

ECONOMY

Mutual aid from New Orleans
to the rescue



Think Strategically: The Smell of Petrichor

Capitol reflection by vpickering

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Firing by Twitter: The Presidential standard

Have you ever wondered why rain smells so good? Several scents are linked with rainfall that most people find pleasing. One of those odors is called “petrichor,” which lingers when rain falls after prolonged periods of dryness.

Petrichor was coined by two Australian scientists studying the smells of wet weather.

We reference this word with the odd but necessary firing of Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who was canned through a tweet from President Trump.

One could smell the “petrichor” from Washington to the remotest regions of India, and saying that Tillerson had a tumultuous relationship with the President is putting it lightly.

Tillerson allegedly called the President “a moron” and never accepted or denied it.

The New York Times, the Atlantic and Foreign Policy have rated him

one of the worst secretaries of State in living memory.

The secretary of State was considered the most powerful cabinet post. Tillerson’s lack of understating of diplomacy and his overall management style did damage to the State Department up to the last generation. The State Department lost its glory, importance and some executives close to Tillerson, who felt his skill set was not adequate for the job. As with many spectacular Washington “crash & burns,” his failure did not come from incompetence but rather from a secluded and cloaked management style that consolidated power into a few disliked and incompetent lieutenants, with a penchant for management style transformations and little knowledge of the actual work the nation’s top diplomat does.

However, no one serving any U.S. President, or any job, deserves to be fired via a tweet. The President shows little respect for the office or the nation itself, and creates the worst possible image outside the U.S.

The allure of the U.S. and why so many move there

Since the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, we have seen hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans move to the U.S. in unprecedented numbers. According to the Puerto Rico Statistics Institute, by June 2018, up to 250,000 people will leave Puerto Rico, until it begins to subside.

According to a report published Sept. 18, 2017, the Statistics Institute had forecasted that Puerto Rico’s population decrease was to leave the island with 2.98 million by 2025. After the hurricane, we saw estimates placing population levels of 2.7 million to 2.08 million by 2025. Every single year, millions of people from many countries around the world come to the United States. These visitors range from regular tourists to refugees escaping the realities of their countries. We wondered where most are coming from and why? During 2015, 8.5 million foreign tourists visited the U.S. on b1 and b2 visas, and these numbers do not include visitors from many European countries, Japan and Australia,

who may enter the U.S. without a visa for three months.

The U.S. has all that Puerto Rico lacks in a diversified workplace, creating jobs by the hundreds of thousands every month. The U.S. is a broad economic representation that is appealing to talents worldwide.

The U.S. American dream is to aspire to high per capita income, good lifestyle and inexpensive financing that provides access to homes, cars and major purchases. One of the best healthcare services in the world is accessible through Obamacare.

The U.S. is the world’s most attractive place to move to. It is quite apparent our neighbors in Puerto Rico are looking for an improved way of life. There can be no decrease in this migration trend until the island supplies its citizens the opportunities available for them in the U.S.

The U.S. economy at a glance

- GDP Growth Rate 2.5%
- Unemployment Rate 4.1%
- Inflation Rate 2.2%
- GDP per Capita \$52,195

Final Word: Implementing New Orleans, Puerto Rico Mutual Aid Society

Puerto Ricans recently met with incoming New Orleans Mayor Latoya Cantrell. Cantrell, a City Council member who first gained political following as she worked to help her hard-hit neighborhood recover from Hurricane Katrina, was elected the next mayor of New Orleans in a landslide victory.

Cantrell, who is going to be sworn in May 7, 2018, met with us at her transition headquarters in New Orleans. During the meeting, the Mayor-Elect explained in detail her fights as an education advocate in a local nonprofit to improve public education. She started her work in her Broadmoor neighborhood. During our discussion, we talked about the idea of developing a New Orleans and Puerto Rico Mutual Aid Society, and collaborating on a range of issues that would benefit both New Orleans and Puerto Rico. The Mayor-Elect liked the idea and agreed to work on the program as soon as she is in office. New Orleans has a wealth of experience to offer Puerto Rico regarding its recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Another idea being implemented was the March 20 visit from Andrew Kopplin. He serves as CEO of the Greater New Orleans Foundation. He previously served, from 2010 to 2016, as First Deputy Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer of the City of New Orleans, and from 2006-2008, was founding executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the agency that leads Louisiana’s recovery efforts after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. During a very detailed discussion, “Andy” shared all the troubles that Louisiana faced with FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Congress. The strategy he developed built the coalitions that more than doubled congressional appropriations for Louisiana’s rebuilding, from \$13 billion to \$28 billion.

Puerto Rico has one of the best opportunities in a generation to transform the island into a thriving economic powerhouse; to achieve it, we must all unite in our efforts.

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