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SWWDC Learns about German Innovations in Workforce Development

VANCOUVER, Wash. (December 10, 2014) – To learn about best practices and innovations in workforce development, vocational training and apprenticeships, Jeanne Bennett, Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) CEO, participated in the third annual convening of the Global Cities Initiative (GCI) in Germany on November 18-20, 2014.

GCI is a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase launched in 2012 to equip leaders with the information, policy ideas and connections they need to compete in the global economy. The Program brought together 40 business, civic and government leaders from across the United States to Munich and Nuremberg, Germany for a study tour to better understand the dual model of vocational training and public-private collaborations that contribute to the successful advanced industry sectors in these two cities and to exchange strategies around workforce development, innovation and applied research.

“The opportunity to experience the German model of vocational training was extraordinary,” said Bennett. “German businesses invest significant resources in training their own qualified workforce, something we could do more of in Southwest Washington.”

While in Germany, Bennett participated in roundtable discussions with experts, executives and government officials to learn about local and state best practices around human capital development and innovation. She toured leading firms, including Siemens and BMW, and institutions that embody the best of the German model for worker training and applied research. She is planning to share what she learned with local business, civic and education leaders.

“The German model of apprenticeships is being used in a few states in the U.S.,” said Bennett. “It was informative to be part of a discussion about the role of companies, education, government and workforce in developing work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities for our young people in the U.S.”

Other participants from the local region included Derrick Olsen, Vice President of Regional Strategy and Coordination at Greater Portland Inc. and Patrick Quinton, Executive Director of the Portland Development Commission.

For more about the German trip, visit <https://storify.com/BrookingsMetro/the-global-cities-initiative-s-week-in-germany>

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The Global Cities Initiative: A Joint Project of Brookings and JPMorgan Chase will equip leaders from the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas with the information, policy ideas, and partners necessary to build economic partnership with their international peers and operate in today's global environment. Learn more at <http://www.brookings.edu/about/projects/global-cities>

Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC), a nonprofit organization founded in 2002, is the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. SWWDC brings together funding, service providers, colleges, economic development and community organizations to provide no-cost employment and training services to businesses, job seekers and youth. Its mission is to prepare and promote a skilled and adaptive workforce for a thriving economy in Southwest Washington. For more information, visit www.swwdc.org.