

# News Release

George McQuade or Aida Mayo  
(818) 340-5300 or (818) 618-9229



[www.MayoCommunications.com](http://www.MayoCommunications.com)

[PR@MayoCommunications.com](mailto:PR@MayoCommunications.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2008

## LAEDC Selects Ten City Finalists for Most Business-Friendly City Competition

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*Ten L.A. County Cities Represent the Best in Economic Development Practices*

**Los Angeles**— The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) announced the finalists today (Tuesday) for its *Most Business-Friendly City in L.A. County* award. This year, the LAEDC created two categories for this award to recognize cities with populations of 50,000 and above and those with 50,000 and under.

The cities of **Cerritos, Glendale, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Santa Clarita** are finalists for the population 50,000+ category, and **Culver City, La Mirada, Monrovia, Santa Fe Springs, and Vernon** are finalists in the population 50,000 and under category.

One winner from each category will be announced live at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Eddy Awards®, honoring economic development leadership, on Monday, November 17, 2008, at the Beverly Hilton hotel (9876 Wilshire Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA 90210). More than 700 leaders from the business, government, and education communities are expected to attend the gala dinner.

“Because of the overwhelming strength of the applications received, we decided to create two categories to recognize these very deserving cities,” said Bill Allen, LAEDC president and CEO. “This is an extraordinarily encouraging sign that more and more cities are being proactive in their efforts to retain and attract quality jobs and businesses in their communities. The ability and commitment of our local governments to attract and retain good jobs is absolutely essential if our region is to sustain its economic vitality and quality of life.”

In the past 25 years, the County of Los Angeles has added more than 2.5 million residents, but only about half a million jobs. Some cities in the County have actually lost jobs in that period, while others have added many new jobs. Much of the reason for that disparity is that many cities are more proactive than others about attracting and retaining quality jobs that pay good salaries and generate healthy tax revenues.

### **The award finalists were selected based on the following criteria:**

- Demonstrated commitment to economic development as a priority
- Excellence in programs and services designed to facilitate business entry, expansion, and retention
- Economic development activity over the past three years
- Competitive business tax rates and fee structures
- Availability of economic incentives
- Effective communication with and about business clients

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Each of the finalists has created a business-friendly environment that encourages businesses to locate or expand in their respective communities.

**Cities with population of 50,000+**

**Cerritos** offers businesses a strategic location. They have a business improvement district and have designated portions of the city as “redevelopment project areas” providing opportunities for innovative financing. Cerritos offers a streamlined permit process and is dedicated to strategic planning and high-quality development standards. They have added three business-oriented planning zones that promote appropriate land uses and encourage the highest quality of design and environment within the designated areas. They are a no-or-low property tax city. Cerritos was also named a finalist in 2007.

**Glendale** has created special zones for business improvement and development and has no business tax or license fees and no gross receipts tax. The city-wide economic development program provides activities and projects aimed at creating an environment promoting the success of the Glendale business community. These activities include a one-stop permit center, career center, utility consultation, façade improvement, redevelopment agency assistance, and access to Glendale’s demographic information. The city staff also meets with businesses on a regular basis.

**Long Beach** has demonstrated its commitment to retaining jobs in its region through an investment in the local business community by offering Enterprise Zone benefits, expedited permit processing, and a transparent, proactive government comprised of civic leaders who understand the necessity of planned growth. Their Long Beach Business Development Center offers grants and loans, permit and site selection assistance, and help with employee recruitment and training. Long Beach is investing \$1.5 billion in infrastructure improvements to ensure its long term economic success. Moreover, Mayor Foster holds monthly breakfast meetings with select businesses to discuss issues and to identify solutions. Long Beach was also named a finalist in 2006 and 2007.

**Pasadena** provides R&D businesses and facilities with incentives that include priority plan check reviews and fee reductions or waivers. Pasadena also boasts a number of programs designed to help businesses such as its business seminar series, small business loan program, and small business incubators. Area incubators include the Pasadena Enterprise Center, Pasadena Bioscience Collaborative, Business Technology Center, and the Pasadena Development Corporation. Pasadena offers ombudsman services which provide individual attention in assisting the business owner from the beginning of the entitlement process to the end of construction. They have also designated certain parts of the city as an Enterprise Zone, and the Mayor and City Manager host special meetings with top level executives of businesses to identify new development needs.

**Santa Clarita** does not assess a utility user tax, allowing businesses to save up to five percent or more on their electric, telephone, water, and gas bills, and it has recently been designed as a State of California Enterprise Zone. Santa Clarita offers its businesses and residents a highly educated workforce, available land for development, site selection assistance, and expedited plan reviews and permit processing. It is also a thriving center for industry clusters such as aerospace manufacturing, bio-medical, entertainment, and technology. Santa Clarita was named a finalist in 2006 and 2007.

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### **Cities with population less than 50,000**

**Culver City** is dedicated to enhancing its economy and business environment. The City offers several business incentive programs that include permit fee reimbursement, permit streamlining, gap closer loans, and commercial façade rehabilitation loans. Their business resource center offers a one-stop shop for information assistance, guidance, and referral services, and is available online as well. And their outreach team meets with key businesses to discuss their individual business needs, concerns, and issues. Prospective businesses can also view available properties for lease or purchase on the city's website.

**La Mirada** was recognized as one of the least expensive cities in which to conduct business by the Kosmont-Rose Institute "Cost of Doing Business Survey." La Mirada has never levied a municipal property tax or utility user's tax. As a result, the City does not levy taxes on electricity, telephone, gas, water or cellular telephones and does not have special assessment districts. La Mirada does not impose impact or exaction fees on businesses looking to expand or relocate to the City. The City's "Dedicated to Service" philosophy includes onsite visits by the Mayor and staff, bi-annual business surveys, and group luncheons to recognize leadership within the business community.

**Monrovia** boasts no utility or parking taxes and also offers financial relocation assistance to businesses. The City has a designated business improvement district and also has two redevelopment project areas. They offer streamlined, expedited permitting and an ombudsman who is the liaison between the project and the community. As part of their outreach and transparency to the business community, Monrovia regularly visits businesses in the area, conducts customer service surveys, and hosts a CEO roundtable which brings business leaders together.

**Santa Fe Springs** strategically invested in infrastructure, public safety, and other services to help businesses prosper. They created a five-year Redevelopment Implementation Plan to highlight strategies for their economic development efforts, and business and job expansion activities. Expedited permitting and formalized coordination among all departments on all development projects are part of Santa Fe Springs' effort to help businesses cut through the traditional layers of bureaucracy. The City also regularly visits with business owners in their community to assist with retention and expansion efforts.

**Vernon** provides its own water and natural gas service, fiber optic system, and its own electric utility company with rates that are consistently ten to 40 percent lower than those outside the City. The City does not have a utility user tax and its redevelopment agency has spent nearly \$40 million on infrastructure improvements and land for economic development. The City offers a "one stop" service counter where questions regarding zoning requirements, building codes and/or public works can be answered. Vernon also boasts the distinction of *Most Competitive* among 12 other industrial cities (six in Southern California and six in other states), according to the Kosmont Companies business costs analysis report.

Last year, the City of Lancaster was the winner for the 2007 "Most Business-Friendly City in L.A. County" competition. The City of El Segundo was the first winner in 2006. There is a three-year moratorium before a winning city can reapply for the award.

In addition to announcing the winners of the Most Business-Friendly City in L.A. County award, the Eddy Awards® will also honor famed real estate developer Rick Caruso and The Walt Disney Company for their outstanding private sector leadership in economic development.

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### **City Information**

1. Cerritos: Mayor Jim Edwards. <http://www.ci.cerritos.ca.us/citygov/council.html>
2. Culver City: Mayor D. Scott Malsin. <http://www.culvercity.org/council/council.asp?sec=gov>
3. Glendale: Mayor John Drayman. <http://www.ci.glendale.ca.us/>
4. La Mirada: Mayor Hal Malkin. <http://www.cityoflamirada.org/>
5. Long Beach: Mayor Bob Foster. <http://www.ci.long-beach.ca.us/>
6. Monrovia: Mayor Rob Hammond. <http://www.ci.monrovia.ca.us/>
7. Pasadena: Mayor Bill Bogaard. <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/>
8. Santa Clarita: Mayor Bob Kellar. <http://www.santa-clarita.com/>
9. Santa Fe Springs: Mayor Gustavo Velasco. <http://www.santafesprings.org/>
10. Vernon: Mayor Leonis Malburg. <http://www.cityofvernon.org/>

### **About the Eddy**

The Eddy Awards® were introduced by the LAEDC in 1996 to celebrate individuals and organizations that demonstrate exceptional contributions to positive economic development in the region. The Eddy Awards® recognize individuals, companies, and in 2006 began honoring cities as well for leadership in economic development. For more information about the Eddy Awards®, including sponsorship opportunities, please visit [www.laedc.org/eddy](http://www.laedc.org/eddy).

### **About LAEDC ([www.LAEDC.org](http://www.LAEDC.org))**

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), the region's premier business leadership organization, is a private, non-profit organization established in 1981. Its mission is to attract, retain, and grow business and jobs for the regions of Los Angeles County. Since 1996, the LAEDC has helped retain or attract more than 145,646 jobs, providing \$6.3 billion in direct economic impact from salaries and \$105 million in annual tax revenue benefit to local governments and education in Los Angeles County. Visit [www.laedc.org](http://www.laedc.org) or call (888) 4-LAEDC-1.

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