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By DAN RING
dring@repub.com

BOSTON - Traditionally ignored by Beacon Hill, leaders of 11 "gateway" cities, including Holyoke and Springfield, today formed an alliance to get more clout in pursuing common goals.

The alliance follows the release of a report last year that found the 11 historic mill communities collectively lost 11,000 jobs over the last three decades while the economy in Greater Boston boomed.

The report, co-authored by MassInc., a public policy think tank in Boston, and The Brookings Institution in Washington, warned that the cities might drift further behind Boston.

Holyoke Mayor Michael J. Sullivan said the alliance can strengthen the cities as they advocate for needs on Beacon Hill.

"It's great to recognize the importance of urban communities, that they have different challenges," Sullivan said.

Mayors of each of the cities signed a compact that was unveiled today during an event at the Old Statehouse in Boston.

The main speaker at the event, Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray, said he and Gov. Deval L. Patrick believe that municipal officials are partners in government. Murray discussed plans the administration has for the cities including preparing old industrial areas for redevelopment.

"The compact fits perfectly with the way our administration is trying to do business," Murray told the audience. "We want to help and promote gateway cities as smart places for economic growth."

By banding together, municipal leaders said they will have more power on Beacon Hill to push for money for programs such as job training, adult education, transportation and an increase in a tax credit for restoring historic properties.

"It's important that the city of Springfield is here today to show our support," said Denise R. Jordan, chief of staff for Springfield Mayor Domenic J. Sarno.

Jordan attended the event with Darryl E. Moss, a mayoral aide, and Brian M. Connors, deputy director for economic development.

Sullivan and Sarno didn't attend the event but signed the compact ahead today's gathering in Boston.

MassInc. and the Urban Initiative at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth sponsored the event, held in the building where the Declaration of Independence was first read in Boston in 1776.

Called the gateway cities because they attract immigrant populations, the communities are lagging partly because of a paucity of trained workers, the MassInc. report said.