



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

WEDNESDAY | June 22, 2005

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Transportation Needs More Than Prop. 42



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

WED | June 22
The Connection Point
[more info](#)

WED | June 22
Business After Hours Mixer
sponsored by Merrill Lynch
[more info](#)

THU | June 23
Doing Business with Brazil
and pre-arranged matchmaking
[more info](#)

TUE | June 28
Referral Network
a Growing Companies program
sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

TUE | June 28
1001 Ways to Reward
Employees
[more info](#)

THU | June 30
Entertainment Industry
Business Council Luncheon
Forum
[more info](#)

WED | July 6
Health Care Committee
Meeting
[more info](#)

FRI | July 8
Education & Workforce
Development Committee
Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | July 12
Referral Network
a Growing Companies program
sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

FRI | July 15
Accenture
Pancakes & Politics
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with nearly 1,400 members, is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

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Last week we heard some good news from Sacramento. Legislative leaders said that we would get a budget on time. Although by the end of the week it was clear that they would not deliver on their promise once again, I want to focus on something else they said that they *must* deliver.

The better news is that the legislature intends to fully fund Proposition 42, ending the two-year robbery of transportation funds approved by the voters. Sending us the money we were supposed to getting all along will help--to the tune of \$300 million for Los Angeles County. Not only will it fund major regional projects, but it will also make money available in every city for street repair and local projects.

This is good news, but it means little if it is just a one-year-only event. We need the assurance that these funds will flow every year, as directed by the voters, because these funds are dedicated to projects that take years to implement. So let's hope that this is not just a flash in the pan.

As much as we appreciate legislative action to restore Prop. 42, it won't be enough. Not even close.

We need to keep up the pressure on Washington to make sure that we receive adequate federal funds for major projects. After all, California receives less than 79 cents from the federal government for every dollar of taxes we send there. We must make sure that we continue to lobby for our fair share for major transportation and other projects.

But even that won't be enough.

It has been estimated that it will take in excess of \$20 billion to solve our region's transportation crisis. This includes projects to build roads, public transit, rail, alternative transportation modes, etc. The fact of the matter is that we need to build facilities of all types if we are to solve this crisis. And solve it we must.

We need to find faster and easier ways to move people from home to work. We need to make it easier for businesses to move goods throughout our region and beyond to feed the growing economy.

What is needed most of all is vision. We need leadership with the vision to make solving our transportation crisis a priority--much as leaders of this region did last century when they developed our water system. Without water, Los Angeles would not be the region it is today. Without solving our transportation crisis, it won't be the region it could be tomorrow.

The leaders and citizens of that era voted to raise the equivalent of over \$25 billion (in today's dollars) to make sure Los Angeles had the water resources it needed to develop its agricultural resources and meet the needs of the growing population.

Surely we can do the same if we put our minds to it

We need the foresight to say that this is not only a crisis we must solve, but one we must address in a comprehensive and systematic way. And we must do so with a financing plan that assures success.

It is time to face up to the reality that we cannot wait for Sacramento and Washington to solve it for us.

It is time to face up to the reality that, although we periodically get good news and some of the money we deserve, it is really up to us to solve this problem.

It is time for the leadership of the region to make this a priority and develop a complete solution that assures we will successfully solve one of the most critical crises we face.

Those of past generations left a legacy that assured we had the water we needed to feed a growing region. The question is whether we will leave a similar legacy in transportation--or whether our legacy will be one of gridlock.

Let's hope it is the former.

The Business Perspective is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, LA Area Chamber

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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Los Angeles Mayor-elect Antonio Villaraigosa has made transportation a major priority for his administration. He has the unique opportunity to serve as the political catalyst to drive this issue in the right direction.

We pledge our commitment to work with him to make it happen.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.



Russell J. Hammer
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Click here to let us know if you agree or disagree with this week's Business Perspective.

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