



White House official: Obama to do all he can to support job growth in Detroit

Published: Friday, September 30, 2011, 7:14 AM

Updated: Friday, September 30, 2011, 10:34 AM



By Michael Wayland | MLive.com



As the 2012 election season approaches, it appears the Obama administration is making Detroit one of its priorities.

This week, Michael Strautmanis – deputy assistant to the president and counselor for strategic engagement to the senior adviser – [became at least the third official from Washington, D.C.](#), including President [Barack Obama](#), to visit Detroit in the past two months to discuss job growth.

“Detroit is important to us, Michigan is important to us and we’re going to continue to be here,” Strautmanis told [MLive Detroit](#) Thursday afternoon after meeting with local business leaders at GalaxE.Solutions’ office at 1001 Woodward Ave.

During his two-day visit, Strautmanis said he met with officials from the public sector, including Detroit Mayor [Dave Bing](#), and business officials from some of city’s most prestigious non-automotive companies, such as [Quicken Loans Inc.](#), [Compuware Corp.](#) and GalaxE.Solutions.

[GalaxE.Solutions](#) founder and CEO Tim Bryan, who hosted Strautmanis and U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development [John Fernandez in August](#), said he is convinced more than ever that picking Detroit to expand his business was the right move.



[+ View full size](#)

AP File Photo

As the 2012 election season approaches, it appears the Obama administration is making Detroit one of its priorities.



“I’m here - in Detroit - because it’s good business,” he said. “I am committed to seeing the business being done in IT in Detroit continue to grow.

“That’s good for me, it’s good for GalaxE, it’s good for the city, it’s good for the state and it’s good for the country.”

In April, Bryan’s New Jersey-based IT company [announced it would hire 500 people](#) in the next five years for its office in Detroit. The hiring spree - now at 125 - attracted national attention thanks to Bryan’s promotion of [“Outsource to Detroit,”](#) which aims to bring IT jobs back to America from

overseas.

“I’m more convinced than ever that the White House is taking a direct interest in the emerging IT-cluster here in downtown Detroit,” said Bryan, whose company is in the works of displaying [a 130-foot "Outsource to Detroit" banner](#) on the side of its building.

Strautmanis said his visit, [like Fernandez’s](#), was to see first-hand how Detroit is rebuilding itself to become a technology hub, one company at a time.

Here are a few highlights from [MLive Detroit’s](#) one-on-one interview with Fernandez:

Q: What was the purpose of your visit to Detroit?

A: “The president is focused on jobs and American competitiveness, so we at the White house wake up every day thinking what can we do to help create jobs in America today. A lot of people think of America’s cities and they focus on their problems, but when we look at our cities, we look for solutions and Detroit is in the solutions business.

“The business community and the political leadership here have decided they are going to make a commitment to move this city forward and President Barack Obama wants to do everything he can to support that because it’s not just good for Detroit, it’s good for America.”



Q: You've been with the President Obama for more than a decade, why is he focusing so much on Detroit?

A: "I have known the president for a long time and I think one of the things he's always focused on ... jobs.

"You can't spend any time in the hard hit communities of this country and not understand that the thing that can make the biggest difference in somebody's life is a job."

Q: When [Assistant Secretary Fernandez visited](#) Detroit, he spoke a lot about how the federal government would like to help Detroit continue its efforts as an "emerging IT-cluster," is the government planning to get more involved?

A: "They've created a technology cluster that we want to double-down on. If Detroit has decided that's where it wants to plant its flag, we want to be right there with them doing everything we can ... We don't want to dictate to Detroit and then have Detroit change its decisions about what it wants to do economically to fit our priorities. We want to come here and listen and find out what Detroit is focusing on and align our efforts there."

Q: What ideas will you be taking back to Washington, D.C.?

A: "I think I'll be going back to Washington with a lot of lessons about what a bright future Detroit has, but the one thing I want to emphasize ... is for Detroit to have a great presence, all of its citizens need to get involved. There's so much opportunity here. There's so much energy. There are so many great leaders. I think everybody trying to think about what they can do to make this city a little bit better will pay great dividend."

[Click here](#) for more information on Strautmanis' visit to Detroit on Wednesday and Thursday.

Related topics: [Barack Obama](#), [GalaxE.Solutions](#)

http://www.mlive.com/business/detroit/index.ssf/2011/09/white_house_official_obama_to.html