

Day One | December 4, 2022 | Münster



Münster: Turning a Refugee Crisis into Workforce Solutions

The Region Nine delegation was honored to be greeted by Münster Mayor Angela Stähler in the Hall of Peace. Stähler spoke on the history of the hall and answered the delegation's questions on workforce, welcoming communities, and refugee issues.

The Hall of Peace was constructed in the mid-14th century and is now the town hall. The gothic architecture and high gable make it unique to other structures in Germany. The building has been the location of many historic events. In 1648, it was the sight of the Spanish-Dutch peace treaty, which marked the formal recognition of the independent Dutch Republic and the end of both the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War.

Today, Münster faces similar issues as Region Nine. Investing in industry has been one pathway to address workforce issues. When asked about what the city has done to encourage newcomers to Münster, Stähler said, "it is very important that we have an established infrastructure. We are building a battery production factory which will be the largest in Europe."

Infrastructure has gone hand-in-hand with being a welcoming community. Stähler said "The welcoming attitude here in Münster creates a nice place for refugees to come. They are welcomed with open arms."

Their willingness to take in refugees and immigrants has helped improve workforce challenges even if the newcomers don't stay in the city. "The refugees come knowing they want to go back as soon as possible. They are given special status and can work right away. They don't want to accept gifts, they just want to work, but are totally focused on going back home" said Stähler.

Münster's welcoming approach that embraces diversity and inclusion, has been a blueprint to other German cities and provides Region Nine with possible solutions to its own workforce issues.





A Walking Tour of Münster

The delegation took time to explore Münster with a guided tour provided by Marion von Hagen from Stadt Lupe. Münster got its name from the Latin word for monastery. The city was founded in 793, when Frisian missionary Liudger started the “Monasterium” (monastery) but its roots go back to the 6th century. It would become a commercial and political hub and received its town charter in 1170.

As the city modernized, it focused its planning around the walkability of the streets, even as automobiles became the primary mode of transportation. You can see the effect of this today. Münster’s streets are filled with bikes and pedestrians which helps keep the emissions from the city to a minimum.

