

A Message of Hope for the New Mayor



Coming up at the Chamber

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

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](#)

TUE | July 19
Transportation & Goods
Movement Committee
Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | July 21
Environmental Quality
Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | July 21
L.A.'s Largest
Mixer VII
[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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As Antonio Villaraigosa's mayoral inauguration this Friday ushers in a new era, Los Angeles stands on the verge of becoming a great city/region of the 21st century--if we can tackle some of the most difficult challenges to ever face a big-city mayor. My top 10 include:

1. Solving the region's transportation problems so that people and goods can move efficiently and feed our growing economy.
2. Improving the quality of education in L.A. so that no child or adult is disadvantaged by the lack of a public education.
3. Further reducing the crime rate so that L.A. assumes the title of the safest big city in America.
4. Working with the state and federal government to fix our broken health care system that condemns hundreds of thousands of people--mostly children--to inadequate health care.
5. Restoring Los Angeles to a place where businesses will want to locate and create jobs.
6. Building affordable and workforce housing so that people who work in Los Angeles can live in Los Angeles.
7. Obtaining our fair share of tax dollars from Sacramento and Washington.
8. Reforming ethics rules at L.A. City Hall.
9. Moving forward on key infrastructure, such as the green-light projects at LAX and modernization at the Port of Los Angeles.
10. Significantly combating poverty in L.A. to improve the quality of life for all.

Some of the solutions are within the mayor's control, while others are not. Notwithstanding his "power" to act, the new mayor must exercise the stature of his office to be a catalyst to define problems and bring together those who have the authority to make things happen.

For example, while schools are not within his control, he must be a loud and constant voice for continued reform and improvement in education. He must also be more than just the mayor of one city; he must use his bully pulpit to bring opinion leaders at all levels throughout the region together to act as one for the good of our region.

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So far, this Mayor-elect has demonstrated that he is up to the challenge. Even before taking office he has shown the leadership qualities that will help him take charge to address these issues:

1. He has made it clear that transportation will be a key priority and has decided to serve as chair of Metro this year.
2. He has called for city budget cuts to face what he knows will be a difficult budget year.
3. He has signaled that crime and education will be at the top of his list of priorities.
4. He has reached out to build a diverse and balanced administration utilizing L.A.'s immense talent pool.
5. He has brokered an agreement between hotel operators and hotel workers to get L.A. on the road back to being a top tourist and convention attraction.

He has also begun to build an administration with extremely capable people in key positions. Some are proven veterans of City Hall, while others have extensive private sector backgrounds. If the recent appointments are any indication of future choices, Villaraigosa is building a very good team.

Mayor-elect Villaraigosa knows that he will only be successful if he builds coalitions and partnerships with all segments of the community. None of us--not business, not labor, not neighborhood councils, nor other special interests should approach this new administration trying to monopolize the public debate on these critical issues. Representatives from all segments and interests must be at the table to develop solutions to the challenges we face. Failing to do so will only mean squandered opportunities.

As he prepares to leave his post, we extend our thanks and appreciation to Mayor Jim Hahn for his 24 years of elected service to

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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the City of Los Angeles. As Mayor, he faced challenges of his own and has addressed them decisively and courageously. Some of his decisions cost him votes that may have brought about his defeat. But the decisions he made--such as his tireless effort to hold L.A. together as one city that Villaraigosa inherits this week--will be a legacy that will live on forever. We thank Mayor Hahn for his service and wish him well in the years ahead.

As for our new Mayor, we have high hopes that you will bring the energy, vigor, and vision you have displayed throughout your career to your new assignment. As I've said before, you have our absolute assurance that the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the business community will be your partner to build Los Angeles into the leading city/region in the Pacific Rim for the 21st century.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.



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