Mayor's Journal March 4-7

This past week has truly flown…partly because I spent quite a bit of time logging air miles. The first of the week was R and R time with my wife and friends in Utah. We had a fantastic time in the beautiful snow covered mountains of the West…good food, good friends and good to get away for a few days. My thanks to Vice Mayor Willie Hinton for standing in for me while we were away; our Vice Mayor is so accommodating and so very supportive. Thanks again Willie.

Thursday, March 4: Thanks to two friends that provided my early morning shuttle to get me to my scheduled flight out of Salt Lake City; I was able to make the four hour hop to Washington, D.C. for the National League of Cities Winter Conference.

This evening I had dinner with NLC staff and the Vice Chairs of the Public Finance Panel, which I am honored to chair. This committee is serving as an umbrella "futures committee" to address how cities will be funded in the years to come. We know, to a large extent that we cannot be and will not be doing business the same way we have in the past. At the Federal level, the script is evolving and being re-written with fewer dollars for cities and states. As a result, cities across America are experiencing tighter budgets while expectations remain high. This is a small snapshot of the discussions and deliberations that my committee will have in the months ahead. Hopefully, the fact that your mayor will be a part of this process, there will be benefit for Little Rock.

Friday March 5: Our panel met today and I was pleased with our first steps. We have a follow up meeting in June and between now and then will be working as a committee by using emails. I am excited about the prospects for public policy development and will keep you posted.

Saturday, March 6: Today was an all day meeting of the NLC Advisory Board, of which I, along with City Director Michael Keck, serve as members. This committee, composed of past NLC board members, is charged with the "futures" study.

Sunday, March 7: I headed back to Little Rock and was ready to get home. This afternoon, I went down to the end of the Little Rock Marathon for the award's ceremony. I am so proud of Gina and Geneva for yet another successful marathon….what a wonderful event they organized! Enough for now…have a grand week.