick Crawford, Memphis City Mayor AC Wharton, Jr., Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell, Jr., CEO of

FedEx Fred Smith, and Airport Authority Director Larry Cox – to name a few. The conference explored the Aerotropolis Economic Development Strategy and how it has been applied in airport cities around the world. It reviewed the Memphis Model for Aerotropolis, its leadership and results to date. Finally, there was a discussion on how Memphis can capitalize on its transportation infrastructure to move the needle forward for jobs, capital investment and neighborhood revitalization.

At the request of TN Congressman Steve Cohen, Secretary Ray LaHood, the US Secretary of Transportation visited the University of Memphis on Friday, April 13th. IFTI hosted the Secretary and a select group of business leaders for lunch in the U of M University Center. IFTI Director, Dr. Martin Lipinski, welcomed the visitors to campus and provided an overview of our Institute's accomplishments as a USDOT University Transportation Center. Secretary LaHood and Congressman Steve Cohen participated in a question/answer session. Secretary LaHood took a few minutes to meet and talk with IFTI student researchers. While in Memphis, Secretary LaHood and Congressman Cohen toured the FedEx Hub, the new traffic control tower at the Memphis International Airport and the BNSF Intermodal Yard.



Congressman Steve Cohen & Secretary Ray LaHood with IFTI Students