Coming up at the Chamber

Wed | July 25
Transportation & Goods Movement Committee Meeting
more info

Wed | July 25
Joint Energy, Water & Environment Committee and Land Use, Construction & Housing Committee Meeting
Green building
more info

Thu | July 26
Small Business Council Meeting
more info

Thu | July 26
L.A.'s Largest Mixer IX
more info

Thu | Aug. 2
The Connection Point
Are You Talking to Me?
more info

Wed | Aug. 8
Small Business Owners Roundtable
Let's Talk Technology Part Two
more info

Wed | Aug. 8
Aviation Committee Meeting
Air Freight
more info

Fri | Aug. 10
Health Care Committee Meeting
more info

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce 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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THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Striking Out
A Strike

by Gary Toebben
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Many of us remember the contentious four and a half month grocery strike of 2003–2004, which cost local grocery companies and their union members millions of dollars and disrupted tens of thousands of shoppers across Southern California. A repeat of this experience was averted this past week when the region’s largest grocery chains – Ralphs, Vons and Albertsons – reached a compromise on a new four-year agreement with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union.

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce applauds all three grocery companies, the local UFCW unions involved in these negotiations and their more than 65,000 members for coming to an agreement and avoiding another painful strike in our region. We also thank the politicians for staying out of negotiations – something they did not do last time.

The new grocery-UFCW agreement eliminated the possibility of a strike. But changing market dynamics, increased competition, and rising health care costs will continue to challenge the grocery companies and their employees, along with many other business sectors across our region.

Talks between the Writers Guild of America and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers surrounding wages for work distributed over the Internet intensified last week. And conflicts between marine clerks and the shippers at the ports threaten to shut down terminal activity at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. We urge the negotiators in these disputes to find a way to agree before strikes lead to economic losses such as those experienced in the recent shut down of the Orange County Transportation Authority public transportation system by its bus drivers.

Ralphs, Vons and Albertsons deserve our praise for reaching an agreement that will continue to grow their businesses while still offering wage increases and benefits for employees. The UFCW locals and its members should be congratulated for staying at the table and working to keep the grocers open.

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The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.