



Athens Sheriff's Station Groundbreaking Ceremony

It's been a long time coming, but Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke was proud to lead the groundbreaking ceremony for the new construction of the Athens Sheriff's Station. It has been a priority of Supervisor Burke since she took office in 1992 to replace the aging Lennox Sheriff's Station that did not adequately serve the needs of the community or Sheriff's Department employees.

While the new 33,750 square foot building, which will include a community room to serve as an emergency operations center, is being constructed, the Lennox Station will continue to provide services to the area. Once the Athens Station is completed, the Lennox Station will then be renovated and brought up to code for additional use by the Sheriff's Department.

Although Supervisor Burke will not be in office to see the completion of the station, tentatively set for late summer of 2009, this station will be one that the Sheriff's Department, its employees and community will surely be proud of!



December 15, Athens Sheriff's Station Groundbreaking.

The County's March of Dimes Campaign Underway

"March for Babies" is the theme of the County's 2008 March of Dimes campaign, announced Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Board Chair. Formerly known as WalkAmerica, the March for Babies will be held on Saturday, April 26, 7:30 a.m., at Griffith Park, near the Merry-Go-Round.

"I am pleased to lead this important effort to raise funds that will be used to help reduce the number of premature births and birth defects," she said. "Our goal is to raise \$300,000 this year."

Supervisor Burke introduced the Board motion authorizing the campaign.

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EVENT CALENDAR

Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia 91007

For a list of seminars, workshops and classes, please visit www.arboretum.org or call (626) 821-4623

Los Angeles County Museum of Art 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 90036 (323) 857-6000 www.lacma.org

Through Mar 3 – SoCal: Southern California Art of the 1960s and 70s from LACMA's Collection

Disney Concert Hall 111 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012 (323) 850-2000 wdch.laphil.com

March

- 1 & 8 – Nathaniel Stookey's *The Composer is Dead*
- 2 – A Tribute to Ella
- 4 – Lang Lang in Recital
- 6, 8 & 9 – Stephane Deneve
- 7 – Eva Ayllon
- 13 - 15 – Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody
- 16 – John Pizzarelli - "Dear Mr. Sinatra"
- 20 - 22 – Janine Jansen Plays Tchaikovsky
- 21 – Chamber Music with Janine Jansen
- 25 – Green Umbrella with Ursula Oppens
- 26 – Chamber Music with Gustavo Dudamel
- 28 - 30 – Dudamel conducts Berlioz
- 30 – USC Thornton Wind Ensemble

Music Center 135 N. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012 (213) 972-7211 www.musiccenter.org

Center Theatre Group

- Through Mar 9 – The Color Purple
- Mar 7 – Apr 13 – No Child...
- Mar 12 – Apr 6 – Sweeney Todd
- May 11 – Jun 8 – Keep Your Pantheon
- May 11 – Jun 8 – Duck Variations

Los Angeles Opera

- Through Mar 9 – Otello
- Through Mar 8 – Recovered Voices
- May 17 – Jun 21 – Tosca
- Jun 7 – 28 – La Rondine
- Apr 20 – Bryn Terfel in Recital

Los Angeles Master Chorale

- Mar 9 – Bach B Minor Mass
- Apr 6 – Hayden & Gorecki
- May 4 – Almost a cappella
- May 18 – Great Opera Choruses

Natural History Museum 900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles 90007

For a list of events please visit www.nhm.org or call (213) 763-DINO

The Los Angeles County Commission for Women
and
The Honorable Board of Supervisors
"Celebrating Women of Service"
at the
23rd Annual *Women of the Year* Awards Luncheon

Monday, March 10, 2008 at 11:30 a.m.
Millennium Biltmore Hotel, Crystal Ballroom

Congratulations!
2008 Women of the Year Awardees

Commander Lynda R. Castro, Nancy Chand, Honorable Laura Chick, Denise Dador, Education Spectrum, Dixie L. Eliopoulos, Maria Leyva, Commander Willie J. Miller, Colleen Mooney, Honorable Fran Pavey and Irma Resendez, MSW

For more information about the Commission for Women or the 2008 Women of the Year Awards Luncheon, please go to www.LACCW.info or call (213) 974-1455.

Retired Employees of Los Angeles County (RELAC)
1000 South Fremont Avenue, Unit 15
Alhambra 91803-8802
www.relac.org
Phone: (626) 308-0532, (800) 537-3522
Fax: (626) 308-2901
Email: admin@relac.org

Visit <http://dhr.lacounty.info>
for information on
employment opportunities
with the
County of Los Angeles

Supervisor Antonovich Announces Successful Program Placing Veterans in County Positions

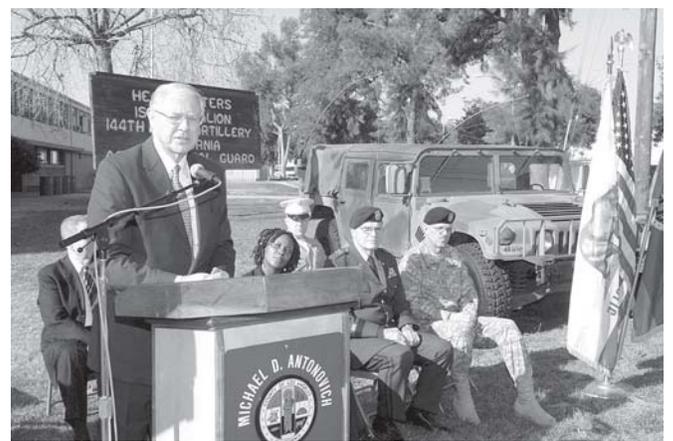
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich joined Michael J. Henry, Director of Personnel; Colonel Joseph Smith, Director, Department of Military and Veteran Affairs; and military officials at a press conference announcing the success of a new County program assisting veterans with employment opportunities.

“Our veterans have served our nation and sacrificed their lives for our freedom,” said Supervisor Antonovich. “This program will provide our veterans the opportunity to apply their skills, learn new ones and compete effectively for employment.”

In 2006, to address a disproportionate unemployment rate among recent veterans, Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe co-authored a motion directing County departments to develop a comprehensive program to identify and place veterans through outreach, new hiring protocols and education.

Open to local military veterans who have been honorably discharged, the County recruits applicants whose training, education and skills match those needed by the County. Successful applicants are hired as trainees for up to 24 months and receive job training and experience that enhances previous job skills or gain new experience in administrative, technical, clerical, technological, craft or maintenance areas. They receive benefits and are eligible to compete for permanent County positions.

Interested veterans are encouraged to visit <http://dhr.lacounty.info> or call (213) 738-2175.



(From left to right) Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich; Veteran Intern Licheen Woods, Registrar-Recorder; Captain Craig Flower, USMC; Major General John Harrel, Commander, National Guard's 40th Infantry Division; Brigadier General Charles Ebner, Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Reserves 63rd Regional Readiness Command.

CEO Fujioka Honored on Dr. King's Birthday

Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair of the Board, and Supervisor Don Knabe spoke warmly about the County's Chief Executive Officer William T Fujioka at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day reception in his honor on January 15.

“The reception recognizes Dr. King's legacy and there is no better way to remember Dr. King than to promote diversity, equality and brotherhood,” said Supervisor Burke, Chair and co-sponsor of the event along with the County's African American Heritage Committee (AAHC) and the Association of Black County Administrators (ABCA). Sharon Harper, Chief Deputy CEO; Michael J. Henry, Director of Personnel; and Cynthia Banks, Director of Community and Senior Services, served as Co-Chairs.



CEO

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Director of Personnel Michael J. Henry, left, and Chief Deputy CEO Sharon Harper, second from right, and Cynthia Banks, right, reception Co-Chairs, are joined by, from left, Charisse Bremond-Weaver, President/CEO Brotherhood Crusade; CEO Bill Fujioka, Mrs. Darlene Kuba Fujioka and Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke.

RETIREEES

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 30 or more years of service to the people of the County of Los Angeles:

ASSESSOR: Paula D. Kimberling

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES: Richard E. Sanford, Leonor Umina

COUNTY COUNSEL: Owen L. Gallagher

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Norma V. O'Dell

FIRE: Ronald P. Lawrence, Richard B. Pfeiffer, Doris J. Young

HEALTH SERVICES: Janice M. Atkins, Nimfa M. Aurellano, Margarita V. Avina, Erthalene Bowman, Rosalinda E. Cantila, Betty J. Champion, Sandra L. Desouza, Edna H. Lankford, Margaret M. Martinez, Joan Masters, Norma L. Mc Ghee, Mary J. Moore, Esther M. Mossman, Martha Owens, David Rubenhold, Sylvia Torres, James K. Wong

INTERNAL SERVICES: Rodney V. Gardner

PROBATION: Charlie Baker Jr., Ruben Garcia, Francies M. Henry, John Knobbe, Nazrie Ray, Gayle Schiller

PUBLIC DEFENDER: Mark Lessem

PUBLIC HEALTH: Diane L. Battaglia, Lurlene Joyce, Marilyn J. Mc Donnell

PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Phyllis A. Ellis, Catherine Fields, Cheryle Henkle, Joseph P. Lewandowski, Elizabeth L. Lopez, Martha M. Williams

PUBLIC WORKS: B C. Brooks, Charlotte A. Flores, William Fraser, Peter S. Lee, Barry S. Witrer

SHERIFF: Alfredo A. Castro, Charles P. Morales, Daniel Nathan, James S. Noennick, Anthony M. Pachot, Michael A. Ruiz, Johnny A. Solis, Sandra P. Moore, Jimmy Orcasitas, James W. Rees, Victoriana Silvas-Alons

SUPERIOR COURT: Richard A. Belmonte, Ted I. Matsuda

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 25 or more years of service to the people of the County of Los Angeles:

ASSESSOR: George Martins

FIRE: Bernard J. Cain

HEALTH SERVICES: Gloria Desantis, Icelind Houston, Helen Hsieh, Vichitra Kanchanatupp, Kanokporn Thumwanit, Queen E. Williams

INTERNAL SERVICES: Eustace Hawarden, Raymond C. Krank

MENTAL HEALTH: Leslie Groenewold, Evangelina Montalvo

PARKS AND RECREATION: Lillian Finn

PROBATION: Lawrence F. Rothstein

PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Xuan T. Nguyen, Mario F. Rodriguez, Luong G. Tran

PUBLIC WORKS: Irene T. Chen

SHERIFF: Peter M. Farino, Stephen R. Van Herpe, Robert D. Wilson, Dolores Marks, Beverly A. Thornton

SUPERIOR COURT: Maria T. Flores, Linda Louie

Cesar Chavez Week, March 24-28

County employees will again volunteer during Cesar Chavez Community Service Week, scheduled Monday, March 24 through Friday, March 28, in honor of the great American hero.

Instead of a day off, employees will volunteer a half-day of service.

Volunteer opportunities will be available in the Departments of Public Library, Animal Care and Control, Parks and Recreation and Beaches and Harbors.

The annual Cesar Chavez Food Drive will be conducted from Monday, March 17 to Monday, March 31. For more information, please contact your department Cesar Chavez Week coordinator or call Ruben Rivero, CEO Workplace Programs office, at (213) 974-2523 or via e-mail at rrivero@ceo.lacounty.gov.

MARCH

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Special fundraising activities planned for employees include "County Night at Dodger Stadium" on Friday, April 11, 7:30 p.m.; and "Blue Jeans for Babies Days" on Wednesday and Thursday, May 28 and 29.

In addition, County employees are encouraged to sign up to walk on April 26 with their department coordinator or by calling CEO Workplace Programs at (213) 974-2619.

County DIGEST

Articles and other submissions to the County DIGEST may be edited or otherwise altered for clarity.

County DIGEST Editorial Offices
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Los Angeles, CA 90010

(213) 738-2352

(213) 639-0940 FAX

Available online at: dhr.lacounty.info

Supervisor Molina Announces Official ‘Intervener’ Status in Vernon Power Plant Dispute

California Energy Commission Grants L.A. County Legal Right to Make Case



Supervisor Gloria Molina announced that the California Energy Commission has granted the County of Los Angeles official “intervener” status in the ongoing dispute over the proposed Vernon power plant.

“This is great news,” Supervisor Molina said. “It means we officially have a seat at the table. It means that as the California Energy Commission weighs the pros and cons of the Vernon power plant proposal, the concerns of residents living in the County – and, specifically, families living in nearby unincorporated areas – will be heard.”

The City of Vernon has proposed developing a 943 megawatt power plant – and, already, environmental and community organizations have mobilized to stop its construction. If approved, the Vernon power plant would produce in excess of 880 tons of air emissions per year. The Vernon power plant would tie as the seventh largest contributor of PM-10 emissions; it would rank as the sixteenth biggest producer of carbon monoxide; and it would be the twenty-first largest producer of nitrogen oxide emissions in the nation. If built, it would be the most massive facility in the County of Los Angeles and would be one of the top polluters in the Southeast Los Angeles region.

The Commission’s decision essentially allows the County to intervene in this dispute by directly participating in hearings, producing and examining witnesses, and otherwise representing the County’s interest in official proceedings.

“I applaud the Commission’s decision,” Supervisor Molina said. “Now, the County can officially raise concerns and make Vernon prove their information. We will not support construction of this power plant unless the Commission and the City of Vernon can guarantee a simultaneous – and greater – reduction of pollutants by other pollution sources in the vicinity. If the power plant is going to be clean, let Vernon prove it. If it’s going to be a project that’s truly beneficial to the community, let them prove it. If it’s going to have all the so-called ‘Priority Reserve’ credits that they promise, let them prove it. If the community is going to have to live with this intrusive power plant, let Vernon be a good neighbor and prove that this facility is worth it to everyone.”

Supervisor Burke Observes “A Day Without A Bag” in Los Angeles County

The Board of Supervisors declared December 20, 2007 as “A Day Without a Bag” throughout the County of Los Angeles.

County residents use approximately six billion plastic bags a year and only recycle 5% of that total, resulting in the un-recycled bags becoming part of a plastic-dominated litter stream.

The littering caused by plastic bags creates significant problems for County streets, beaches, and the marine environment, and harms seabirds, marine animals, and countless fish through indigestion and entanglement of marine debris.

The County of Los Angeles is making a significant effort to reduce plastic bag litter and has set solid waste reduction and recycling goals.



Supervisor Burke joined by “A Day Without A Bag” participants at the Westfield Shopping Center in Fox Hills.

ENRICHING LIVES...

County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation Launches Campaign Urging People to “Play for Life!” at Los Angeles County Parks



LA County junior golf program



Descanso Gardens

The Department of Parks and Recreation will launch its PLAY FOR LIFE! Public Information Campaign at a February Board of Supervisors meeting later this month.

Utilizing broadcast, print, outdoor and electronic media, the campaign’s message will encourage youth, teens, families, seniors and everyone in between to be active, be healthy and to do it at one of the many Los Angeles County Park facilities.

Los Angeles County residents will soon see and hear catchy phrases with double meanings, but have distinct, collaborative messages. “Make a Splash!” tells people to make a splash, and what better way to do so than at one of Los Angeles County’s 28 public swimming pools. “Stop and Smell the Flowers!” encourages the public to nurture their well being by slowing down and – literally – smelling the flowers at one of Los Angeles County’s four Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. “Go Fore It!” is a play on words, applicable for anyone to go for health, go for fitness and go for a round of golf at one of Los Angeles County’s 19 golf courses, comprising the largest municipal golf course system in the Country. These phrases are just a few of the messages of the Play for Life! campaign.

Although referring to different aspects of the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation’s abundant facilities, the Play for Life! campaign’s core message is to be healthy, to reduce stress, to live well and to “Play for Life!” in whatever way that means to the individual person. Just as important, the campaign highlights the more than 140 beautiful parks and facilities within Los Angeles County, and shows that everything one needs to do to Play for Life!, they can do right here, in the County of Los Angeles’ public parks and facilities.

To view a list of all of the Parks and Recreation facilities offered by Los Angeles County, go to www.lacountyparks.org.



LA County Arboretum



Belvedere Skatepark



County of Los Angeles Strategic Plan



County Vision

"Enriching Lives"

Our **purpose** is to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles County by providing responsive, efficient and high quality public services that promote the self-sufficiency, well-being and prosperity of individuals, families, businesses and communities.

Our **philosophy** of teamwork and collaboration is anchored in our **shared values**:

- **A can-do attitude** - we approach each challenge believing that, together, a solution can be achieved.
- **Accountability** - we accept responsibility for the decisions we make and the actions we take.
- **Compassion** - we treat those we serve and each other in a kind and caring manner.
- **Commitment** - we always go the extra mile to achieve our mission.
- **Integrity** - we act consistent with our values.
- **Professionalism** - we perform to a high standard of excellence.
- **Respect for diversity** - we value the uniqueness of every individual and their perspective.
- **Responsiveness** - we take the action needed in a timely manner.

Our **position** as the premier organization for those working in the public interest is established by:

- A capability to undertake programs that have public value;
- An aspiration to be recognized through our achievements as the model for civic innovation; and a pledge to always work to earn the public trust.

County Mission

To enrich lives through effective and caring service

Strategic Plan Goals

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Service Excellence | 5. Children and Families' Well-Being |
| 2. Workforce Excellence | 6. Community Services |
| 3. Organizational Effectiveness | 7. Health and Mental Health |
| 4. Fiscal Responsibility | 8. Public Safety |

Gloria Molina
Supervisor
First District

Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor
Third District

Don Knabe
Supervisor
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor
Fifth District

Enhanced Illegal Dumping Hotline and Web Site Allows Convenient 24-Hour Reporting

Improvements to the County's toll-free hotline and Web site have resulted in an user-friendly system to encourage Antelope Valley residents to report illegal dumping, announced Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich.

"Illegal dumping is a danger to public health and safety, decreases property values, lowers the quality of life, and costs County taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in clean-up, education, and enforcement," said Supervisor Antonovich. "The hotline and Web site make it convenient for residents to report violators anonymously, 24 hours a day."

The toll-free Hotline (888) 8 DUMPING features live operators Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. After hours, residents can leave a voice message and the matter will be handled the next business day. Reports can also be made at www.stopillegaldumping.com 24 hours a day. A new feature also allows residents to track the progress of their reports.

To further assist residents in properly managing their waste, Supervisor Antonovich encourages residents to utilize other vital County programs including:

- The Antelope Valley Environmental Collection Center – to dispose of hazardous waste.
- Free Tire Collection Day – to dispose of tires at locations twice a year or four unwanted tires per year at Lancaster Landfill.
- Free Bulky Item Drop-off – to dispose of one bulky item a year at the Lancaster Landfill.
- Free Dump Day – allows County residents to drop-off up to 1 ton of trash twice per year.



For more information, please contact the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Environmental Programs Division at (626) 458-4991.

CEO

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The reception committee also included Queen Jones and Jackie Mizell Burt, Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) and active members of ABCA; Cynthia Machen, Countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee and Chair of AAHC; and Victoria Pipkin-Lane, CEO Workplace Programs, Program Coordinator, AAHC.

Supervisor Burke worked with Dr. King in the civil rights struggle and pointed out that honoring Fujioka "pays tribute to that legacy as he is the first Japanese American to serve as County CEO, an historic appointment that inspires all minorities."

Supervisor Knabe spoke in comedic terms about the "new County CEO and the challenge facing Fujioka as he implements the new structure." His remarks were well received by the capacity audience.

Charisse Bremond-Weaver, President and CEO of the Brotherhood Crusade, welcomed Fujioka to the County on behalf of the local African-American community. The agency was a sponsor of the event. "Our partnership with the County is a strong one that will continue," Bremond-Weaver said. "We look forward to continuing the great working relationship," she added.

Reverend John Hunter, Senior Pastor, First AME Church, delivered the invocation. Also giving remarks were Vernon Webb of United Way of Greater Los Angeles, a co-sponsor of the reception with the L.A. Federal Credit Union, Vibrant Publishing Company, Inc. and HTL Global Enterprises.

A special highlight of the reception was the presentation of gifts to Fujioka and his wife, Darlene Kuba Fujioka, by the AAHC and the ABCA. A special plant and African American artwork was given to Fujioka, while Mrs. Fujioka received a beautiful and authentic baby blue colored African dress and head wrap.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky Tackles Transportation at “Move LA” Transit Summit



On Thursday, January 10, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky delivered a blunt and candid assessment of the region’s transit challenges as a featured participant on the concluding panel convened as part of the “Move LA” all-day public transit conference held in downtown Los Angeles. Supervisor Yaroslavsky’s remarks touched on various transit projects underway such as the Expo Line Light Rail through Culver City to Santa Monica and the Eastside Gold Line Light Rail, as well as other suggested projects including the Wilshire subway extension.

Pictured with Supervisor Yaroslavsky, from the left, are Dr. Manuel Pastor, USC; John Fasana, Metro Board member; Richard Katz, Metro Board member; and Parke Skelton, political consultant.

Supervisor Antonovich Dedicates New Lifeguard Patrol Boat at Castaic Lake

Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich joined members from the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, Castaic Lifeguards and the community in the dedication of the new “Bravo 4” patrol boat.

Constructed by D.R. Radon Boat Building, Inc., Bravo 4 is 22 feet long and weighs 5,000 lbs with a top speed of 45 mph. The new boat will increase the Castaic Lake Lifeguard rescue fleet to 10 boats.

Bravo 4 safety features include:

- A GPS system that can locate boats lost in 100 or more feet of water
- A heavy duty pump capable of pumping 200 gallons of water per minute

In 2007, there were more than 20,000 incidents at Castaic Lake, with over 230 swimmers rescued and more than \$80 million worth of vessels saved.

“Bravo 4 will be a vital new resource to help save lives,” said Supervisor Antonovich.



(From left to right) Stan Lee, LA County Parks and Recreation Commissioner - 2nd District; Russ Guiney, Director, LA County Parks and Recreation; Hugo Maldonado, Chief Lake Lifeguard, LA County Parks and Recreation; Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich; William J. Korek, LA County Parks and Recreation Commissioner - 5th District; Raymond E. Ojeda, LA County Parks and Recreation Commissioner - 3rd District



Bravo 4 Patrol Boat.



County of Los Angeles Celebrates

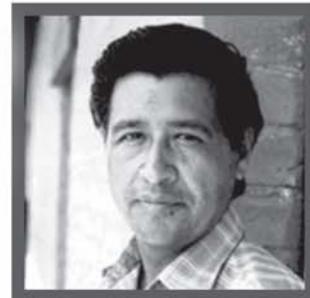
Cesar Chavez Community Service Week

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

March 24 - March 28, 2008

Volunteer opportunities (half-day) for County employees will be available during the Cesar Chavez Community Service Week in the following County departments:

- *Animal Care and Control*
- *Beaches and Harbors*
- *Parks and Recreation*
- *Public Library*



Photographer: George Rodriguez

Visit www.colapublib.org/chavez

FOOD DRIVE

March 17 - March 31, 2008

For additional information, contact your department coordinator or call the CEO/Office of Workplace Programs at (213) 974-2523. (Food distributed by the L.A. Regional Food Bank)

Supervisor Knabe Honored by Children’s Mental Health Agency for Support of Children’s Causes

The Intercommunity Child Guidance Center (ICGC), which provides comprehensive mental health and social services for children and their families, recently recognized Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe for spearheading landmark programs designed to safeguard children.

“While on the Board of Supervisors, Don Knabe has repeatedly advocated for and supported groundbreaking programs to protect the lives of children and safeguard their environment,” said ICGC Executive Director Charlene Dimas-Peinado. “He’s truly been a champion of children’s causes throughout his career, as well as an advocate for children’s mental health services.”



The ICGC, which serves the Whittier and Southeast Los Angeles County area, presented its “Children’s Champion Award” to Supervisor Knabe during its recent 50th Anniversary Gala held at the historic Ritz Carlton Huntington Hotel and Spa in Pasadena.

Supervisor Knabe championed the County’s Safe Surrender Program in 2001, which allows a parent or guardian to drop off an infant, three days old or younger, to a hospital emergency room or other designated location without fear of arrest and prosecution. Based on the State’s Safe Haven Law, the program has saved the lives of more than 60 newborn children.

In addition, Supervisor Knabe led efforts for the creation of a Child Care Quality Review System in the County of Los Angeles, sought to enhance the County’s oversight of the State-licensed Foster Family Homes program, led a drive to reform the County’s Department of Children’s and Family Services and helped to establish a rating system for child care centers to help parents make informed choices.

Proceeds from the gala dinner benefited the “Early Attachments...that last a Lifetime Infant-Toddler Center,” an ICGC project in partnership with Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital in Whittier. The Center will provide an early intervention and prevention program for families with infants at-risk for abuse, neglect or foster care placement with the goal of decreasing that risk by providing services aimed at fulfilling the well-being of the entire family system.

Protecting Public Lands

Supervisor Yaroslavsky Thanks Senator Feinstein

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky presented Senator Dianne Feinstein with a scrapbook of historic photos, illustrations and postcards of the West LA Veterans’ Administration (VA) site, where this picture was taken, in gratitude for her recently-enacted legislation protecting the nearly 400 acres of that site from commercial development and preserving it for the benefit of veterans. Senator Feinstein’s legislation, which passed the House thanks to the strong support of Representative Henry Waxman (D-Los Angeles), who represents the area, was included in an omnibus appropriations bill signed into law by President Bush in December.



Share It



Tips on Using Gift Cards from the Department of Consumer Affairs

Gift Cards – What do they have in common with Gym Memberships?

They are things people get all the time but often don't use.

Are you too lazy to buy real presents or don't know what to get your gifted brother-in-law? Get him some loving gift cards. You won't be alone. Over 60 percent of American adults buy or receive a gift card each year at a cost of over \$60 billion last year alone.

The appeal of gift cards is obvious. They save time and thinking for buyers. A \$20 gift card beats slipping two fives and a bunch of wrinkled ones into an envelope. For recipients, gift cards ward off the bliss of returning unwanted gifts. Merchants love gift cards because many go unredeemed and they drive customers to their stores. In 2006, Home Depot earned a whopping \$43 million from unclaimed, lost, and expired gift cards. Best Buy made out with \$19 million. Wal-Mart, Inc. won't say how much gift cards added to its bottom line.

So, what's not to like about gift cards? Nothing, if your job is to sell them. If you are one of 160 million Americans who got a gift card last year, however, you contributed to the roughly \$8 billion that goes unclaimed each year. Unless charity for your favorite merchants is your thing, here are some things you can do to get your money's worth from your gift cards:

- Use them *pronto*, don't store them away under your mattress. The longer you hang on to them, the greater the risk you will lose them or forget you have them.
- Say no to unwanted fees. In most cases, unless you have less than \$5 left in the card and you haven't used it for 24 months in a row, merchants can't charge fees.
- Don't let merchants tell you your gift cards have expired. According to the law, the gift cards can't have expiration dates, unless they are for perishable foods. If a card is allowed to have an expiration date, it has to be printed clearly on the front of the card.
- Get cash back if you have less than \$10 left. Starting January 1, 2008, the law says you can request cash if the card has less than \$10 left.
- Trade them for cash or goods. Many Web sites let you combine your gift card collection and get cash or goods for them.
- Re-gift them to people who gave them to you. They won't know.

Oh, one last thing: Increasingly popular bank gift cards – those that carry the logo of credit card companies – are different than other gift cards. They can have expiration dates and come loaded with a long list of fees. This list may include purchase fees, monthly maintenance fees, inactivity fees, and transaction fees. Bank gift cards are required to have any expiration dates and fees printed

on the front of the card. They are also required to have a customer service number or web address printed for you to get more information. Understand expiration dates, fees and limitations before you commit.

If you want to talk about consumer issues, call our friendly staff at (800) 593-8222. The call and service are free. If you are not into calling, check out our great Web site: dca.lacounty.gov.



Members of the Board

Yvonne B. Burke
Chair
Second District

Gloria Molina
First District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

Michael J. Henry
Director of Personnel

Sandra Wallace Blaydow
Ombudsman/Community Liaison

John S. Mina
Managing Editor

Simon Y. Lee
Editor