



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 29, 2005

CONTACT: Marie Condron
213.925.9605 - cell
mcondron@lachamber.org

CITY OFFICIALS CONNECT WITH BUSINESS COMMUNITY AT L.A. AREA CHAMBER'S "ACCESS CITY HALL" EVENT

Mayor's office, city council signal support of critical economic development projects, transportation and education policies championed by the Chamber

LOS ANGELES – At today's fifth annual "Access L.A. City Hall" event, presented by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, more than 300 business leaders, entrepreneurs, and small business owners talked with city officials about a wide range of policy issues, and received signals of support on key elements of the Chamber's advocacy agenda.

"The great thing about Access City Hall is that businesses large and small had the opportunity to talk face-to-face with state senators, city councilmembers, deputy mayors, and other decision-makers about the issues they face as employers living and working in Los Angeles," said L.A. Area Chamber Board Chair Chris Martin, CEO, AC Martin Partners. "We were greatly encouraged by today's dialogue with city leaders, especially when it comes to economic development and education issues."

During the event, the mayor's office and city council signaled support of several projects championed by the Chamber, and saluted the Chamber for its recent support on transportation and education issues at the state level. At a panel on Downtown redevelopment, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Bud Ovrom voiced support for the Anschutz Entertainment Group's L.A. Live project, which the Chamber has been vocal in championing as a key element of Downtown's economic resurgence (See this week's *Business Perspective* column, "Yes, We Need Another Downtown Hotel," at www.lachamber.org). He and L.A. City Councilmember Jan Perry clarified the financing structure of the project, noting that the vast majority of the project is privately funded, and that no general fund money will be tapped for the city's loan to the project. The Chamber will be expressing support for L.A. Live when it goes before the City Council tomorrow.

"The convention center hotel is really integral to keeping the Downtown momentum going. If we relied on market conditions, it would not be built—and the convention center won't be successful without a hotel," said Ovrom. "I've been doing redevelopment 30-plus years, and it takes this kind of public commitment to make a convention center happen."

The event's breakout sessions acquainted the business community with many deputy mayors and advisors of the new administration as well as generated substantive discussion about important issues -- many times resulting in consensus. For example,

at an aviation breakout session highlighting LAX modernization, Councilmember Bill Rosendahl and retired Councilmember Cindy Miscikowski agreed that green light projects need to move forward. Meanwhile, state Sen. Tom Torlakson spoke at the public transportation session, securing support for a transportation bond set to appear on the 2006 state ballot. At a session on state and local budget issues, Councilmembers Wendy Greuel and Dennis Zine both pledged to prioritize public safety in future budgets and to continue to identify waste in government so that the general fund could go further for the city's police and fire departments.

At a panel on education and workforce development, Carolyn Webb de Macias, a senior advisor to Mayor Villaraigosa, voiced the Mayor's support of small schools/small learning communities school reform. The L.A. Area Chamber's education division provides technical support to Los Angeles Unified School District on small schools and leads delegations to other cities in which urban schools have successfully reinvented themselves as small schools and small learning communities.

"We do not believe that a child can effectively learn in 5,000 student super-institutions unless they can be broken down into small groups, where every child is known by his or her name," said Webb de Macias. "Small learning communities and small schools have got to be part of the solution."

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's chief of staff Robin Kramer saluted the Chamber for lobbying successfully with the Mayor in Sacramento for the first set of funds to unclog the 405, and for the Chamber's support of the Preschool for All initiative, which will be on next year's ballot.

"I have to say it took some guts and some smarts, and I want to salute the Chamber's stepping up to support the universal preschool initiative as a matter of equity and foresight – it's good for the community, for the economy, for business, for families and for our future," said Kramer. "Kudos to you for supporting this important initiative."

###

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with more than 1,450 members, represents the interests 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.