Long Beach residents are urged to vote YES on Long Beach Measure MA – the tax on the sale of marijuana – in case either the local initiative, Measure MM, or state Proposition 64 passes.

Measure MM is on the Long Beach ballot via the initiative process. It repeals the city’s ban on marijuana businesses and allows for retail medical marijuana businesses. If Long Beach voters approve MM, it will create enforcement problems and add significant costs to our already strained public safety budgets.

Proposition 64 would legalize recreational marijuana. It will undoubtedly cause problems for law enforcement. Anyone who doesn’t believe so has most likely not smoked pot or gotten behind the wheel while under the influence. Legalizing recreational marijuana will lead to an increase in highway accidents and fatalities and allow for marijuana sales near schools and parks. Long Beach Police Chief Robert Luna told Staff Writer Brandon Richardson that over two years between 2011 and 2013, Colorado – where recreational marijuana is legal – experienced a 57% increase in marijuana-related traffic fatalities and add significant costs to our already strained public safety budgets.

Proposition 64 would legalize recreational marijuana. It will undoubtedly cause problems for law enforcement. Anyone who doesn’t believe so has most likely not smoked pot or gotten behind the wheel while under the influence. Legalizing recreational marijuana will lead to an increase in highway accidents and fatalities and allow for marijuana sales near schools and parks. Long Beach Police Chief Robert Luna told Staff Writer Brandon Richardson that over two years between 2011 and 2013, Colorado – where recreational marijuana is legal – experienced a 57% increase in marijuana-related emergency room visits.

In order to ensure our public safety personnel and emergency response staff have sufficient funds to meet the additional costs from Prop 64 and Measure MM, Measure MA is essential.

The tax on marijuana businesses will create enforcement problems and add significant costs to our already strained public safety budgets.

Developers Talk Affordable Housing Challenges

Mayor Robert Garcia hosted a roundtable with housing developers, the last of a series of three community meetings looking at affordable housing in Long Beach, at the Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library on October 14.

In one of the library’s community rooms, the roundtable was open to the public and was attended by more than 50 housing advocates and residents, some of which are represented by Long Beach Affordable Housing Advocates, a coalition of local residents and advocates.

What Does LBPD Think About Legalizing ‘It?’

The “legalize it” marijuana movement and conversation has been ongoing for decades, and in recent years, it finally seems to be going somewhere. In the United States, four states – Alaska, Colorado, Oregon and Washington – have legalized recreational marijuana use as of 2016.

City Goes Digital To Help Businesses, Developers

In an effort to streamline city processes for the benefit of entrepreneurs and developers, the City of Long Beach is in the midst of launching new digital tools aimed at improving efficiency and accessibility to services, as well as reducing confusion.

Recently, the city launched BizPort, an online portal for entrepreneurs interested in starting a business in Long Beach. The portal was the brainchild of the Long Beach Innovation Team (i-team), a Bloomberg Foundation-funded entity of the city that is particularly focused on economic development efforts. It was created in partnership with Code for America, a nonprofit dedicated to bridging the technology gap between the private and public sectors.

In the summer of 2015, the i-team began surveying and inter-
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Welcome Remarks by

MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA

TOM BOWMAN
Founder of Bowman Design Group and Bowman Change, Inc.

SPENCER BROWN
Founder and Chief Tree Hugger of Rent A Green Box

APRIL ECONOMIDES
President of Green Octopus Consulting

TERRY GEILING
President and CEO of American Gold Star Manor

JAY PENEV
Co-Founder and Chief Fermentationist of Fine Feathers Kombucha

Tickets/Vendor Tables: www.lbchamber.com. Sponsorship Opportunities: contact Judy Nelson, 562-432-8128 or jnelson@lbchamber.com

Sustainable Business Long Beach and Women’s Business Council are programs of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce.
Carnival Cruise Line
To Expand Footprint
In Long Beach

By SAMANTHA MEHUNGER
Senior Writer

Carnival Cruise Line has been operating cruises from its terminal in the dome adjacent to the Queen Mary since 2003. For years, the cruise line has been lobbying unsuccessfully to expand its footprint within the dome so it can operate a larger terminal and grow its Long Beach presence by bringing in larger ships. On October 17, Carnival announced its wish had finally been granted, saying in a company statement, calling it “great news for Long Beach” and pointing out that it would bring additional tourism activity to the city.

Taylor Woods, principal of Urban Commons, stated that “Carnival Cruise Line is a tremendous asset for the Long Beach community” and said his company has “big plans for the facility and the surrounding land,” which will be enhanced by Carnival’s operations.

Urban Commons and Carnival reached an agreement to allow the cruise line to take over the entire dome, more than doubling its footprint from 66,000 square feet to 142,000 square feet, according to a statement from the cruise line. The additional space allows for two-way operations – simultaneous embarkation and disembarkation – as well as the future use of larger ships.

Construction within the dome to accommodate these operations is expected to be completed late next year, according to Carnival. The terminal will remain operational during construction. Currently, the company deploys three ships from Long Beach, including the Carnival Miracle, Carnival Inspiration and Carnival Imagination.

Cruise destinations include the Mexican Riviera, Baja and Hawaii, with Alaska voyages slated for the future.

Plans also include the expansion of cold ironing, which allows ships to plug in to clean shore power instead of running engines while at dock, according to the statement. Carnival and Urban Commons will work together on “enhancements to the area surrounding the dome and the adjacent Queen Mary,” according to Carnival.

“For years we have been working toward reaching an agreement to expand the Long Beach Cruise Terminal to accommodate larger ships on the West Coast, and we’re thrilled to finally be able to move forward with our plans to assume full usage of the dome, making Long Beach one of our largest home port facilities,” Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line, said in a company statement. Duffy thanked the City of Long Beach and Urban Commons for facilitating the expansion.

Mayor Robert Garcia lauded the deal in the Carnival statement, calling it “great activity to the city.

Other speakers referred to the building as an eyesore or a “monstrosity” and claimed that 94 additional units is not a “minor change,” but a major one. However, city staff pointed out that the concept of a minor change within the law is not in reference to project plans but rather the environmental impact, which was found to be relatively unaltered by the modification.

Other speakers referred to the building as an eyesore or a “monstrosity” and claimed the city should “keep Long Beach clean” and pointed out that it would bring additional tourism activity to the city.

Taylor Woods, principal of Urban Commons, stated that “Carnival Cruise Line is a tremendous asset for the Long Beach community” and said his company has “big plans for the facility and the surrounding land,” which will be enhanced by Carnival’s operations.

Downtown High Rise
Approved . . . Again

By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Staff Writer

At its October 20 meeting, the planning commission approved the Shoreline Development Partners LP project on the corner of East Ocean Boulevard and Alamitos Avenue – the East Tower to accompany The Current (West Tower) – for the second time with a unanimous vote.

The 35-story building was initially approved in 2007 to include 221 residential units, 6,367 square feet of retail and restaurant space and 393 parking spaces. However, after nine years, the company filed an addendum to alter the previous proposal.

The approved addendum increases the number of units to 315, the retail and restaurant space to 6,711 and the number of parking stalls to 458. The only change to the current design is that the proposed two-level subterranean garage will increase to five levels.

Units in the building will include a mix of studios, one- and two-bedrooms, and lofts ranging from 500 to 2,097 square feet. The Downtown Plan includes a minimum unit size of 600 square feet, but developers can request to reduce the size of up to 15% of the units to no less than 450 feet. The proposed project contains 13% (40) of units that are 500 and 520 square feet.

The tower will include 8,300 square feet of common, outdoor open space. Residents will enjoy two community rooms and two lounges that total more than 7,300 square feet, a gym, a resident community garden, a pool and a spa. Additionally, 93% of units have private open space in the form of balconies ranging from 52 to 760 square feet.

Warren Blesofsky, a downtown resident and president of Long Beach Citizens for Fair Development, claimed the city and commission were once again making a “complete mockery” of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by not conducting a secondary environmental impact assessment.

According to CEQA, if minor changes are made to a plan, a new environmental impact report is not necessary. Blesofsky claimed that 94 additional units is not a “minor change,” but a major one. However, city staff pointed out that the concept of a minor change within the law is not in reference to project plans but rather the environmental impact, which was found to be relatively unaltered by the modification.

Other speakers referred to the building as an eyesore or a “monstrosity” and claimed the city should “keep Long Beach clean.” However, the vast majority of public comments were positive and in full support of the proposed project. Most commenters asked for the commission to approve the project.
project to help with the housing crisis in the city, as well as increase sales for local businesses downtown. Another benefit that several speakers mentioned was the added ability for residents to live close to work and entertainment.

“This is not about minor technical changes, it’s about progress. A couple of weeks ago, I saw two pictures: one of the City of Vancouver, the other of the City of Long Beach,” Jim Kuhne, a lawyer at Roberts & Kehegaras in downtown, said. “They were taken from the same perspective—over the water, looking in toward the city. They looked like a before and after. Vancouver with its beautiful high-rises, just like the one we’re talking about, and Long Beach with all its potential.”

“The seven-story, 163-unit housing project on the southwest corner of 3rd Street and Pacific Avenue was unanimously approved for a site plan review by the planning commission at its October 20 meeting. The project will include 15,324 square feet of common and private open-space areas and 224 parking stalls. (Rendering courtesy of Sares-Regis Group)
Business Leaders To Share Insights Into Benefits Of Sustainable Practices

October 28, 7:30-9:30 A.M. At Courtyard Marriott Downtown

By SAMANTHA MEHUNGER Senior Writer

On October 28, Sustainable Business Long Beach (formerly known as the Green Business Council) and the Women’s Business Council are cohosting a panel discussion about the unexpected benefits of creating sustainable businesses. The event is part of the rebranded Sustainable Business Long Beach’s (SBLB) efforts to engage businesses with their peers, who will hopefully inspire each other to move towards sustainable practices.

“What we want to do through Sustainable Business Long Beach is to address a broader perspective of issues, where we’re looking at not only having a viable business community that is profitable and doing well but also one that is engaged in the community and one that is engaged in making the quality of the environment better,” Dr. Wade Martin, president of SBLB and director of the California State University, Long Beach Office of Economic Research, told the Business Journal.

“We are the businesses being engaged in the community means businesses learning what they’ve shared with each other,” Tom Bowman, president-elect of SBLB and president of Long beach-based small business Bowman Design Group, said. “Business owners really like to hear what works from their peers because their peers live the same life,” Bowman said. “They’ve got the same challenges to overcome. So we’re structuring these events to bring panels of business owners who have accomplished something or are in the process of accomplishing something around the topic [of sustainability].”

The event at the Courtyard Long Beach Downtown features opening remarks by Mayor Robert Garcia, who recently signed the Compact of Mayors – a pledge signed by mayors around the world to make their cities more climate resilient.

“Mayor Garcia has signed the Compact of Mayors and has the stated goal of making Long Beach a climate-resilient city,” Martin said. “So we’re looking at it from the business sector, how can we contribute to Long Beach achieving that goal,” he said of SBLB.

Panelists at the breakfast event, which runs from 7:30-9:30 a.m., include: Spencer Brown, founder and “chief tree hugger” of Rent-A-Green Box; April Economides, president of Octopus Consulting; Terry Geiling, president and CEO of American Gold Star Manor; and Jay Penev, co-founder and chief fermentationist of Fine Feathers Kombucha.

Each of the panelists offer a different perspective on sustainability, including how they have made their own operations or facilities sustainable, as well as how they help other businesses in that effort, according to Bowman and Martin. “I’ll interview them as a panel discussion so that everybody in the audience is really hearing from their peers rather than getting a report from some of the city government agencies or some of the major institutions in town,” Bowman said. “This makes it more practical and relatable to businesses. And it also helps businesses begin to engage with each other more.”

Bowman has successfully transitioned his own small business into a more sustainable model, reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by two-thirds. He consolidated equipment, swapped out the company car for a Prius, replaced light bulbs with energy efficient ones, changed his air conditioning unit, and plugged equipment into power strips that could be turned off at night.

These were relatively small fixes Bowman could make without spending a lot of money. As a small business, while he didn’t fall under many of the state’s environmental requirements, he also didn’t qualify for any incentives for things like solar panels or energy-efficient roofing, he explained. Bowman Design Group won the first-ever Cool California Small Business Award for its efforts and success. “It means any business can do this. They don’t have to be a green tech company,” he said.

City Completes Phase One Of LED Streetlight Retrofit

City Will Eventually Reduce Energy Consumption By 10%

By BRANDON RICHARDSON Staff Writer

A year after the launch of the LED streetlight retrofit program to save money and reduce carbon dioxide emission, the City of Long Beach has replaced approximately 1,750 high-pressure sodium streetlights, completing the first phase of the project.

“By retrofitting the city’s streetlights, we are reducing energy usage and pollution, making neighborhoods safe and saving millions of dollars,” Mayor Robert Garcia said in a statement.

Phase one of the retrofit was funded by a $639,000 community mitigation grant from the Port of Long Beach. Phase two will cost the city $6.1 million but is estimated to be fully offset by energy savings within four years. Additionally, the city will gain $3.2 million in utility rebates from Southern California Edison.

The projected lifetime savings for the project are estimated to be $15.1 million due to the long lifespan of LED streetlights – approximately 100,000 hours, which is roughly 24 years when operating 12 hours per day.

“The reduced energy costs and the increased lifespan of the LED streetlights will have a positive impact on the city’s budget moving forward,” Craig Beck, director of the Long Beach Public Works Department, said in a press release.

Between 1,600 and 2,000 streetlights are being converted monthly, starting in the west part of the city, including the downtown area, and moving east. The retrofit will save about 9.6 million kilowatt-hours of electricity each year, according to Energy Network, the company administering the retrofit program. This equates to a nearly 10% reduction in Long Beach’s energy consumption, which is equivalent to taking 21,000 cars off the road in terms of carbon emissions.

City Light and Power has also partnered with the city for this project.
Downtown Long Beach Alliance’s New Name, Look Reflects Increasing Community Focus

By SAMANTHA MEHLINGER
Senior Writer

Since its inception as a group of Pine Avenue merchants collaborating for advertising purposes in 1937, the Downtown Long Beach Associates has been known as the voice of business in downtown. Through its incorporation and subsequent leadership as the manager of downtown’s property and business improvement areas, the nonprofit has retained its name. But in the past few years, the organization has become increasingly focused on the overall downtown community. To reflect that direction, the group recently rebranded as the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA).

Discussions around changing the organization’s name and branding – it also has a new logo emblematic of the entire downtown grid in lieu of its skyline – began about a year ago when the board was reviewing the organization’s strategic plan, according to President and CEO Kraig Kojian.

“It’s more of a community-based organization than it ever was in the past,” Kojian said. “And we felt as though ‘associates’ really didn’t reflect or represent the type of work we were doing with our stakeholders and members of our partnerships throughout the city.”

Kojian continued, “I think the momentum that we’ve been able to gain over the last five or six years and consciously moving towards becoming more of a community-based organization is very much in alignment . . . with our downtown community and the surrounding neighborhoods and, obviously, with the stakeholders with whom we are working.”

An example of how the DLBA has become more involved in the community at large was its work last year with the Council of Business Associations (COBA) related to an impending minimum wage increase, Kojian noted. “I think the role that we took with COBA really showed how we could align different sectors of our community and help come to some type of conclusion,” he said.

The new logo by local firm Commune Communications includes a new, contemporary palette of purples and oranges and depicts an abstract representation of the grid of streets in Downtown Long Beach. “Since we were updating the name to better reflect our organization, we just wanted a current, more up-to-date logo as well,” Gina Dartt, marketing and special events manager, said.

The next change for the DLBA will be to its website – a brand new one is launching later this year. “With us becoming more of a reliable news source for Downtown Long Beach, we wanted to make sure that the information was easy to access, user-friendly, and is keeping up with the modern trends,” Dartt said. “We hope to have all those elements included in the new website with ease of use and better design and feel.”

To get the community acquainted with the DLBA’s new brand and look, the organization is considering a variety of advertising initiatives, including pole banners throughout Downtown, Dartt said.

The DLBA is also in the process of updating its strategic plan. “We’ve gotten the framework approved by our board. We’re putting the final touches on it, and we’ll be launching that hopefully within the next 30 to 60 days,” Kojian said. “It’s more of a continuation of the work we’re doing. But there will be some fine-tuning.”

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Developers Talk Affordable Housing Challenges

which had to stand due to a lack of available chairs and space. Eleven developers were seated at a horseshoe of tables along with Garcia and former assemblymember and councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal, who has been an active participant in the affordable housing discussions as part of the Affordable and Workforce Housing Study Group.

“I really appreciate this opportunity to not only be here today but the opportunity to have a communitywide discussion about housing affordability. This, I believe, is a first for our city,” Lowenthal said. “It’s very public. And you can tell by the number of people here that it’s well received in the community.”

Garcia opened the discussion by asking about barriers that developers face when working on a housing project. Challenges that the group unanimously agreed on were finding available land, attaining funding sources and undergoing the long-drawn-out permitting and entitlement processes.

Another challenge brought up was a need for time to involve the community in the planning process, which can be as beneficial to a developer as getting land at a reduced price, according to Suny Lay Chang, executive vice president of the nonprofit LINC Housing.

Developers said they also need leadership from the city when working on housing projects. They explained that if they have direction from the city and the community as a whole as to what projects are needed and where, their jobs become much easier. According to Kasey Burke, president of META Housing Corporation, if local governments could align with and have a better connection to the state with regard to incentives, tax credits and other development programs, it would alleviate some of the financial burden of developing affordable housing brought on by countless rules, regulations and high cost.

The next topic of discussion was whether or not developers thought it was more beneficial to build projects for people of mixed incomes. Daryl Carter, chief executive officer of Avanath Capital, and Jonathan Newsome of the Long Beach Affordable Housing Coalition, both agreed that a diversity of incomes have lead to stronger communities in their experience.

However, Pat Patterson, a representative of Ledcor Properties, pointed out that while “everybody would love integrated developments,” the government assistance in creating such projects is a long, competitive and administratively burdensome process.

One of the most controversial topics of the day was parking. Always a hot topic with Long Beach residents, Garcia pointed out that building parking is expensive for developers and noted that some cities in the state have begun lowering parking requirements. He also said he has read that some communities eliminated parking requirements for affordable housing entirely. He added that he was not advocating this in Long Beach, but rather that he found it interesting.

“Parking is very expensive, especially in high-density developments where you have to do underground parking. It could run $50,000 or $60,000 per stall to build parking,” Patterson said. “[But] this is California still. And people love their cars. And people still drive. So you may find that you have an unsuccessful project because you have taken advantage of the ability to deliver less parking.”

Others echoed Patterson in saying that parking depends on the project and the community’s demand. For example, senior housing is likely to need less parking than multifamily housing.

Robin Hughes, president of the nonprofit Abode Communities, explained that for every parking space a developer doesn’t have to build, another unit could be built in its place. She explained this is a constant tradeoff that needs to be taken into consideration when developing housing in dense areas with a high demand for affordable units, and that alternatives such as bike space, shared car space and even working with public transit for resident discounts are options that should be taken seriously.

Other thoughts to alleviate parking were to open city- and state-owned parking garages to residents for overnight parking or merging commercial and housing spaces, which would allow for business parking during the day and residential parking overnight.

Tyson Sayles, a principal with Ensemble Properties, deemed Long Beach’s minimum unit size of around 500 to 600 square feet another challenge for affordable housing. Sayles said he is a believer in micro-units in densely populated areas as long as they are located in close proximity to transit and walking distant to other amenities such as parks, restaurants and entertainment.

Garcia elaborated on the idea of micro-units for residents in the audience who were not familiar with the idea. When he mentioned the size of about 300 to 350 square feet, it sparked a lot of wide-eyed gasps and chatter from the crowd. While some of the developers agreed there is demand for housing of all sizes and configurations, including micro-units for young, single people, Carter and Newsome pointed out that their experience with affordable housing shows demand is highest for two- and three-bedroom units. They attribute this
to families being the group that most needs affordable housing, especially low-income families that might have several generations living under one roof.

After the developers spoke on these topics, the public was invited to comment, and they seemed just as divided on the idea of micro-units. One speaker said he imagined chickens in tiny coops when he thought of micro-units and thinks this living arrangement could have a negative effect on a resident’s mental health. Another speaker cited statistics of the more than 700 homeless students who attend Long Beach City College and how affordable micro-units could be the answer to putting a roof over their heads.

Elizabeth Torres, a Wilson High School senior, spoke about growing up in poverty and demonstrated the demand for units with multiple bedrooms. She told the mayor and developers that she will be the first high school graduate in her family and hopes to be the first college entrant. Through tears, she said she recently received news that most of her family was going to be moving to Bakersfield because rent for a three-bedroom apartment in Long Beach is “too damn high.”

“There are no doubt many pieces to the puzzle of providing sufficient affordable housing,” Elaine Hutchison of Better Housing for Long Beach said. “The mayor’s initiative to address the closing opportunity gap in Long Beach is a big step in the future of Long Beach. We appreciate this very much because there are a number of factors to be considered. Providing affordable housing should be at all levels.”

According to Garcia, there is no timeline as to when the study group and city staff will make recommendations to the city council. No timetable has been determined as to when that will occur.
What Does LBPD Think About Legalizing ‘it’?

(Continued From Page 1)

May of this year. Another 22 states and the District of Columbia have legalized the use of medical marijuana, including California.

The November 8 ballot will see more state propositions regarding weed than any other election in history. Five states – Arizona, California, Maine, Massachusetts and Nevada – will be voting to legalize the recreational use of marijuana. Arkansas, Florida, Montana and North Dakota will vote to legalize the use of medical marijuana or, in Montana’s case, loosen stringent laws that have been passed since its legalization in 2004. Aside from Proposition 64 to legalize recreational marijuana in the state, Long Beach voters will also decide upon measures MM and MA, which would legalize the cultivation and sale at brick-and-mortar stores in the city and set city tax rates on top of proposed state taxes, respectively.

When it comes to the issue of legalizing recreational marijuana use in California, or more specifically, if the City of Long Beach should allow the cultivation and sale of marijuana within city limits, many residents have opinions one way or the other. However, most residents will not have to deal with many possible consequences on a daily basis should marijuana become legal. That duty will fall to the Long Beach Police Department (LBPD).

“One of the things that concerns me is we have been struggling to address the city’s current needs with our existing resources,” LBPD Chief of Police Robert Luna said in an interview with the Business Journal. “Where I’m coming from on this is I believe that the legalization of marijuana will increase our workload. There is always the possibility that we could be wrong. I don’t have a crystal ball. I can just tell you what I’m reading. I’m not very comfortable with.”

Luna explained that over the years, police forces have gained a lot of what he calls “unfunded mandates.” Essentially, departments have been asked to administer additional training on mental illness, procedural justice and implicit bias, to name a few, but were not given additional funding. Combined with legislation like Proposition 47, which “reduces certain drug possession felonies to misdemeanors” and “requires misdemeanor sentencing for petty theft, receiving stolen property and forging/writing bad checks when the amount involved is $950 or less,” and Assembly Bill 109 that “transfers responsibility for supervising certain kinds of felony offenders and state prison parolees from state prisons and state parole agents to county jails and probation officers,” Luna said his department has already seen an increase in its workload.

“[In Colorado], marijuana-related emergency room visits have grown about 57% in two years between 2011 and 2013. Marijuana appears to be associated with very poor school performance and increases the absence from school and is increasing the dropout rate,” Luna said. “Now, why is a police chief talking about education and emergency room visits? Because those are things we look at that impact our overall workload. If kids aren’t in school, they’re usually out committing crimes. If the dropout rates continue to go [up], that means kids aren’t being employed. And then they become more of our stats, which we don’t want to see.”

Being the first states to fully legalize marijuana, statistics from Colorado and Washington are often cited both for and against. Proponents will often cite how much money is made off of marijuana tax revenue. Opponents often cite reported links to an increase in driver impairment and accidents and fatalities when marijuana was present in the individual’s system.

When it comes to pulling over and arresting someone for driving under the influence
of marijuana, Luna said the process is the same as with alcohol. Typically, when the officer approaches the window, they can detect the smell of marijuana. If the driver was operating their vehicle erratically, it could be grounds for arrest for DUI.

“Certainly, we’ve developed a science around drunk driving that makes it very predictable and consistent to measure how impaired a person is,” Long Beach City Prosecutor Doug Haubert said. “We do not have the same science for marijuana, so prosecuting someone for operating a vehicle while impaired by any drug is usually more challenging than if they are impaired by alcohol.”

When asked how marijuana would be regulated – more similarly to alcohol or cigarettes as far as when and where it can be purchased and used – Deputy Chief Richard Conant said, “That particular piece of concern, where folks are walking around smoking marijuana everywhere, that type of activity is still under review. There is no hard and fast [guideline] on that one just yet. But it stands to chance that we are not going to see that type of activity. They’re already talking about pot shops where people go and hang out and smoke. Kind of like speakeasies back in the day.”

One narrative used by proponents of legalizing marijuana is that it will keep people out of jail and prison for nonviolent, marijuana-related crimes. Luna said this cracks him up every time he hears it. He explained that in 2015, the LBPD documented 17,910 arrests. Of those arrests, 316 were marijuana related, which equates to 1.76%. Not a very staggering figure. When he included citations, meaning people who were ticketed but not booked, that figure jumped to a whopping 3.44%.

“While I can’t predict what will happen in the future if Measure MM is passed, I think it’s reasonable to assume that regardless of the laws that are included, there is going to be a great number of people who will disregard those laws,” Haubert said. “Plus, the laws were not written to make it easy for the city to enforce, they were written by the operators for the benefit of the operators.”

When asked why the legalization of marijuana and its ramifications are any different than the legality of alcohol, which has been linked to numerous health problems and deaths due to drinking and driving, Luna said there are countless studies that show marijuana is a gateway that leads users to other more serious drugs. He said he does not see similar studies of alcohol that are comparable or that link alcohol to school absence, dropout and graduation rates, as marijuana does.

“One once upon a time, we had D.A.R.E. officers that would go to schools trying to teach drug resistance to kids,” Luna said. “I have got to be honest with you, what kind of message are we sending our kids if this passes? That smoking weed is OK? Do we have to go back to the schools and start teaching that marijuana’s bad and you shouldn’t do it? Because that’s not the message that they’re getting from the adults.”

On the November 8 ballot, Long Beach residents will not only vote to legalize the use of recreational marijuana through Proposition 64, but will also vote to legalize the cultivation, production and sale of marijuana within the city, as well as set the sales tax rates on marijuana products, through measures MM and MA, respectively. (Photograph courtesy of Laurie Avocado)
Economic Development

(Continued From Page 1)

There are a lot of data to sift through, but the mayor has already identified some key highlights in the report. For example, “The national economy has been growing about 2% [annually]. The Long Beach economy is growing at 4%. We’re actually growing faster than the national economy,” he said.

“The city has not done in the past a great job of collecting economic data. So for the last six months we’ve been collecting data, and now we have an enormous amount of economic data to get this blueprint started,” Garcia said.

To develop the Long Beach Economic Development Blueprint, the commission and Beacon Economics, with assistance from the Long Beach Innovation Team, will review the data to fully understand its overall implications, Garcia explained. “They’re going to have a series of public meetings at the commission meetings to include some of the community,” he said. “And then they will also be doing interviews of key business leaders and business sectors.”

After the data has been sifted through, meetings have been held and interviews have taken place, a report will be developed and presented to the mayor and then brought to the city council for adoption. The final result will be a document “to guide the city’s economic development efforts for the next 10 years,” Garcia said.

“The blueprint is really about strengthening the current industries that we have – supporting them, expanding them – and then bringing in new industries and job growth, particularly in the higher wage job market around technology and around health care, around education,” Garcia said. “Those are jobs that I think we want to grow.”

The final blueprint will be completed in the first quarter of 2017, Garcia said. After that, the commission will continue to gather and review economic data two to three times a year and update the blueprint based on that information. In other words, it will be a “living document,” he explained.

Garcia reflected, “We need to also have a document that kind of brings the community together – includes the business community, includes residents – so that we can really have a strong plan moving forward.”

New Study Says U.S. ‘Suffering’ From Loss Of 8.1 Million Jobs

The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council, a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy, research and education organization, on October 18 released its GAP Analysis #6: America’s Lost Jobs, which shows dramatic shortfalls in the U.S. labor force and in job creation. “The troubling fact is if the U.S. had a reasonable level of employment relative to population, such as the level existing before this last recession, there would have been 8.1 million more people employed in September 2016 than actually were working,” said Raymond J. Keating, SBE Council’s chief economist.  To see the report, visit: http://sbecouncil.org/2016/10/13/gap-analysis-6-americas-lost-jobs/
viewing hundreds of individuals in the Long Beach business community to identify where the city was lacking in terms of resources for economic development, John Keisler, head of the i-team, told the Business Journal. The i-team found that the business community felt the process of starting up in Long Beach “was very confusing and, as a result, wasted a lot of their time,” Keisler said. “So it was very costly for them to start a business in the City of Long Beach.”

He added, “We discovered that the process was very confusing because the entrepreneur had to interact with so many different agencies that didn’t interact with each other. And there was no tool – there was no sort of clearinghouse or one-stop shop – that the entrepreneur could go to that would cut across those various agencies and requirements.”

The i-team set out to address this problem through the creation of BizPort. Built with open source code, the portal launched in beta in March. Beta users gave feedback through a chat function, which influenced the design and functions of the portal, Keisler explained.

“We set out on the goal of reducing confusion by establishing a digital platform that would map across all the different agencies that the entrepreneur would have to interact with and would link out to those resources,” Keisler said.

Entrepreneurs also told the i-team that keeping track of so many different identification numbers, permits and licenses was also confusing, and that they needed a checklist to ensure they had completed all necessary steps toward starting a business.
City Goes Digital

(Continued From Page 13)

“...we created a digital profile and a wallet that would track their process, and then they could pull their numbers and their records in that digital wallet,” Keisler said. BizPort's design. The portal could be found at bizport.longbeach.com.

At the same time BizPort was in development, the Long Beach Development Services (LBDS) department launched an effort to digitize its plan check process. To create an electronic plan check (EPC) system, the city contracted with e-PlanSoft, which has worked with cities like Fountain Valley, Fremont and Chino, as well as county governments and other agencies.

A beta version of EPC launched in June with the cooperation of three local architecture firms as beta users, including Environ Architecture, Studio One Eleven and M. Grisafe Architects, according to LBDS Director Amy Bodek.

“We are trying to create a system that makes it easier for applicants to submit to the City of Long Beach without having to show up in person during business hours at city hall,” Bodek said. As the process stands today, anyone submitting plans has to go in person to the fourth floor of city hall, she explained.

“So we created a digital profile and a wallet...” Bodek said. The idea behind having an online portal is not only to offer flexibility, but also convenience. “This way, the architects...or the contractors don’t have to spend time driving here, standing in line, waiting to be called and then finally processing their plan check requests,” she said.

Having the online system will also allow city staff to more easily communicate with one another about documents, she noted. “As one engineer is reviewing it for one specialty or subtrade, another engineer can see those same notes. It makes things more consistent in how all the plan checkers are talking to each other as well,” she said.

Having an online plan check system would also create efficiencies for city staff. “Our hope is that it actually reduces the time it takes to do the plan checking because we will be doing it electronically, and there is more efficiency in doing it that way,” Bodek said. For example, the current process generates “reams and reams of paper” and major storage issues, she explained.

So far, 25 projects have been submitted through the beta system by participating architecture firms, who have made suggestions for the system along the way, Bodek said. “They love it,” she said, adding that if other firms would like to become beta users, she welcomes them to reach out.

A portal is now being built to connect the new EPC system with the city's existing plan check database. “What we’d like to do is create this portal where the external world can go to this website and upload all of their information. And then it immediately goes into our database and transfers the information to our database so that we don’t have to do data entry twice,” Bodek said.

While the system is currently within LBDS, the city plans to expand its use to other departments involved in the planning process, like public works, water and fire. Bodek said: “It’s kind of a citywide effort. But the bulk of plan checking is done through development services, and so we’re taking the lead on it.”

The service is primarily for professionals—developers, engineers, architects, contractors and so on—due to the level of expertise necessary for the process, Bodek explained. “But we’re also moving towards making some of our smaller processes more simplified and more online,” she noted. “If a homeowner is pulling a roofing permit, that should be able to be done online. It’s straight, it’s simple [and] there are really no variances.”

Bodek hopes to have the EPC running through LBDS’s website within six months and hopes the city will have made a significant transition to electronic plan check by the time the new city hall is built.

Massive Outlet Mall Planned For Carson

By BRANDON RICHARDSON Staff Writer

After missing out on an expansive football stadium complex, the City of Carson has entered into an exclusive negotiation agreement with the Macerich Company to develop a massive outlet mall instead.

The 42-acre project is immediately adjacent to the 405 Freeway and will feature more than 150 of the world’s top retailers and designers in 582,000 square feet of commercial retail space, according to a Macerich presentation.

Macerich owns and manages 55 million square feet of commercial space in 50 regional shopping centers, including Santa Monica Place, Los Cerritos Center and Lakewood Center.

“This is a game-changer for the City of Carson,” Mayor Albert Robles said. “This project will generate significantly more revenues for the city than the previously considered NFL stadium, but with less impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.”

Initially, the outlet mall is expected to generate $4 million in sales tax revenues for the city, a number that is forecast to grow over time. City officials hope the project will act as a catalyst for the development of the remaining 115 acres on site, as economists predict Carson’s sales tax revenue will double once the site is fully developed.

Designs have not been finalized, as negotiations are in the early stages, but Macerich has presented two options. Option A’s design calls for a ground-level shopping center with parking garages located on either side. Option B’s design calls for a raised retail center with parking under the structure to reduce walking distance. Both designs show a one-level shopping complex and will have an open-air concept, according to the Macerich presentation.

There is currently no available timeline for the project.
years ago, nobody would have dreamt this would have been the result,” Jarand Rystad, chief executive officer of Rystad Energy, told CNNMoney.

With the United States’ new status of potential king of the oil field, and despite the push for alternative fuels and a lowering of emissions, oil and gas exploration is still an important and profitable business.

Earlier this month, Caelus Energy Alaska LLC announced its subsidiary in Smith Bay made a significant light oil discovery on its state leases on the North Slope of Alaska. With 126 square miles of 3-D seismic imaging, the company drilled two wells earlier this year and now estimates roughly 6 billion barrels of oil are under the current leasehold (upward of 10 billion barrels when adjoining acreage is included), according to a press release.

“This discovery could be really exciting for the state of Alaska. It has the size and scale to play a meaningful role in sustaining the Alaskan oil business over the next three or four decades,” Jim Musselman, chief executive officer of Caelus, explained in a statement. “Fiscal stability going forward is critical for a project of this magnitude. Without the state tax credit programs, none of this would’ve happened, and I’m not sure Caelus would’ve come to explore in Alaska. We’re proof that the credit programs work.”

In Alaska, almost all oil and gas is on state-leased land, according to Kara Moriarty, president and chief executive officer of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association. She said twice a year the state conducts lease sales in which the highest bidder wins. Moriarty explained that this is different than in areas like Texas where much of the drilling is on private land.

When exploring for oil, the first step companies take is to conduct a seismic survey using 3-D imaging technology that allows them to discover possible gases and liquids in rock formations without intrusive drilling. Moriarty explained that conducting a seismic survey is not a big deal, but if oil or gas is discovered, every step afterward is extensive and expensive.

Because of Alaska’s wetlands and its population’s overall pride in its landscape, companies’ permitting processes usually involve dealing with the National Environmental Policy Act and could require working with upward of 20 or 30 different state and federal regulatory agencies, more than required by companies in the lower 48, Moriarty said.

“It can be very expensive. Depending on how big the project is and how extensive it is, you can get into hundreds of millions of dollars to do permitting,” Moriarty said. “Big costs can range anywhere from $50 million to $100 million. We don’t have any new fields that have come online on the North Slope for under a billion dollars.”

Along with added regulations, Alaska faces other challenges: the terrain and the weather. Moriarty explained that unlike the lower 48 states that can explore, produce and move rigs practically 365 days a year, the sensitive environment in Alaska leaves a very small window for exploration. Without existing infrastructure, ice roads must be built, which can only be done in the winter. So timing is a lot more calculated in Alaska and timeframes from lease to production are a lot longer, taking six to seven years on average.

In contrast, Moriarty said companies in places like North Dakota or the Permian Basin can go from exploration to production in a matter of months. However, she pointed out that rigs can come down just as...
Oil & Gas Exploration:
(Continued From Page 15)

fast as they go up, which can lead to a se-
vere drop in jobs.
Due to the high cost and constant permit-
ting processes, Moriarty explained that some-
times companies will simply walk away from an investment. She recalled an
instance where Shell Oil Company spent
$7 billion on a project in which they drifted
one exploration well. The well did not yield
the results they were hoping for, so instead
of spending more money on permits and
well drilling, they simply left the project.

The future of oil production in the U.S.,
and Alaska specifically, is in question during
this election cycle. Moriarty said that Hillary
Clinton’s stance on ending the leasing of
federal land to oil companies and her call to
cease hydraulic fracturing (fracking), which
has been utilized in Alaska without incident
for the last 50 years, would be a huge blow
to the Alaskan economy. Moriarty explained
that between the elections and recent state
government changes, Alaskan companies’
challenges aren’t below ground, as there
is plenty of oil, but rather above ground
through excessive regulations.
“The reason we live here is because of its
natural beauty and the pristine nature that
we all love and enjoy literally in our back-
yard,” Moriarty said when speaking about
safety precautions oil companies take. “We
don’t give safety lip service – it is real. It’s
part of our business. We budget for it, we
plan for it. And we would not be able to be
successful without keeping our employees
and our environment safe.”

Locally, Signal Hill Petroleum (SHP) faces
these same challenges of permitting, regula-
tions and safety, but with one major addition:
people. Being an oil company that explores,
drills and produces oil within established
communities adds new hurdles to overcome.

Dave Slater, the executive vice president
and chief operating officer for SHP, said
the company is very proud of its accomplish-
ments over the last 10 years. One of the
top achievements Slater mentioned was
the company’s completion of its 3-D seis-
mic imaging project of about 40 square
miles of the Greater Long Beach Area. As
a result of the project, the company discov-
ered new wells and reserves.
“Cumulative recovery to date is around a
billion barrels, which makes it a super giant
field,” Slater said. “With the imaging tech-
nology and drilling deep, we’ve discovered
whole new horizons underlying existing pro-
duction that hasn’t been produced before in
a 100-year-old oil field. In a lot of ways, we’re just starting to scratch the surface.”

According to Slater, the Long Beach Oil
Field is the only field of this magnitude and
size that doesn’t have a fence around it as a
buffer zone with the public, and that is why
the operations here are so unique. Because
wells are surrounded by residents’ homes
and businesses, Slater boasts the company’s
dedication to safety as being above and be-
ond best industry practices.

The company encourages residents to re-
port noises, smells or leaks immediately so
that they can be addressed quickly in order
to avoid being a nuisance or becoming a
bigger problem. He said this policy, along
with allowing project access to anyone who
requests it, goes a long way in helping the
company coexist with the community.

Signal Hill Petroleum takes community
and environmental safety very seriously and
monitors its operations with surveil-
ance operators on site 24 hours a day.

The company is not currently drilling – as a part of a recent cost structure ad-
justment to offset oil prices – it does have
more than 400 operational wells, according
to its website. Every quarter, the company
contracts a third party to conduct an inspection of more than 70,000
components to assure all of SHP’s equipment
is up to code and not at risk of failing.

“Our overarching paradigm is to be a good neighbor. And when we do that, our
neighbors return the courtesy, and we co-
exist very peacefully,” Slater said. “If we
can’t do it and keep our neighbors happy,
then we shouldn’t be doing it.”

Despite Ongoing Industry Challenges, Continuing Environmentally Safe Operations Remains Priority For California Resources Corporation

By MICHAEL GOUGIS
Contributing Writer
Robert Barnes stepped into some big shoes. Frank Komin, the recently retired exec-
utive vice president of southern opera-
tions for California Resources Corporation (CRC), headed up local activities of the
company for about 15 years and, according
to Barnes, developed an excellent reputa-
tion for the company and a solid relation-
ship with Long Beach and its environs.
“Frank Komin was a prince of a guy. He’s
a good friend of mine. I’ve known him
for years,” Barnes, CRC’s new executive vice
president of operations, told the Business
Journal. “Frank’s relationship with the city, with the community – when he was drag-
ging me around introducing me, I was thinking, ‘Oh no, what have I done?’”

Barnes looks at the roots of CRC’s souther-
nern region after Komin retired earlier this year, and soon
after, the company’s northern and southern operations were combined. Barnes now oversees operations throughout the state for the company that was spun off from Occidental Petroleum in 2014.

In a tough period for petroleum companies, Barnes, a 38-year veteran of the industry, is pragmatic and focused, with an eye for improving efficiencies within the company and continuing the difficult job the company has done of running an oil extraction operation in and around one of the largest urban areas in the world.

“This is the flagship for operating in environmentally sensitive areas and urban areas,” Barnes said. “Even when I was in other areas, in Argentina, in the Peruvian [Basin of Texas, one of the largest oil-producing regions in the na-
tion], we really wanted them to see Long Beach. We thought it was a great demonstration of how the city, the state, the community and the contract operator, how everything gets together. It’s just been class – what a dedicated bunch here. It demonstrates that it can be done – and it can be done right. You work at it harder.”

The low price of crude is the biggest concern to Barnes and CRC, as it is to many in the oil industry. As we spoke, Wilmington crude was floating at around $45 per barrel, not a historic low, but low enough to be the restricting factor on future capital expenditures, Barnes says.

“We have to live within our means. The checks can’t bounce! That unfortunately requires us to engage in less activity. We’re not going to fund our drilling programs by taking loans,” Barnes said. “That controls our rate of de-
velopment and our activity levels.

“We’re the largest acreage holder in California. We hold a lot of this in fee – which means we control the surface, we control the minerals, we control our pace. I don’t have an expiring lease that I have to go drill a well. So we’re committed to living within our means.”

While the current price slump is persistent, Barnes said it is not unprecedented. It carries with it not just an eco-
nomic concern but a human cost as well, he stressed.

“This one has been a little bit longer in duration than some others. But if you look at the gas glut of the 1980s, though, that was pretty brutal,” Barnes noted. “That was pretty long-lived. It’s a commodity business, supply and demand. With the shale boom, there’s a lot of oil on the market. And maybe there wasn’t the economy – the global economy – to go with it.”

Barnes pointed out that the commodity price affects tax revenue and the firm’s employees.

“There’s a lot of suffering that’s with that. We’ve bat-
tened down the hatches to get going, but some of our work-
force – it’s guys who maybe don’t have the best education, maybe they got in a little bit of trouble as a kid – the oil-
field pays very well for them. It’s a place where a guy can have a second chance at making a good living.”

California is a net energy importer, and Barnes said that fact means that the state is failing to capture economic op-
portunity benefits connected to those oil operations. A combination of market forces and regulation can help the
state recapture jobs and tax revenue and even help improve environmental protec-
tions outside of the state, he said.

“California uses a lot – a lot – of en-
ergy. It’s tough to live in California with-
out a car!” Barnes stated. “We import more than 65% of our petroleum. We im-
port over 90% of our natural gas. We im-
port 50% or more of our electricity. We buy a lot of petroleum from places that do not have the stringent environmental protections that we have here in the state.

“We really do it right in California. Wouldn’t it make sense to develop [petro-
leum production] in a place where you have a say in how it’s done? Where you get the jobs? You get the taxes? This is some-
thing we feel strongly about – meeting Cal-
ifornia’s demands. It can be done right.”

Technology is a double-edged sword for the industry. With little of the philosophical
discussion on energy’s future focusing on petroleum fuels, Barnes points out that oil will play a key role in making sure that transportation remains affordable and accessible to all, and that petroleum will play at least some role as far as anyone can see into the future.

“You and I may be able to afford electric cars and to plug them into green energy sources,” Barnes said, “but what about the [the people] who can’t afford them? What about them? Do we run off and leave them? We need abundant, re-
liable and affordable power for everybody, not just the elite.”

“The Department of Energy says we’re going to have petroleum products for decades to come,” he continued. “I believe that [they will exist] in a partnership. CRC has nine solar projects going right now – we have the land!”

Barnes said, “And we built, the roads, all the products that come from petroleum.”

There is a saying having to do with the anxieties of liv-
ing in interesting times. For the oil industry, 2016 defi-
nitely qualifies as an interesting time. Barnes said, no matter what, he is committed to making sure that CRC continues to meet its internationally lauded standards of operating as a good neighbor in an environment that couldn’t be much more challenging.

“I’ve been with the company, through acquisitions and things, for 38 years,” he said. “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it. The single thing we are always striving for is to be a better organization and working in the best, most environmentally friendly way we can. I mean that in all sincerity. Nothing we do is worth hurting anyone.”
The oil and gas industry in California directly supports hundreds of thousands of jobs and is a major producer of tax revenue for local governments and the state. Domestic production here also helps make the state less dependent on foreign energy. But it’s no secret that for the last two years, low oil prices have taken their toll on the industry.

In 2014, the price of a barrel of crude oil began declining from around $100 and, at its lowest point, reached about $26 in January of this year, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).

“It has been difficult for our producers here in California because of the low price of crude oil,” Catherine Reheis-Boyd, president of the Western States Petroleum Association (WSPA), told the Business Journal. WSFA is a nonprofit advocacy organization for the oil and gas industry in the Western United States. “The more robust that price is, it allows our producers more opportunity from an economic standpoint to pursue increasing production in the state,” Reheis-Boyd explained. More production means more jobs and more tax revenue generated for the government, she noted.

The past two years have been “beyond challenging” for oil companies, said Ralph Combs, manager of regulatory, community and government affairs for The Termo Company, a Long Beach-based oil and gas company with operations in nine states. The national oilfield services company Halliburton, for example, has laid off more than 20,000 people since 2014, Combs noted. Reheis-Boyd said oil and gas companies have been minimizing their operating costs to reduce layoffs. “At some point you have to cut back on labor, and you have to cut back on operations like drilling such that you can remain in existence while you weather the storm,” she said.

Signal Hill Petroleum (SHP), which has operations concentrated in Signal Hill and Long Beach, has “significantly reduced the cost structure of the company,” David Slater, executive vice president and chief operating officer, said. “Whenever we do that, that impacts jobs,” he said.

SHP has reduced its staff from around 140 people to just below 90 employees, Slater estimated. “That’s just tough when we have to eliminate good jobs,” he said. “It affects real people. It affects people that we care about.”

Jobs in the oil and gas industry – which Slater called “one of the last bastions of manufacturing” – are high paying, he pointed out. “Manufacturing forever has been the backbone of really good-paying, full-benefit jobs that you don’t necessarily need a college education for. And you can have a career,” he said. “From my perspective, we have lost way too many of those jobs as a country. I think it’s affecting our whole society as far as . . . what’s happening to the middle class. And my perception is we don’t have enough good jobs.”

The Termo Company didn’t fire anyone, but its employees did suffer income losses. “As to how it affects Termo’s operations and our staffing, we committed to not laying anyone off,” Combs said. “And we managed to do that by everyone on the team sharing the pain of wage and benefit cuts.”

In 2014, Termo’s capital budget was $24 million. This year, it is $6 million, Combs said. “We’ve managed to hold our production steady over the last 18 months with limited capital investment, and so that’s a real important lesson for us going forward,” he said. Companies that “borrowed too much money to deploy capital, counting on the higher oil prices,” suffered even more, Slater said. “That is a repeat pattern you see in the oil and gas business – [companies] overleverage [and] borrow money to apply technology and drill wells.”

Although SHP has had to reduce its cost structure, an unforeseen benefit of the industry’s downturn has been that the firm has been able to acquire additional wells and reserves from struggling companies, Slater said.

With taxes, Slater estimated about 50% of the price of a barrel of crude oil generated in California winds up as government revenue. While the low price in oil hasn’t affected the operations of Long Beach Gas & Oil (LBGO), the City of Long Beach’s gas utility and oil operations division, it has impacted city revenues, according to Bob Dowell, director of LBGO. Much of this revenue goes towards the city’s capital proj-
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...in its Tidelands areas – coastal parts of the city where oil is extracted. Last year, the city over budgeted for the price of oil, causing the city council to prioritize its spending on capital projects in the Tidelands zone. With the price per barrel of crude oil currently at about $49, Dowell is comfortable with the city’s fiscal year 2017 budgeted price of oil at $45. Trends in oil extraction – principally the use of hydraulic fracturing and enhanced extraction methods – caused oil production in the United States to nearly double in the past decade, which contributed to lower oil prices, Slater said. The growing use of 3-D seismic imaging, which allows companies to identify locations in shale formations where oil and gas might be trapped, has also contributed to increased production, he noted. Reheis-Boyd said oil prices are more impacted by production overseas. “It’s much more impacted by the powers that be within OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and the global conversations going on around crude oil,” she said. No one knows for sure what’s going to happen with oil prices, but OPEC – which represents oil-producing countries in the Middle East, Africa and South America – will play a major role, according to Slater. “It’s supply and demand. Price has been driven by high supplies,” he said. “So if OPEC does start reducing production, it will strengthen prices. But there’s a lot of what ifs in there, and we are not making any changes in our expenditure plans or cost structure yet.” Slater said that “noise and information coming out of the marketplace” suggest OPEC may in fact pull back on production. But he said neither he nor his peers have any illusions that the price per barrel will recover to $100 anytime soon. “I would be surprised to see $60 a barrel before the end of this year, and probably not until mid-2017,” Combs said, adding that he expects the price of oil to stay in the $40-$50 per barrel range this year.

Natural Gas
Natural gas prices experienced an increase in prices last year. Dowell said the oil and gas industry are building the infrastructure to allow GHG-producing operations up to a cap on allowed greenhouse gas emissions. If they come in below the cap allowed by their permits, companies may sell the resulting credits, he said. The legislation also did not address the point that it can fit easily under the hood of a standard passenger vehicle.

Trends Moving Forward
Moving forward, trends in California’s oil and gas industry will be driven by profitability, and the need to comply with state regulations, based on observations made by Reheis-Boyd.

Trends Moving Forward
Moving forward, trends in California’s oil and gas industry will be driven by profitability and the need to comply with state regulations, based on observations made by Reheis-Boyd.

The Future
Of Fuel Is Available Today
By BRANDON RICHARDSON
Staff Writer

As the world truly begins to grasp the consequences of climate change – havingSecretary of Defense Carter ‘a parting million dollar tipping point’ for atmospheric carbon dioxide at the end of September – more research is being done to introduce cleaner alternative fuels to the general public.

In recent years, through laws and regulations, as well as research and development of feasible alternative fuels, countries have made great efforts. Electric and hybrid cars have already made a tremendous impact on this front by providing viable options for consumers to purchase low- or no-emission vehicles, far more affordable than when they were introduced more than 15 years ago.

By the end of 2015, the United States had roughly 400,000 electric vehicles on the road and more than 4,000 charging stations, according to a report by Edison Electric Institute. "This is the first year really that cars are being commercialized, and retail stations are opening. This is the starting point if you will," said Stephens.

"Over the last 20 years, there’s been an earnest effort to pursue hydrogen cars. And I don’t think everybody shares this opinion, but I would say many automakers see hydrogen and fuel cell cars as the holy grail for the next evolution for the automobile," Stephens said. "This is the first year really that cars are being commercialized, and retail stations are opening. This is the starting point if you will."

According to Stephens, the road to hydrogen fuel cells began 50 years ago when General Motors (GM) engineers developed the first prototype in the form of a Chevrolet van. He explained that the van could only seat two as the entire back area was filled with the equipment to operate the vehicle. Since GM’s scientific experiment in 1966, hydrogen fuel cell technology has evolved to the point that it can fit easily under the hood of a standard passenger vehicle.

Currently, fuel cell vehicles are reported to be two to three times more efficient than a gasoline car and 1.8 times more efficient than hybrid cars, Stephens said. He explained that the Environmental Protection Agency has rated some fuel cell vehicles at 66 miles per kilowatt hour, which is equivalent to 66 miles per gallon of gas. Essentially, a fuel cell vehicle is an electric vehicle, Stephens explained. The difference is that instead of plugging into the

(Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)
TOGETHER WE POWER CALIFORNIA

California Resources Corporation safely produces ample, affordable, reliable energy for California by Californians. CRC has operations at the Elk Hills Field in Kern County, the Wilmington Field in Long Beach and fields in the Los Angeles, San Joaquin, Ventura and Sacramento basins.
power grid and utilizing electricity produced by geothermal plants, fuel cells perform an electrochemical conversion of hydrogen and oxygen into electricity right under the hood, producing water as the only emission.

“One of the reasons I would put hydrogen and battery vehicles on kind of a different stage for alternative fuels is because there are only the two vehicle options that are zero-emission vehicles,” Stephens said. “That’s really, for the State of California, the ultimate vision – to get zero-emission, light-duty vehicles on the road.”

However, Stephens pointed out one aspect of the hydrogen-fueled car that might soon put it a step above even electric vehicles: It can be refueled in about four minutes, as opposed to the hours needed to charge an electric car. He said this will be a key factor when it comes time for consumers to choose which gasoline alternative to purchase – a decision some are already making.

Five key automakers are developing fuel cell vehicles: General Motors, Hyundai, Mercedes, Toyota and Honda. The latter two will have hydrogen cars on the road this year. The Toyota Mirai is already on sale at dealerships in California for $57,000. While the price may seem steep, the state is offering a $5,000 rebate, qualified buyers can receive an $8,000 federal tax credit, the car is eligible for the California Clean Car Rebate Program and the state of California is offering three years of complimentary fuel.

Honda’s Clarity will be released later this year, according to its website. The fuel cell car will be released in California and will be available to residents who live or work within a 10-mile radius of a hydrogen fueling station.

Fueling up hydrogen cars will be very calculated for buyers in the beginning. In the next several years and potentially down to half the price of gas within 10 years.

“The hydrogen station at work is the refueling infrastructure. He expects hydrogen fuel prices to be on par with gas prices in the next several years and potentially down to half the price of gas within 10 years.

“Nobody expects that next year we’re going to have half a million fuel cell cars on the road. That’s not how it works,” Stephens said. “We’ve got this very early on. We’re on the ground here in California of really creating this market. And finally the puzzle pieces are coming together to get this thing launched.”

### Natural Gas

While hybrid, electric and hydrogen technologies dominate the light-duty market, major cities across the country have already adopted compressed natural gas (CNG) as an alternative to diesel fuel for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles such as buses and freight trucks.

According to George Minter, the regional vice president of external affairs and environmental strategy for Southern California Gas Company, heavy-duty transportation accounts for 80% of the NOx (nitric oxide and nitrogen oxides) emissions in the South Coast Air Basin, which includes all of Orange County and parts of L.A., San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

“There has been a technology breakthrough, a real game-changer in the heavy-duty engine sector,” Minter said. “There’s now an ultra-low NOx engine – an engine that meets a level 90% lower than the required level of NOx emissions from heavy-duty trucks in California set by CARB [California Air Resources Board].

The new engine is produced by Cummins Westport Inc., which already has transit agencies lining up to purchase the engine as a replacement for older CNG buses, according to Minter. He said cities across the country have bought the technology for waste hauling and street sweeping trucks. While these engines are already on the market, Minter said Cummins will certify a larger model to be used for heavy-duty long-haul trucks.

Minter explained that to meet Gov. Jerry Brown’s progressive emission reduction plan by the proposed timeline (which includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030), the trucking industry does not have time to wait for electric and hydrogen technologies to become viable options for the large-haul trucks.

To decrease the carbon emissions further, the CNG RNG engines are currently prompting a push for renewable natural gas (RNG), Minter said. Methane from dairy farms, agricultural waste, landfills and water waste treatment facilities can be captured and converted into RNG.

In Los Angeles, for instance, the city’s Icelands Bus line is powered 100% by RNG, according to Minter. Other cities (including L.A. and San Diego, which currently operate about 50% on RNG) have plans to increase to 100%. Minter explained that if these fleets also transition to the ultra-low NOx engine, these transit agencies would be near zero on smog-forming pollutants and zero equivalent on greenhouse gas emissions.

For the cities, like Long Beach, have begun purchasing electric buses as another alternative to diesel and older CNG models. However, Minter pointed out the staggering cost of these new buses – upwards of $1 million each – and said it is not feasible for them to quickly transition a fleet to such an expensive technology, especially one that has not been field tested as extensively as CNG options.

Minter said the other major role of natural gas in lowering emissions is by providing renewable hydrogen. He explained that the Union Pacific Railroad and the BNSF Railway already have liquid natural gas (LNG) powered locomotives running as demonstration projects for research and development funding through the Department of Transportation.

“LNG power in place of the exceptionally dirty bunker fuel land ships are known for,” Minter said. “We don’t see CNG really penetrating that light-duty marketplace. We think that electric and hydrogen fuel cells are likely the way to go,” Minter said. “But heavy-duty marketplace is where we have a real challenge with respect to technology: And America being the way it is, we need to have other positive effects other than lower emissions from vehicles: Capturing methane from dairy farms and landfills keeps it from entering the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas,” Minter said. “If we don’t use dead and rotting trees for feedstock could help reduce wildfires as climate change increases their frequency. And groundwater would be protected.

“I think that it’s important to have a large context in which these processes are viewed,” Kaffka said. “Not only that if you are generating energy and byproducts from energy from these biomass resources here, you’re also doing it by providing new infrastructure, helping with facilities and creating jobs in rural areas.”

As of September 1, the California Energy Commission (CEC) has spent $621.9 million funding alternative fuel vehicle projects and fueling infrastructure. This funding included $150.2 million in biofuel projects, $210.9 million in electric vehicle projects, $112.3 million in hydrogen projects and $97.5 million in natural gas projects, according to Anna Kaffka, an energy commission specialist.

John Kato, the deputy director for the CEC Fuels and Transportation Division, said, “Our main charge is to reduce petroleum dependency by 50%. That’s kind of our larger driver. Our primary driver in the fuel sector is we’re wanting to promote the least carbon-intensive fuels types out there.”

The program is funded by a surcharge on California vehicle registrations, which yields an annual budget of $100 million. To determine where money will be allocated, there is an annual investment plan update that includes public and private input on which fuels have the highest demand. Kato explained that the push for zero-emission in the light-duty sector is important because it will eventually spill over into the heavy-duty platforms and reduce costs as the technologies progress.

California’s goal is to have 1.5 million zero-emissions vehicles on the road by 2025 and ultimately 100% zero-emission vehicles on the road by 2050, according to Kato. “We are supporting the infrastructure and the alternative fuel accessibility to help support the governor’s targets. Fuel cell vehicles and renewable hydrogen are one of the pathways and the strategies to attain a zero-emission vehicle landscape.”
Women In Business
(Continued From Page 1)

Balboa Capital, an independent direct lender based in Costa Mesa, recently found that the top three reasons women go into business for themselves are “to implement a new business idea or vision, to enjoy the freedom of being an entrepreneur, or to solve a specific industry problem.”

The growth of women-owned businesses is reflected in the Long Beach area women business owners profiled in this section. Each of these women struck out on her own, driven by reasons quite similar to those outlined by Balboa Capital.

Whether fledgling enterprises (like The Pie Bar, ARCA World Logistics) or more established companies (like TGIS Catering, EcoCleaning Inc., Encore Awards and MMS Dance), all the women-owned businesses in this section have grown since their inception.

They've added employees and clientele, and they continue to look to the future with the hopes of expanding further.

The women profiled in these pages cumulatively employ hundreds of locals and serve a wide variety of geographic areas, from Long Beach to Southern California and even countries overseas.

Laurie Gray
The Pie Bar
450 Pine Ave., Long Beach
562/444-8743 • www.thepiebarlongbeach.com

Laurie Gray has been baking pies since she was a little girl living on a farm in Washington, where she and her mother would gather ingredients for their pies from their own land. Now, she sells her sweet and savory creations at her own business, The Pie Bar, in Downtown Long Beach.

“She was a stay-at-home mom, so she taught me how to bake everything from scratch and how to make pie crust. And we would roll pies,” Gray said of her mother.

Gray eventually started a family and entered a career in corporate management. “That kind of took me away from my love of baking for about 30 years while I raised my kids and got them off to college,” she said.

After working in various jobs in marketing, finance and management, Gray started a pie shop with a friend in Seattle, which she ultimately sold. She returned to the corporate world for another 10 years or so, later ending up as a manager at a nonprofit. In 2014, she was laid off. “They did a round of layoffs, and I was one of those to go,” she recalled. “It was a big surprise to me, and I still had a teenager at home. So I said, ‘What can I do to make some money? It’s the holidays.’”

Gray began baking pies from her home and selling them to friends. “It just took off from there,” she said. “I realized . . . that this was my true love. And I wanted a pie shop where people could come and sit with friends and family and enjoy pie.”

The Pie Bar quickly took off. Gray opened a pop-up shop at MADE in Long Beach on Pine Avenue (now MADE by Millworks) and began selling wholesale to local shops like Berlin Bistro and Steelhead Coffee. She also catered events and meetings.

In June of this year, Gray opened her store at 450 Pine Ave., where she has nine employees. “It has been a lot of fun. We are way above what I projected we would be in sales,” she said.

Gray’s biggest challenge is contending with the unknown – figuring out how to get from point A to point B with her goals. “You have to just keep pushing forward, and when you get frustrated or scared or don’t know what to do, you just have to take a leap and keep moving,” she reflected.

In the future, Gray hopes to expand her business to other parts of the state, and perhaps beyond.
In the late 1950s, Long Beach resident Marrilynn McDowell began teaching dance classes in her home garage. Thirty years later, she and her family built a studio on Redondo Avenue in Belmont Heights, where MMS Dance has been located ever since. Her daughter, Denise Knight, has served as director of the company since 1981 and has continued to teach classes as well.

Now, Knight’s daughter is assistant director of MMS Dance, making it a third-generation family business. “It is family owned and run. My mother passed away about 11 years ago, but we have kept the legacy going,” Knight told the Business Journal. “It was her passion, and we needed to keep that passion alive.”

Knight began dancing at age two and started teaching dance classes at the company around the age of 19. “My dance education was with my mother and with some other studios years ago that were here in Long Beach,” she recalled. “And then I went to L.A. and did most of my training there.”

After high school, Knight got married and had a family. She went back to school in her late 40s and earned a bachelor’s degree in dance from California State University, Fullerton when she was 52.

MMS Dance offers a range of classes to students of all ages – the youngest are two years old and the oldest-ever student was in her 80s, Knight noted. Specialties include ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, contemporary and conditioning classes for dancers.

Growing competition in the Long Beach area has been the biggest challenge for MMS Dance in recent years, Knight said. “Over the years, there have been many studios open in our general vicinity. There is a lot to choose from, and I would say that is the biggest change – we’re not the only one any more,” she explained.

MMS Dance is a neighborhood-oriented, family-friendly business that puts on two major productions each year – a holiday show and a year-end recital. Many students walk from their homes or from school to their afternoon dance classes, Knight noted. Past students have gone on to perform in professional dance companies and abroad.

“My favorite part is watching the students grow and excel in this industry and being able to share my passion with them – and watching how they soak that all in and enjoy it just as much as I do,” Knight reflected.

In the future, Knight’s goals are to continue offering quality instruction and to grow the business.

For Sofia Riley, an endeavor that started as a catering business run out of her father’s restaurant 27 years ago has grown into a full-service event production company with a 25,000-square-foot operation near the Long Beach Airport.

“I come from a family of great cooks. My father was a formally trained chef, and I think it’s just part of our gene pool,” Riley said. While not a formally trained chef herself, when Riley started her business, TGIS (Thank Goodness It’s Sofia) Catering, she did the cooking, the food preparation, the event service – everything. About a year later, she was able to bring in a chef, she said.

Riley found event staff where she could – like in her father’s restaurant. “My dad would have waitresses working [at his restaurant]. I’d be like, ‘You want to make some extra money and come work this event with me?’” Now, she has 250 full-time and part-time employees.

A lot has changed since Riley started TGIS. “I have to tell you, when I started the company 27 years ago, there was no Internet,” she recalled. “It was all word of mouth. That’s how I built the company . . . people that had either been to one of my events or knew someone that had been to one of my events.”

TGIS serves all the way from San Diego to Santa Barbara and as far inland as the desert, according to Riley. “We literally do thousands of events every year,” she said. People are often impressed when Riley tells them that the largest event her company ever put on was for 7,000 people. But with one crew and just one menu, that was not her biggest challenge, she said. “It’s on those days where we’ll do 40 events in one day, and . . . they’re all different [menus]. And they’re all going out with different trucks and crews, and my parking lot looks like a highway,” she said.

One of the most memorable events Riley has done to date was a wedding – for dogs. Not knowing whom the wedding was for, her event staff showed up and found the pooches getting hitched on the beach. “The doggy was pregnant, and it was a shotgun doggy wedding,” she said, laughing.

One of TGIS’s newest clients is the Los Angeles Rams. Their contact with the Rams has told Riley he knows she has everything under control. “I think that says a lot right there,” she said.

Riley’s partner in business is her brother, George Marinos. She is also excited to have her daughter, who began working for her a few months ago, join the company.

For the past 12 years, Jessica Somera has worked in various sectors of the logistics industry, including freight forwarding, importing, exporting and shipping. Her start in the business proved too corporate for Somera, a Long Beach native who wasn’t too keen on the traditional, buttoned-up environment. So eventually, she leveraged her skillset to start her own business.

Somera first started working in logistics after she
Polly Adams, Loan Consultant
New American Funding

Polly Adams has been working in the mortgage lending industry for over 20 years. She moved here in 2012 from Salt Lake City, Utah. Polly opened her mortgage office on 4th Street after a long career with Bank of America, where she achieved top 10 in the nation for her achievements. Passionate about the community, she started focusing on first time buyers, and helping families in her area better their financing situation. Honesty and integrity in business is her mantra. In her free time, Polly volunteers helping homeless animals, playing with her dog, biking, and playing golf.

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Marta L. Callotta, DC, CCSP
Long Beach Spine & Rehabilitation

Dr. Marta Callotta has been serving Long Beach communities for 20 years. When treating a patient she considers the whole person. She is a Certified Chiropractic Sports Practitioner. Honored with the CA Chiropractic Association’s 2007-08 “Doctor of the Year” award, she is a team doctor for Team USA Beach Volleyball and was the Official Chiropractor for the Orange County Roller Girls from 2009-2011. Emphasizing biomechanical health and fitness, customized nutritional requirements and exercise programs, focusing on individual needs and goals, helping you to be the best you can be, naturally.

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Gail Desilets
Marriage & Family Therapist

Gail Desilets is a licensed Marriage & Family Therapist who specializes in working with successful people who need a little assistance in their personal life. She works with adult individuals and couples to help make life better as quickly as possible. She is conveniently located in the Kilroy Airport Business Center. Gail offers flexible therapy hours to fit busy lifestyles. Call (562) 477-2530 or visit www.GailDesilets.com to see how she can help you today.

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Dr. Alyson Emery, Owner
Emery & Emery

Dr. Alyson received her B.S. from UCLA and her D.D.S. from the University of Pacific School of Dentistry. She has practiced dentistry with Dr. Doug Emery in Long Beach for over 25 years. She prides herself in providing high quality dentistry while making patients feel very comfortable. Dr. Alyson believes in being part of the community and has volunteered for numerous organizations. She is a past President of The Harbor Dental Society, LB Chamber Women’s Council, and National Charity League. “The most meaningful volunteer work I do is providing dentistry to the young ladies in the Pathways to Independence program.”

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(562) 421-9361 • www.emerydds.com

Christine Baratta, President
Baratta Enterprises, Inc.

Conveniently located at 222 Atlantic Ave. with side street parking and a bilingual staff, Baratta Enterprises (R# 63824) offers vehicle registration service! NO appointments, NO lines, NO hassles for a minimal service fee. Auto and commercial vehicle registration same day service, specializing in Interstate/Intrastate commercial license plates and permits: IRP/IFTA/MC/DOT/CA-MCP/2290. Industry specific software: IRPspread and IFTAspread programs; IFTA quarterly mileage/Fuel tax recordkeeping/ reporting; truck insurance; IRP classes and consulting. Christine has been in the transportation industry since 1984, specifically the specialized field of commercial licensing/permits. She has worked among the finest carriers in the U.S. such as B.F. Walker, Global Van Lines and Keystone Lines.

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Connie Chick, Realtor
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Vali DeVries, Agent
State Farm Insurance

Vali is observing her 32nd year as a State Farm Agent this week, serving the needs of friends and neighbors with their homeowners, auto, life and commercial insurance coverages. A Long Beach native, Vali attended local schools, is a 1981 CSULB graduate and resides in the Los Altos area with her husband, Dave, and their two daughters. “I enjoy helping people, providing protection at a good price and solving their problems so they can sleep better at night,” Vali states. Like a good neighbor, State Farm (and Vali DeVries) is there. • CA License #0667954

1777 Bellflower Blvd. • Long Beach, CA 90815
(562) 494- (562) 494-7700 • www.validevries.com

Charlene Ferry, Owner
Salon Indah

Salon Indah is a full-service salon with a unique style that accompanies its friendly and down-to-earth atmosphere. Highly trained stylists are committed to their clients’ colors and styles while maintaining beautiful healthy hair. Donna, the esthetician, is educated in all natural facials and products. She’s created her own line of anti-aging, antioxidant rich skincare with quality ingredients available for purchase. Her services include facials, waxing, massage, spray tanning, makeup applications and lessons. Halloween is around the corner so book early for spooktacular makeup by Christine. Check specials on Facebook and Yelp.

189 Arpione Ave. • Long Beach, CA 90803
(562) 498-1557 • www.salonindah.com

The Long Beach Business Journal
Encourages Its Readers To Support Local Women In Business
Local Women In Business

Who's Who

Paige Fingerhut Charnick, Realtor+Probate Specialist

A Long Beach native, Paige maintains expertise in probate, trust, and conservatorship sales, working with attorneys, CPAs, trustees, administrators, and conservators. She is asked regularly to speak at professional trust and estate organizations on a range of topics from the particulars of the probate purchase contract to the real estate temperature in local markets. “We serve our clients through unparalleled levels of service, experience, and expertise. They know every detail of their transaction(s) will be handled smoothly and with utmost integrity.” Paige is involved in many local charities and resides in Bixby Knolls with her husband Jason, and their dog and cat, Teddy & Floyd.

4531 E. Anaheim St. • Long Beach, CA 90804
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Tomilee Tilley Gill, Founder & President

Executives Unlimited, Inc.

In 2001, Tomilee founded Executives Unlimited, a national retained executive search firm, after a successful career in commercial banking and finance. Her demonstrated business acumen and ability to thoroughly evaluate her client’s business and their corporate culture sets her apart from other recruiters. Her national expertise in a variety of industries and personalized approach is central to every search assignment that Executives Unlimited undertakes and is what allows them to succeed today. Tomilee has been honored by the Long Beach Memorial Hospital and C5LA for her support, and recently spoke at Tedx Mission Viejo on advocating for executive gender balance.

3208 Orange Ave. • Signal Hill, CA 90755
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Eva Guzman, CEO

Firestone Fabricators

Eva began working at Firestone Fabricators in 1996. She is one of 10% of women who hold a C-51 Structural Steel contractor’s license in California. Some of her past projects include: Nike at the Grove, Windward School in L.A., and the Chevron Refinery. She currently oversees a multi-million restoration of the oldest historical building in downtown Los Angeles and The City Place located in downtown Long Beach. She operates her business with honesty, integrity, and loyalty to her current and future general contractors. Eva has helped in opening the doors for the next generation of women in structural steel.

6621 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Ste. 160 • Long Beach, CA 90803
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Patty Gadd, Sr. Loan Officer

New-American Funding

Patty has been in the Long Beach Real Estate industry for over 40 years. As a seasoned lender she provides exceptional service and knowledge to get borrowers the best loan programs that will fit their needs. From first time buyer programs, to super jumbo loans, she can handle it all. Patty has counseled and educated her clients to get the best programs at the lowest cost and best rates! NMLS #485609 She believes in giving back to the community, by being involved in Rick Rackers and is the current President of the Long Beach Cancer League. She can be reached at (562) 708-1222 or Patty.Gadd@nafinc.com.

Melissa Glatman, Owner/Operator

Family Floors, Inc.

Melissa Glatman is the owner and operator of Family Floors Inc. We are a 3rd Generation Flooring Store. Family Floors is based upon good old honest handshake tradition. Straightforward open and honest pricing is the core value behind Family Floors. At Family Floors our pricing is clearly marked with no hidden extras. We don’t run specials, we don’t need to. Our everyday pricing is usually better than the other guys’ special price. We specialize in carpet, hardwood, vinyl, laminate, and area rugs. Come in and talk to any of our Family members about your new flooring purchase.

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(562) 506-0505 • www.familyfloorslb.com

Joen Garnica, President/Principal Designer

Garnica Interiors Inc

Joen Garnica is a visionary whose determined spirit and work ethic helped her create an award-winning interior design firm that has been in business for over 13 years in Long Beach’s revitalized downtown. Garnica Interiors is a full service interior design firm providing comprehensive solutions for residential & commercial clients. Projects for her highly satisfied clients include residential, professional offices, healthcare facilities & restaurants. Her desire to help clients create beautiful, functional interiors is also what drives Joen to help her community as a member of several community boards, and as President of the East Village Association.

5000 E. Spring St., Ste. 295 • Long Beach, CA 90815
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Imelda Lorena R.H., Owner

Stephanie’s Linens and More

Stephanie’s Linens was named after the owner’s 19 year old daughter who currently holds an office manager position. Business owner Imelda Lorena worked in 3 Long Beach hotels as a banquet server and was inspired by the hotel’s events to start her own business. She loved observing setups as well as admired vendors who contributed to giving the event a captivating look. Lorena made it her goal to have a company that specialized in providing quality event rentals and décor for hotels and venues in the Los Angeles and Orange counties.

1416 E. Burnett St., Ste. D • Signal Hill, CA 90755
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Who’s Who

Genelia Alburger, Owner

Beach Equities: A Fingerhut Co Since 1972

A Long Beach native, Genelia maintains expertise in residential and commercial banking and finance. Her demonstrated business acumen and knowledge to get borrowers the best loan programs that will fit their needs. From first time buyer programs, to super jumbo loans, she can handle it all. Genelia has counseled and educated her clients to get the best programs at the lowest cost and best rates! NMLS #485609 She believes in giving back to the community, by being involved in Rick Rackers and is the current President of the Long Beach Cancer League. She can be reached at (562) 708-1222 or Patty.Gadd@nafinc.com.

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The Long Beach Business Journal

Encourages Its Readers To Support Local Women In Business
Who's Who
Women In Business

Barbara Irvine-Parker, Realtor Associate
Coldwell Banker Coastal Alliance
Barbara obtained her California Real Estate License in 1977. As a seasoned agent, she continues to receive ongoing training and has developed tried and true marketing strategies. Her accomplishments have hinged on two points: providing the highest degree of professionalism and expertise, and providing quality service and communication. Barbara has called Long Beach/Signal Hill her home for more than 25 years. “My professional networking through National Association of REALTORS®, California Association of REALTORS®, and the Women’s Council of REALTORS® has proven to be invaluable in maintaining a powerful connection between my business and community.”

Janis Krantz, Owner
J & L Jewelry
Long Beach native Janis Krantz, owner of J&L Jewelry, has been in the jewelry business since 1967 and opened her business in 1991. Janis attended all Long Beach schools – Our Lady of Refuge, Saint Anthony High School and Long Beach City College. You can find quality jewelry items at J&L ranging from $10 to whatever your heart may desire. We carry platinum, white gold, yellow gold, sterling silver, gold or silver-plated items and estate jewelry. J&L Jewelry is very involved in our community helping local charities and schools. Our slogan is: “Welcome to J&L Jewelry where women get into trouble and men get out of it!” We are diamond specialists.

Cassandra Popli, Director of Account Services
ETA Agency
Cassandra hails from the U.K., where she graduated summa cum laude from the University of Wales, Swansea, majoring in American Literature, Politics and History. She is Personable, detail-oriented and an integral part of every department at ETA, Cassandra has spearheaded multiple award-winning campaigns, seeing them through from concept to completion. Cassandra also has extensive experience with a wide range of clients, including entertainment, government, financial, real estate, retail and hospitality.

Lisa Kammel, Co-owner
Executive Fitness, A Private Training Studio
Executive Fitness Corporate Wellness
Proudly serving Long Beach for 20 years, Lisa Kammel, and her husband Casey, opened Executive Fitness, a business dedicated to customer service through personal training, corporate wellness, group classes and more. “As a business owner and working mom, I understand that the life scales never balance, but with focus and perspective, we CAN make fitness a priority!” Their private studio in Naples offers one-on-one training, along with a women’s bootcamp that meets every Tuesday/Thursday at 5:30 am. Lisa says, “I work out daily because I love lifting heavy weights, I want to stay fit, and I want to defy the aging process!”

Marty Kurner, Founder
Hawden Group USA, Inc.
Marty founded Hawden Group, a nationally known furniture and design firm in 2011. We sell American-made, local products with great sustainable stories. A $5 donation is given to nonprofits with every chair sold. Hawden is a 100% referral business. Why? Because of our commitment and our extraordinary service. Marty was on the Board of the LB Chamber and president of the Women’s Business Council. She is now on the Board of For The Child, a Rotarian, a member of the LA and LB Propeller Club, LBCREC and FuturePorts. She previously was Military Affairs Director for Davis Monahan AFR and on the Board for the US Navy League, USS Tucson. Most important to Marty is integrity, honesty and ethical business practices.

Phyllis Schmidt, Realtor
Boardwalk Properties
I am a licensed real estate agent with Boardwalk Properties. I live in and love Long Beach, especially Belmont Shore. I own and live in a duplex here in the Shore. I was recognized as a 2015 Woman of Distinction by Assemblymember Patrick O’Donnell. Specializing in one to four residential units, I can help with staging and curb appeal. For some years I had a landscaping business here in Long Beach and Signal Hill. My email address is plants29@gmail.com, from my gardening days. Please call or email as I would love to work with you to sell or purchase property here in Long Beach.

Renee Shaffar, E.J.D., Certified Divorce Mediator
Alternative Divorce Solutions
A Native Californian, Renee completed her BS degree in Business Management at Pepperdine University and her Executive Juris Doctorate at Concord Law School. Thereafter, Renee’s own experiences going through a divorce prompted her to become a Certified Divorce Mediator. Renee is proud to now be a part of the team that once guided her through her own divorce. As the owner and operator of her own firm, she is honored to make a positive impact on the lives of families in Long Beach, California and the surrounding areas. Call us today for a complimentary one-hour consultation.

The Long Beach Business Journal
Enourages Its Readers To Support Local Women In Business
graduated from college, when she got a job at a Fortune 500 freight forwarding firm. “It was very much corporate America, and as a young girl from California – I was born and raised in Long Beach – I really wasn’t into that lifestyle,” she said.

She quit the business but, after a few years working in retail, ultimately decided to come back to it. “The good thing about this industry is that it’s consistent, and there is always work to be done,” she said.

In 2014, Somera and her husband were living in Charlotte, North Carolina, and decided they wanted to come back to Long Beach. Her employer at the time supported her decision to move and start her own business. “They supported me 100% of the way. And I actually move a lot of their cargo for them now,” she said.

“I never really thought of myself as an entrepreneur, exactly,” Somera said. “But I know that I have the heart to do it, and I know that I have the hustle to do it.”

ARCA World Logistics opened its doors in January 2015, with the help of other investors who are primarily silent partners, Somera said. She handles the day-to-day operations of the business, which has three employees.

“We offer an array of different services, [including] ocean imports and exports, and air imports and exports,” Somera said. “We also do trucking, ground transportation, as well as warehousing and distribution . . . and customs brokerage.”

In working for large corporations, Somera saw that small and mid-size businesses were often not prioritized in lieu of doing business with big box retailers. Those businesses are now her focus. “I reached out to a lot of startup companies. . . . And I really hold their hands through the entire process,” she said.

Some of Somera’s biggest challenges in running a business include hiring employees that fit into the business’s culture, she said.

“This is only our second year of business, and I’m so excited because we’ve had so much growth over the past year and a half,” Somera said. In the future, she hopes to open another office on the East Coast or possibly in China. ❑

A native of China with an engineering degree and a master’s in international business, Mu Zhang worked in the corporate world for many years but has always had an entrepreneurial spirit, she told the Business Journal. This drive is what led her to become owner of Encore Awards in 2009.

After arriving in the United States, Zhang lived in Marin County in Northern California for some time and eventually moved to Long Beach. “I started my corporation, called GWS International Inc., in 2005 when I was also working for a major U.S. cosmetic manufacturer,” she recalled. She started GWS International with the intention of eventually purchasing a company, she said.

“In the daytime I worked at my job, and [in the] evening I worked at my own corporation,” Zhang said, adding that she worked about 60 hours per week. “By the year 2009, I accumulated enough money and purchased my current company, Encore Awards.”

Encore Awards was founded in 1984. Three years later, Encore acquired Hollywood Trophy, a business founded in 1969 that supplied the Golden Globe Awards, Academy of Country Music Awards and other awards ceremonies. Al’s Rubber Stamp of Whittier was purchased by Encore in 1997. In 2001, Jensen’s Rubber Stamp, a historic Long Beach business founded in 1929, was acquired.

Encore’s fabrication services include a variety of award and trophy types, professional gifts, crystal products with etchings, rubber stamps, promotional products, signs and more. “We have quite a few major accounts,” Zhang said, listing the Air Quality Management District, Intel Capital Global Summit and the Student Academy Awards as examples. “We’ve grown very nicely.”

All products are custom-made at Encore’s 4,500-square-foot Long Beach facility by Zhang and her five employees. “We are from California, but in reality, we are shipping all over the place,” she said.

Zhang’s biggest challenge as a business owner is competing in the Internet age, she said. The Internet allows competitors to offer similar goods at cheaper prices and lower quality by essentially talking their products up, she explained. So Encore competes by focusing on the quality of its products, she said.

“All businesses are different. So the key is to find your own strength, what you’re good at the most, and compete in that particular area,” Zhang said. Some such strengths of Encore’s include crystal products with etchings and acrylic awards, she noted.

In the future, Zhang said her focus is “growing the business and continuing to provide prompt, efficient and knowledgeable customer service as well.” ❑

Monika Zuzanska
EcoCleaning Solutions
10841 Noel St., #105, Los Alamitos
562/794-9789; www.ecoclean-inc.com

For Monika Zuzanska, what began as a way to put herself through school became a bustling business and a whole new career.

The Polish native immigrated to the United States in 2001 in pursuit of opportunities and a better life after earning a master’s degree in biomedical engineering from the Wroclaw University of Technology. She began working for a Polish couple who ran a house cleaning business in 2002 to help pay for English and accounting classes.

“At that time, it was good money and a flexible schedule,” Zuzanska said. “It helped me to go to school and learn English in the evening, and during the day I was cleaning homes.”

She began preparing to enter an MBA program, but her life took a different course when she became a single mother. In addition to being inspired to work for herself, she felt the need to go into business to support herself and her son. So she bought out the couple she had been working for and started Monika’s House Cleaning with 15 clients. At first, Zuzanska ran the business on her own, but in 2005 she hired her first employees.

As the business began to grow, Zuzanska noticed a trend – people were looking for environmentally friendly and nontoxic cleaning solutions for their homes. She rebranded her company as EcoCleaning Solutions Inc. and shifted her focus to cleaning with eco-friendly supplies. “They are safe, especially for the kids and pets,” she said. Using these products is also safer for employees, who don’t have to breathe in toxic fumes, she noted.

EcoCleaning Solutions now has more than 100 clients and serves the Greater Long Beach area, including Seal Beach, Rossmoor and other local cities. This year, Zuzanska moved the business from North Long Beach to a larger location with a small warehouse in Los Alamitos. “Having a real office, that was kind of a big moment for me,” she said.

One of Zuzanska’s biggest challenges is finding employees. Many people who respond to her job postings don’t have drivers’ licenses and aren’t legal, she said. “I set up the business so that everyone I hire is legal,” she explained, adding that she sympathizes with those she can’t hire due to legal status.

Currently, EcoCleaning Solutions primarily services homes and vacation rentals, but in the future, Zuzanska hopes to expand to do more commercial cleaning. Her business plan, which she developed during her time in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program, has the goal of reaching $1 million in revenue by 2018. ❑
Maggie Shapiro, REALTOR®, GRI, CPS, SRES
Keller Williams Coastal Homes Group
With over 16 years of experience and hundreds of homes sold, Maggie has been a consistent top producer. She was awarded the Five Star Professional REALTOR® Award through Los Angeles Magazine and works with both Sellers and Buyers as she feels that it’s important to fully understand both sides of the transaction to better serve her clients. She believes education is key, which is why she provides her clients with all the information needed to make the best decisions in the ever-changing housing market. Maggie loves that her career allows her to meet many people and count many past clients as good friends.

Mary Sophia, Co-owner
Baja Sonora Mexican Restaurants
Mary Sophia, one of the owners of three Baja Sonora Mexican Restaurants in Long Beach and Los Alamitos, has been running her own business for over 18 years. She has always said, “Learn from your heart.” Baja has been great supporters of many organizations, Long Beach School District being number one. Mary and Mike Mendelsohn opened the first Baja in 1998, the second in wonderful Bixby Knolls in 2004 and Baja in Los Alamitos in 2013. They look at themselves as the “Queens” of Long Beach. People are always greeting each other when they come into eat those deep fried hard tacos. They both love of good food and dedication to their city.

Andrea Testa, Realtor
Keller Williams Pacific Estates
Formerly the owner of FreeSpirit Yoga, Andrea obtained her California Real Estate License in 2013 and was honored with Rookie of the Year, Volume, for 2014. Her clients and vendors boast her professionalism, availability, communication, resourcefulness and service. She’s a member of National Assoc. of Realtors, California Assoc. of Realtors, Women’s Council of Realtors, and International Women’s Leadership Assoc. Andrea’s also a community liaison for Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Assc., member of the Senior Advisory Council for the 8th District Senior Activities Center at Expo, is on the non-profit KW Cares committee, and on her Church Council at Cal Heights United Methodist Church.

Dr. Christina Turner, OD, MS
Eye Land Optometry
As a California board-certified optometrist, Dr. Christina Turner has dedicated her career to providing the best vision care in a wide range of health care settings. She earned her Doctor of Optometry from Southern California College of Optometry in 2011. Prior to her training in Optometry, she received a Master’s of Science in Health Care Administration at CSULB and a Bachelor’s in Chemistry at UCSC. Her volunteer work with the visually impaired during her undergrad-

Patricia Watts, Founder, President & CEO
FCI Management
Ms. Watts is the founder, President & CEO of FCI Management. FCI provides expertise, knowledge and leadership to its customers by delivering innovative strategies and solutions in the energy and water industries, creating a sustainable global environment. With over 30 years of experience in the utility industry, Ms. Watts has held management positions in customer service, energy services, marketing, public affairs, and community relations. Ms. Watts is also a member of the Executive Board of the Low Income Oversight Committee and Hall of Fame inductee for the National Association of Women Business Owners, in addition to other prestigious organizations.

Leslie A.M. Smith, Consultant & Owner
McCormick L.A. Public Relations
As a public relations consultant since 1994, Leslie A.M. Smith has developed and implemented numerous marketing and public relations strategies that meet her clients’ objectives. She has worked with businesses large and small in several industries including: nonprofit organizations, business associations, aerospace, healthcare, finance, law, real estate, retail products, restaurants, departments of transportation and water districts. Call for a consultation today. McCormick L.A. offers: Marketing Plans, Community Relations, Media Relations, Event Planning, Training & Facilitation, Social Media & Advertising.

Julia Sylva, Esq., Attorney
Law Offices of Julia Sylva, ALC
The Law Offices of Julia Sylva, A Law Corporation, a full service law firm (litigation, transactional and regulatory). The founder, Julia Sylva, is nationally the youngest first woman to serve as a Member of the City Council, City of Hawaiian Gardens (1976-1980). Ms. Sylva remains active in many professional/business organizations that empower the community. Firm Practice Areas: Real Estate (land use, broker liability, purchase and sale); Business and Corporate (formation, shareholder disputes, nonprofits); Estate Planning (trusts/wills, probate, conservatorships, special needs trusts); Political Law (formation and compliance of PACs).

Charlene Tritipeskul, Director of Catering
Holiday Inn Long Beach Airport Hotel and Conference Center
Charlene joined Holiday Inn Long Beach Airport Hotel and Conference Center in June 2016, bringing with her over 20 years of food & beverage operations and catering sales experience. She continues to receive ongoing training and belongs to several catering event organizations, which enables her to get inspiration and stay connected with the latest trends. She is genuinely inspired by hospitality and takes joy in connecting with her clients and their event needs.

Dr. Lourdes Valles
Gems & Jewels Fine Jewelry and Repair
Lourdes Valles is a local resident and founder of Gems and Jewels Fine Jewelry. Lourdes is a graduate of the Gemological Institute of America, and is a proactive member of the community. She is also a board member of the BKBIA. Gems & Jewels specializes in fine jewelry, engagement rings, jewelry repair and restoration. Gems and Jewels has two locations in the city of Long Beach, visit them in Belmont Heights or in their Bixby Knolls showroom. Open Everyday 10-7 and Sunday 10-5.

Tracey Wittle, “The Redhead Realtor to Remember”
Coldwell Banker Coastal Alliance
Tracey is a So Cal native. She’s lived in Long Beach since 1984. Before becoming a REALTOR® in 2000, Tracey worked in the Restaurant, Jewelry and Human Resources fields. Anyone remember Bobbi McGee’s restaurant? Along with other talented servers dressed in costumes, Tracey served 100’s of guests. “I’ve worked in customer service all my life,” she says. “Through listening, I discover my client’s needs and fill them.” It is critical that her clients know they are important and their feelings are valid. Her passions are helping people buy and sell homes, animals, exercising and her husband and family.
New Fisher House Opens at VA Long Beach

By LARRY DUNCAN
Staff Photographer/Staff Assistant

The VA Long Beach Healthcare System celebrated the completion of a new housing facility for families of veteran patients with a ribbon-cutting event on Wednesday, October 19th. The 14,000-square-foot facility, built and funded by the Fisher House Foundation, will provide lodging for up to 16 families at no cost, allowing them to be close to eligible veterans during hospitalization for injury, illness or disease.

“We are excited to open a Fisher House in Long Beach,” said David Coker, president of the Fisher House Foundation. “There are so many people in the Long Beach community that helped make this Fisher House a reality. Because of their tremendous efforts, we are able to support those we consider to be our greatest national treasure, our military service men and women, and their loved ones.”

The Fisher House Foundation is best known for its network of multi-suite housing facilities. There are more than 70 Fisher Houses located at major military and VA medical centers around the world. These houses provide free lodging for military and veteran families during medical treatment. The program has saved families an estimated $320 million since its inception.

Left: Members of the public attending the ribbon cutting were offered tours of the Fisher House facilities.

Right: Each of the Long Beach Fisher House’s 16 suites are equipped with private, handicapped-accessible bathrooms and access to the house’s various common areas, including a communal kitchen, living, family and dining rooms, a laundry room and outdoor patio.

The Long Beach Fisher House joins more than 70 other Fisher Houses around the world. These homes enable family members to be close to loved ones free of charge during hospitalization at VA Long Beach Healthcare System Medical Center. At left, Nancy Edelman, vice chairman, Fisher House Board of Trustees, hands over the ceremonial key to the Long Beach Fisher House to Lana Toenjes who will serve as the house’s first manager. In the background from left are: Tracey B. Davis, acting director, VA Long Beach Healthcare System; Steve Kuykendall, president, Fisher House Southern California, Inc.; and Donna Dibel, managing director of state and local affairs, Delta Air Lines. At right, a bust of Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher greets visiting families as they enter. The couple started the Fisher House Program in 1990, dedicating more than $20 million to the construction of comfortable homes for families of hospitalized military personnel.

Hotel Maya Names Ariel Mungi-Ciarrocca Fuego Chef De Cuisine
The Hotel Maya (a DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel) recently hired Ariel Mungi-Ciarrocca, pictured right, as the new chef de cuisine for its restaurant, Fuego. The Argentinean chef “brings his cultural influences and culinary experiences” to the restaurant, which has a Latin-infused menu, according to a statement from the hotel. In addition to modifying and creating menus for Fuego, Mungi-Ciarrocca is responsible for overseeing all kitchen staff, training all cooks, ensuring ingredients are fresh, and maintaining a clean and safe environment. He was previously the executive chef for Belmont Brewing Company for two years. He also previously served as sous chef of Tantalum Restaurant, among other positions in Brazil, Argentina and Florida. (Photograph provided by Hotel Maya)

20th Annual Veterans Day Parade On Tap November 5 In North Long Beach
The 20th Annual Veterans Day Parade, featuring more than 200 entries, begins at 10 a.m. on Atlantic Avenue in North Long Beach. The event, which runs about two hours, steps off at Harding Avenue and runs south on Atlantic to 56th Street. Parade officials expect about 25,000 people to line the streets. The parade’s major sponsors are the California Resources Corporation and the Port of Long Beach. “After one of our earlier parades, a Vietnam vet told me this was the very first time he was honored for his service,” said Val Larch, parade committee chair and former vice mayor of Long Beach. “Vets from that era never really received a warm welcome home, and he took great pride in being able to participate in this particular parade.” For more information, visit www.lbveteransdayparade.com

Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Architecture Receives Two Historic Preservation Awards
Long Beach-based Kelly Sutherlin McLeod Architecture (KSMA) recently received two 2016 American Architectural Awards for historic preservation from The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies. The firm, run by architect Kelly Sutherlin McLeod, was recognized with one award for its restoration and preservation of the Olan G. and Aida T. Hallary House in Park Estates. Original building elements of the 1953 home designed by Richard Neutra were carefully restored, rather than replaced, for authenticity, according to the KSMA. The second award was for KSMA’s work on the Killingsworth Office Building, which serves as the company’s headquarters. The building was designed by Edward A. Killingsworth and features transparent glass walls and “delicate post and beam construction,” according to KSMA. KSMA’s efforts include the preservation of interior furnishings and fixtures, a photography collection illustrating Killingsworth’s career, and restoration of the original landscape design. The Chicago Athenaeum’s American Architecture Awards are in their 22nd year and “honor the best and finest contributions to innovative contemporary American architecture,” according to KSMA. “With these awards for our projects, it is so gratifying to see the most advanced approaches to heritage conservation and historic preservation recognized as essential disciplines by the architecture community,” Sutherlin McLeod stated. Sutherlin McLeod is pictured at the Killingsworth Office Building. (Business Journal photograph)

Children Today’s EcoHouse To Receive U.S. Green Building Council Award
EcoHouse, a daycare and preschool facility run by the nonprofit Children Today, is set to receive the Merit Award for Sustainable Sites from the U.S. Green Building Council at its Los Angeles chapter’s gala and awards ceremony on November 10. The facility, which serves children impacted by homelessness, was designed and built by Long Beach-based firms Studio One Eleven and Howard CDM. The daycare has already earned the GBC’s LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification, according to a statement from Howard CDM. “It has always been a high priority to improve the quality of life for the future by building environmentally sustainable architecture,” Martin Howard, president of Howard CDM, stated. “And EcoHouse exemplifies our green building tendencies.” EcoHouse is located at 2951 Long Beach Blvd. (Image provided by Howard CDM)
Many voters in Long Beach will tell you that they feel disconnected with city hall. That they don’t feel those elected really listen to the people or, more pointedly, that elected officials only listen to “some people,” particularly those who give big money through independent expenditure political action committees.

If ever there was a demonstration of just how broken the political system is in Long Beach, it would be the recent special interest funding of Measure A which increased sales taxes in the city by 11.1% (effective January 1, the sales tax in Long Beach goes from 9% to 10%). The campaign of direct mail and consultants cost more than $750,000.

Contribution after contribution came from developers, employee unions and businesses that have contracts with the city, and the building trades unions—all of whom will greatly benefit from the expenditure of millions and millions of sales tax dollars for the advertised “infrastructure and public safety” promised in the mailers.

As larger and larger contributions are made to political campaigns through independent expenditure entities or tax measures supported by elected officials, we are witnessing local government decisions being usurped for the benefit of those who contribute, and who may not even live in Long Beach.

And yet we wonder why voter turnout is so dismal in Long Beach. One does not need to be a political analyst to realize that, as more and more decisions are being made without public input, voters realize the difficulty of going up against the organized electoral power of special interests. Voters simply give up.

Long Beach was one of the first local governments to limit campaign contributions and to match small dollar donors for those who agree to spending limits. All of these efforts to clean up politics and to remove “pay to play” has been diminished greatly with the recent special interest funding of Measure A. The city manager or city council approves a contract, there needs to be disclosure to the public of how much and to whom.

Additionally, when the city manager or city council approves a contract, there needs to be disclosure as to whether or not the entity or organization receiving the contract has contributed, along with how much and to whom.

Voters deserve this transparency.

Next column: Just How Ready Is Long Beach For A Big Disaster?

(Mick Ukleja is an author, speaker and generational strategist. He keynotes across the country on leadership, generational diversity and personal productivity. He is co-author of the best seller: “Managing The Millennials, 2nd Edition.” Check his weekly blog at wwwLeadershipTnQ.com.)
**Realty Views**

**Mortgage Interest Deduction A Hot Topic Again**

By Terry Ross

One of the staples of homeownership is likely to get a once-over next year as a new administration and Congress sit down to look at budgets, income, the tax code and changes that they envision as necessary.

In the race for the White House, where there has been little time left over from the tabloid fodder to actually discuss fiscal policy, the comments from the candidates they relate to real estate and housing have been vague at best. One side is calling for taxing the rich, while the other wants to encourage economic growth through the tax code—nothing new here—but detail on either side is sorely lacking.

Most of the discussion about specific changes that could impact real estate and homeownership has come at the lower levels of both parties, who keep looking at ways to tweak the tax code. And once again, the mortgage interest deduction appears to be a hot topic, as something that could be taken away and turned into a giant revenue generator for the government.

This is something that the housing and mortgage industry has fought for years and continue to fight against in Washington, but some feel that the sentiment right now is more one of the staples of homeownership is likely to get a once-over next year as a new administration and Congress sit down to look at budgets, income, the tax code and changes that they envision as necessary.

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By Jeffrey Wilcox

For most, it’s a double-edged sword. For many, a subject that should be left alone. The topic is executive compensation, and it’s one leadership responsibility that can’t be ignored.

How a nonprofit organization decides to engage in dialogue, deliberation and decision-making regarding its compensation policies and practices speaks volumes. It’s a message about how people choose to compensate other people who have directed their lives’ passions, education and careers to creating social benefit.

The process by which board chairs and boardmembers engage in discussion about the compensation of their paid professionals sends an unmistakable message about stewardship. It also demonstrates the organization’s position on such issues as advancement, equity, value and self-respect. Outcomes that many nonprofits are fanned to achieve for the people they serve.

Everyone knows the subject of pay for nonprofit professionals is loaded. On the one hand, there are contributors and payors who provide hard-earned personal funds or public dollars to support nonprofit organizations who are rightfully concerned that their funds are being put to best use. On the other, what constitutes underpaid or overpaid for the hard-earned personal funds or public dollars to support nonprofit organizations who are substantially subordinate to leaders of corporations further compounded the compensation equation.

And, there’s one more serious factor: While nonprofit boards struggle to reflect the diversity of our society, the nonprofit workforce is proudly viewed as “women’s work” which created a spawning ground for gender inequality in its most blatant forms. A perception that leaders of community organizations both on and off the front lines of feeding the hungry, caring for the elderly, teaching young children and cleaning up community messes at production rates and levels of diverse representation that other industries would boast about.

Today, the compensation conversation begins with a board understanding the market value and replacement costs of its professionals and establish multi-year budgeting goals and reserve policies aimed at adequately compensating the hands and hearts that mobilize the missions.

The strategic planning discussion must include specific directives about how the organization intends to retain and recognize its talent. The public message about compensation must be framed around taking a leadership role in social justice that begins with the organization itself. For those with employees on behalf of their people to advocate their elected officials to design government spending mandates that balance fair compensation for the people on the front lines of their contracts in nonprofit organizations.

Executive compensation is a complex issue with no right answer. What every socially responsible nonprofit board must have today, however, is a justified answer. What every socially responsible nonprofit board must have today, however, is a justified answer.

Jeffrey R. Wilcox, CFRE, is president and CEO of The Third Sector Company (www.thirdsector.com). (Jeffrey R. Wilcox, CFRE, is president and CEO of The Third Sector Company. Inc. Join in on the conversation about this article at the Long Beach Business Journal website www.lbbj.com)
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