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Shelter: Vagabond Inn in Glendale.



HOMELESS HOTELS

State program fills rooms during pandemic and tourism downturn.

By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER**
Staff Reporter

During the coronavirus emergency, the state and federal governments are bankrolling Project Roomkey, which converts hotels into temporary housing for virus-vulnerable homeless people. Los Angeles County has paid about \$1 million a month for the program, which

includes 35 hotels, including the Vagabond Inn in Glendale.

Les Biggins is chief executive of El Segundo-based **Vista Investments**, which owns the Glendale property and others in Ventura County. He describes Project Roomkey as a “win-win,” even though the rates paid by the program are less than market value.

“Under COVID, in our industry, revenue started to significantly decline,”

Biggins said. With Project Roomkey, “we were doing much better,” he added.

While the program is set to expire this summer, the state has a follow-up program called Project Homekey, in which counties would buy entire hotels and convert them to permanent homeless shelters.

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Sell-Off Gives LTC Fresh Cash

HEALTH CARE: Nursing home REIT waits for acquisitions.

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

Although its industry has plenty of virus-related risks, **LTC Properties** in Westlake Village has seen its stock steadily increase since mid-March when the pandemic ramped up in the U.S.

The senior housing REIT beat analyst expectations for its first quarter earnings report by \$1.08 per share. It reported net income of \$63.4

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Valley Exec Now LAEDC's Chair

NONPROFIT: Strategic plan to find organization's direction.

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter



Nissen

Steve Nissen, a former executive at **NBCUniversal** in Universal City who is the new chairman of the **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.**, talks with the Business Journal about the organization's future.

Please see **NONPROFIT** page 6

Restaurants Rattled by Second-Round Shutdown

RETAIL: Regulatory ping-pong spells trouble for eateries.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Aron Celnick was relieved to see a “nice uptick” in revenue at his Canoga Park eatery **Grandi Italiani** last month after L.A. County regulators allowed restaurants to resume dine-in operations with limited capacity.

But the recovery didn't last long.

On July 1, just weeks after authorizing indoor dining rooms to reopen, Gov. **Gavin Newsom** imposed another round of temporary restrictions for restaurants and other food service businesses in 19 counties, including Los Angeles and Ventura counties, in an attempt to combat a surge of COVID-19 cases. As a result, dining rooms in Los Angeles and Ventura counties were required to shut down. On July 13, as the pandemic worsened, Newsom extended the

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PHOTO BY MICHAEL AUSHENKER

Ready: Dinner at Grandi Italiani.

SPECIAL REPORT PUBLIC COMPANIES



The unpredictability of the coronavirus crisis presents a problem for public companies in communications with investors, employees and customers. The virus makes it “impossible to predict and dangerous to predict” a company's future financial results, according to **Roger Pondel**, chief executive of Woodland Hills investor relations and strategic public relations firm **PondelWilkinson Inc.**

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Technology Brings WWI Exhibit to Life

Burbank company builds 3D app, right, for a memorial from the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission.

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'Green Gold' in Ventura County

Pandemic hasn't curbed the appetite for avocados, Santa Paula-based Calavo Growers' top product.

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VALLEY INSIDER
JOEL RUSSELL

‘Audience Fatigue’ Expert

FBE, a producer of serialized digital shows and branded entertainment, has hired TV executive **Nneka Enurah** as head



Enurah

of development and partnerships. She previously worked at **Hello Sunshine**, the production company founded by actress **Reese Witherspoon**.

“It’s easy for any long-running successful content company

to experience audience fatigue,” Enurah said in a statement. “Why don’t we surprise them? ... There’s a real opportunity to innovate here.” ... **Interlink Electronics** in Camarillo has appointed **Raymond Li** as chief financial officer. He previously held positions at **Emerson Electronics**, **K2 Sports** and **PwC**. “In addition to his finance responsibilities, he will play a key role in supporting our larger global strategy, helping structure initiatives, collaborations, acquisitions and integrations,” Chief Executive **Steven Bronson** said in a statement. Added Li: “The team here has spent years laying the groundwork for global growth and acquisitions, and I am proud to help execute those plans.” ... **Integrity Bio**, a contract drug manufacturer in Thousand Oaks, has opened a second manufacturing and fill line to meet growing demand. “Timing could not have been better,” said Chief Executive **Michael Reilly**. “The new capacity allows us to prioritize COVID-19 projects.” ... **Resident Relief Foundation**, the organization affiliated with real estate firm **Gelt Inc.** in Tarzana that helps tenants pay rent, has secured a partnership with **LeaseLock** in Marina del Rey. LeaseLock offers surety bonds for apartment security deposits and will promote donations to the foundation from its customer base. “We so appreciate LeaseLock’s heart in helping us move forward with our COVID-19 relief initiative,”



Oswald

Tina Oswald, the foundation’s executive director, said in a statement. “Their commitment to spreading the word of our relief program will help so many in need.”

... **Thermomix USA**, a Thousand Oaks maker of combination blenders, mixers and slow cookers, has launched a new “Shoppable Recipes” function on its online system. It allows users to order ingredients from a shopping list on the app. “Shoppable ingredients is one of the most-requested functions and we are thrilled to finally roll out the function,” Chief Executive **Kai Schaeffner** said in a statement. ... **Roland Kelly** has joined **Velocity Financial** in Westlake Village as general counsel and corporate secretary. He will oversee the mortgage company’s legal and compliance operations.

Valley Insider is compiled by Editor Joel Russell. Send submissions to jrussell@sfbvj.com.

Reflecting on Work’s ‘Changing Nature’

Valley author’s book examines the evolution of employment.

By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

Authors are supposed to write what they know, and with his fifth book, “The Changing Nature of Work,” **Richard Kaumeyer** has done just that.

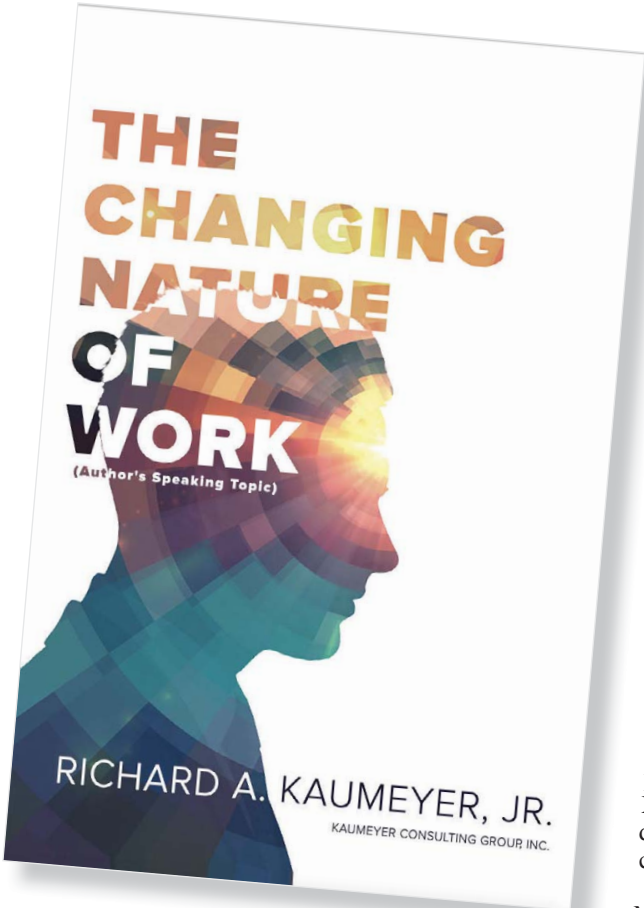
At 80, Kaumeyer has seen his career in human resources evolve. He worked in the HR departments of companies such as Security Pacific Bank, magazine publisher **Knapp Communications** and the Westlake Village office of **Spherion**. He later opened his own executive search firm **Kaumeyer Consulting Group Inc.** in 1995.

Kaumeyer’s book discusses staying current in the technology-fueled employment market. He particularly emphasizes LinkedIn as a venue for communication and self-marketing.

While people used to join companies with a plan to stay on as devoted employees for decades or for an entire career, “anyone with this philosophy today is programming themselves for trouble and serious disaster,” the book states.

Kaumeyer writes that it is not just companies or industries which come and go, but entire cities. He shows as evidence how the once dumpy New York City and robust Detroit have switched places since the 1970s while Los Angeles’ leading non-entertainment industry has traded aerospace for tech with the rise of Silicon Beach in West Los Angeles.

“We are all self-employed in today’s world,” Kaumeyer said.



In terms of career, what used to be looked down upon — working at government agencies — now appears ideal, he found. Kaumeyer regrets not having worked in government.

“I’d have a whole pension and medical, dental and vision for my whole life,” he said. “Only about 13 percent of private companies now have any pensions. ... The real pensions come from the state, the city, the fed.”

When he started his career, the aerospace

industry dominated the San Fernando Valley economy. And while the industry is still here, it too has evolved from a workers’ perspective.

“L.A. still has 11 percent for the world of aerospace and defense subcontractors,” Kaumeyer told the Business Journal. “The companies don’t seem to stay around. They get sold, change their names. You’ve got to be ready to change jobs every three to five years.”

Prior to the pandemic, the U.S. economy appeared solid. With 80 million Baby Boomers retiring, there were millions of available positions for Generation Xers and younger, producing more jobs than job candidates.

That all changed mid-March.

“With this coronavirus, I don’t know what the heck is going to happen,” Kaumeyer said. “I’ve never seen anything like this in my life.”

As Kaumeyer mulls writing a sequel to his book — or at least a revised edition for the coronavirus economy — the author does believe one maxim from his pre-virus tome still abides, even if it now means doing it via LinkedIn or **Zoom**: “Network, network, network!”

App Makes WWI’s Stories High Tech

Burbank company puts military history on users’ phones.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

A new app created by a Burbank company gives viewers a chance to learn about World War I and visit a memorial now under construction in Washington, D.C.

Code-Headquarters LLC partnered with **TechApplication.com LLC**, in Ventura, to create the free app for their client, the **Doughboy Foundation**, the charitable arm of the United States World War One Centennial Commission.

The WWI Virtual Explorer App is filled with video game-style 3D stories and more than 50 videos. Code-Headquarters created much of the content while TechApplication.com provided the video.

While the National WWI Memorial is still a construction site, the virtual explorer allows users to visit the location and see the work progressing. Also, the app can place a scaled version of the 1.8-acre memorial on user images of backyards or driveways.

Andranik Aslanyan, founder and lead programmer of Code-Headquarters, said this is the first augmented reality app for a federal memorial.

“It is a great way to tell the different stories with a new technology,” he said. “It has a lot of applications outside just the WWI memorial.”

Theo Mayer, president of TechApplication.com, said he knew of Aslanyan and his company from his days as an adjunct professor at **Woodbury University** in Burbank.

“(I) reached out to him and his very brilliant and innovative game studio to help us make this concept real,” Mayer said.

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Project Roomkey

HOSPITALITY: Hotel owner deems state program to house the homeless during pandemic ‘a win-win.’

By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

With Project Roomkey — an initiative to convert hotels into temporary housing for a virus-vulnerable segment of the homeless population — the state has simultaneously addressed the pandemic and California’s homeless problem by encouraging counties to lease up 15,000 hotel rooms.

At the forefront of the project is a number of Valley-region hotels owned by **Vista Investments**, an El Segundo-based firm which has Vagabond Inns in Ventura and Oxnard, as well as one in Glendale and a Best Western next door to Ventura’s Vagabond Inn. All currently have homeless guests.

Vista Chief Executive **Les Biggins** described his involvement with Project Roomkey as a “win-win” for everyone.

“We were approached by the County of Ventura sometime in March,” Biggins recalled. “Their procurement office... sent out a contract — we reviewed it. ... After a month in Ventura, we clearly saw how they were not only good for the community, it’s also good for us.”

Biggins told the Business Journal that while the room rate offered by the county was lower than market value, the deal was hard to resist.

“Under COVID, in our industry, revenue started to significantly decline,” Biggins said. With Project Roomkey, “we were doing much better,” he added.

Ventura County Continuum of Care Program Manager **Tara Carruth** acts as the liaison between the homeless and the hotels. Her Roomkey journey began with the statewide shutdown in mid-March.

“Our Office of Emergency Services through the Sheriff’s Department secured these leases,” Carruth said. “My team assisted with establishing the referral process and screening. We partner with all of the service providers.”

With regards to Vista, Carruth said: “They offered us a fair lease value and obviously the motels were fairly vacant when they were taken up, at a time when tourism was significantly slowed.”

Security, medical measures

For hotel owners, the security of their properties is a risk that the state has largely assumed.

At Motel 6 in Newbury Park — a site at 1516 Newbury Road not owned by Vista that serves homeless guests from Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Simi Valley and Moorpark — tents were set up outside the 175-room motel to process and provide medical tests for incoming occupants. To ensure security, fencing was installed around the entire motel.

Vista’s Biggins said that working with Ventura County has gone smoothly.



Crucial Link: Ventura County's Continuum of Care Program coordinates with hotel owners and the homeless.

PHOTOS BY THOMAS WASPER

“It was a very fair agreement,” he said. “They screened the displaced, they provided the security. There were clauses at the end of the agreement that they would repair any damages. ... There were frankly not a lot of issues.”

In fact, Biggins noted, based on his experience with Ventura County, Vista soon-after leased out Vagabond Inns in Los Angeles, San Mateo and Sacramento for Roomkey programs in those cities’ respective counties.

Biggins added that the Vagabond Inn business model puts the hotels in a good position to house people during the pandemic. The buildings are usually two or three floors with external room entrances and a minimum of enclosed spaces such as lobbies and elevators.

“These (homeless) people are pre-screened. They have to obey the rules of the hotel. If, for any reason, they don’t, they will be removed,” Biggins said.

Somewhat ironically, because of the vetting that goes into these homeless candidates for Roomkey, many may prove less likely to be harboring the coronavirus than the general public, Biggins added.

In Ventura County to date, Carruth said, not one of the homeless people staying at the four designated motels has experienced the virus during their residency.

Funding

Project Roomkey relies on a section of the Federal CARES Act that authorizes spending Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, funds to protect homeless people from COVID-19. Partnering with the state, FEMA will reimburse 75 percent of motel costs while the county taps state emergency funds to offset the remaining 25 percent.

L.A. County currently has 35 hotels or mo-

tels in Project Roomkey, including Vista’s Vagabond Inn at 120 W. Colorado St. in Glendale. The county has paid about \$1 million a month to house homeless in these hotels. Although that funding was originally set to expire at the end of June, FEMA has extended the program through July 30.

As L.A. County Homeless Initiative Director **Phil Ansell** explained to the Business Journal, the state — via Roomkey — has tackled three objectives at once: Protecting the lives of homeless individuals 65 or over with pre-existing conditions; supporting the “health service system by preventing an avalanche of people experiencing homelessness from flooding our hospital beds”; and “enabling hotels and motels that — in most instances would have to close their doors and lay off their staff — to function at a higher level of occupancy that they would routinely have.”

However, in Ventura County, Project Roomkey is set to expire soon.

“Three of the motels in West County gave us the notice in June,” Carruth said. “The Newbury Park (location) also gave us notice.”

Leases for the West Ventura County motels will lapse at the end of July while the Motel 6 contract runs through August.

Remnants of Project Roomkey will manifest in the future. The county is now transitioning into a FEMA-remunerated system that allows individuals to use vouchers to pay for motel rooms without the county leasing entire motels.

Biggins anticipates welcoming homeless guests to his hotels through Ventura County’s voucher system. The transients housed at his locations will room alongside the more typical travelers making their summer reservations.

“We do not anticipate any problems with that,” Biggins said.

Roomkey to Homekey

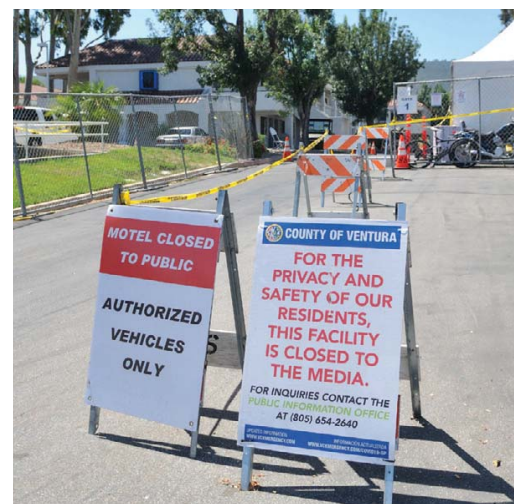
At the end of June, when Gov. **Gavin Newsom** signed the state budget for 2020-21, he announced his intent to earmark money toward Project Homekey, in which counties will purchase hotels and convert them into permanent homeless shelters.

“We are very much interested in this opportunity,” L.A. County’s Ansell said.

According to **Tracy McAulay**, management analyst with the Ventura County Community Development Department, Homekey “dovetails nicely with Project Roomkey.”

“But there are a whole lot of unknowns,” she added, because the county has not yet had the chance to apply for these funds.

A slice of Newsom’s \$750 million designated to local governments toward the homeless



Newbury Park: Fence at Motel 6.

will go to the conversion of motels into permanent homeless housing, but McAulay deemed it also “very early in the process” to know whether or not it will include the hotel operators of Roomkey. McAulay said that the parent company of Motel 6 “indicated they were up to selling (some of) their sites. It’s hard to know with occupancy going back up. We’ll have to see when we go forward.”

However, coronavirus funds must be spent by the end of 2020, so her department will be looking into finding “a housing provider to lead that charge.”

An evaluation committee will be formed to elect that partner moving forward, and Carruth said that she will be a part of that process.

Also, per McAulay, while there was little NIMBY pushback on the county’s assumption of local hotels during the coronavirus emergency, area residents will be taken into account on any permanent hotel conversions.

“We are working closely with cities and making sure they’re comfortable,” McAulay added.

In the meantime, even with its short lifespan, Carruth said Roomkey has been an overall beneficial experience in addressing the local homeless during a time of crisis.

“We had no person at Project Roomkey with COVID, so that was a success,” she said, adding that the county was able to connect some of the people staying at these hospitality sites with health services, drug treatment and, in one case, dental work. “Because they had a secure place for a significant amount of time, they could get their life on track and progress toward housing. The most important aspect is that they were protected from the virus,” she said.



Glendale: Vista Investments' hotel at 120 W. Colorado St.

Calavo's Avocado Market Steady in Pandemic

FOOD: New management at Santa Paula grower.

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

Following a change of leadership months prior, Santa Paula's **Calavo Growers** presented its first earnings report under new management at the beginning of June.

Despite the pandemic, the avocado marketing company reported revenue comparable to the same time last year at \$281 million against \$286 million a year ago. Net loss was \$3.3 million, or -19 cents a share, while adjusted income came in at \$7 million, or 40 cents per share, missing analyst expectations by 8 cents.

The company's new chief executive started his presentation to analysts with a nod to the company's legacy under former chief executive **Lee Cole**.

"I have had the good fortune of working alongside Lee for 10 years as president of Renaissance Food Group, a company that I co-founded and was acquired by Calavo," Chief Executive **James Gibson** said during the conference call. "While Lee has left us a proud legacy, I am even more excited about our future."

Cole also retired from his post as chairman of the board, leaving **J. Link Leavens**, a member of the Calavo board for 33 years, to take up the position.

Other Calavo careerists were promoted to key positions at the beginning of this year, including **Kevin Manion** as chief financial officer and **Joel Silva** as corporate controller and chief accounting officer.

"Our operations here in the U.S. and Mex-

ico are led by a senior team with more than 200 years of collective industry knowledge and experience," Gibson explained.

Calavo started in 1924 in a Vernon warehouse. The publicly traded company is a leading supplier of avocados, along with other prepared foods and refrigerated fruits and vegetables.

Currently, Calavo has three business segments: Fresh Products, which the company acquired in February, focuses on grading, sizing and packing avocados for delivery; Renaissance Food Group produces, markets and distributes packaged food products for retailers; and Calavo Foods is focused on procuring and processing avocados into guacamole products.

'Green gold'

Affectionately calling avocados "green gold," Gibson said demand continues to be "robust" — the U.S. consumes approximately 8 pounds of avocados today per person compared to 3 pounds a decade ago. There's also a growing demand for the fruit in Asia, Gibson said.

In the company's 13 facilities in the U.S. and Mexico, which employ more than 3,500 workers, several employees at Calavo's Santa Paula location tested positive for COVID-19 in mid-May. The affected plant was closed for four days while a third-party cleaning company sanitized the facility, Gibson said.

"Since then, we've had no new incidence of COVID-19," Gibson said during the call. "Our proactive efforts have allowed us to minimize supply chain disruptions and continue to safely serve our customers."

Overall, however, growth was constrained by the virus, with sales falling sharply mid-March because of stay-at-home orders, food



Green Skin: Calavo facility in Riverside.

service customers seeing less foot traffic, canceled orders having to be resold at discounted prices, and the "rapid devaluation of the Mexican peso," Calavo's chief executive said.

"The fresh segment began to recover in April and May as consumers shifted back to normal buying patterns at retail grocery outlets and the food service industry began to open for takeout and delivery," Gibson explained to analysts.

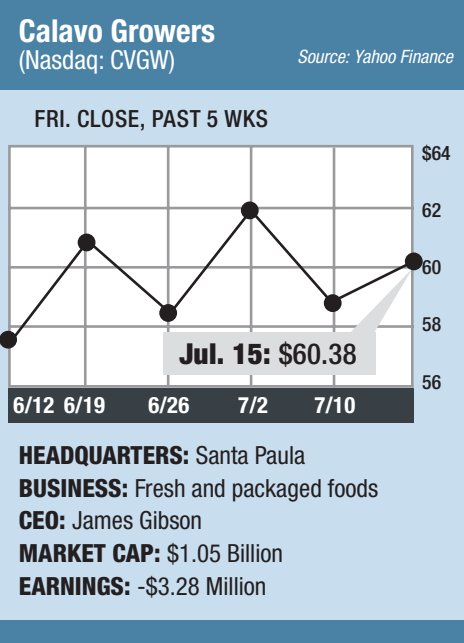
The company's foods sector helped pick up the slack too. Unsold avocados were repurposed for frozen guacamole — inventory with an extended shelf life.

Looking ahead, analysts from **Jefferies**, **Sturdivant and Co.**, **Stephens Inc.** and **Lake Street Capital Markets** await recovery across all of Calavo's sectors in the third quarter through a better avocado crop and more favorable pricing.

"Price volatility isn't always that pronounced, but it seems to be now," said **Robert Frederick Dickerson**, analyst for Jefferies

during the earnings call. "If (the third quarter) is a higher seasonal quarter, pricing is down but volume comes back, it would seem as if there could still be some profitability pressure. But I'm hoping that pricing dynamic recovers quickly as we get through the summer and demand increases."

"The quality, I would say, of the pick is getting better and better," answered Gibson. "And as you know, that allows us to dedicate certain sizes and grades to certain customers. And as long as we have control of that, we can maintain a margin."



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‘Reimagining the Priorities’

NONPROFIT: Steve Nissen, new chairman of the L.A. County Economic Development Corp., says the Valley ‘will not be forgotten in our efforts.’

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

Steven Nissen was appointed chairman of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. on July 2. He replaces Dianne Harrison, former president of California State University – Northridge. Nissen retired from NBCUniversal in January after serving as senior vice president of legal and government affairs for 12 years, opening up more time for his new role with LAEDC and to further develop his consulting firm, Nissen Consulting Group. He also served on the board of the Valley Industry & Commerce Association. Prior to joining NBCUniversal, Nissen worked in the private sector as a partner in the law firm Manatt Phelps and Phillips and in the public sector as chief executive of the California State Bar and a senior official in the administration of former California Gov. Gray Davis.

Question: What is the LAEDC working on?

Answer: In the last several months we embarked on a strategic planning process, which would normally make people’s eyes glaze over, but it occurred in real time just as the public health crisis, economic disruption and really a long overdue racial justice awakening all occurred basically at the same time. It really drove our strategic planning process to reimagine what LAEDC could be in the future, what our economy was going to look like in the future. And it really drove us to embrace the idea for this economy to work, it had to be an economy based in equity — social and racial and gender equity.

What about initiatives to benefit the Valley?

LAEDC ramped up its small business outreach, especially now when small businesses are disproportionately impacted by the economic disruption we’re going through. We want to be there at the other end with the survivors and to help them.

How much of your time will go toward the chairmanship position?

I think we are all leaping into the great unknown. In a typical year, some chairs are more energetically involved than others, so

there’s no real set amount of hours. This is not going to be a typical year. Everything we do this year, for the most part, will be done for the first time, from remote meetings to remote counseling to completely reimagining the priorities as the economy goes through this dramatic change. The staff of course is paid, but this is a volunteer position.

Valley executives lead the LAEDC now, between yourself and Bill Allen as chief executive. Thoughts?

Bill, as the longtime CEO, has lived in the Valley, I think for all of his life, and I have for the last 20 years, mostly. I think it’s great for the Valley and it’s great for the LAEDC. You have two Valley people in leadership positions. It just means that the Valley will not be forgotten in our efforts. I’m proud of that, but I’m also proud of the fact that we are a diverse, fascinating region and we’re all in it together.

What was your role like at NBCUniversal?

I was in the general counsel office, but I led the government affairs effort within the general counsel’s office. I did oversee state and local government affairs and we had a lot going on during those 12 years. When I first started, NBCUniversal was owned by GE, and a couple years into my tenure there GE sold the company to Comcast, which is the company’s current owner.

What memories stick out the most to you during your NBCUniversal tenure?

There was a multi-billion dollar master plan, upgrading the studio and bringing a lot of new things to the theme park, including most recently and notably the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. That required a lot of work up front ... getting the approvals from (Los Angeles) City Council and from the (L.A. County) Board of Supervisors on the development, which included Harry Potter, and working with organized labor, entering into a project labor agreement.

Challenges?

Piracy — if it’s digitized, it’s much easier to pirate and steal and disseminate all over the world. That was a tremendous



Nissen

‘What works for me is curiosity. I’m curious about missions, people, events. ... I’m prepared to be surprised every day. I like to get to solutions, but I think it starts with being open-minded and curious about the people around you and the issues around you.’

STEVEN NISSEN
Nissen Consulting Group

challenge. Land use issues too, because as I said we had a multibillion-dollar master plan development project. So working with neighborhood groups, working with labor, with government to get everything approved, getting signoff, was a major challenge.

Why did you transition to a more advisory role with your consulting firm?

After all these years of working in big institutions, working in the private sector and nonprofit and government, I wanted an opportunity to strike out on my own and take all those experiences and see how I can help others, whether they’re for-profit companies or nonprofit, as they interface with government, with charitable foundations and in the civic structure of Los Angeles. It’s a crazy time to launch a consulting business based on personal relationships and interactions — and then there’s the pandemic shutdown. That brings peculiar challenges, but through it all I’ve encountered some really interesting opportunities, everything from helping a company provide PPE to schools and hospital systems, to working with a medical research institute to help its advancement efforts.

What personality traits help you in your job?

Everyone’s different. What works for me is curiosity. I’m curious about missions, people, events. I’m open to learning about new and different things; I’m prepared to be surprised every day. I like to get to solutions, but I think it starts with being open-minded and curious about the people around you and the issues around you.

Space Force: Palmdale in Race for HQ

AEROSPACE: City hopes established industry will attract new military branch.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** and **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporters

Palmdale has applied to become the location of the headquarters for the U.S. Space Command.

The Antelope Valley city has received an endorsement from Gov. **Gavin Newsom** and support from State Sen. **Scott Wilk**, Assemblyman **Tom Lackey** and Los Angeles County Supervisor **Kathryn Barger**.

The city has not heard back yet from the federal government regarding its application, a spokesman said.

Mayor **Steve Hofbauer** said that with its rich aerospace history, the region is the best place for the headquarters.



Hofbauer

“Some of the most sophisticated aircraft, including the space shuttles, have been designed, built, flown and tested here at (Air Force) Plant 42 and at Edwards Air Force Base,” Hofbauer said in a statement. “Aerospace is in our DNA.”

City Manager **J.J. Murphy**, a retired Air

Force officer, told the Business Journal the presence of industry giants including **Northrop Grumman**, **Lockheed Martin**, **Boeing** and **NASA** in Palmdale provides myriad career opportunities for space command personnel when they retire from the military.

He added the city is in the midst of a “renaissance period,” with a burgeoning downtown scene and several major infrastructure projects in the works.

“Within the next five years, we should have an operating commercial airport here in Palmdale. We will have high-speed rail service via **Virgin Trains** from Palmdale to Las Vegas. That’ll help young entrepreneurs make a decision (to relocate). We have affordable, high-quality housing with market-rate apartments coming on the market in the next 12 months,” he said. “Landing Space Force would be a cherry on top.”

Criteria for the Space Command headquarters include having a population base within the top 150 largest metropolitan statistical areas in the country, a military base within 25 miles and a livability index score of 50 points out of 100 or higher as determined by the **American Association of Retired Persons Public Policy Institute**. Palmdale meets all those criteria.

Murphy added the city has thousands of acres of wide-open land for Space Force.

“We have two spaces that are directly adjacent to Plant 42. One is city owned and is 600 acres. We would certainly be able to offer that up as part of a future stage if we make the next round. We also ... have 17,500 acres directly adjacent to Plant 42 that is currently owned by Los Angeles World Airports.”

He said LAWA bought the space years ago for Los Angeles International Airport East campus, which never materialized.

“What better use of that land than the Space Force HQ?” he posited.

The U.S. Space Command is a separate branch of the Defense Department responsible for military operations in outer space, specifically at altitudes of 100 kilometers or more.



Listener: Nissen at Valley Industry & Commerce Association luncheon in 2016.



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HEALTH CARE & BIOTECH

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Tarzana Hospital CEO Moves to Jewish Home

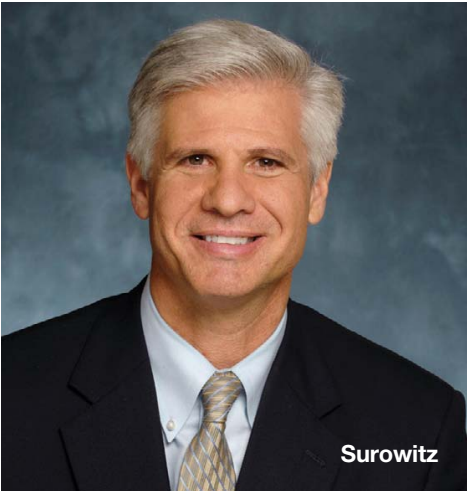
Surowitz leaves top job at Providence after 23 years.

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center’s **Dale Surowitz** will leave his post as chief executive — after roughly 23 years — to lead the **Los Angeles Jewish Home** during a time of rapid expansion.

Outgoing chief executive at the Jewish Home, **Molly Forrest**, will focus on growing advocacy efforts as president of the **Jewish Home Foundation**, the organization said in a statement. She has led the organization for 24 years.

Surowitz’s new role with the senior care provider will focus on an expansion initiative to serve 10,000 seniors throughout Los Angeles County by 2025, with its first efforts focused on West Los Angeles, and eventually four other locations in the Valley area, Forrest said.



The Jewish Home currently serves 4,000 seniors and has historically been centered in the San Fernando Valley, with its central campus in Reseda. The initiative will push the Home’s Brandman Program for seniors at home — an insurance plan funded primarily by **Medicare** and **Medi-Cal**, according to Forest.

“Seniors really want to stay in their homes as long as possible,” added **Andrew Berman**, board chairman at Jewish Home. “Through our Brandman Center for Senior Care, which is our PACE program, we’re able to serve more and more people, a more diverse community, and we’ll be expanding to the west side in 2021 and we’re looking at another expansion for that line of service.”

“The senior program is expanding exponentially, so we have an obligation to increase our capacity, to serve more people, especially people in financial need,” Berman added.

Jewish Home offers rehabilitation services, dementia care, nursing school, hospice and independent living options, Forrest said, making Surowitz’s administrative experiences at Tarzana a good fit.

“His experience at Providence will make it very easy for him to oversee all of our different lines of business,” explained Berman. “With Dale, he’s a local boy. He knows this area, he’s been living in the San Fernando Valley for many, many years — he actually lived down the street from me.”

“I think that’s a dynamite grouping of skills, intent and feeling that will make him quite successful,” added Forrest.

Forrest and Surowitz, it turns out, have known each other for roughly the entirety of each other’s careers, regularly checking in and exchanging thoughts about their overlapping industries. Surowitz also has a special connection to the organization, having an aunt



‘That’s a dynamite grouping of skills, intent and feeling that will make him quite successful.’

MOLLY FORREST
Jewish Home Foundation

that lived at the home at one point, Berman said.

“The Jewish Home has always been very special to me,” Surowitz told the Business Journal. “I’ve had relatives that were in the Jewish Home, I was part of Jewish Home support groups when I was growing up, participating in a couple other support groups over the years, and for the last 10 years I’ve served on some of the subsidiary boards.”

Surowitz will serve as chief executive at the Tarzana hospital until Sept. 10, while the health care system conducts a national search for his replacement.

“We made a decision pre-COVID,” added Surowitz. “I really had to spend a lot of time here making sure the hospital was prepared and ready. I would not step away from Tarzana unless all of these things were in the right place, and they are. In essence, we are prepared for surges and we’re just having to figure out the processes so we can appropri-

ately do what we do best, and that’s provide care to patients.”

During his tenure at the hospital, Surowitz said his proudest moments involve the campus’ ownership change from for-profit **Tenet Corp.** to **Providence Health and Services** in 2008, the \$600 million Tarzana Reimagined project, and the hospital’s joint partnership with **Cedars-Sinai**, which was first announced in March last year.

“(Tenet to Providence) was a very unique transaction, and just as unique is the relationship with Providence being a Catholic, faith-based organization moving to Cedars — that required a lot of navigating the challenging waters to accomplish what we needed to, and it’s gone off just beautifully in terms of the relationship,” Surowitz explained.

“You want to have something in a good position before you leave. I feel comfortable being able to step back,” he said.

Henry Mayo Hospital Grows With Surgery Center

Hand specialists to take patients referred from ER.

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

After two years of construction and planning, and despite an ongoing pandemic, the Henry Mayo Newhall Center for Hand and Reconstructive Surgery opened at the beginning of June.

The center will serve patients in the Santa Clarita Valley, the first of its kind at one of the only hospitals in the area. Such clinics often have a wide-ranging repertoire, including surgery for motor vehicle accidents, arthritis, repetitive motion injuries, tumors, cancer and infection, clinic director Dr. **Mort Rizvi** told the Business Journal.

“Over the past several years, we’ve seen a growth in the medical professional offerings, from clinics like this as well as large providers like UCLA and Kaiser, all of which have been increasing their presence and service availability in the Santa Clarita Valley,” said **Holly Schroeder**, chief executive of the **Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp.** “It represents their confidence in the Santa Clarita Valley as a market, and I think a part of that is we’re a growing community and the population is increasing — we’re actually building new homes and adding new jobs.”

Rizvi anticipates a busy next couple



months for the clinic, regardless of the possibility that elective surgeries could get curtailed again if a second wave of COVID-19 hits in the fall.

“We’ve always had a plan in place,” said Rizvi. “Those patients, if they test COVID positive, we try to keep them outside the hospital, keep them quarantined at home. If they’re in significant pain and are really in need of some intervention, we try to make sure they’re treated first, before we go in and do any surgical procedure on them.”

Emergency surgeries, Rizvi said, would be

seen right away.

“If you cut yourself, you cut an artery and you go to the emergency room, they contact us, we do the surgery urgently. ... Everyone wears a mask, it’s a universal precaution we always do,” explained Rizvi. “We would try to test you for COVID, which is what we’ve been trying to do, but in an emergency where it has to be taken care of right away, we’ve realized that with that comes some risk.”

Rizvi opened up similar programs at **Adventist Health Glendale**, **Huntington Hospital**, and **Children’s Hospital Los Angeles**, as well as another location in Northridge. Fellow hand and plastic surgeon, Glendale’s Dr. **Sepideh Saber**, will be joining Rizvi at the Valencia clinic.

Hand and reconstructive surgery clinics, especially those on a hospital campus, help emergency room doctors make quick, concise decisions on where to send their patients.

“It genuinely attracts a lot of interest because a lot of doctors as well as medical staff don’t know where to refer patients if they have a hand problem,” added Rizvi. “That’s always the issue in an emergency room — ‘Does that go to orthopedic?’ ‘Is it a plastic surgeon that does it?’ There has been confusion.”

There’s also the little-known ‘one-stop-shop’ mentality of a hand and reconstructive surgery clinic, Rizvi said, especially in a digital age.

“There really isn’t a group of people we don’t touch, from your office worker, white collar people, blue collar, children, athletes, geriatric patients — cancer and trauma room patients,” explained the surgeon. “I think people are using their hands more, and technology is driving that. The injuries are occurring more often and the patients are coming in, and they really need someone trained in the specialty we’re offering.”

A clinic on site is linked to the urgent care, emergency room and surgical center on the hospital campus. That’s a huge plus, Rizvi said, the clinic has a channel of prospective patients.

Rizvi said 80 to 90 percent of people will have hand issues at some point in their lives.

There’s also the demographic of the Santa Clarita Valley, Rizvi said, made up now of a lot of young families moving into affordable housing, coupled with an aging population living in retirement communities.

“Santa Clarita being a sports town also with a lot of sports injuries, (the clinic) serves the high schools and the colleges in the area, and also the elderly getting arthritis in their hands as well, to maintain motion and minimize pain,” added Rizvi.

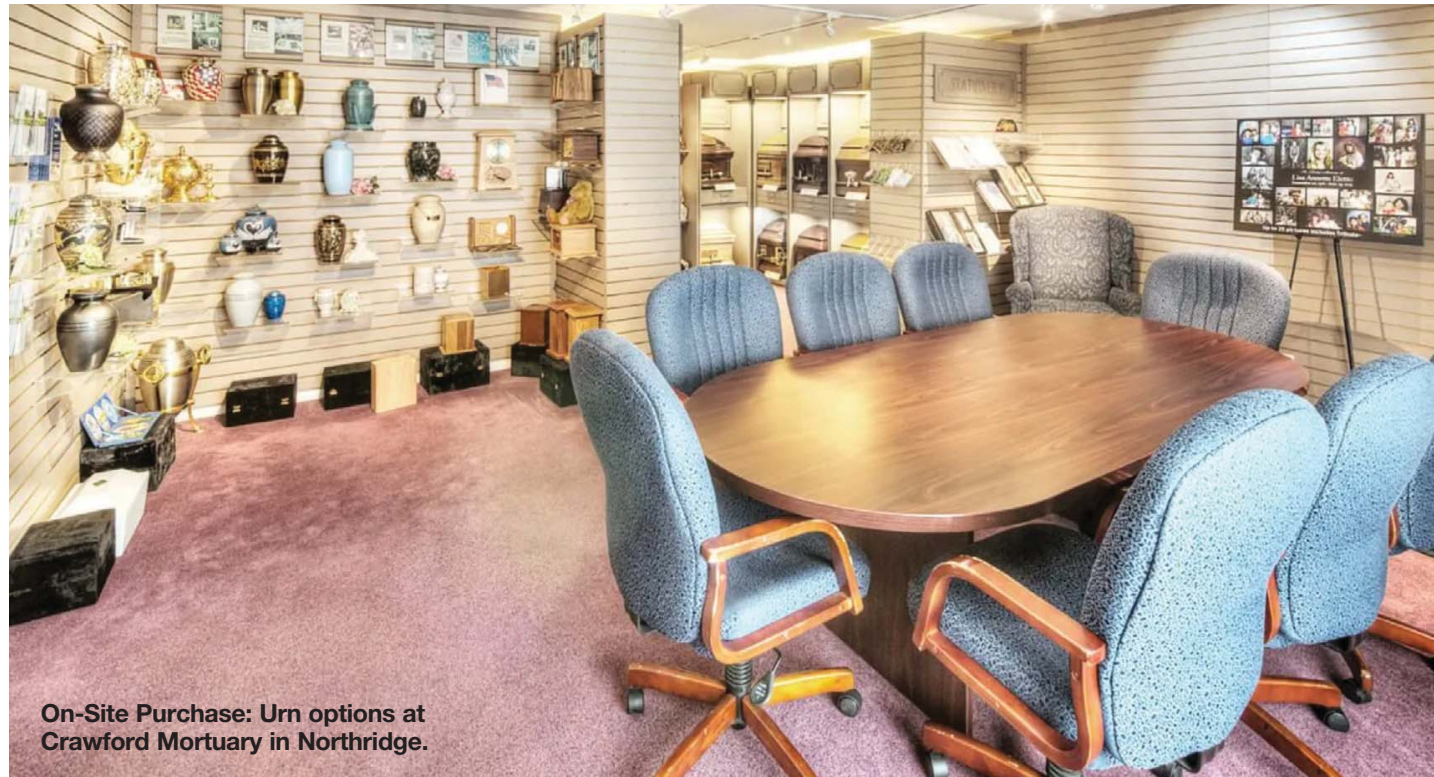
Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital is located at 23845 McBean Parkway in Valencia. The Center for Hand and Reconstructive Surgery is in Suite 220 of the outpatient surgery building at 25751 McBean Parkway.



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Quick Loans Help Funeral Industry Cope With Price-Shopping Trend



On-Site Purchase: Urn options at Crawford Mortuary in Northridge.

Sherman Oaks business offers end-of-life lending.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Consumers are spending less money than ever on funerals and death processions, industry professionals in the Valley tell the Business Journal.

Angeleno Mortuaries Chief Executive **William Hawkins** said his mortuaries are collecting fewer dollars per customer every year, causing a tighter squeeze on profitability. The company has 10 funeral homes throughout the San Fernando Valley, Antelope Valley and San Bernardino, including **Angeleno Valley Mortuary** in North Hollywood, **Angeleno Mortuary** in Van Nuys, **Lorenzen Angeleno Mortuary** in Reseda, **Crawford Mortuary** in Northridge, **Chapel of the Valley Mortuary** in Palmdale, **Reardon Simi Valley Funeral Home** in Simi Valley and **Halley-Olsen-Murphy Funerals & Cremations** and **Antelope Valley Cremation Service** in Lancaster.

"Fifty-seven years ago, when I was a young teenager working in funeral service, price shopping was virtually unheard of. There is an increasing tendency on that ... at least in the last 23 years," Hawkins said.

He pointed to several contributing factors behind consumers' trend towards minimalism, including their increased access to competitively priced choices. Also, he said extended family members today tend to live further away from one another than they used to, driving down procession attendance numbers.

For many, money presents the biggest hurdle.

Hawkins said standard death care services at his mortuaries – including transfer, embalming, preparation, visitation, a funeral, casket, utility car, service director and all the paperwork – cost \$6,000 on average, but that the industry average trends higher.

Increasingly, he said, customers are instead opting for non-ceremonious cremation services, which can cost between \$1,000 and \$3,000.

"Nationally, the cremation rate is (rising) 1 or 1.5 percent on average compounded every year ... for the last 20 or 30 years," he said.

Lender survey

According to a survey released in June by point-of-sale financier **LendingUSA**, funeral professionals ranked the top challenges facing their businesses as planning services that fit within the family's budget (48 percent) and collecting payment (31 percent).

Additionally, 70 percent of respondents said that families today are less prepared for the costs associated with funeral services than they were 10 years ago.

LendingUSA, headquartered in Sherman Oaks, issues microloans to finance big consumer purchases in niche markets like funerals, pet care and cosmetic surgery. It is an extension of **Cross River Bank** in New Jersey, which originates all the company's loans.

With regard to funerals, "there's a big curve in families looking for the least expensive option because they couldn't afford a traditional burial anymore," Merchant Engagement Manager **Elaine Valdez** told the Business Journal.

Added Marketing Strategist **Amanda Krebs**: "Millennials are less wealthy than their parents. People aren't saving as much, they don't have as much for retirement and they certainly do not have the savings for an unexpected funeral."

For funeral homes, the benefit of the loans is that they can offer families more flexible payment options while still getting paid up front.

Angeleno Mortuaries is a registered merchant with LendingUSA. Hawkins said the lender solves a big problem for company in that it eliminates delays and inaccuracies in insurance claim payouts.

"(LendingUSA) verifies, with their expertise, the fact that the life insurance policy is enforced and is not contestable and that the claim will get paid. Once they have that verification, they pay us on behalf of the family for a modest fee. For us, we get paid. On many other kinds of insurance assignments, frankly, we haven't gotten paid. ... It has

helped our accounts receivable."

Industry consolidation

Consumer spending trends have created tough times for small, privately owned, family-operated mortuaries.

"A lot of smaller funeral providers (are) going out of business, where they fall below a viability to manage the current environment," Hawkins said.

Since the mid 1980s, he said, the industry has been taken over by publicly traded, corporate funeral companies run by private equity firms.

That trend has been exacerbated by the proliferation of online retailers, which Hawkins said offer urns, caskets and other products at prices brick-and-mortar homes can't match.

He said Angeleno Mortuaries has been lucky to achieve growth by acquiring small homes from retiring owner-operators who didn't have a family successor and didn't want to sell to a corporate chain.

But that was before COVID-19 further complicated the landscape.

With city regulators now prohibiting gatherings of more than 10 people in response to a recent surge of coronavirus cases, Hawkins said the few customers who want to splurge on funerals aren't able to do so.

"(The virus) is forcing more simplicity on the few families that don't want it. There are limitations on attending gatherings. Apprehension of distant relatives to travel – all those things certainly add to a little uptick in cremation. Among people who still want a ceremony, they need to be drastically smaller. With that, people are probably slightly more inclined to go with a modest casket. In terms of flowers, prayer cards, memorial holders, stationary products and things of that sort, there's less of that being selected and (purchased)."

To stay relevant, he said, funeral homes need to be creative with video livestreaming, high-quality video presentations and cremation jewelry.

"If you were to sum it up, those that are continuing to do well are embracing change and adapting," Hawkins said.

WaBa Grill In NoHo

Franchise expands with delivery-first design.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Despite the pandemic's chokehold on L.A. County restaurants, the **WaBa Grill** franchise is forging ahead with expansion plans.

The chain, known for its healthy rice bowls, opened its latest location earlier this month in the heart of North Hollywood's Arts District, off Lankershim Boulevard and Camarillo Street. It is the banner's second NoHo branch. The first sits near the intersection of Sherman Way and Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Franchise partners **Panos Grivakis** and **Byung Kim** operate the Lankershim location.

WaBa Grill specializes in health-forward protein and veggie bowls, pairing chicken, shrimp, salmon and tofu with rice, salad, fruit and sauces. The company was founded in City of Industry in 2006 and has since grown to more than 200 locations in California and Arizona. Of them, 18 are corporate-owned and operated. The rest are run by independent franchisees.

In addition to the two NoHo locations, WaBa Grill's Valley presence includes outlets in Panorama City, Simi Valley, Sun Valley, Sylmar, Tarzana, Santa Clarita, Castaic Ventura, two in Van Nuys, two in Northridge and three in Oxnard.

According to Vice President of Marketing **Mark Finnegan**, opening the NoHo restaurant during the pandemic was an unusual process.

"It took quite a bit longer," he said. "A lot of it had to do with the availability of inspectors and contractors. We probably had about a three-month delay."

Finnegan said there was a silver lining to the holdup in that it presented an opportunity to tinker with interior design elements that prioritized delivery and to-go lines of business. To that end, the owner-operators installed an at-the-counter grab-and-go cooler where patrons can grab pre-packaged items. Additionally, the restaurant features more shelves and racks for delivery orders, plus some operational tweaks that enable workers to more easily identify and organize delivery and to-go orders.

"Coming out of this, one of the trends we see is that there is going to remain some skittishness among guests," Finnegan said. "Delivery and pickup is a need now. It was certainly a convenience that folks wanted, but we're feeling like there are folks who are going to take dine-in experiences off the table."

He said the WaBa Grill business model has been particularly resilient to the coronavirus, and is well suited for post-pandemic consumer trends.

"We're fortunate," he said. "A number of initiatives we were working on as a brand – pushing toward delivery and pickup and digital ordering – were already well in process when the crisis started. Consumer needs shifted right to where the momentum was already taking us."

Finnegan said the company had already built out an internal delivery app called WaBa Rewards when the pandemic hit and had existing relationships with the four major third-party delivery companies: **Uber**, **Postmates**, **Doordash** and **Grubhub**.

"By their own reporting, we found out we were remarkably good at turning out a delivery or a digital order. We're fast and wait time for drivers is less than it is for other chains," he said.

The company is now incentivizing such orders by waiving all delivery fees.



ENTERTAINMENT

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Product Exclusives at First Virtual Comic-Con

Valley vendors in online exhibit hall and web panels.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

What would have been the 51st annual **San Diego Comic-Con International** was to take place later this week until the coronavirus pandemic caused its cancellation.

As an alternative, the annual pop culture and comic book fan fest is presenting more than 350 panel discussions online for **Comic-Con@Home 2020** as well as making exhibitors available from the virtual convention floor to offer exclusive products for sale, promotional links and more.

Among San Fernando Valley area companies taking part in the panel discussions are **Warner Bros. Entertainment**; **NBCUniversal**; **Walt Disney Co.**'s **Lucasfilm** and **Marvel Entertainment**; and **Nacelle Co.**, a content creation and distribution company in Burbank.

Also part of the virtual convention are interactive activities for fans such as the sidewalk art challenge and a cosplay challenge.

Jason Labowitz, president of **Entertainment Earth**, a pop culture collectibles vendor in Simi Valley, said in an email to the Business Journal that **Comic-Con** was the entertainment industry's Super Bowl. It was a huge disappointment that the convention was cancelled but he and the staff understand and support the decision.

"It's really the quintessential event and an opportune time for us to celebrate our industry," Labowitz said in the email. "Not being there physically is definitely a loss for us and the industry as a whole, so the giant spectacle and celebration that is **San Diego Comic-Con** will be greatly missed this year."

Along with taking part as a virtual exhibitor at **Comic-Con@Home**, **Entertainment Earth** is launching exclusives intended for the con on its website.

"The goal is to ensure that products originally developed for convention attendees are

available at home, online," Labowitz wrote in the email. "We want fans to have access even without the physical event taking place."

Among the exclusives the company is offering are a **WWE Elite Mr. T** action figure, a **Funko Pop!** vinyl figure of "Batman" villain **Ra's al Ghul**, two 30th anniversary "Twin Peaks" enamel pin sets and a jack-in-the-box with the **Joker** popping out of it.

As an alternative to **Comic-Con**, **Sideshow Collectibles**, in Thousand Oaks, will host **Sideshow Con**, a virtual event from July 20 to 26 that will center around a physical booth space for a unique twist on the company's typical convention format.

Andy Smith, public relations manager, said the idea to host **Sideshow Con** was born from the sadness over the cancellation of the annual **San Diego** event. The company wanted to find a way to showcase its new products of original and licensed figurines yet bring in the engagement, discussion and interaction of an in-person event.

"We decided to build a physical real-world **Sideshow** booth space, and we're filling it with new and never-before-seen (and fan favorite) products from **Sideshow** as well as our brand partners like **Hot Toys**, **PCS Collectibles** and **DC Direct**," Smith said in statement.

Sideshow Con will feature giveaways, contests, convention-exclusive products, special guests, artist interviews and all the things one would expect from **Sideshow** at **San Diego Comic-Con**.

Chief Executive **Greg Anzalone** said the company has been going to **San Diego** since 1998 and he would miss it this year.

"Hopefully we can bring a little bit of that **Comic-Con** magic to people at home, and perhaps introduce it to many more people who've perhaps never had the opportunity to experience that amazing event in person," Anzalone said in a statement.

Chuck Costas, vice president of business development at **The Prop Store**, said the **Valencia** memorabilia auction house will take part in **Comic-Con**'s virtual exhibit hall and



this year's virtual event, it will be interesting to see how cons evolve, Costas added.

"These more inclusive, online activities are something that I think will continue to evolve because of what is happening with COVID," he said. "I think it will make the cons in the future better with more of an online component for people all over the world able to participate."

Jim Sullos, president of **Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc.**, the licensing company for the estate of the "Tarzan" creator, said in an email to the Business Journal that he was putting together a virtual panel for **Comic-Con@Home**.

This follows doing an online panel that was posted at the **Comic Con International** website as a substitute for the cancelled **Wonder Con**, in **Anaheim**, where the **Tarzana** company was also going to have a booth. **Wonder Con** was scheduled for April.

The firm was unfamiliar with scripting and screening its panel, but it liked the results, as did **Comic-Con International**, Sullos said.

"Since that time, of course, Zoom meetings have become pretty commonplace, and having been through that process we are now pretty comfortable in putting a panel together," Sullos wrote in the email.

One thing that will be different for the online panel is the length. The allotted time for a panel is 50 minutes but Sullos said that was too long for the average attention span on the internet so they were going to cut it down substantially.

"But we do have some exciting developments to relate," Sullos said in the email.

will offer catalogues for two auctions – one for **Marvel's "The Defenders"** tied to the **Netflix** series that ends on July 23 and the second for movie memorabilia that will take place at a later date. That second auction will feature vintage items from such film series as "Star Wars" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

"We came up with an exclusive print for the **Marvel** auction so the fans can look at it almost like a **Comic-Con** exclusive," Costas said.

He added that the cancellation of **Comic-Con** this year was bittersweet, but it will force businesses to interact with fans in a different way.

With everybody being able to get a ticket to

Film Festival Postponed to Circumvent Virus

Theater closures complicate plans for November event.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

The **Valley Film Festival** has been pushed back three months from its original dates in August to November.

The reason for the switch, said festival founder **Tracey Adlai**, was that it was not certain that the **Laemmle NoHo 7** theaters would be open by then due to the coronavirus outbreak.

"With the spike in infections in **L.A.**, I do not feel comfortable going into a theater right now and I know our filmmakers don't," Adlai said in a phone interview with the Business Journal. "I don't want to put them into that position."

The festival will screen about 50 films this year, both features and shorts in the comedy, drama and documentary categories. It takes place Nov. 11-15 in **North Hollywood**.

Adlai said she is keeping her fingers crossed that the coronavirus outbreak dies down by then so that the festival can expand to nine days, like it did last year. The first

half of the week there was live music every night, panel discussions among filmmakers and a lot of networking while the second half of the week was the film screenings, Adlai said.

"That is what we were planning on doing this year. but with all the venues still closed in **North Hollywood** it is very difficult," she added. "Hopefully, by moving it to November we will be able to do that again."

While the **Valley Film Festival** was started as a way to showcase the work of **San Fernando Valley** area filmmakers, the films shown now come from all over the world.

This year, foreign entries include "Memoria" from French director **Marceau Uguen** and "Granada Nights," a co-production from the United Kingdom and Spain that Adlai described as being about self-discovery.

Valley entries in the festival include two comedies – "Take Me to **Tarzana**" and "Film Fest," about a group of struggling independent filmmakers trying to sell their film at an obscure festival.

The **Valley Film Festival** receives funding from **Community Partners**, a nonprofit charity, and in-kind donations from Valley businesses.



CORPORATIONS' PUBLIC FACE



Open for Delivery: Cheesecake Factory restaurant in Valencia.

Communication gets complicated when a disease can make every marketing, employment and investment decision uncertain.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

In mid-May, **Velocity Financial Inc.** announced steps taken to counter the economic turmoil caused by the coronavirus outbreak. They included suspension of loan origination activities and placing the loan origination staff on a 60-day furlough.

The Westlake Village commercial mortgage lender also communicated its uncertainty about how to navigate the pandemic.

"While it is still too early to accurately predict the ultimate impact of this health crisis on the economy and Velocity's short-term operations, we are positioning the business to thrive in the long term," Chief Executive **Chris Farrar** said in a statement.

Velocity, No. 24 on the Business Journal's list of Public Companies ranked by market capitalization, is not alone in acknowledging the guesswork involved in developing a pandemic strategy and communicating it to investors, employees and customers.

For example, **Cheesecake Factory** on March 23 announced that its restaurants "have a long-standing business in the off-premise channel, which enabled a quick pivot to an off-premise only operating model in all open restaurants as required by state and local officials." Although it closed 30 locations, it said the open restaurants "are operating sustainably at present under this model."

But less than a week later, the company notified landlords it wouldn't pay April rent. And in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing, it said it would furlough 41,000 employees.

"While the duration of COVID-19 and what the reopening of the economy will look like remains uncertain, we look forward to getting our affected staff members back to work as soon as practicable," Chief Executive **David Overton** stated in a preliminary quarterly report on May 5.

Cheesecake Factory ranks No. 17 on the Business Journal list.

Roger Pondel, chief executive of Woodland Hills investor relations and strategic public relations firm

PondelWilkinson Inc., said that the ambiguity of the economic mess left by COVID-19 makes it "impossible to predict and dangerous to predict" what a company's financials will look like.

While Cheesecake and others have stopped issuing guidance for upcoming quarters, investors still want to know what is going on, Pondel said.

"It is important to be transparent and to be very forthright on the quarterly calls," he explained. "Try to breathe some life into the quarterly calls so that investors have confidence."

Being honest in communications with not just investors but also employees, customers, vendors and suppliers was something that **Robert Krol**, an economics professor at **California State University – Northridge** agreed on.

He thinks that being direct, factual and honest about the difficulties facing a business is the best way to go.

"I don't think that would surprise anyone," he added. "I don't think any investor would be surprised if a company says that it is not certain about growth prospects."

Faceless corporations

Perhaps the biggest communications challenge facing public companies during the pandemic is that of no face-to-face meetings, Pondel said.

The non-deal roadshow where company executives would travel to meet with investors and analysts has been suspended for the time being. Instead they hold these meetings via Zoom or other video conferencing platforms. It is something that he has heard that executives like, Pondel said.

For one, they don't have to leave their offices or their routines. Another is that it cuts down on expensive travel, he added.

"Is it the same? No. You cannot see body language as well," Pondel said. "Some investors are telling us they really would like to shake hands and look at that body language in an in-person meeting, but it does not come across on Zoom. But there is no choice right now."

For companies, video conferencing is a tool that is in use every day, Pondel continued. But if you put four or

five people on a Zoom call, it creates a whole different dynamic than if the meeting took place in a conference call using just the phone, he added.

"I have a feeling that the use of video is going to be a permanent change in a lot of ways," Pondel said. "In annual meetings, in roadshows, in other areas of other communications, I think it is going to be one of the biggest permanent areas of change."

Most public company annual meetings have been audio only, so you cannot see anything or anybody, Pondel continued.

"The meetings tend to get boring in general, unless the CEO and CFO are really energetic and great presenters," he added.

What public companies need to do is stay in front of their investors as much as possible, he advised.

"The out-of-mind, out-of-sight syndrome could easily take hold, but it is critical during a time like this that it does not," Pondel said.

Krol, from CSUN, said another consideration that public company executives are going with is forecasts in the media that speculate about the type of recovery that will happen and whether it will be fast or slow.

"The reality is forecasting is always tricky even in the best of times," Krol said. "Right now it is highly speculative."

And the uncertainty levels in the forecasts are huge, he added.

Part of that uncertainty is not just the traditional anxieties about sales and whether a business need to lay off staff, but also in terms of policy and what the federal, state and even county governments will do.

"That type of uncertainty is as troubling and difficult for businesses as the traditional uncertainty," Krol said. "I would just communicate that as directly as possible."

Krol thinks public and private companies are going to pull back and hold off on hiring and investing in infrastructure and new equipment. The risks and returns on hiring and investment are just so uncertain that they will have to hold those decisions, Krol said.

"There is value in waiting at this point in time," he added.

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List of Valley's Most
Profitable Public
Companies.
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THE LIST

PUBLIC COMPANIES

Valley-area companies ranked by market capitalization as of June 30

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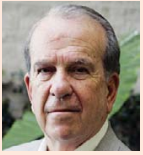














Co-Working Locations

Rank		Company <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name• address• website	(in millions)			Description of Operations	Profile <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stock ticker• employees	Top Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name• title• phone	
			Market Cap <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6/30/2020• 6/30/2019	Revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2019• 2018	Net Income (Loss) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2019• 2018				
1		Walt Disney Co. 500 S. Buena Vista St. Burbank 91521 thewaltdisneycompany.com	\$199,827.3 \$254,927.4	\$69,570 \$59,434	\$11,054 \$12,598	media and entertainment	DIS 222,564	Bob Chapek CEO (818) 560-1000	
2		Amgen Inc. One Amgen Center Drive Thousand Oaks 91320 amgen.com	137,599.9 113,661.5	23,362 23,747	7,842 8,394	biotechnology	AMGN 22,000	Robert Bradway CEO, Chairman (805) 447-1000	
3		Public Storage 701 Western Ave. Glendale 91201 publicstorage.com	33,189.6 41,265.7	2,847 2,754	1,521 1,711	self-storage real estate investment trust	PSA 5,900	Joe Russell CEO (818) 244-8080	
4		Teledyne Technologies Inc. 1049 Camino Dos Rios Thousand Oaks 91360 teledynetechnologies.com	11,401.7 9,991.8	3,164 2,902	402 334	instrumentation, digital imaging, aerospace and defense electronics, engineered systems	TDY 11,790	Aldo Pichelli CEO, President (805) 373-4545	
5		Avery Dennison Corp. 207 Goode Ave. Glendale 91203 averydennison.com	9,537.4 10,008.3	7,070 7,159	304 467	manufacturer of pressure-sensitive materials, tickets, tags, labels and other products	AVY 30,000	Mitchell Butier CEO, President (626) 304-2000	
6		American Homes 4 Rent 30601 Agoura Road, Suite 200 Agoura Hills 91301 americanhomes4rent.com	8,048.2 7,319.1	1,143 1,073	141 108	single-family home real estate investment trust	AMH 1,324	David Singelyn CEO (805) 413-5300	
7		BlackLine Inc. 21300 Victory Blvd., 12th Floor Woodland Hills 91367 blackline.com	4,641.2 2,930.7	289 228	(33) (28)	cloud-based finance controls and automation software for mid-size to large enterprises	BL 1,055	Therese Tucker CEO (818) 223-9008	
8		PS Business Parks Inc. 701 Western Ave. Glendale 91201 psbusinessparks.com	3,624.3 4,609.8	430 414	175 227	diversified real estate investment trust	PSB 155	John Petersen Interim CEO and President (818) 244-8080	
9		Semtech Corp. 200 Flynn Road Camarillo 93012 semtech.com	3,406.1 3,370.5	627 627	70 63	semiconductors	SMTC 1,388	Mohan Maheswaran CEO, President (805) 498-2111	
10		PennyMac Financial Services Inc. 3043 Townsgate Road Westlake Village 91361 pennymacfinancial.com	3,306.8 1,781.3	2,273 1,375	393 88	mortgage banking and investment management	PFSI 4,215	David Spector CEO, President (818) 224-7442	
11		AeroVironment Inc. 900 Innovators Way Simi Valley 93065 avinc.com	1,924.2 1,319.7	314 271	47 34	aerospace and defense	AVAV 823	Wahid Nawabi CEO, President (805) 520-8350	
12		PennyMac Mortgage Investment Trust 3043 Townsgate Road Westlake Village 91361 pennymacmortgageinvestmenttrust.com	1,740.7 1,670.1	786 526	226 153	mortgage real estate investment trust	PMT 1	David Spector CEO, President (818) 224-7028	
13		LTC Properties Inc. 2829 Townsgate Road, Suite 350 Westlake Village 91361 ltcreit.com	1,467.1 1,812.1	185 169	81 155	specialized real estate investment trust	LTC 22	Wendy Simpson CEO, Chairwoman, President (805) 981-8655	

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Researched by Joshua Niv

PUBLIC COMPANIES

Rank		Company <ul style="list-style-type: none">nameaddresswebsite	(in millions)			Description of Operations	Profile <ul style="list-style-type: none">stock tickeremployees	Top Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none">nametitlephone	
			Market Cap <ul style="list-style-type: none">6/30/20206/30/2019	Revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none">20192018	Net Income (Loss) <ul style="list-style-type: none">20192018				
14		Arcutis Biotherapeutics 2945 Townsgate Road, Suite 110 Westlake Village 91361 arcutis.com	\$1,167.0 NA	\$0 NA	(\$42) NA	biopharmaceutical	ARQT NA	Frank Watanabe CEO, President (805) 418-5006	
15		Marcus & Millichap Inc. 23975 Park Sorrento, Suite 400 Calabasas 91302 marcusmillichap.com	1,139.7 1,201.5	806 815	77 87	real estate brokerage and financing services	MMI 877	Hessam Nadji CEO, President (818) 212-2250	
16		Simulations Plus Inc. 42505 10th St. West Lancaster 93534 simulations-plus.com	1,063.0 500.4	34 30	9 9	application software	SLP 111	Shawn O'Connor CEO (661) 723-7723	
17		Cheesecake Factory Inc. 26901 Malibu Hills Road Calabasas Hills 91301 thecheesecakefactory.com	1,033.1 1,948.5	2,483 2,332	127 99	restaurants	CAKE 46,250	David Overton CEO, Chairman (818) 871-3000	
18		Dine Brands Global Inc. 450 N. Brand Blvd. Glendale 91203 dinebrands.com	689.6 1,672.8	910 781	104 80	restaurants	DIN 3,560	Stephen Joyce CEO (818) 240-6055	
19		Tutor Perini Corp. 15901 Olden St. Sylmar 91342 tutorperini.com	616.0 721.1	4,451 4,455	(388) 83	construction	TPC 9,100	Ronald Tutor CEO, Chairman (818) 362-8391	
20		Tejon Ranch Co. 4436 Lebec Road Tejon Ranch 93243 tejonranch.com	380.2 454.4	50 46	11 4	real estate development and agribusiness	TRC 106	Gregory Bielli CEO, President (661) 248-3000	
21		MannKind Corp. 30930 Russell Ranch Road, Suite 300 Westlake Village 91362 mannkindcorp.com	368.7 210.3	63 28	(52) 28	biotechnology	MNKD 230	Michael Castagna CEO (818) 661-5000	
22		Limoneira Co. 1141 Cummings Road Santa Paula 93060 limoneira.com	259.8 347.8	171 129	(6) 20	agribusiness and real estate development	LMNR 319	Harold Edwards CEO, President (805) 525-5541	
23		Cinedigm Corp. 15301 Ventura Blvd. Building B, Suite 420 Sherman Oaks 91403 cinedigm.com	178.2 47.5	54 68	(16) (19)	independent content distributor	CIDM 104	Christopher McGurk CEO, Chairman (424) 281-5400	
24		Velocity Financial Inc. 30699 Russell Ranch Road, Suite 295 Westlake Village 91362 velfinance.com	78.9 NA	162 NA	17 NA	real estate finance	VEL NA	Christopher Farrar CEO, Director (818) 532-3708	
25		Research Solutions Inc. 16350 Ventura Blvd., Suite D 811 Encino 91436 researchsolutions.com	62.6 68.1	29 28	(1) (2)	reprint services	RSSS NA	Peter Derycz CEO, President (310) 477-0354	
26		California Resources Corp. 27200 Tourney Road, Suite 200 Santa Clarita 91311 crc.com	60.8 961.4	2,804 2,835	(28) 328	oil and natural gas producer	CRC 1,250	Todd Stevens CEO, President (888) 848-4754	

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Researched by Joshua Niv

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PUBLIC COMPANIES *Continued from page 13*













Rank		Company • name • address • website	(in millions)			Description of Operations	Profile • stock ticker • employees	Top Executive • name • title • phone	
			Market Cap • 6/30/2020 • 6/30/2019	Revenue • 2019 • 2018	Net Income (Loss) • 2019 • 2018				
27		Interlink Electronics Inc. 1267 Flynn Road Camarillo 93012 interlinkelectronics.com	\$34.7 \$11.3	\$7 \$9	(\$1) \$1	manufacturer of force sensing technology	LINK NA	Steven Bronson CEO, Chairman (805) 484-8855	
28		NetSol Technologies Inc. 23975 Park Sorrento, Suite 250 Calabasas 91302 netsoltech.com	32.9 67.7	68 61	9 4	application software	NTWK 1,360	Najeeb Ghauri CEO, Chairman (818) 222-9195	
29		Capstone Turbine Corp. 16640 Stagg St. Van Nuys 91406 capstoneturbine.com	30.9 58.5	83 83	(17) (10)	heavy electrical equipment	CPST 154	Darren Jamison CEO, President (818) 734-5300	
30		Bank of Santa Clarita 23780 Magic Mountain Parkway Santa Clarita 91355 bankofsantaclarita.com	30.5 42.7	NA 10	3 3	commercial bank	BSCA NA	Frank Di Tomaso CEO, Executive Chairman (661) 362-6000	
31		Unico American Corp., dba Crusader Insurance Co. 26050 Mureau Road Calabasas 91302 crusaderinsurance.com	29.5 32.6	31 34	(3) (3)	multiline insurance	UNAM 72	Cary Cheldin CEO, Chairman, President (818) 591-9800	
32		Salem Media Group Inc. 4880 Santa Rosa Road Camarillo 93012 salemedia.com	29.4 62.6	254 263	(28) (3)	broadcasting and cable television	SALM 1,487	Edward Atsinger III CEO (805) 987-0400	
33		Mission Valley Bancorp 9116 Sunland Blvd. Sun Valley 91352 missionvalleybank.com	22.9 35.4	19 16	4 3	commercial bank	MVLY NA	Tamara Gurney CEO, President (818) 394-2300	
34		Second Sight Medical Products Inc. 12744 San Fernando Road, Suite 400 Sylmar 91342 second sight.com	22.3 96.9	3 7	(34) (35)	implantable prosthetic devices to restore functional vision	EYES 117	Matthew Pfeffer Acting CEO (818) 833-5060	
35		BNK Petroleum Inc. 760 Paseo Camarillo, Suite 350 Camarillo 93010 bnkpetroleum.com	15.6 44.3	17 24	(0) 5	oil and gas exploration	BNKPF 19	Wolf Regener CEO, President (805) 484-3613	
36		Taitron Components Inc. 28040 W. Harrison Parkway Valencia 91355 taitroncomponents.com	15.1 17.0	7 8	1 1	technology distributors	TAIT NA	Stewart Wang CEO, President (661) 257-6060	
37		U.S. Nuclear Corp. 7051 Eton Ave. Canoga Park 91303 usnuclearcorp.com	15.0 21.8	4 4	(3) (2)	developer and manufacturer of radiation detection	UCLE NA	Robert Goldstein CEO, Chairman, President (818) 883-7043	
38		Trio-Tech International 16139 Wyandotte St. Van Nuys 91406 triotech.com	11.6 10.8	39 42	2 1	semiconductor equipment	TRT NA	Siew Wai Yong CEO, President (818) 787-7000	
39		Flamemaster Corp. 13576 Desmond St. Pacoima 91331 flamemaster.com	10.4 9.7	NA NA	NA NA	commodity chemicals	FAME NA	Joseph Mazin President, COO (818) 890-1401	
40		APEX Global Brands Inc. 5990 Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 600 Sherman Oaks 91411 apexglobalbrands.com	5.2 6.7	24 29	(12) (56)	apparel, accessories and luxury goods	APEX 37	Henry Stupp CEO (818) 908-9868	

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PUBLIC COMPANIES

Rank		Company • name • address • website	(in millions)			Description of Operations	Profile • stock ticker • employees	Top Executive • name • title • phone	
			Market Cap • 6/30/2020 • 6/30/2019	Revenue • 2019 • 2018	Net Income (Loss) • 2019 • 2018				
41		Qualstar Corp. 1267 Flynn Road Camarillo 93012 qualstar.com	\$4.6 \$11.6	\$13 \$12	(\$0) \$2	computer storage and peripherals	QBAK NA	Steven Bronson CEO, President (805) 583-7744	
42		Tix Corp. 12711 Ventura Blvd., Suite 340 Studio City 91604 tixcorp.com	3.8 9.4	13 13	(3) (8)	discount ticketing services and branded event merchandising	TIXC NA	Mitchell Francis CEO, Chairman, President (818) 761-1002	
43		Cavitation Technologies Inc. 10019 Canoga Ave. Chatsworth 91311 ctinanotech.com	1.9 4.7	1 1	(1) (0)	biodiesel equipment manufacturer	CVAT NA	Igor Gorodnitsky CEO, President (818) 718-0905	
44		Immunocellular Therapeutics Ltd. 30721 Russell Ranch Road, Suite 140 Westlake Village 91362 imuc.com	1.0 0.7	NA 0	NA (14)	cancer drug developer	IMUC 4	Anthony Gringeri CEO, President (818) 264-2300	
45		BioSolar Inc. 27936 Lost Canyon Road, Suite 202 Santa Clarita 91387 biosolar.com	1.0 1.8	0 0	4 (10)	photovoltaic solar panels	BSRC NA	David Lee CEO, Chairman, President (661) 251-0001	
46		Web Blockchain Media 3940 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Suite 160 Studio City 91604 webblockchainmedia.com	0.1 NA	NA NA	NA NA	diversified holdings, asset acquisition and development	WEBB NA	Steve Slome CEO, Founder, Executive Producer info@webblockchainmedia.com	

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THE LIST

MOST PROFITABLE PUBLIC COMPANIES
Ranked by return on equity for three years

Rank	Name	Ticker	Three-Year Return on Equity	12-Month Return on Equity	Rank	Name	Ticker	Three-Year Return on Equity	12-Month Return on Equity
1	Amgen Inc.	AMGN	40.80	70.04	24	Salem Media Group Inc.	SALM	-1.29	-24.36
2	Avery Dennison Corp.	AVY	34.47	34.92	25	Tutor Perini Corp.	TPC	-3.35	-20.62
3	Simulations Plus Inc.	SLP	26.49	24.89	26	Unico American Corp.	UNAM	-8.21	-4.69
4	Public Storage	PSA	26.17	26.93	27	BlackLine Inc.	BL	-9.65	-9.32
5	Walt Disney Co.	DIS	21.75	12.28	28	Research Solutions Inc.	RSSS	-39.54	-25.66
6	Cheesecake Factory Inc.	CAKE	21.62	12.48	29	Tix Corp.	TIXC	-65.66	-98.56
7	Marcus & Millichap Inc.	MMI	19.69	17.40	30	U.S. Nuclear Corp.	UCLE	-74.84	-96.41
8	PennyMac Financial Services Inc.	PFSI	18.03	25.35	31	Capstone Turbine Corp.	CPST	-78.50	-97.60
9	PS Business Parks Inc.	PSB	16.11	14.34	32	Apex Global Brands Inc.	APEX	-95.77	-93.52
10	Teledyne Technologies Inc.	TDY	15.08	16.03	33	ImmunoCellular Therapeutics Ltd.	IMUC	-181.22	N/A
11	LTC Properties Inc.	LTC	13.72	12.64	34	Second Sight Medical Products Inc.	EYES	-529.43	-514.52
12	Qualstar Corp.	QBAK	11.43	1.32	35	Arcutis Biotherapeutics	ARQT	N/A	N/A
13	Flamemaster Corp.	FAME	10.84	N/A	36	Dine Brands Global Inc.	DIN	N/A	N/A
14	PennyMac Mortgage Investment Trust	PMT	9.96	-2.32	37	MannKind Corp.	MNKD	N/A	N/A
15	AeroVironment Inc.	AVAV	7.95	7.75	38	Cinedigm Corp.	CIDM	N/A	N/A
16	Taitron Components Inc.	TAIT	7.81	7.93	39	Velocity Financial Inc.	VEL	N/A	10.84
17	Semtech Corp.	SMTC	6.92	6.10	40	California Resources Corp.	CRC	N/A	N/A
18	Trio-Tech International	TRT	6.36	6.94	41	Interlink Electronics Inc.	LINK	N/A	N/A
19	Limoneira Co.	LMNR	4.72	-4.94	42	Bank of Santa Clarita	BSCA	N/A	N/A
20	NetSol Technologies Inc.	NTWK	4.41	7.20	43	Mission Valley Bancorp	MVLY	N/A	N/A
21	Tejon Ranch Co.	TRC	1.01	1.70	44	Cavitation Technologies Inc.	CVAT	N/A	N/A
22	BNK Petroleum Inc.	BNKPF	0.95	-21.79	45	BioSolar Inc.	BSRC	N/A	N/A
23	American Homes 4 Rent	AMH	0.65	1.93	46	Web Blockchain Media	WEBB	N/A	N/A



REAL ESTATE

Michael Aushenker
(818) 316-3123 | maushenker@sfbvj.com

Apartments On Horizon Near CSUN

Multifamily with 51 units proposed for Northridge.

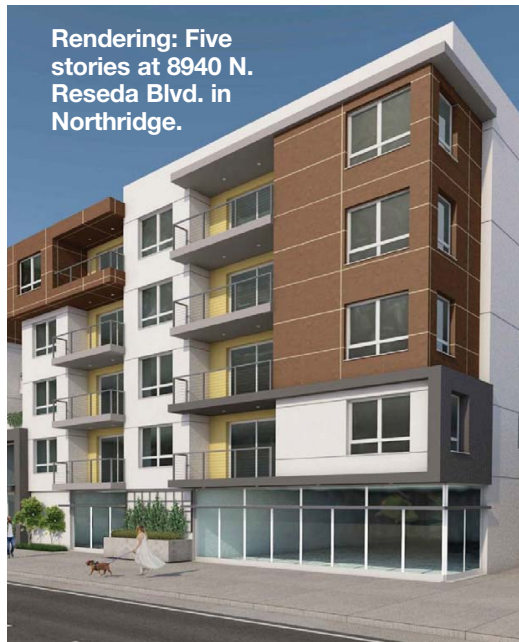
By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

The influx of residential dwellings in Northridge continues as another developer intends to capitalize on the demand for student housing near the campus of **California State University – Northridge**.

A parcel located at 8940 N. Reseda Blvd. will host a five-story building with 51 apartments in the Northridge submarket, according to a July application filed with Los Angeles City Planning Department.

The CSUN-adjacent units will be comprised of one- and two-bedroom apartments over subterranean parking levels to accommodate 92 vehicles.

Rendering: Five stories at 8940 N. Reseda Blvd. in Northridge.



The applicant, **Uzi Levy and 8940 Reseda LLC**, has requested entitlements allowing for a height increase and a reduction to required side-yard setback in exchange for five low-income units. The developer is also requesting a demolition permit to raze the property's existing commercial building.

GA Engineering Inc. has designed the contemporary multifamily asset, which will include a courtyard, roof deck and ground-floor fitness center.

Back in 2015, this parcel was acquired for \$2.1 million, according to CoStar Group data.

This latest multifamily project is one of many residential developments currently in different phases of planning and construction, including **Mosaic**, a 61-townhouse project located at 8350-8430 N. Reseda Blvd. being developed by Arizona firm **Meritage Homes** and designed by **KTGY Architecture + Planning**; a 146-residential unit project by **Nordhoff Darby**, designed by **DE Architects**; **Shea Properties'** \$100 million development featuring 429 apartments at Nordhoff Street and Corbin Avenue, designed by **KTGY Architecture + Planning**; and the **Symphony Development**-conceived project with 128 units on a 1.5-acre parcel at 9530-9546 N. Reseda Blvd.

In addition to the housing, CSUN itself is overseeing construction of a four-story, 150-suite hotel on its campus, to be developed by **Corvias** and designed by **Gensler**.



Truck Power: NorthStar's fleet parked in front of loading dock in Chatsworth.

Trading Spaces in Chatsworth Industrial

NorthStar Moving relocates during a virus crisis.

By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

For 15 years, **Ram Katalan** and wife **Laura McHolm** have run their moving and self-storage business at a leased 380,000-square-foot property shared with another company in Chatsworth.

"We were subleasing from them," Katalan explained.

But in the midst of the pandemic, the couple found themselves needing to relocate after the owner-user of their site got acquired by a new parent company. Suddenly their **NorthStar Moving** had to move itself to another Chatsworth address at 20401 Prairie St.

"They got bought by a much larger company," Ram said of **Cosmetic Laboratories America**, which manufactures shampoos and other hair products.

"The location we're moving into we're subleasing from the company that purchased CLA," Katalan said.

"We're sort of swapping spots," added McHolm.

After a decade and a half at 9120 Mason Ave., relocating proved to bring "a bit of (apprehension)," Ram said. "It's a challenge – definitely out of our comfort zone."

With the move, NorthStar downsized its local storage space from 100,000 to 65,000 square feet.

McHolm explained that the company built out the offices at the Mason Avenue location. "We were apprehensive to give it up," she added.

The couple, who reside in Santa Monica, personally supervised the July 1 move to the new location. "We're literally a couple blocks away (from the previous location)," McHolm said.

Katalan and McHolm have other NorthStar locations: One in San Mateo with 20,000 square feet; and another in Phoenix, which totals just under 10,000 square feet.

One unusual service which the Chatsworth location provides is temporarily store furniture and personal effects from houses used as filming locations. The NorthStar team take photos of the furniture, bookshelves and other interior arrangements

prior to filming, then moves everything into storage so the film designers have a blank canvas to decorate the set. When filming concludes, NorthStar returns and replaces the furniture in the proper arrangement.

Another service that differentiates NorthStar among self-storage and moving endeavors is that they employ reusable and stackable wooden vaults in the warehouse.

"They're more environmentally friendly," McHolm said of the pods. "Each panel can be rebuilt and reused – we can expand or contract."

Numerous entertainment industry clients have utilized the company's moving services, from individual stars such as **Angelina Jolie**, to production companies such as **Jim Henson Productions**, **Dick Clark Productions** and **Getty Center**.

"Everything from law offices to libraries to accountants and residential," she said. "Large buildings along the Wilshire Corridor. We generally try to become people's movers for life."

A sign of the times calls for some re-thinking of the business configuration for its team of 100 employees to ensure safety during the coronavirus crisis. The adjustments include creating more space at the ingress and egress of the warehouse; placing movers closer to the storage area; and scheduling staggered start times for employees with masks and gloves required plus temperature checks before outbound assignments.

"We are an essential business," McHolm said. "We've been working all of our way through this."

While the company was fortunate enough not to lay off or furlough team members, NorthStar did set up computer and phone systems enabling some employees to work from home.

"We changed our hours up a lot and extended lunch hours for employees to have time with kids," McHolm said.

Valley businesses that have used their services include law and accounting firms and retail businesses such as **Menchie's Frozen Yogurt**.

NorthStar Moving ranks No. 9 on the Business Journal's list of Women-Owned Businesses.

Posh Offices for L'Oreal In Encino

Construction is complete on Pulp Riot brand headquarters.

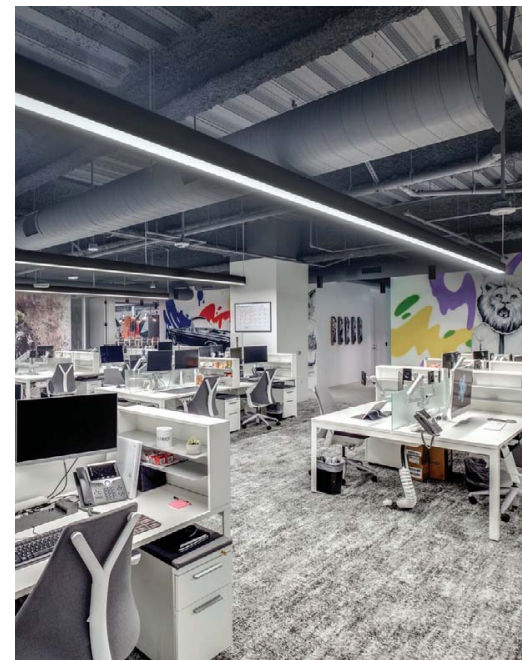
By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

Design studio **Ware Malcomb** announced that construction is finished on cosmetics company **L'Oreal's** Pulp Riot offices, located at 16501 Ventura Blvd. in Encino.

Pulp Riot is a L'Oreal-owned brand of hair coloring, and the new 6,600-square-foot office space includes a hair demo salon, conference rooms, open offices, flex offices and a photo studio.

Los Angeles-based Ware Malcomb provided interior architecture and design services for this project, working in tandem with general contractor **Pinnacle**. The designers selected materials that used simple textures in contrasting ways, such as black, white, and grays paired with white walls to allow blank canvases for the company's branding, according to the firm. Darker ceilings were incorporated to allow for a deep contrast with pops of colors on the walls.

In addition to offices, the space will serve as a training facility for stylists.



Chic: Workspace at 16501 Ventura Blvd.

"This is a company with a very distinct brand, and we wanted the interior design to showcase that brand and tell a story throughout the space," **Alicia Zaro**, director of interior architecture and design for Ware Malcomb's Los Angeles office, said in a statement. "In working closely with the team at L'Oreal and Pulp Riot, we created an environment where the company's branding could speak for itself in a space that inspires innovation and creativity for employees and visitors alike."

The conference rooms were designed around the names and color tones of Pulp Riot's popular hair products. Ware Malcomb also installed acoustical clouds in the main conference room and put down some carpet at the grand entry next to the demo salon. The firm also selected furniture colors tied to the overall branding concept.

French-owned L'Oreal already had a sizable regional presence near the San Fernando Valley area, including a 274,000-square-foot distribution facility at Tejon Ranch.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR & PUBLISHER



On the following pages are profiles of the 200 people we consider the most influential in the Valley area.

Some are driven business owners or operators. Others are at the helm of organizations that strive to make our community a better place. A few are top educators. Many are professionals. But all are engaged and active. They are the most influential people in our community.

This is the fifth year we have produced the Valley 200, and we added something different. In this year 2020, we have selected 20 of the 200 as “Icons of Influence.” They are the standouts among the standouts, the most influential of the most influential.

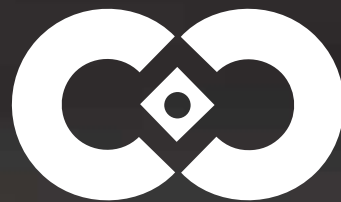
How did we select the 20? First, we looked for those who have been leaders in our Valley area for a long time. (The word “decades” can be used in the descriptions of most.) Folks who have been engaged in several disciplines – such as business owners who have been involved in several charities, chambers and business groups – were automatic candidates. Leaders who have appeared multiple times on our Valley 200 list were favored. Significantly, I sought the help and insight of some longtime local leaders to finalize the list of icons. I asked them: Who would you call on if you really, really wanted to get something of a civic nature done?

I am absolutely candid in saying these were difficult choices; we could have 30 or 40 Icons of Influence, not just 20. That means we’ll surely see some new icons next year.

I will conclude this note, as I always do, by saying this: our list of influential people is very good. But it is not perfect. If you know anyone who’s an emerging leader, or perhaps an established one we overlooked, let me know. I’d be pleased to consider them next year. You can always reach me at ccrumpley@sfvbj.com.

Sincerely,

Charles Crumpley
Editor and Publisher



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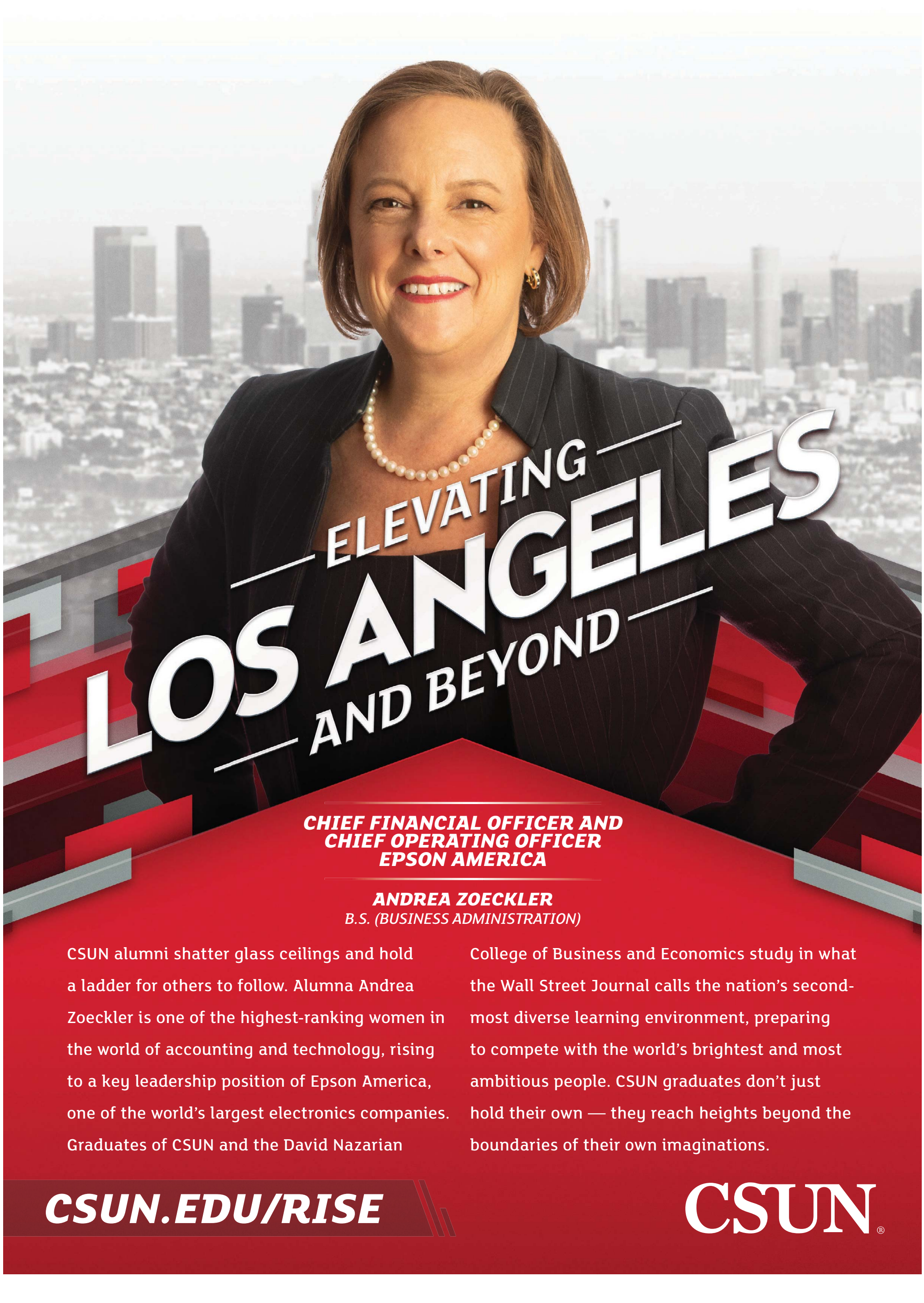
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A portrait of Andrea Zoeckler, a woman with short brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark pinstriped blazer over a dark top, a pearl necklace, and gold hoop earrings. The background is a hazy view of the Los Angeles skyline. Overlaid on the image is the text "ELEVATING LOS ANGELES AND BEYOND" in large, white, 3D-style letters.

ELEVATING LOS ANGELES AND BEYOND

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ANDREA ZOECKLER
B.S. (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)

CSUN alumni shatter glass ceilings and hold a ladder for others to follow. Alumna Andrea Zoeckler is one of the highest-ranking women in the world of accounting and technology, rising to a key leadership position of Epson America, one of the world's largest electronics companies. Graduates of CSUN and the David Nazarian

College of Business and Economics study in what the Wall Street Journal calls the nation's second-most diverse learning environment, preparing to compete with the world's brightest and most ambitious people. CSUN graduates don't just hold their own — they reach heights beyond the boundaries of their own imaginations.

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WAYNE ADELSTEIN

The Decision Group

Wayne Adelstein is owner of Decision Group, a business consulting firm. He also serves as chief executive at the Northridge Chamber of Commerce. Adelstein has served on the boards of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, where he was vice chair; Valley Economic Alliance; Valley Economic Development Center, where he was chair; California State University – Northridge Alumni Association, where he

was president; and CSU Alumni Council, where he was president. He currently serves on the board of the Fernando Award Foundation.



MARY AKPOVI

Martini Akpovi Partners

Mary Akpovi, Ph.D., is a partner with the accounting firm of Martini Akpovi Partners in Encino, and she is known for devoting significant time to local and foreign charities that serve women, orphans and the homeless. She has sat on the boards of Exceptional Children Foundation and Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission. Akpovi received Volunteer of the Year award from the Business Journal as well as the Business Journal's Award for Lifetime Achievement. She also is proud of training and mentoring future leaders. "To walk along with

others as they come into their own professionally, is exceptionally rewarding," she said. Akpovi is a certified public accountant with a focus on tax and consulting. She holds a doctorate in business administration and earned a master's degree in business taxation from the University of Southern California, along with a master's in business administration from Santa Clara University.



LEE KANON ALPERT

Alpert, Barr & Grant

Lee Kanon Alpert is a founding member and senior counsel at the law firm Alpert, Barr & Grant in Encino. He is also president and founding member of Alpert Dispute Resolution and Consulting Inc., and he is a registered lobbyist. In the past year Alpert joined the board of trustees at Woodbury University in Burbank, a position he took because of the school's work in helping minority and foreign students get an education. Alpert is past president of the governing board for Providence Health and Services hospitals, the board of commissioners for the Los

Angeles Department of Water and Power and L.A. Building and Safety Department. He is a past commissioner of Los Angeles World Airports and past president of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. He is past chair and current board member of Genesis L.A. In 1999, Alpert received the Fernando Award for his volunteer work in the Valley area.



ERICK ARNDT

SCV Startup

Erick Arndt is founder of SCV Startup, a mentorship-driven accelerator program to launch technology companies in the Santa Clarita Valley. In the last year, he has moved into startup investment and has transitioned "from organizing the community and helping to curate it to seed-round investor," he told the Business Journal. Arndt also is co-founder of Virtue Wealth Management. As a financial advisor, he helps human

resource directors and chief financial officers improve companies' retirement plans – 401(k) plans in particular – and teaches employees about financial planning and good money management. Arndt is a member of the advisory board for College of the Canyons.



SUE M. BENDAVID

Lewitt, Hackman, Shapiro, Marshall and Harlan

Sue Bendavid is an employment attorney, shareholder and chair of the employment practice group at the Lewitt, Hackman, Shapiro, Marshall and Harlan law firm in Encino. For about 30 years, she has exclusively represented employers in their legal matters. She is a strong proponent of employee claims prevention via management training and clearly established company policies. She also is co-chair of the Labor and

Employment Committee of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. As a frequent lecturer, Bendavid publishes employer-focused articles and has recently been at the helm of webinars and newsletters to help businesses deal with employment matters related to COVID-19. As a recent professional accomplishment, she cites: "The outcome in a hard-fought wage/hour class action. I took 14 depositions and opposed class-certification and trial plan motions. Court denied certification and dismissed PAGA."



BARRY COHN

Heffernan Insurance Brokers

In June, Barry Cohn sold his company, Really Great Employee Benefits, to employee-owned Heffernan Insurance Brokers. The company retained the Really Great name as the Canoga Park office of Heffernan, working with 275 companies and more than 10,000 employees in the Valley, assisting them with employee benefits, cost containment and compliance. Cohn serves on the board of Valley Industry and Commerce Association and the

Valley Economic Alliance. He has served on the board and executive committee of Shomrei Torah Synagogue in West Hills for eight years. Cohn also has a seat on the UCLA Alumni Association Executive Committee and the board of the UCLA Foundation. He resides with his wife Renee in West Hills, while their five children "are productive members of society and off the payroll," he told the Business Journal.



MARTIN M. COOPER

Cooper Communications Inc.

Martin Cooper is president of public relations firm Cooper Communications in Encino, which is celebrating its 40 anniversary this year. Previously, Cooper was senior vice president of marketing and communications for Playboy Enterprises. He also worked as Disneyland's advertising and promotions manager. Cooper has authored four books, one of which was a compilation of essays first published in the

Business Journal. His most recent book, "Read All About It! The San Fernando Valley; 1946-1970," won the CSUN Oviatt Library Award for the best nonfiction book on the Valley in 2016. Founder of The Executives, a support group for the Jewish Home of the Aging, he was presented with the organization's highest honor, the Circle of Life Award. In 2014, Cooper received the Fernando Award. He is past chairman of the Boys and Girls Club of the West Valley.



DAVID FLEMING

Senior Advisor to Sen. Robert Hertzberg

David Fleming once was described by former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan as "Mr. San Fernando Valley." He now serves as the senior advisor to State Senator Robert Hertzberg. Fleming also founded the Los Angeles County Business Federation, or BizFed, an umbrella lobbying organization representing 180 chambers of commerce and trade groups. During his 58-year career as an attorney, he was appointed to 14 federal, state, county and city boards and commissions. He also served on more than 20 boards for nonprofits and

chaired many of them, including the Valley Economic Alliance for 16 years and Valley Presbyterian Hospital for 25 years. Fleming received the Fernando Award in 1992 for his civic involvement.

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**STEPHANIE FORMAN***Tharpe & Howell*

Stephanie Forman, managing partner of Tharpe & Howell, oversees the operations of the Sherman Oaks law firm, which is the largest in the Valley area. She is AV Preeminent Rated by Martindale-Hubbell, one of the highest ratings available to attorneys nationwide, and her practice focuses on all phases of civil litigation in both federal and state courts, including arbitration, mediation and trial. Forman represents a broad range

of clients, primarily in the areas of employment and labor law, premises liability, product liability, wrongful death and mass tort litigation. She has extensive experience counseling companies on administrative and regulatory compliance issues, including environmental and diverse risk assessment matters. She is also a member of the Defense Research Institute and the Claims and Litigation Management Alliance.

**JOEL FOX***Fox and Hounds Daily*

At the website Fox and Hounds Daily, Joel Fox aggregates commentary and news on California business and politics, and he offers his own views. Fox served as founder and president of the Small Business Action Committee, from 2003 to 2017, and he is known for his 19 years with the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, serving as president (1986-98). Fox served on six state commissions appointed by Governors Pete Wilson and

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Assembly Speakers Antonio Villaraigosa and Bob Hertzberg, as well as serving as vice chair on the Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Budget Task Force appointed by Supervisor Mike Antonovich. Fox was director of policy for Richard Riordan's gubernatorial campaign in 2001-02; a consultant to the San Fernando Valley secession effort in 2002; senior policy consultant for the Schwarzenegger for Governor campaign during the recall election of 2003 and was state co-chairman of the John McCain presidential campaign.

**KAREN GABLER***LightGabler*

Karen Gabler is a partner in the LightGabler law firm in Camarillo, and she has represented businesses as an employment lawyer for 28 years. Her expertise has made her a sought-after speaker and educator on employment law topics, and she has taught numerous courses on the subject at Pepperdine School of Law. Gabler was named a Southern California Super Lawyer by Los Angeles Magazine for 9 years in a row, as well as one

of the Top 50 Women in Business and Who's Who in Professional Services by Pacific Coast Business Times. The Business Journal also named Gabler as the Top Attorney in Client Service and a Trusted Advisor. She said that participation in her monthly seminars and webinars on employment law issues has expanded to over 800 attendees per month.

**FRED GAINES***Gaines & Stacey*

Fred Gaines is the founding and managing partner of Gaines & Stacey, an Encino law firm that provides counsel on real estate law. He was elected chair of the Valley Economic Alliance in April and formerly served as chair of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. Gaines is a longtime councilmember on the Calabasas City Council and twice served as mayor, including during the Woolsey Fire in 2018. He received the Harmon Ballin Community Service Award from VICA in 2005 and the Justice Armand Arabian Leaders in Public Service Award last year. His

firm, which has been inducted into VICA's Business Hall of Fame, specializes in regulatory approvals, litigation about development and California Environmental Quality Act lawsuits. Gaines said, "I am most proud of our firm assisting with the approval of more than 1,000 units of new housing for our region over the last two years."

**TIM GALLAGHER***20/20 Network*

Tim Gallagher is the former editor and publisher of the Ventura County Star and now is co-owner of the 20/20 Network public relations firm. With California Lutheran University economist Matthew Fienup, Gallagher last year started Homes for Generations of Ventura County, a nonprofit housing land trust. "We are working on several projects that could create 100 homes for purchase by low- to middle-income families," Gallagher

said. "Someday, that number could be in the thousands." His board service includes Ventura County Community Foundation and Community Memorial Hospital. Asked for a recent career highlight, he said: "Being one of five board members who stuck with the Ventura County Community Foundation during its darkest days and helping it emerge as the major force for philanthropy and charitable giving. In the COVID-19 crisis, we have raised and distributed more than \$4 million. After the Borderline murders and Hill-Woolsey fires, we raised and distributed more than \$6 million."

**DAVID GERSHWIN***David Gershwin Consulting*

David Gershwin's career in public affairs and public relations has spanned three decades. He opened his own firm in 2010, specializing in providing strategic advocacy and communications to real estate developers, law firms, business organizations and others, including elected officials. He was a vice president at Cerrell Associates from 2008 to 2010. He was chief of staff to Eric Garcetti, then-city council president and now mayor of

Los Angeles, and he was director of communications for the previous city council president, Alex Padilla, now California's Secretary of State. Gershwin was also a legislative manager for the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. He is on the board of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association and chairs its Government Affairs Committee. He said that during the pandemic, he was proud to guide a client, Access Services, "in partnering with local government agencies and nonprofits to help deliver meals to homebound seniors and people with disabilities."

**BARRY P. GOLDBERG***Barry P. Goldberg, Professional Law Corp.*

Barry P. Goldberg is the principal of his eponymous personal injury law firm in Woodland Hills, which specializes in uninsured and underinsured motorists. He is this year's president of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. Goldberg has been named a "Super Lawyer" for the last nine years and his firm has made a Fastest Growing Law Firms list four years in a row. In fact, he said he is most proud of growing his firm into a team with nine

full-time employees, which "has resulted in one marriage and two births!" A lifelong Valley resident, Goldberg attended Taft High School, obtained his bachelor's degree from UCLA and his J.D. from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles in 1984. He also plays trombone for the Los Angeles Lawyers Philharmonic and Big Band of Barristers, which performs to benefit charities.

**ANDREW 'DREW' GREY***Squar Milner*

Andrew "Drew" Grey is the managing partner of Squar Milner's Woodland Hills office and serves on the firm's executive committee. He had been the co-managing partner of SRG, which merged into Squar Milner over the past year. Grey was the driving force of the merger between the accounting firms. Throughout his long career, Grey has amassed expertise in tax minimization and financial statement optimization, as well as in estate tax and

asset protection planning particularly for high net-worth individuals and companies. Grey also assists clients with tax compliance and planning, strategic business consulting and debt and equity formations among other services. Founded in 1938, Squar Milner is one of the nation's 40 largest accounting firms. It is also one of the largest independent accounting and advisory firms in California.

**LISA GRITZNER***LG Strategies*

Lisa Gritzner is head of LG Strategies, a strategic communications and public affairs firm, and she has more than 20 years of experience as a political consultant. Among her most high-profile corporate clients: Microsoft, Shell, Southern California Gas Co. and Uber. She also has done work for Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and Los Angeles Unified School District. Gritzner last year finished her two-year

term as chair of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. "I am very proud of my last two years as chair of VICA," she said. "As one of only three women to serve as chair in the 70-year history of VICA, I am delighted to have been able to spearhead the first Extraordinary Women in Leadership event in the Valley." She also serves on the board of the Levy Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University and is on the board of Children's Bureau. She has served as president of the Saban Free Clinic board and is a member of the Founders' Board of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust.

**CALVIN HEDMAN***Hedman Partners*

As the chief principal at his eponymous firm in Valencia, Calvin Hedman oversees quality assurance and client service. In addition to audit and tax services, Hedman's expertise extends to strategic planning, acquisition, estate and succession planning and due diligence reviews. Hedman is active in the community, where he serves on the board of the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp. He also is a founding member of Santa Clarita

Valley Aerospace Defense Coalition and sits on the advisory board of Santa Clarita Valley YMCA. As a recent highlight, he cites "the successful recruitment of a new audit partner who interned with us while in college and then developed his career for 11 years at a national firm before returning to our firm."

ICON OF INFLUENCE



WHY WOULD YOU TRY TO NAVIGATE YOUR MEDICARE HEALTH PLAN OPTIONS ALONE?

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- ▶ **Did you enroll in a Medicare health plan a few years ago?**

Things change. Perhaps it's time for a potentially money-saving, coverage-expanding plan review.

- ▶ **Are you enrolled in a company group health plan?**

Transitioning over to Medicare might be a better choice.

- ▶ **Do you have employees over 65?**

Perhaps they might also benefit by looking at options.

- ▶ **Did you recently lose your group health coverage?**

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- ▶ **Are you moving and do not know what to do about your Medicare health coverage?**

Paul is available to provide simple answers to these and all your other complex questions.



CHARTING YOUR PATH

There are dozens of potholes, detours, blind curves and speed traps that can get in your way, on your path to a Medicare Health Plan. When you are looking for a guide to get you to the right, most cost-effective idea, Paul Davis is the agent for you. He has been helping people answer health insurance questions for 35 years and his vast experience in group and individual health plans allows him to better understand your transition onto Medicare. For the past 12 years, his primary focus has been on Medicare Health Plan options: Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement and Part D plans. Paul has been voted "Best Insurance Agent" by Readers of the *Daily News* for 18 years and named a "Trusted Advisor" by the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*.



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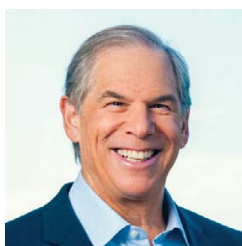


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**GREG HUTCHINS***Holthouse, Carlin and Van Trigt*

Greggory J. Hutchins has over 30 years of experience tax consulting to high net worth individuals and entities. He is a certified public accountant and principal with Holthouse, Carlin and Van Trigt in Westlake Village. His industry experience includes private equity, real estate, manufacturers, retail and distribution. He has served on boards of several private and public companies and speaks at industry events, particularly

about the impact of changing tax legislation. HCVT has continued to grow and in January it promoted nine new partners, including three from the Westlake Village office. As for a recent accomplishment, he said he and his firm helped desperate clients get Paycheck Protection Program money after they had difficulty securing the funds. "I was able to make a couple of emails and telephone calls and process each of the clients' applications and get funds in their hands within a couple of days."

**JONATHAN 'JAKE' JACOBS***Rose, Snyder & Jacobs*

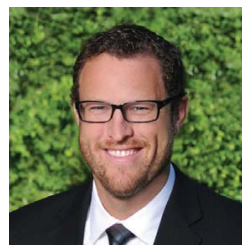
As a certified public accountant with Rose, Snyder & Jacobs, Jonathan "Jake" Jacobs specializes in mergers, acquisitions and financing for middle-market companies, working with his personal network of finance experts. Before joining his partners' firm in Encino, Jacobs oversaw the West Coast entrepreneurship practice and the Warner Center office for KPMG Peat Marwick. He is a former chairman of the United Way's San Fernando Valley Region

and served on the advisory board for the David Nazarian College of Business at California State University – Northridge. He serves on the Price Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at the Anderson School of Management at UCLA. He also chairs the California Oncological Research Institute in Culver City and is board treasurer for Muse/Ique in Pasadena. Among his proudest accomplishments is becoming an expert at implementing the Entrepreneurial Operating System, a process that aligns and synchronizes the pieces of a business to produce the desired results.

**DAN KAHN***Kahn Media*

Dan Kahn founded Kahn Media in 2008 with the premise of merging public relations tactics with consumer engagement through branding, social media and influencer marketing. The company, based in Moorpark, has 25 employees, including publicists, social strategists and other creatives and developers. Clients include Rolex, Lotus Cars Limited, Gearys of Beverly Hills, the Quail Lodge, the Petersen Automotive Museum, Roush

Enterprises and Nitto Tire, among others. The company was named one of the fastest growing in the country by Inc. magazine two years in a row, and it is a member of the Forbes Agency Council as a PR/Digital advisor. Kahn serves on the board of the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) and currently serves as chair elect on the organization's Young Executives Network. He is most proud of his company's pivot during the COVID-19 outbreak. It has produced weekly newsletters and near daily content aimed at helping businesses learn about digital content creation, direct to consumer sales and how to market during a crisis.

**ALEXANDER KASENDORF***Alpert, Barr & Grant*

Alexander Kasendorf is a partner with Alpert, Barr & Grant in Encino, focusing on matters involving dispute resolution, strategic advocacy and real estate and commercial law and litigation, among other things. He was named a "Super Lawyer" in 2019 and 2020, and he is vice chair and secretary of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. The Business Journal recognized Kasendorf as a Trusted Advisor in 2017. Also, he is

a registered lobbyist with the city and county of Los Angeles, a role that he said positions him at the "key nexus between members of our community and our elected and appointed officials that have say in our growth."

**RICHARD KATZ***Richard Katz Consulting*

Richard Katz served in the California State Assembly for 16 years, including 10 years as chairman of the Transportation Committee. He created the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority (Metro), and after his days in Sacramento served for 8 years on the Metro board, including as chair. Katz is the owner of a public policy and government relations firm Richard Katz Consulting. He serves as chairman emeritus of the Valley Economic Alliance, and he is on the boards of Heal the Bay, the Saving the West Foundation, the Los Angeles Coalition and the Luskin Public Policy Center at UCLA. One recent accomplishment is being

part of the Toll Roads of Orange County team that resolved issues with the Save San Onofre Coalition, ending a decade of lawsuits, creating a process for protecting open space while solving congestion problems.

**COBY KING***High Point Strategies*

Coby King is president and chief executive of High Point Strategies, a longtime San Fernando Valley public affairs firm specializing in strategic and crisis communications and governmental advocacy. He has been very active in the effort to bring more transit to the San Fernando Valley, among other quality-of-life issues in the Valley. King serves as treasurer and a past chairman of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association

and currently is on its executive committee and co-chair of its transportation committee; as a member and past president of the state board that oversees professional engineers, land surveyors and geologists; and in leadership positions with the California Democratic Party and Sierra Club.

**BARRY KURTZ***Lewitt, Hackman, Shapiro, Marshall and Harlan*

Barry Kurtz is chair of Lewitt, Hackman, Shapiro, Marshall and Harlan's Franchise Practice Group. He represents franchisors and franchisees in national and regional restaurant, retail and service businesses. Kurtz said he's proud that the franchise group has evolved into a team of eight lawyers, including five legal specialists and three certified franchise executives. Kurtz has earned Martindale-Hubbell's highest rating (AV Preeminent 5.0)

for legal ability and ethics. The Business Journal has honored him several times: In February 2007, he was named one of the Top 25 lawyers in the Valley; in August 2012 and August 2015, he was honored again as one of the top attorneys and as a Trusted Advisor; in August 2018 he won the Attorney of the Year - Client Services Award; and last year he was given the Attorney of the Year - Trailblazer Award. Also, he has been named a Super Lawyer by the Journal of Law and Politics since 2010.

**STEPHEN LANDSMAN***Squar Milner*

Stephen Landsman, certified public accountant and partner with Squar Milner, has over 20 years of experience providing tax, attestation, litigation support and business management services for privately owned businesses. He was given one of the Business Journal's Trusted Advisors Awards last year. He is on the board of Fit 4 The Cause, and he volunteers for many organizations including Encino Little League, AYSO and Girl Scouts. In the

last year, another leading Valley accounting firm and its professionals merged with Squar Milner. The firm has grown its outreach program in support of local nonprofits and has rapidly developed an expertise to help clients comply with federal government stimulus lending programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**JONATHAN FRASER LIGHT***LightGabler*

With over 30 years of experience representing employers, Jonathan Fraser Light provides legal advice, in-house employer training programs, and litigation services to companies of all sizes to reduce liability and protect against lawsuits. He also speaks before business and employer groups on such topics as harassment avoidance, supervisor training, human resources best practices and the latest employment law issues. He has received

the highest AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell and has been a peer-nominated Super Lawyer for more than a decade. He is also a member of the Ventura County Fair Political Practices Commission. The achievement he is most proud of is that his firm, LightGabler in Camarillo, recently opened a file for its 3,500th client. "That is a nice milestone for our nine-year boutique employment firm," Light said.

**GREG LIPPE***Gregory N. Lippe Accountancy Corp.*

Greg Lippe is a certified public accountant with his eponymous firm in Woodland Hills and Simi Valley. He has managed two public accounting firms for a total of 23 years and was once chief financial officer of a lumber yard. Long active in civic affairs, he is currently the president of the California Board of Pharmacy and chair of the Woodbury University Board of Trustees. He is former chair of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. He

formerly served on the Los Angeles Fire and Police Pensions Board, including as vice president and as chair of the audit committee, and the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency, including as treasurer. The Business Journal gave him the Community Service Award in 2014 at the Trusted Advisors event; VICA gave him the Harmon Ballin Community Service Award in 2012; and Habitat for Humanity gave him its Hammer of Hope Award in 2011, among other honors. As a recent accomplishment, he said he was able to obtain favorable financing "to help clients severely impacted by COVID-19 avoid terminating employees and closing their doors."

ICON OF INFLUENCE

**JOHN LOCKHART***People Media*

John Lockhart is president of People Media Worldwide Inc. in Westlake Village, managing communications for emerging and established Valley-area organizations. Lockhart serves on the board of the Association for Corporate Growth 101 and recently started a series of “Investors and Innovators Forums” at the HUB 101 coworking space. 805 Magazine named him one of “50 Over 50 on the 101.” During the “Safer at Home” orders, he launched

PeopleMedia.Live, a web broadcasting service for the company’s programs and events that included performances from the New West Symphony and Westlake Village Symphony. He also partnered with Whistle, a hotel guest messaging platform and client of People Media, to form a coalition to house health care workers in local hotel rooms.

**PEGI MATSUDA***Pegi Matsuda Consulting*

Pegi Matsuda’s practice, Pegi Matsuda Consulting in Sherman Oaks, is the culmination of more than 30 years of civic and community service throughout the San Fernando Valley. Matsuda is or has been a board member for many of the region’s best-known organizations, including the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, the Valley Economic Alliance, Woodbury University in Burbank and the Fernando Award

Foundation. She was named Woman of the Year in 2013 by the 42nd Assembly District, and she was given an Armand Arabian Leaders in Public Service Award. Matsuda said she has spent this year focusing on improving client engagement and satisfaction while juggling her numerous community activities. “I equate accomplishments to learning outcomes and this was a learning year for me,” she said. “I feel I’m a better professional.”

**TERRI HILLIARD OLSON***Terri Hilliard Law*

Terri Hilliard Olson is a lawyer and published author in Westlake Village. Her law practice centers on advanced estate planning, business succession planning, asset preservation, special needs trusts and family protection planning for seniors, notably veterans. She won the Business Journal’s Trusted Advisor award in 2017 and again in 2018. She founded the Pro Bono Panel of Attorneys called “Legal Concerns” where she oversees lawyers in

eldercare, advising seniors and caregivers in estate planning. Last year, she became a founding member of the National Alliance of Attorneys for Alzheimer’s Planning, a nonprofit focused on educating caregivers and clients as well as the community. This year she published a book titled “You’re not Alone – Living with Dementia” and was certified as an Alzheimer’s disease and dementia care trainer to support those who counsel people with brain diseases.

**FRANCINE OSCHIN***Oschin Partners*

Francine Oschin is president of Oschin Partners in Encino, which provides strategic guidance for firms wanting to do business with the city or county of Los Angeles, especially regarding transportation or environmental agencies. She is on the board of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association and chairs its transportation committee. She also is on the boards of the Valley Performing Arts Center, the League of Women

Voters, Move L.A. and the Executives of the Los Angeles Jewish Home. Oschin is on the County Beach Commission and is its immediate past president. When she was on former Los Angeles City Councilmember Hal Berson’s staff, she worked several years with local organizations and various governments to achieve a status for the Chatsworth Reservoir that protects it from development.

**BRENT REINKE***Musick Peeler & Garrett*

Brent Reinke is partner in the Westlake Village office of Musick Peeler & Garrett. His law practice emphasizes mergers and acquisitions, venture capital, advising emerging growth companies and their executive teams and entrepreneurs on growth issues. Reinke also devotes his time to building Vapur, his collapsible water bottle brand; co-producing the Gold Coast Executive Forum with the Business Journal and providing

networking events to the Conejo Valley biotech community through the BioScience Alliance, which he founded in 2007. He also serves as a trustee for the Conejo/Las Virgenes Future Foundation. “My founding of BioScience Alliance and co-founding of the Gold Coast Executive Forum has allowed me to develop a very extensive network of C-level executives in our region, which allows me to influence and guide our region’s business community,” he said.

**RICHARD ROSENBERG***Ballard Rosenberg Golper and Savitt*

Richard Rosenberg is a partner in the Encino law firm of Ballard Rosenberg Golper and Savitt, which Forbes named in October one of “America’s Top Trusted Corporate Law Firms.” The firm exclusively represents employers, and Rosenberg has spent his career assisting management with workplace issues. He has published more than 75 articles and legal commentaries in numerous trade publications and legal journals, and regularly

lectures for bar associations, trade organizations and management groups throughout the United States. He has been on the list of Southern California Super Lawyers every year since its inception and was named to the list of Best Lawyers in America this year for the 14th time. He said he’s used his time in lockdown to “become an expert on anything COVID-19 relating to employment.”

**BRAD ROSENHEIM***Rosenheim & Associates Inc.*

Brad Rosenheim is founder and chief executive of Rosenheim & Associates, a Woodland Hills land-use entitlement consultancy that specializes in planning and permit processing. A member of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association for nearly 40 years, Rosenheim was selected as the organization’s chair in December. “Representing the great and diverse business community of the San Fernando Valley is a great honor and particularly gratifying in these most challenging times,” he said of his new position. Rosenheim is deeply affiliated with the

region’s child services industry, having founded the nonprofit West Valley Boys and Girls Club in Canoga Park and the Warner Center Children’s Corner, a day care serving parents who work in the Warner Center area, in the early 1990s. He was nominated in 2015 for the 57th annual Fernando Award and formerly served as president of the Fernando Award Foundation. He received VICA’s Harmon Ballin award for community service as well as the Valley Cultural Center’s Clyde Porter Humanitarian Award.

**ROBERT L. SCOTT***Mulholland Institute*

Robert L. Scott has been executive director of the Mulholland Institute since 1990, preserving the San Fernando Valley’s history and pushing to grow the area’s economy. He is a former president of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission, a former board member of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and a key architect of city plans and charter reform policies throughout Los Angeles. Professionally, Scott recently expanded his 35-year

legal practice to include territory from Santa Barbara to Santa Monica, and he has taken a particular interest in real estate and construction issues. Additionally, Scott is working to reform the governance structure of the Valley Economic Alliance, which he helped to found. “We want to get back to being the regional player that we were when Bill Allen and Bruce Ackerman were the CEOs,” he told the Business Journal.

**JOHN SHAFFERY***Poole, Shaffery & Koegle*

John Shaffery is a founding partner of the Poole, Shaffery & Koegle law firm in Santa Clarita. He has more than 27 years of trial experience and specializes in civil litigation with a focus on product liability matters, large loss and catastrophic claims, labor and employment issues, trucking and transportation claims and professional liability matters. He holds an AV Preeminent rating from Martindale-Hubbell, which is awarded to attorneys for

the highest level of professional excellence and ethical standards. Shaffery has been honored as a Super Lawyer in California by his peers and been accepted as member of the American Board of Trial Advocates. A past chair of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce, he continues to advocate for the business community as a founding member and current executive board member of the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp. He also mentors entrepreneurs in the Santa Clarita Business Incubator program.

**TERESA TODD***Point of View Communications*

Teresa Todd is the founder of Point of View Communications, an advertising, marketing and public relations firm in Santa Clarita. She is immediate past chair of the Valley Industry Association, and she is on several boards, including Carousel Ranch. She also served a two-year term as president of the American Advertising Federation’s Los Angeles branch. She is a two-time nominee for the Santa Clarita Woman of the Year award and last year she won

the Volunteer of the Year award at the Business Journal’s Women’s Council event. She is proud that she helped connect a local magazine with a school district and some businesses to publish a book honoring this year’s 5,000 high school graduates because, as she put it, “there would be no pomp due to circumstances for the Class of 2020.”

THE VALLEY 200 BUSINESS



MADELYN ALFANO

Maria's Italian Kitchen

Madelyn Alfano, owner of Maria's Italian Kitchen based in Van Nuys, opened the first Maria's restaurant in Sherman Oaks in 1985 and has since expanded the franchise to 10 locations, several of which are in the Valley area. Alfano is very involved with organizations, serving on the board of the California Restaurant Association and past president of its Los Angeles Chapter. She is past president of the National Association of

Women Business Owners - Los Angeles. She also is on the Board of Advisors for the UCLA Anderson School of Management. Alfano was awarded a Valley of the Stars award in 2018 by the Valley Economic Alliance and was named by the Los Angeles Business Journal as the most influential businesswoman of 2017. At the Western Foodservice and Hospitality Expo last year she was given the Beacon Award, which recognizes an outstanding woman leader. The trade organization described Alfano as "one of California's most successful restaurant owners who has truly served as a Beacon for the industry through her leadership, contributions, and inspiration."



MARTHA DIAZ ASZKENAZY

Aszkenazy Development

San Fernando Valley Sun and El Sol Newspaper

Martha Diaz Aszkenazy and her husband Severyn Aszkenazy own Aszkenazy Development in San Fernando along with the San Fernando Valley Sun and El Sol Newspaper, a bilingual news operation that serves the entire San Fernando Valley. "When the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the closure of businesses in our economy, our newsroom didn't miss a beat," she said. "That's because our team was prepared having already been working remotely for a few years." She is chair of the board of Project

GRAD Los Angeles and is chair emeritus of the Valley Economic Alliance. She's won numerous awards over the years including the Governor's Award for Outstanding Woman-Owned Business. She was named among the 25 Most Influential Leaders of the San Fernando Valley by the Business Journal and was named Latina Entrepreneur of the Year by the Latin Business Association, among other honors.



EDWARD G. ATSINGER III

Salem Media Group

Sun Air Jets

Edward G. Atsinger III is chief executive and a director of Salem Media Group in Camarillo, known for its conservative opinion content and its Christian and family-themed content. The publicly traded Salem owns 99 radio stations in 37 major U.S. cities. The company owns Salem Radio Network which syndicates talk, news and music programming to approximately 3,100 affiliates. The

company also operates Salem Web Network, an Internet provider of conservative, Christian and family-themed content streaming on more than 100 websites. Salem also operates Regnery Publishing and Salem Books. Furthermore, Atsinger is the founder and managing member of Sun Air Jets, a charter and aircraft business and fixed-base operator at the Van Nuys and Camarillo airports. He said he's proud that Sun Air has matured. "We've added fleet aircraft and been awarded all the highest safety audit ratings." Finally, Atsinger is a founding board member of Oaks Christian School in Westlake Village.



PAMELA BERG

MP Printing & Mailing

The co-owner and president of MP Printing & Mailing in Panorama City, Pamela Berg has a long record of service with the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. Berg chairs VICA's membership committee, serves on the executive board and won the organization's President's Award last year. She and husband Kevin have built MP into a company named as one of the top 100 small printing companies in the country by the National

Association of Print Leadership. She also was chosen as one of 100 volunteers to help decorate the White House for the Christmas season in 2018. MP Printing is celebrating its 30th year in business. "I am grateful my business has survived COVID-19, and I look for new products and services to help us rebuild," Berg said.



BEAU BOECKMANN

Galpin Motors

Beau Boeckmann is president of Galpin Motors, a Van Nuys auto dealership group owned by his father, Bert Boeckmann. He also stars in a cable channel show about cars. "I was blessed to film 'Car Kings' for the Discovery Channel," Boeckmann said, when asked what recent accomplishments he's proud of. "We built some amazing cars with incredible stories. Galpin also opened Porsche Santa Clarita!" In fact, the Galpin group includes

dealerships for Ford, Lincoln, Honda, Volkswagen, Subaru and several others. Boeckmann has worked in the family business for more than 25 years. He performed a variety of jobs for the company as a teenager, and, after graduating from the University of Southern California, worked full-time on the sales floor and in the service, finance and rental departments. He also serves on product committees for Ford Motor Co. He has served as a member of the National Lincoln Dealer Council.



BERT BOECKMANN

Galpin Motors

Bert Boeckmann is the owner of Galpin Motors, a multi-brand automotive group based in Van Nuys that is legendary for its 29-year run as the No. 1 Ford dealer in the world, which ended last year. He began by selling automobiles at Galpin Ford in 1953 and was majority stockholder by the time he was named president in 1964. Among his many honors, he was Time magazine's National Quality Dealer, inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame, awarded the Presidential Citation for Private Sector Initiatives (the nation's highest award for entrepreneurs) and given the

Horatio Alger Award. Boeckmann has long contributed to the community, including a 17-year stint as Police Commissioner of Los Angeles.



KARL BOECKMANN

Galpin Motors

Karl Boeckmann is vice president of Galpin Motors, the family-owned group of car dealerships based in Van Nuys. Boeckmann was born and raised in Glendale and is a graduate of Glendale College and USC. He has served on the boards of Goodwill, New Directions for Youth, Pierce College, Diabetes Association, Fernando Award Foundation and Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center. Boeckmann also is a founding director

for the LAPD Valley Foundation. He is a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, ONE Generation Hearts Across the Valley award, Philanthropist of the Year and the Fernando Award for outstanding community leadership and service. "Coming closer to retirement," he said, "I have become more heavily involved in charitable and community activities, and, along with Galpin Ford, worked more closely with students and auto shops at local high schools and college levels."



STEVEN BRONSON

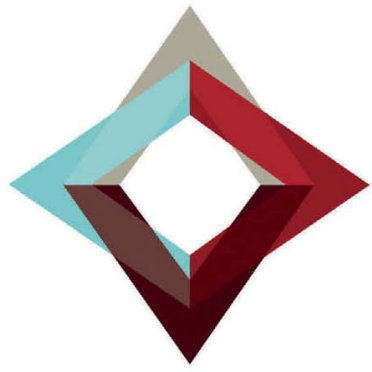
BKF Capital Group Inc.

Interlink Electronics Inc.

Qualstar Corp.

Steven N. Bronson has more than 35 years of business and entrepreneurial experience. His background in investment banking, operations and management has led him to acquire meaningful stakes in several technology companies and assuming top roles in them. He became the chief executive and chairman of

Westlake Village-based Interlink Electronics Inc. in 2010. In 2013, Bronson became president and CEO of Simi Valley-based Qualstar Corp., a high-quality tape library manufacturer. He immediately initiated a turnaround strategy that led the company to profitability. He also has served as chairman and chief executive of BKF Capital Group Inc. in Westlake Village since October 2008. He said he has remained disciplined in his approach to business, "and that allowed me to have the vision to walk away from a potential acquisition last year when the target was underperforming, and that proved out to be the right move."



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**MICHAEL CASTAGNA***MannKind*

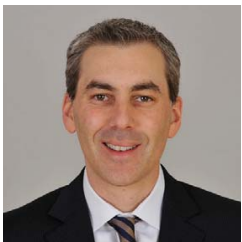
Michael Castagna is chief executive officer and a director of MannKind Corp. in Westlake Village. He has more than 20 years of experience in health care, pharmaceutical, biotech, and specialty pharmacy industries. He joined MannKind from Amgen, where he spent more than three years as vice president, global commercial lead for a portfolio of nine biosimilar drugs, and vice president, global lifecycle management. Prior to Amgen,

Castagna, was executive director of Bristol-Myers Squibb's immunology franchise. He received his bachelors of science - pharmacy degree from Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, his doctor of pharmacy degree from Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, and his MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

**MARK DAVIS***Sun Hill Properties Inc.*

Mark Davis is chief executive of Sun Hill Properties Inc., which operates the largest hotel in the Valley area, the Hilton Los Angeles Universal City. Sun Hill, based in Universal City, also operates the Courtyard by Marriott Ventura/Simi Valley. Davis has worked in the hospitality industry for more than four decades, and specializes in helping companies with strategic financial performance, market share penetration and team development.

He serves on the boards of the Los Angeles Hotel Lodging Association, Valley Industry and Commerce Association and Los Angeles Convention and Tourism. He said: "I am enjoying my role as CEO to expand the company with two Colorado acquisitions and also commenced development on 650,000 square foot expansion at Sierra Point Brisbane Bay, Calif., for two new ground-up hotels while continuing our local expansion of Hilton to add a 395-room tower."

**KEVIN DEMOFF***Los Angeles Rams*

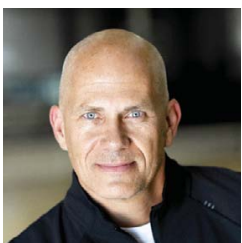
Kevin Demoff is the chief operating officer of the Los Angeles Rams, serving as the football team's top executive on all organizational matters. After working with the group that helped return the Rams to Los Angeles, Demoff is now playing a significant role in the construction of the 298-acre sports and entertainment district in Inglewood that will be the future home of the Rams. Demoff helped lead a regional effort to bring the

Super Bowl to the new SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park. Demoff and the Rams have also joined forces with the LA24 Olympic Bid Committee to help deliver the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games to Los Angeles. Demoff serves on several charitable boards. A recent accomplishment came in March when the Rams and KABC hosted a virtual Te'LA'thon which raised more than \$2.2 million to benefit the United Way of Greater Los Angeles' Pandemic Relief Fund and the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank.

**SKYLER DITCHFIELD***GeoLinks*

Skyler Ditchfield founded Camarillo-based telecommunications service provider GeoLinks in 2011 with his cousin, Ryan Hauf. Last year he was appointed to the Federal Communications Commission's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. He is or has been on the Federal Communications Commission's Advisory Board for the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association; the Schools, Hospitals and Libraries Broadband

Coalition's committees for strategic advisory and fundraising and the Forbes Los Angeles Business Council. He was recognized as Entrepreneur of the Year in 2018 by the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce and a Top Innovator in Diversity and Inclusion by Mogul, a social networking platform for women. Ditchfield said he is proud of the continued growth of his company, which is positioned to hit \$2 billion in valuation by 2025. "We were able to accomplish all our objectives this year to put us on track for that," he said.

**CHAD FAULKNER***Sports Academy*

Faulkner founded and operates the Sports Academy, a 96,000 square foot facility in Thousand Oaks. The Sports Academy offers specialized fitness programs, coaching and medical services. Faulkner and his colleagues suffered a shock in January when Lakers great Kobe Bryant, who had come on as a partner in the academy, died tragically in a helicopter accident. Faulkner also co-founded Riverside-based financial services firm Curo

Financial Technologies Corp., where he serves as chief operating officer. He has served on the boards of charitable foundations including the Snyder Legacy Fellowship, which provides leadership development opportunities to students at Kansas State University; and the Special Forces Charitable Trust, which offers support to U.S. Army Special Forces members. He said, "I am proud every day to work with an amazing team committed to the health and well-being of our clients, no matter what we are going through in our 'locker room'!"

**ICON OF INFLUENCE****CHERI FLEMING***Valencia Acura*

Fleming and her husband, Don, purchased Valencia Acura in 1997. The store ranked dead last nationally in sales and customer satisfaction among Acura dealerships but is now one of the highest-ranked in customer satisfaction. Fleming is a longtime leader and involved in several organizations including Soroptimist International and the Child and Family Center. She is vice chair of Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital board. Fleming has won more than a dozen awards including several Woman of the Year and Citizen of the Year honors from different organizations. She

won the Volunteer of the Year Award at the Business Journal's Women in Business event in 2017. She said she is proud that during the pandemic, "our Acura dealership reinvented our business overnight without sacrificing our signature Friendship customer experience, turning an unfortunate situation into a 'Friendemic.'"

**HORACE H. HEIDT***Horace Heidt Agency
Horace Heidt Productions*

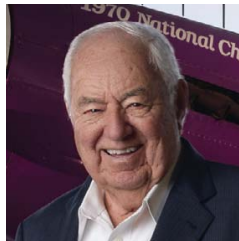
Horace Heidt is a longtime San Fernando Valley leader who is president of the Horace Heidt Agency, which owns a 220-unit apartment complex in Sherman Oaks, and Horace Heidt Productions, in which he offers his expertise in entertainment as a consultant. From 1982 to 1994, he was the musical director for the Los Angeles Raiders and in 1985 played for President Ronald

Reagan at his inaugural ball. Heidt served on several chambers of commerce, including the ones in Universal City-North Hollywood, Sherman Oaks (where he was once president) and Encino plus the United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley, where he was co-chair. Among his many honors, he received the Justice Armand Arabian Leaders in Public Service Award in 2017. "My mission is to help small businesses," he said, and for the last 7 years, he has worked to add to the housing stock of the state. Heidt got a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a juris doctor degree from Southwestern University School of Law.

**TONY KNOPP***Ticket Manager*

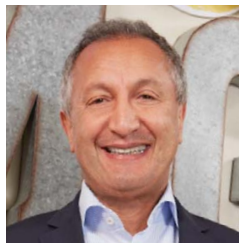
Tony Knopp is a software-as-a-service and technology expert who is co-founder and chief executive of Ticket Manager in Calabasas. Knopp's grown the tech startup, which manages company sports tickets and events, into a perennial honoree for Fastest Growing and Best Places To Work lists while acting as an advisor to the TechStars Sports Accelerator and a half dozen sports technology start-ups. He is an avid volunteer at Calvary

Community Church in Westlake Village and his team volunteers monthly at rescue missions and food banks throughout the Valley area.

**CLAY LACY***Clay Lacy Aviation*

Clay Lacy is founder and chairman at Clay Lacy Aviation, one of the first jet charter and executive jet management companies on the West Coast. It is headquartered at Van Nuys Airport. In his career, Lacy has flown more than 300 aircraft types, logged more than 50,000 flight hours and accumulated more miles flying jet aircraft than almost anyone. In 2010, the Federal Aviation

Administration presented Lacy with a Wright Brothers Master Pilot Certificate in recognition of his aviation expertise and safe operations for more than 50 years. The same year, he was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame for his achievements as an air pioneer. Last year, Lacy also received the Aircraft Owner and Pilot's Association's top honor, the R.A. "Bob" Hoover Trophy, for his contributions to aviation, support of young people and inspiration to pilots. Lacy also helped pioneer development of the Astrovision camera system, which was used to film such movies such as "Flight of the Intruders," "The Great Santini," "Armageddon" and "Top Gun."

**ISAAC LARIAN***MGA Entertainment*

Isaac Larian founded MGA Entertainment in 1979 and built it into the largest private toy company in the world. In 2001, the Chatsworth-based MGA launched the Bratz line of dolls that revolutionized the doll industry and now sells L.O.L. Surprise, another big seller. The company also owns the brand Little Tikes, which makes products for young children. Larian increasingly has become a national figure. A couple of years ago, he attempted to

rescue the failing Toys R Us chain but was rebuffed. Last month, he got into a public squabble with an African-American artist who claimed MGA had "misappropriated her likeness" in creating one of its dolls. Larian responded in an unkind way and later deleted his tweets and apologized. Larian was the national winner of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2007 and the local winner in 2004 and has been active in several charitable foundations that focus on helping children and families.



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**LEONARD M. LINTON***ViaSource Solutions*

Leonard “Len” Linton is chief financial officer of ViaSource Solutions, a Thousand Oaks outsource contact center. He is former chief executive of INWContact, a Thousand Oaks technology company, and he serves on the board of other companies. He is chair of the California Museum of Art at Thousand Oaks, or CMATO, and he was on the board of the New West Symphony for several years and served as chair for three years. He was a director,

treasurer and past president of the Wellness Community, and he was a director and past president of the Rotary Club of Westlake Village Sunrise. As a professional accomplishment, he said ViaSource has “adapted to the demands of customers to supplement our established U.S. virtual agent call center model and successfully now operate multiple call centers in central America.”

**RICHARD LOGUERCIO***Town & Country Event Rentals*

Richard LoGuercio is owner and president of Town & Country Event Rentals in Van Nuys. He has more than 40 years of experience in the industry and began his career working part time at a local United Rentals store. He opened Town & Country Event Rentals in July 2005 in a 61,000-square-foot facility in Van Nuys. Town & Country has since expanded into a 180,000-square-foot facility, opened additional stores in Pasadena and Santa Barbara

and now employs more than 500 full time. LoGuercio also is active in the California Business and Industrial Alliance, or CABIA, the Pacoima-based group formed to fight the state’s Private Attorney General Act. What’s he proud of? “Along with a lot of smart and talented people at my side, building a company like ours with so many mind-boggling moving parts into one of the nation’s largest and most well-respected event rental companies.”

**JOHN MAIER***Blue Microphones*

John Maier is chief executive of Westlake Village-based Blue Microphones, which designs microphones and headphones. He said he’s proud that Blue Microphones was successfully sold to Logitech and then he and his team “integrated the business just in time to fulfill the huge increase in demand that’s come from the new work/play/learn/share from home world we live in.”

Before joining the company, Maier was chief executive of audio equipment distributor TC Group Americas Inc., where he helped the Danish company build its presence in North America. He sits on the boards of Loud Audio (Mackie); In The Band, a non-profit that brings music programs to schools and communities, and PAMA, the Pro Audio Manufacturer’s Alliance.

**SCOTT MILLS***The Garland*

Scott Mills is general manager of The Garland including its restaurant – local favorite The Front Yard. Since joining in 2013, Mills led the rebranding and renovation of the hotel, which resulted in it being recognized among the top 15 hotels in Los Angeles in each of the last 5 years by Condé Nast Traveler’s Readers’ Choice Awards. Also, last year The Garland was ranked No. 7 among L.A.’s hotels by Travel + Leisure World’s

Best Awards. Mills is on the boards of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, the Los Angeles Tourism Marketing District, the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board and the East Valley Family YMCA. In 2017 he was named the Outstanding General Manager of the Year by the California Hotel and Lodging Association, which he called “a crowning achievement professionally and really only made possible by the endless support of my co-workers, ownership, mentors and family!” Mills also was the recipient last year of VICA’s President’s Award.

**ICON OF INFLUENCE****JOHN M. PARKER***Parker Brown Inc.*

John Parker is owner, founding partner and the chief financial officer of Parker Brown Inc., a leading construction company in the San Fernando Valley. Parker also is a director of Mission Valley Bank in Sun Valley and chairs its audit committee. He serves on the board of BUILD Industries, which works with those who have mental disabilities. Parker also serves on the management board of the Valley Economic Alliance. He is a past president of the United Chambers of Commerce and the Canoga Park/West Hills Chamber of Commerce. He also was president

of the Canoga Park Improvement Association. Parker, an immigrant from Ireland, helped start the annual St. Patrick’s Day March through Canoga Park. Along with other duties, he is a commissioner of the Los Angeles County Building and Rehabilitation Appeals Board as well as the Los Angeles City Innovation and Performance Commission. As an accomplishment, he cites bringing Parker Brown to \$50 million in sales. “We were doing \$15 million just 5 years ago, and we set a goal and achieved it.”

**LOUIS PERRY***Kadima Security Services*

Louis Perry is founder and owner of Kadima Security Services. The Encino company provides security for high-profile individuals such as politicians and former presidents, as well as security details. He is also security correspondent for local news outlets. As an inspector for the California State Athletic Commission, he is a boxing official who often serves ringside.

Perry served on Sylmar’s Neighborhood Council. He is chairman of the Stevenson Ranch Neighborhood Watch, diplomat of ABC Homeland Security and an honorary member of the International Police Association. He’s proud that he recently became a certified community police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department.

**MARCELO ‘MIKE’ QUIROGA***Mike’s Roofing and Building Corp.*

Marcelo “Mike” Quiroga emigrated from Bolivia at age 23 and in 1972 started his roofing business that is now Mike’s Roofing and Building Corp. in Van Nuys, which he still runs as president. He is known for his prodigious and longstanding civic involvement. He has been on the board of, and often chair of, more than half a dozen Valley area chambers of commerce. He has been chair of the Mid Valley YMCA, the Mid Valley

American Heart Association and the Los Angeles Valley College Foundation, among others. He has donated money and resources to a number of nonprofits, including ONEgeneration and New Horizons. When he won the Fernando award last year, the Valley’s highest honor for volunteerism, it was pointed out that he also offers advanced training to his employees at Los Angeles Valley College and Los Angeles Mission College, as a way to boost their future. Quiroga said he is proud that last year and again this year he won awards at the Owens Corning Roofing Platinum Conference, which honors top contractors in the industry.

**JOANN ROTH-OSEARY***Someone’s In The Kitchen*

Joann Roth-Oseary is president of Someone’s In the Kitchen, a full-service catering and event-planning business, with 35 full-time and 150 part-time employees. Within three weeks of baking apple bread for friends 39 years ago, she managed to sell more than 750, launching SITK. Roth-Oseary is on the board of the Valley-based California Business and Industrial Alliance and said, “I am most proud of my involvement with the creation of

CABIA, the business alliance trying to change the dreadful climate that exists in this state for business owners.” She also has donated her time and professional services to the AIDS Project Los Angeles, The Fred Jordan Mission, and Homeless USA. In 2009, SITK was named the Best Catering Company by the Los Angeles Daily News and received the Lifetime Achievement Award by Special Event Magazine.

**JIM RULE***Acorn Newspapers*

Jim Rule has been owner and publisher of Acorn Newspaper Inc. since 1996, when he and his wife Lisa purchased it. The couple has since grown the company to five publications, including editions for Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Moorpark and Simi Valley along with a lifestyle magazine. Jim Rule previously was the publisher of Baker Communications, which owned and operated the Acorn newspaper along several other community publications

for Beverly Hills, Palos Verdes and Orange County. He grew up in the San Fernando Valley. Rule and his wife were the recipients of the California Press Foundation’s Justus F. Craemer Newspaper Executive of the Year Award for 2017. He said he is proud of the Acorn’s coverage of the Borderline shooting “and the fact that our five papers brought home 30 honors in this year’s California Newspaper Publishers Association’s Better Newspapers Contest.”

**LISA RULE***Acorn Newspapers*

Lisa Rule has been owner and associate publisher of Acorn Newspaper Inc. since 1996, when she and her husband, Jim Rule, purchased it. Also, Lisa Rule is publisher of Beyond the Acorn, a free quarterly lifestyle magazine that’s distributed throughout Ventura County. Rule and her husband were the recipients of the California Press Foundation’s Justus F. Craemer Newspaper Executive of the Year Award in 2017. She was named

the Community Advocate of the Year in 2016 by the Ventura County chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners. “I am proud of the team of people we have assembled to produce the news for our area, especially during community challenges like the Woolsey Fire and the COVID-19 pandemic,” she told the Business Journal.

**HARUT SASSOUNIAN***The California Courier*

Harut Sassounian is a publisher, columnist, TV commentator, political analyst, author, documentary producer and human rights activist. Sassounian publishes The California Courier, an English-language Armenian newspaper in Glendale. It is known for his weekly columns, which are published in 200 other publications and websites. He is president of the Armenia Artsakh Fund, which last year shipped \$71 million worth of free medicine to Armenia

and over the past 30 years sent \$900 million worth. He was a non-governmental human rights delegate to the United Nations from 1978 to 1988, playing a key role in the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the U.N. in 1985. He is the author of “Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out,” and executive producer of the award-winning documentary: “Armenia: Bittersweet Freedom.” He is the recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and speaks five languages.

**RUDI SCHREINER***Ama Waterways*

Born in Austria, Rudi Schreiner began his career arranging student bus tours in Europe. Later, he pioneered the river cruise vacation industry after the Main-Danube Canal opened in 1992, making inland water travel feasible from Amsterdam to the Black Sea. In 2000, Schreiner started the U.S. office of Viking River Cruises in Woodland Hills, where he served as chief executive. In 2002, he and two partners launched Calabasas-based

AmaWaterways; he is president and co-owner. The company has 23 ships in operation, cruising the rivers of Europe (including the Rhine, Main Danube and Elbe rivers), Africa and Vietnam. He said he’s not only proud that AmaWaterways is acknowledged by the trade as one of the world’s the top cruise lines but also for keeping all the company’s American staff employed full-time during the coronavirus pandemic.

**TODD SCHWARTZ***Former producer and restaurateur*

Todd Schwartz is a former television network executive and producer who purchased the franchise rights to a Dickey’s Barbecue Pit restaurant in Northridge, which opened in July 2012. He was elected to serve on a National Franchise Owner’s board and was tapped to produce customizable television commercials and to head up an advertising co-op for the 11 Southern California owners. Schwartz is an active member of the

California Restaurant Association. He sold the restaurant in January, and said, “I am proud that I successfully completed the sale of my business after 7 years of building a solid reputation with my employees and the community.” He is on the board of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association and serves as co-chair of its Labor and Employment Committee. Prior to buying the restaurant, Schwartz oversaw and produced television programming at NBC, VH1 and the History Channel, among others.

**JANE SKEETER***UltraGlas Inc.*

Jane Skeeter is chief executive and founder of UltraGlas Inc., a Chatsworth-based manufacturer of customized glass surfacing. UltraGlas was inducted into the Valley Industry and Commerce Association’s Hall of Fame in 2017. She is chair of the advisory board of Woodbury University’s School of Business, and she is on the board of the Valley Economic Alliance, VICA, the Boys and Girls Club of the West Valley and NAWBO-LA

Foundation, among others, and she serves on the advisory board of Pierce Community College Architecture Department. She received VICA’s Harmon Ballin Award, which honors a VICA member for community service; she is a three-time Fernando Award finalist and she is a commissioner on Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Community Forestry Advisory Committee. She said she is proud that UltraGlas is expanding, “now offering complete protective glass screen assemblies for public and staff safety.” The company now produces molded glass inserts for wood-framed doors and shower enclosures.

**MARSHALL D. ‘MARK’ SMITH***California Resources Corp.*

Mark Smith is Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of California Resources Corp., the state’s largest independent oil and gas producer. He has over 35 years of experience in all aspects of the energy industry. During 14 years of corporate and investment banking with BMO Capital Markets, Smith performed an advisory role to energy companies. He and his wife, Vicky, have actively supported the Muscular Dystrophy Association; he was

appointed a national vice president for the organization and has served on the MDA board since 2014 and now serves on the executive committee and as chair of the audit committee. Smith was named Best CFO of the Year for 2017 for a large public company by the Business Journal. “I am most proud of serving as a key member of our leadership team as we work diligently to navigate the company through the deepest, most enduring downturn in the (energy) sector,” he said.

**TODD STEVENS***California Resources Corp.*

Todd Stevens is president, chief executive and a director of California Resources Corp., the state’s largest independent oil and natural gas producer, based in Santa Clarita. Previously, Stevens worked for 20 years in various management positions at Occidental Petroleum Corp. He is on a number of boards including these: American Red Cross Los Angeles Region, Boys and Girls Club of Santa Clarita Valley, California

Business Roundtable, Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital, L.A. Kings Business Advisory Board, Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment Commission Advisory Board, Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp., Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff’s Foundation, Southern California Leadership Council, USC Marshall School of Business Corporate Advisory Board, USC Board of Counselors, Val*Pac (San Fernando Valley Business Political Action Committee) and the Western States Petroleum Association. He got a master’s degree in business administration from USC and a bachelor’s degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

**THERESE TUCKER***BlackLine*

Therese Tucker founded BlackLine in 2001 and is the chair and chief executive. The Woodland Hills company, which develops cloud-based accounting software, went public in October 2016. She designed the first offerings of the company’s products and engineered its transition to the cloud in 2007. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Computer Science and Mathematics from the University of Illinois. Two years ago Tucker was named by Forbes

as one of America’s Top 50 Women in Tech. She won the CEO of the Year Award from the Business Journal at what is now called the Women’s Council Awards in April 2017.

**RONALD TUTOR***Tutor Perini Corp.*

Ronald Tutor has served as chief executive of Tutor Perini Corp. since March 2000. The Sylmar company, which trades on the New York Stock Exchange, is a leading civil, building and specialty construction company that offers general contracting and design-build services to private clients and public agencies throughout the world. It built much of the Metro Red Line in

Los Angeles and has worked on the California High-Speed Rail project. The company acknowledged earlier this year that it was considering a buyout offer and said it expected that Tutor would remain in a leadership role. However, it called off acquisition talks in May because of “volatile market conditions.” Also, Tutor serves on the board of trustees of his alma mater, USC. He gifted USC the Ronald Tutor Campus Center and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering’s Tutor Hall, both named in his honor.

**ADEL VILLALOBOS***Lief Labs*

Adel Villalobos is founder and chief executive of Valencia-based Lief Labs, which develops and manufactures dietary supplements. After graduating from California State University - Northridge, he joined Natrol, a supplement company in Chatsworth, where he helped launch products. In the early 2000s, he started several dietary supplement companies before

launching Lief Labs in 2008. The company has increased from five employees in 2008 to nearly 200 now. He completed an executive education program in machine learning and artificial intelligence at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management and is a founding member of the Nutrition Industry Association, a board member of the Supplement Safety and Compliance Initiative and sponsor of Vitamin Angels and Heart of the Brain programs. Asked to name a recent accomplishment he is proud of, he mentioned completing the executive education program and moving the business into a state-of-the-art, 115,000 square-foot facility.

**MICHAEL WILDING***Hilton Woodland Hills / Los Angeles*

Michael Wilding is the general manager at the Hilton Woodland Hills / Los Angeles hotel. A native of Austria, he graduated from the Hotel and Tourism College in Vienna and started his career with Hilton Hotels in Southern California where he worked at four properties, including the Hilton Anaheim and the Hilton Los Angeles Airport. In 2000 he became leader of the rooms division at the Hilton Hawaiian Village in Waikiki, Hilton’s

largest hotel. He eventually became the resident manager and in 2011 became general manager of the DoubleTree by Hilton Alana Waikiki. Active in the community, he won a Forty under 40 Award from the state of Hawaii for his achievements, leadership and commitment to the community. Wilding became general manager in Woodland Hills two years ago and has joined the board of the Warner Association.

THE VALLEY 200

EDUCATION



GERHARD APFELTHALER

California Lutheran University

Gerhard Apfelthaler, Ph.D., is dean of the School of Management at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks. An important accomplishment came in the last year when the management school received the largest single gift in the history of the university for a new building. An Austrian native, Apfelthaler served as Deputy Austrian Trade Commissioner to the United States in the early and mid-1990s. In 1997, he was

part of the founding team of a new university in Austria after which he continued his career in public service as Commercial Attaché at the Austrian Embassy in Singapore. Apfelthaler returned to Austria and built a boutique consulting firm specializing in global business development. He joined California Lutheran in 2009 as professor of international business and became dean in 2013. He is the co-founder of two pharmaceutical start-up companies and the nonprofit Start-Up Kids. He serves on the boards of the Valley Economic Alliance, the Economic Development Collaborative of Ventura County and the California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks. He has published books and articles in academic journals and the trade media, and he co-founded the European Journal of International Management.



MATTHEW FIENUP

California Lutheran University

Matthew Fienup, Ph.D., is the executive director of the Center for Economic Research and Forecasting at California Lutheran University. He also teaches courses in econometrics and environmental economics in the university's Masters of Quantitative Economics program. He also chairs the Fox Canyon Water Market Group and was chosen by Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency to serve as exchange

administrator for a first-of-its-kind water market pilot program involving Ventura County farmers. Fienup returned to school and obtained his doctorate degree after running a small business in Ventura County for more than a decade. He and the Business Journal co-produce the Valley Economic Forecast, and annual assessment of the San Fernando Valley economy.



ICON OF INFLUENCE

DIANNE HARRISON

California State University – Northridge

Dianne Harrison, Ph.D., is the fifth president of California State University - Northridge and began her appointment in June 2012. She has postponed her planned retirement to the end of this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Harrison serves on the boards of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Valley Economic Alliance and Valley Presbyterian Hospital. She holds a Ph.D. in social work from Washington University in St. Louis and a master's of social work and a bachelor's in American Studies, both from the University of Alabama. She

currently chairs the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. board. "I am proud to lead an institution that fosters student achievement despite the pandemic," she said, "with a record 11,790 students earning degrees and over 90 percent of currently enrolled planning to continue in September."



EDWARD KNUDSON

Antelope Valley College

Edward Knudson has been president of Antelope Valley College since June 2013. He was executive vice president at Moorpark College from 2009 to 2011, was appointed vice president of academic affairs at Bakersfield College in 2006, and was dean of economic and workforce development at Bakersfield beginning in 2002. Knudson began full-time service in community colleges in 1993 as a faculty member in business management

and economics at Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Ore. While at Linn-Benton, he transitioned into education management. Knudson holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in business administration from Oregon State University. Knudson said he is most proud of the college's "continuing attitude of meeting community need and therefore creating new opportunities for our students."



JAMES LEWIS

Compass Charter Schools

James Lewis is the superintendent and chief executive for Compass Charter Schools in Thousand Oaks, a system of three charters serving over 2,000 scholars in California. Lewis is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and serves on the Association of Personalized Learning Schools and Services Advisory Committee, Digital Learning Collaborative, and "The Charter Schools Resource Journal" editorial board

among other education-related bodies. He's won several teaching awards and last year won the Pioneer Award for Leadership from the Association of Personalized Learning Schools and Services. Lewis is currently working on his Doctor of Education degree in Organizational Change and Leadership from the University of Southern California. He said he is proud of the team at Compass, especially since they worked to assist others to make the transition to remote learning because of the coronavirus pandemic.



WENDY GREUEL

California State University - Northridge

Wendy Greuel is an executive-in-residence at California State University – Northridge's Nazarian College of Business and Economics. Greuel also was instrumental in opening Discovery Cube Los Angeles in the San Fernando Valley and serves as the vice chair of the board. Greuel serves on several boards and commissions, including the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and more recently was appointed to the California Film Commission. She was on the Los Angeles City Council, representing the Valley from 2002 to 2009. As a council

member, she helped enact business tax reform and focused on basic city services, such as sidewalk and street repair. She was elected the Los Angeles City Controller and held that office from 2009 to 2013. Earlier, she worked at DreamWorks SKG and she served in the Clinton administration at the Department of Housing and Urban Development overseeing southern California. She worked in Mayor Tom Bradley's office for 10 years. "During the past few years, I have been proud to be a LAHSA Commissioner where we have expanded services and housing for homeless individuals and families," she told the Business Journal.



MIKE PANESIS

California Lutheran University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Mike Panesis is executive director of the California Lutheran University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. He plays an influential role in the formation of startup communities in the Conejo Valley and Ventura County. The center offers an entrepreneurship minor to all Cal Lutheran students, holds startup-focused events and operates Hub101, a community

co-working space. Panesis is chairman emeritus of Tech Coast Angels, one of the largest accredited angel investor groups in the country. He heads the group's Central Coast Investor Network and is a founding member of the Santa Barbara Alliance. Panesis told the Business Journal that he is proud for having successfully moved Cal Lutheran's New Venture Fair online. "Our students' startup projects were viewed in 36 states and 40 countries!," he said.

'Our students' startup projects were viewed in 36 states and 40 countries!'

— Mike Panesis of California Lutheran University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship on the result of putting its New Venture Fair online.

**DAVID STEELE-FIGUEREDO***Woodbury University*

David Steele-Figueredo, Ph.D., serves as the 14th president of Woodbury University, a private, non-profit university in Burbank with a second academic site in San Diego. Founded in 1884, Woodbury is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Southern California. Prior to joining Woodbury, Steele-Figueredo was dean of San Jose State University's Lucas College and Graduate School of Business. Before beginning his

academic career, he played a variety of strategic roles with Chevron Corp., including senior strategic planner and financial analyst on the Chevron-Gulf merger team, and president of Chevron Latin America. Born in Venezuela, he attended the University of Birmingham in England, where he earned B.S. and Ph.D. degrees in chemical engineering. He later completed graduate business training at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He is on the board of Better Burbank Corp. and the board of Val*Pac. Asked what he's proud of, Steele-Figueredo said: "Advising young alumni on career options, given my experience in a large corporation; and having lived in seven countries in addition to the U.S."

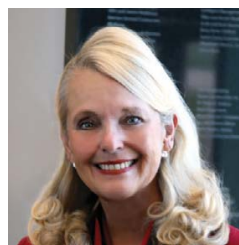
**CHANDRA SUBRAMANIAM***California State University - Northridge*

Chandra Subramaniam is the dean of the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics at California State University - Northridge. He came to the San Fernando Valley college two years ago after serving as interim dean and professor of accounting at the University of Texas at Arlington College of Business. Prior to that he was associate dean for students and programs for two years, and the chair of the department of

accounting for six years at Arlington and was an assistant professor of accounting at Texas Christian University. He has taught at all levels including in the undergraduate program, master's program, executive MBAs and doctoral seminars. He said CSUN's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program helped more than 8,700 low-income taxpayers during the 2019 tax season, bringing more than \$14 million in tax refunds and credits back to our community, making it the largest university-based program in the country.

California State University – Northridge's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program helped more than 8,700 low-income taxpayers during the 2019 tax season, bringing more than \$14 million in tax refunds and credits back to our community, making it the largest university-based program in the country.

– Chandra Subramaniam, Dean of the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics at California State University – Northridge

**DIANNE VAN HOOK***College of the Canyons*

Dianne G. Van Hook, Ph.D., is the chancellor of College of the Canyons. Her 32-year tenure makes her the state's longest serving community college chief. She has served on more than 35 statewide commissions and boards. College of the Canyons is engaged in over 70 business, nonprofit and educational partnerships annually. She was named as the Santa Clarita Valley Newsmaker of the Year and was named the No. 1 most influential person in the Santa Clarita Valley by The Signal.

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PAULA BAHAMON

Mission Valley Bank

Paula Bahamon is Vice President - Community Development Officer at Mission Valley Bank in Sun Valley. She has extensive commercial banking experience, specializing in small business, business development, and client relationship management. Her responsibilities include providing community outreach to business owners for financial literacy. Active in the community, she serves on the board of MEND (Meeting Each Need with

Dignity), a nonprofit serving economically challenged communities in the San Fernando Valley; the advisory board for the School of Management at Woodbury University; the board of the Valley Industry Association Education Foundation; and as a committee member of the Outreach Program of the Boys and Girls Scouts. The Business Journal named her Banker of the Year at the 2018 Trusted Advisors event, and last year she was named a Rising Star at the Business Journal's Women's Council.



VICTOR BERRELLEZ

US Bank

Victor Berrellez is a vice president and relationship manager with US Bank, a position that has him looking after a portfolio of corporate clients. He began his career as a sales representative for Xerox Corp. in the east San Fernando Valley and then started up an electronic parts distribution company. After more than a decade of that, Berrellez went to California State University - Northridge for an MBA and became a

commercial banker. He has worked for Bank of America, Sanwa Bank and City National Bank. He has long been involved in civic affairs, having served on Valley Community Healthcare's boards of governors and directors for 11 years, the last two as chair. He is on the advisory board for St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catholic School, and he is chairman of the Finance Committee for St. Cyril of Jerusalem Catholic Church. He also is first vice chair of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association.



DAVID BONROUHI

Calabasas Capital

David Bonrouhi is co-founder and managing director of Calabasas Capital, a boutique investment banking firm that specializes in representing family-owned and other privately held businesses in mergers and acquisitions and private equity and debt capital raising. Bonrouhi has 25 years of experience in investment banking and private equity, including with such firms as Merrill Lynch and UnionBanCal Equities. He is on

the board of the 101 Corridor Chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth and is its sponsorship chair. He was recently recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal as one of the most influential investment bankers in Los Angeles. Among recent accomplishments: He represented KT's Kitchens in the successful sale of Bob's Big Boy Salad Dressings to The Flavor of California. Also, he represented Impact Landscape Corp. in its sale to Connor's Landscape, among other transactions.



ROBIN CHOI

Wells Fargo, San Fernando Valley

Robin Choi is region bank president for Wells Fargo's San Fernando Valley division. He oversees more than 950 banking professionals at 67 branches in the Valley as well as Hollywood. He serves on the boards of the Valley Economic Alliance and the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. Choi started with Wells Fargo in 2003 as a personal banker and quickly worked his way up to become district manager and area

president while residing in Philadelphia. He helped found the Wells Fargo Team Member Network chapter Asian Connection in Philadelphia. He currently helps fellow parents understand issues surrounding pediatric cardiology. Choi said he's proud of his team's volunteerism in the Valley area. "To date, more than 500 of my region's team members have volunteered at local organizations," he said. "Our team members have also completed 14 Wells Fargo Builds." At a build, employee volunteers build, renovate, paint or repair homes for low- to moderate-income households. What's more, he said, \$210,000 in grants have been given to local Valley-based nonprofits.



PAUL DAVIS

Paul Davis Insurance Services

A lifelong Valley area resident with 36 years in the insurance industry, Paul Davis operates Paul Davis Insurance Services. The sole focus of his practice is assisting people with their transition onto Medicare and is a sought-out speaker on Medicare. Davis has been voted Best Insurance Agent by readers of the Los Angeles Daily News a record 18 times and was named a Trusted Advisor by the Business Journal. Davis is very involved in civic

affairs, and he was the 2017 recipient of the Fernando Award, the most prominent local award for volunteerism. Davis is a member of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association and five area chambers of commerce as well as a past president and member of the Greater Van Nuys Rotary club since 1986. He is a longtime supporter of many local organizations including New Horizons, ONEgeneration and Valley Community Healthcare. As a recent professional accomplishment, he cites "the level of recognition I now have from other insurance agents for my expertise in Medicare Health plan options."

'This year marks my 40-year career in financial services and banking...and what a ride as of late!'

— Frank Di Tomaso, Bank of Santa Clarita

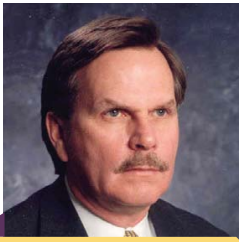


FRANK DI TOMASO JR.

Bank of Santa Clarita

Frank Di Tomaso Jr. was part of the management team that founded the Bank of Santa Clarita in 2004, and he serves as executive chairman and chief executive. The company is a full-service community bank headquartered in Santa Clarita that serves small to mid-sized businesses, professionals, entrepreneurs and consumers. Prior to the founding of the bank, Di Tomaso was senior vice president and business development officer at City

National Bank in Los Angeles from 1997 to 2004, and senior vice president and commercial loan team leader from 1996 to 1997. He worked at Metrobank, Los Angeles, until Comerica Bank acquired it in 1996, and began his banking career at Union Bank in Los Angeles. Asked to cite a professional accomplishment he's proud of, he said: "This year marks my 40-year career in financial services and banking...and what a ride as of late!"



JAMES GARRISON

Pacific Federal

James Garrison is president of Pacific Federal in Glendale. Founded by Garrison in 1977, PacFed was acquired by Zenith American in 2017, one of the nation's largest employee benefit administrators. PacFed was inducted into the Valley Industry and Commerce Association's Business Hall of Fame last year. Garrison serves on the executive board of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and is co-chair of its Health Care Council. He is a director of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, El Proyecto del Barrio and Music Fund of Los Angeles, and chair of the

Development Council for Loyola Marymount University's Center for the Study of Los Angeles. He is a past member of the California Electoral College and the California Democratic Party Finance Council. He has been the recipient of the Boys and Girls Club of the San Fernando Valley Golden Hands Award, Teamsters National Hispanic Caucus Community Award and Dolores Huerta Foundation Richard Chavez Memorial Award, among many other awards. A recent accomplishment was PacFed's "weekend transition" from an office-based business to a work-from-home one.

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**TIM GASPAR***Gaspar Insurance Services*

Tim Gaspar is the owner and principal at Gaspar Insurance Services in Woodland Hills. A lifelong entrepreneur, he started his first business in high school and ran a number of businesses while attending California State University - Northridge. Gaspar worked with Marsh & Co., an independent insurance agency in Encino, and in 2008 he purchased his book of clients from the agency and founded Gaspar Insurance. It is one of the largest independent insurance firms in the city of Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley (as ranked by the Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley business journals). Gaspar Insurance this year was ranked by Inc. magazine as of the fastest growing companies in America. Gaspar supports a number of nonprofits focused on youth and public safety and serves on a number of boards including the Discovery Cube Los Angeles, West Valley YMCA and the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. "I am thrilled to have joined the Discovery Cube board," he said. "The northeast part of our San Fernando Valley is long overdue in getting the attention and helps it deserves."

**DAK GILINSKY***DLC Group*

Dak Gilinsky is managing director of the DLC Group, a finance and accounting consulting firm in Woodland Hills. In the past year, he was involved in the process of selling the DLC business to the Addison Group, which is the new parent. Gilinsky was promoted to manage the Orange County market in addition to its Los Angeles business. He brings to his role more than 12 years of experience across consulting and professional services in all industries. In the past, he has launched multiple professional services businesses on the West Coast.

**TAMARA GURNEY***Mission Valley Bank*

Tamara Gurney is the founding president and chief executive of Mission Valley Bank, a community-based business bank in Sun Valley with offices in the Santa Clarita Valley. She is active with the Federal Reserve's Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council. She serves on the board of Pacific Coast Banker's Bank and serves on the board or advisory boards of the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp., the Valley Economic Development Corp., the Valley Economic Alliance, the Los Angeles County Business Federation or BizFed, College of the Canyons Foundation, YMCA of Santa Clarita, Southland Sings and the San Fernando Valley Community Foundation. She was recognized by the Santa Clarita Valley Leadership Committee as the Business Person of the Year in 2012; the Business Journal named her a Trusted Advisor in 2011, and she is a past president of the California Independent Bankers Association. She said she is proud of the team at her bank for supporting the community during the economic crisis. "Our small community bank to date processed more than 330 Paycheck Protection Program loans, providing more than \$68 million in desperately needed funds. That's impactful."

ICON OF INFLUENCE

'We didn't miss a beat when the stay-at-home order was issued.'

— Mitzi Like, LBW Insurance

**VAHID KHORSAND***BWS Financial*

Vahid Khorsand is an analyst and partner at BWS Financial, an independent equities research firm in Woodland Hills that has been ranked No. 1 for 5-year and 1-year performance by Investars. Khorsand is an appointee of Mayor Eric Garcetti to the Los Angeles Citywide Planning Commission where he was elected vice president in 2018. He is the founder and current chair of the United Chambers of Commerce's Inspirational Women of the San Fernando Valley. He also is on the Community Advisory Group for Premier America Credit Union. He is a founding member of the West Valley Democrats and co-chair of the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley's Endorsements Committee. Prior to his appointment to the planning commission, he was on the board of the Encino Chamber of Commerce where he was a past president and board secretary of ONEgeneration among other affiliations. Khorsand said he is proud that BWS has consistently been recognized for its equities research and that the company's summer internship program has led to industry jobs for the interns.

**MITZI LIKE***LBW Insurance and Financial Services*

Mitzi Like is chief executive of LBW Insurance and Financial Services in Valencia. In addition to her management duties, she handles the firm's largest book of business. In 1977, she formed Like Financial with her father; a later merger created LBW. Today it remains a family-owned insurance agency with seven family members from three generations on staff. In 2013, Like formed Western Resource Network, a strategic alliance with two insurance agencies in the L.A. region. She serves on the boards of the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital Foundation and Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp. One of LBW's high-profile clients is the city of Santa Clarita. She said she is proud that "we didn't miss a beat when the stay-at-home order was issued. We remain a high-touch 'boutique' agency (even with everyone remote), and with so much consolidation in our industry, we're finding clients really appreciate that about LBW."

**JAMES MUNTER***Bank of America*

James Munter leads a team of financial specialists for Bank of America Merrill Lynch in Encino. He is vice president overseeing client relationships within the commercial bank, which offers advisory and global financial services for companies' domestic and international operations. Munter also serves on the bank's Latino Leadership Council, which is dedicated supporting the Latino business community. He is on the board of the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Clarita.

**PATRICK NYGREN***Union Bank*

Patrick Nygren joined Union Bank two years ago as regional president of its Los Angeles and Central Coast division, which also includes Ventura, Santa Barbara and Monterey counties. From his Woodland Hills office, he oversees more than 87 branches and 580 employees. Before moving to Union Bank, he served as regional bank president for Wells Fargo, where since 2017 he led all aspects of consumer, small business and affluent business banking throughout Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. Nygren is on the board of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association as well as Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families, a crisis-care and residential treatment facility for foster or at-risk children. He said he is proud of the professional network he built. "I've been able to maintain strong partnerships and relationships with my previous employer and team while expanding my influence and professional network here at Union Bank," he told the Business Journal.

**ROSS PENDERGRAFT***Leavitt Group*

Ross Pendergraft is senior vice president of the Leavitt Group insurance firm in Woodland Hills, where he's responsible for growth of Leavitt Group's employee benefits initiatives in Southern California. Pendergraft's specialties include employee benefits, 401(k)'s, worksite benefits, estate planning and Medicare. He is an active board member of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association; he has been on the board since 2012 and chairs VICA's health care committee. Pendergraft is president of the East Valley Police Activity League Supporters, or PALS. He also devotes his time and money to Healing Arts Reaching Kids (HARK) and the Boys and Girls Club of the West Valley. When asked to cite a recent accomplishment, he said: "I am really blessed with a wonderful career and because of that, it has enabled me to be even more giving with my time and finances to several of my beloved charities."

**DAVID POMS***Poms & Associates*

David Poms is chief executive of Poms & Associates, an independent insurance and risk management firm in Woodland Hills that he founded in 1991. Today, the company has six branches in three states and has been repeatedly recognized as one of the 50 Best Places to Work in Insurance by Insurance Business America magazine. Poms was named the 2020 Insurance Entrepreneur of the Year by the American Business Awards for his leadership in loss control and advocacy for child welfare and school safety issues. He has served on the board of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Foundation for the past 8 years. In the community, Poms supports Chaminade College Preparatory school; City of Hope, a private clinical research center and hospital in Duarte, Calif.; The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society; and SafeSport, a nonprofit that works to end abuse in sports. He said he is proud of how his team responded to the pandemic, "shifting seamlessly to remote work locations and doing whatever it takes to continue delivering the highest level of service to our clients and the communities in which they operate."

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**JOSEPH SEETOO***Morton Capital Management*

Joseph Seetoo is a partner and senior vice president of Morton Capital Management in Calabasas, which provides financial services to business owners and high net worth families. Seetoo is a chartered financial analyst, a member of the CFA Institute and the Los Angeles Society of Financial Analysts. He is a certified exit planning advisor and is president of the Conejo Valley chapter of the Exit Planning Institute. He is involved in several

nonprofits, and in 2018 he was given a service award from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Conejo Valley for chairing a capital committee that raised \$3 million. He received the Trail Blazer award at the Business Journal's Trusted Advisors event in 2017. Seetoo said he is proud to be part of an organization that was named one of the top places to work last year and this by Investment News and that continues the legacy of the late founder, Lon Morton.

**DANONE SIMPSON***Montage Insurance Solutions*

The founder and chief executive of Montage Insurance Solutions, Danone Simpson has built an agency focused on employee benefit and property and casualty programs for the commercial and nonprofit sectors. Her Woodland Hills company utilizes human resources tools, consulting, wellness campaigns, health fairs and safety initiatives to reduce premium and employee costs. She has won multiple awards, including being selected last year as

one of 16 Most Influential Insurance Brokers by the Los Angeles Business Journal and as CEO of the Year by the San Fernando Valley Business Journal in 2018. She has been named a Trusted Advisor in Insurance and her firm was named One of the Top Twelve Women-Owned Businesses in Los Angeles. Simpson was selected by Forbes magazine to be represented in the Women of Power series for Southern California, among other honors. She serves on the Valley Village business advisory and fund development board, and she was honored as a founding member of Women for Wishes. She also is an active member of multiple insurance associations. As for a recent accomplishment, she cites successfully moving the staff to working from home because of the coronavirus pandemic, changing monthly seminars to bi-weekly webinars and maintaining service levels.

**SIM TANG-PARADIS***City National Bank*

Sim Tang-Paradis is vice president and manager of City National Bank's Westlake Village office. She has more than 25 years of banking experience. Prior to joining City National, she served as a vice president and SBA business development officer with California Oaks State Bank in Thousand Oaks. Active in the community, Tang-Paradis serves on the board of Economic Development Collaborative of Ventura County, the Golf

Committee of California State University - Northridge's Construction Management Program, and the Health Care Foundation for Ventura County. She also serves on the board of Commerce Department's Minority Business Development Agency of Pasadena — operated by SoCal Corporate Growth Partners, for which Tang-Paradis serves as board secretary. This year, she was awarded the American Red Cross' Outstanding Service Award as a Blood Program Partner for her support during the COVID-19 pandemic. "I'm so pleased to provide CNB's services to my small business clients during these difficult times," she said. "What I do at City National truly matters to the community."

**LOUIE VALDEZ***Valdez and Polanski Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo Advisors*

Louie Valdez has been a financial advisor for 28 years, helping affluent families in the Conejo Valley achieve their financial goals. Valdez is a graduate of California State University - Northridge with a degree in finance and economics. He received his Certified Financial Planner designation in 2014 and a Masters in Personal Financial Planning. Outside of the workplace, Valdez

has given his time to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County, Boys and Girls Club of Moorpark and Moorpark Foundation for the Arts. He serves on the board of California State University - Channel Islands Foundation. He is the Wells Fargo Ally Los Angeles Ambassador for the Women's Team Member Network and chair-elect for Senior Concerns. He said he is proud that, "two years ago our team moved from UBS to Wells Fargo Advisors. We believe that our clients are best served by having the resources of a large enterprise with comprehensive financial and investment guidance."

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AL ADAM

Mayor of Thousand Oaks

Al Adam and the city of Thousand Oaks are practically inseparable since he has been active in civic matters throughout the 2000s. He was mayor in 2015 and is again this year. He served on the Thousand Oaks Planning Commission from 2004-10. He has been a city councilmember since 2012. He served as Mayor Pro Tem in 2014 and 2019. Since 2018, Adam also has served as a general assembly delegate to the Southern California Association of Governments. On the Ventura Council of Governments, Adam served as chair in 2015 and 2019. He has sat on the Civic Arts Plaza Board of Governors from 1994 through 2004. By day, Adam works as Wells Fargo Advisors managing director of investments. As for recent accomplishments, he cited developing a biotech hub for high-paying STEM jobs and achieving an S&P AA+ long-term credit-worthiness rating for the city of Thousand Oaks.



VREJ AGAJANIAN

Mayor of Glendale

Vrej Agajanian was elected to his first term on the Glendale City Council in 2017. In April 2020, he was selected by council members to be the mayor of the San Fernando Valley city. Agajanian came to public service from the media industry. He is the chief executive of two television stations, including the Armenian American Broadcasting Corp. in Glendale. He has been a television host and commentator on his nightly show,

“ABCTVLIVE with Vrej Agajanian,” that features guests calling in with questions and concerns. A resident of Glendale for more than 30 years, Agajanian is a state certified engineer. He has served as president of the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America. He has also been a board member of the Glendale Police Foundation, of the Glendale Kiwanis Club and past chairman of the Armenian Society of Los Angeles.



KATHRYN BARGER

Los Angeles County Supervisor

Kathryn Barger is chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. That put her at the forefront the county’s response to the coronavirus crisis and was the one to proclaim it a state of emergency. She began her career in public service as a college intern in the office of Supervisor Michael Antonovich and eventually rose to the position of chief deputy in 2001. She served with that title until her election as a supervisor in 2016

after Antonovich retired. Barger currently serves on the boards of Metrolink, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority, Southern California Association of Governments and South Coast Air Quality Management District. Her district includes 22 cities in the Antelope, San Gabriel, San Fernando, Santa Clarita and Crescenta valleys.



BOB BLUMENFIELD

Los Angeles City Council

Bob Blumenfield was elected to the Los Angeles City Council in March 2013. He represents the 3rd District, which includes Canoga Park, Reseda, Tarzana, Winnetka and Woodland Hills. Previously, Blumenfield represented San Fernando Valley communities in the California State Assembly from 2008 to 2013. He was the first Democratic freshman assemblymember to serve as chair of the Assembly Budget Committee. He also

worked in Washington as a staffer to Sen. Bill Bradley, Congressmen Howard Berman and as a staff designee to the House Budget Committee. In addition to the work he’s done to help residents, local businesses and nonprofits get through the COVID-19 crisis, Blumenfield said he’s proudest of his “\$100 million plus signature redevelopment initiatives Reseda Rising and the Canoga Park Cultural Arts Hub that are now funded and about to transform our arts and entertainment landscape.”



JULIA BROWNLEY

U.S. House of Representatives

Julia Brownley was first elected to Congress in 2012 to serve as the representative for California’s 26th District, which encompasses most of Ventura County and includes Santa Paula, Camarillo, Newbury Park, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village. She serves as one of the House Democratic Caucus’s Senior Whips. Brownley’s first committee assignment was serving on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

She helped pass the Female Veterans Suicide Prevention Act in 2016. She’s also been a champion of the Port of Hueneme, Channel Islands and Ventura harbors, and local airports as a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. A graduate of George Washington University with a B.A. in political science, Brownley pursued her MBA at American University and her career in public service commenced in 1994 after running for the local school board to advocate for special needs students such as her dyslexia-stricken daughter. She resides in Thousand Oaks.

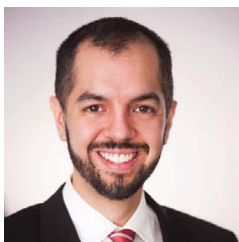


TONY CÁRDENAS

U.S. House of Representatives

Tony Cárdenas is in his fourth term as U.S. congressmember, representing California’s 29th District communities of Granada Hills, Van Nuys, Pacoima, Panorama City, North Hollywood, Sun Valley, Sylmar, San Fernando and Lake Balboa. He has served more than 20 years in public office, starting with his election to the State Assembly in 1996. He served three terms there before being elected to the Los Angeles City Council in 2003. Cárdenas

now sits on the Energy and Commerce Committee and has worked on and authored legislation to lower prescription drug prices, combat climate change and increase access to affordable health care. He was the first Latino elected to represent the San Fernando Valley in Congress and is a member of several caucuses designed to strengthen relationships and business opportunities between the United States and Central and South American countries.



JOEL FAJARDO

Mayor of San Fernando

Joel Fajardo is the three-term mayor of San Fernando and a real estate agent with Keller Williams Realty in Encino. “My priorities will be to balance the budget, strengthen city finances, and restore confidence in our government,” he said. “My years in the private sector have taught me the skills needed to keep San Fernando solvent.” On the community level, he has worked extensively with the promotion of sustainable homeownership. He has also fought against high water rate hikes in the San Fernando Valley.



LAURA FRIEDMAN

California Assembly

In the last year, California Assemblymember Laura Friedman has sponsored a bill to address delays in litigation over the California Environmental Quality Act to promote swifter resolution; another bill would streamline CEQA compliance for certain housing projects. On the coronavirus front, she serves on the Legislature Coordination Group, which works on economic recovery plans for the state in conjunction with Gov. Gavin Newsom. Friedman

formerly served on the Glendale City Council and as mayor. She owns PlanetGlass.net, a website and business focused on mid-20th century modernist art glass and jewelry. In 2016, she was elected to represent the 43rd Assembly District, which includes Glendale, Burbank, La Cañada-Flintridge and portions of Los Angeles.

**JESSE GABRIEL***California Assembly*

Jesse Gabriel represents the 45th Assembly District, the west and central San Fernando Valley. The 38-year-old won in a special election in June 2018 and later was re-elected to a full term. Prior to becoming an elected official, Gabriel was a constitutional rights and general litigation attorney. As an assemblymember he serves on the Appropriations Committee as well as the Committees on Higher Education, Housing and

Community Development and Banking and Finance. A committed environmentalist and longtime community activist, Gabriel previously served on the board of the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters and the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. His proudest professional accomplishment in the recent past was working “to protect vulnerable populations through the establishment of the California State Nonprofit Security Grant Program and expanding access to legal services for low-income Californians.”

**ERIC GARCETTI***Mayor of Los Angeles*

A native of the San Fernando Valley, Eric Garcetti was sworn in as the city’s 42nd mayor in 2013 and re-elected in 2017. He is the son of public servants; his father Gil Garcetti was Los Angeles County district attorney. Among his accomplishments: raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, cutting business taxes, leading a regional alliance committed to ending chronic homelessness and successfully leading the bid to bring the 2028

Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games to the United States for the first time in more than 30 years. A jazz pianist and photographer – a hobby he shares with his father – Garcetti has served as an intelligence officer in the United States Navy Reserve and taught at USC and Occidental College.

**MIKE GARCIA***U.S. House of Representatives*

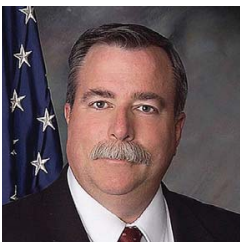
Mike Garcia was elected to Congress in May in a special election to fill the unexpired term of Katie Hill. A Republican, he faces another election in November. He represents the 25th District, which includes northern parts of the San Fernando Valley, along with Palmdale and portions of Lancaster and Simi Valley. A top graduate of Saugus High School in 1994, Garcia was nominated by U.S. Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon to attend the U.S. Naval

Academy in Annapolis, Md. He went on to become one of the first Super Hornet strike fighter pilots in the Navy, flying more than 30 combat missions over Iraq. After nearly 20 years of military service, he returned to the 25th District in 2009 and began work for the Raytheon Co., where he said he has been responsible for generating billions of dollars of revenue and the creation of hundreds of jobs for his company and his district. He also has a passion for real estate; he has bought distressed residential properties and improved them.

**ROBERT M. HERTZBERG***California State Senate*

Robert Hertzberg is the Senate Majority Leader in Sacramento. He represents the 18th District, which includes much of the San Fernando Valley. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, his office created “Virus and the Valley,” an e-newsletter. In the last year he has worked on bills to establish state-chartered cannabis banks and reform the California Earthquake Authority, which sells insurance to homeowners. Hertzberg was first elected to the California State Assembly in 1996 and served as Speaker of the Assembly, unanimously elected in 2000 and 2002. After

his tenure as speaker, Hertzberg worked at the law firm Mayer Brown and co-launched a company that produced inexpensive, lightweight solar panels. In recognition of his clean energy efforts in Rwanda, he received the World Bank Award for Lighting Africa. In 2014, he returned to state government.

**STEVEN HOFBAUER***Mayor of Palmdale*

Steven Hofbauer was elected mayor of Palmdale in 2018 and will finish out his term in November. He was first elected to the Palmdale City Council in 2003 and prior to that served as Palmdale Planning Commissioner and chairman. He said he’s especially proud of leading the team that brought a new administrative and economic development team to the city that embraces transparency, ethics and public engagement. Hofbauer

has devoted more than 39 years to the Los Angeles Fire Department, first as a fire inspector and later as a firefighter and paramedic. He received the Los Angeles County Fire Department Valor Award for Heroism, along with several other awards. He started a building, fire code and construction consulting business after retiring from the LAFD.

**KELLY HONIG***Mayor of Westlake Village*

Kelly Honig has served on the Westlake Village City Council since November 2015 and is currently serving as mayor of the Conejo Valley city. Honig has worked as development director at St. Patrick’s Day School in Thousand Oaks, and as a lawyer for 13 years in the Los Angeles region. She taught business law and criminal law and procedure at Oxnard College for two years. Prior to joining the city council, Honig spent many years

volunteering for local sports organizations and schools. During her time on the council, she is most proud “of helping to lead our city and its residents through the impact and recovery from the Woolsey Fire, and am sincerely thankful and grateful for the outstanding citizens that make our community so strong.”

**JACQUI IRWIN***California Assembly*

Elected in 2014 to represent California’s 44th Assembly District, including Camarillo, Moorpark, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village, Irwin is the former mayor of Thousand Oaks, where she was elected in 2004 and served two terms. As an assemblymember, Irwin was a leader in getting funding for the creation of CSU Channel Island School of Engineering and for innovation centers on UC campuses. Her

legislation created tax-free savings accounts for the disabled, increased the cybersecurity of state agencies and expedited mental health services for military service members. The 20-year Thousand Oaks resident once worked for Teledyne Systems and was an engineer at Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab.

**PAUL KORETZ***Los Angeles City Council*

Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Koretz has represented the city’s 5th District for 10 years. District 5 includes communities on the west side of Los Angeles as well as in the San Fernando Valley. Koretz was born in the Valley. He’s a champion of environmental protection including fighting climate change, conserving water and protecting natural resources. He also worked against mansionization in the area and has worked

to try to solve the city’s homelessness problem. Among his honors, he has won the Green Leaf Award for Innovation from City Plants, a nonprofit partner of the city of Los Angeles and the Department of Water and Power; the 2019 UCLA Tom Bradley Local Leader of the Year Award for his commitment to UCLA and the city of Los Angeles; and the 2018 Courageous Leadership Award from Women Against Gun Violence.

**PAUL KREKORIAN***Los Angeles City Council*

Paul Krekorian has served on L.A.’s City Council since 2009, representing parts of the San Fernando Valley. A third-generation Valley resident, Krekorian attended Cleveland High School in Reseda. After graduating from UC Berkeley School of Law, Krekorian helped organize Bill Clinton’s 1992 presidential campaign. As an attorney specializing in entertainment and intellectual property litigation, he eventually became a partner at

Fisher & Krekorian. In 2006, Krekorian was elected to the California State Assembly’s 43rd District and was named Assistant Majority Floor Leader of the State Assembly. On the L.A. City Council, he chairs the Ad Hoc Job Creation Committee, which he founded in 2015, and sits on the city’s Economic Development Committee. He has also advocated for gun control and, in the wake of this year’s civil unrest, has refused to support defunding the police.

**SHEILA KUEHL***Los Angeles County Supervisor*

Sheila James Kuehl in November 2018 was re-elected to her second term on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in the 3rd District, which includes Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Reseda, Winnetka and Canoga Park. Prior to that, she served eight years in the California State Senate and six in the state Assembly. Kuehl was the first woman in state history to be named Speaker Pro Tempore of the Assembly, and the first openly gay

or lesbian person to be elected to the California Legislature. She is proud to have been part of a comprehensive and coordinated countywide effort to protect lives and ensure public health during the coronavirus pandemic.

**JOHN LEE***Los Angeles City Council*

John Lee was elected in August to represent the 12th Council District communities of Northridge, Chatsworth, Porter Ranch, Granada Hills, North Hills, Sherwood Forest, Reseda and West Hills, beating out a crowded field of 15 candidates. Prior to his election, Lee served as chief of staff to his City Council predecessor, Mitchell Englander, who pleaded guilty in early July to a felony charge in the ongoing City Hall corruption case. It is

unclear if Lee is a serious target of prosecutors. Lee created the CD12 Rapid Response program to combat illegal dumping and was instrumental in building the Devonshire Police Activities League Supports (PALS) Youth Center in Northridge.

**NURY MARTINEZ***Los Angeles City Council*

Nury Martinez is the president of the Los Angeles City Council and represents the 6th District which includes Lake Balboa, Van Nuys, Panorama City, North Hills, Arleta and Sun Valley. She has led the city council in virtual meetings and passed emergency measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, Martinez is interested in supporting families' efforts to raise their children in safe neighborhoods

with the opportunity to achieve and maintain the middle-class goals of the American Dream by fighting for good paying jobs, increased green space and environmental justice for the communities of the Northeast Valley.

**KEITH MASHBURN***Mayor of Simi Valley*

Keith Mashburn was elected mayor of Simi Valley in 2018. In the last year, he has coordinated the city's response to the coronavirus, telling the Business Journal: "I'm here to assist businesses in being COVID compliant." Mashburn has served on the city council since 2012. He currently sits on the boards of Ventura County Association of Water Agencies, Clean Power Alliance, Simi Valley Tourism Alliance and the Regional Defense

Partnership for the 21st Century. He is a representative to the League of California Cities and a voting representative to the general assembly of the Southern California Association of Governments. The Mashburn family has owned and operated three retail businesses in Simi Valley: Mashburn Kawasaki, Java Island and Awards Specialties. Mashburn worked for 30 years at the Ventura County Fire Department, specializing in fire investigation. He retired in 2005 with the rank of battalion chief.

**ARA NAJARIAN***City of Glendale*

Ara Najarian is a lawyer by training, having earned his J.D. degree from USC. But it is in public service where Najarian is widely known. He recently finished his fourth term as the mayor of Glendale and now serves as councilmember. He was first elected to the city council in 2005 after having served two years on the Glendale Community College board of trustees. He is past chair of the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments,

past chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and is on the board of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink). His wife is Palmira Perez, who has been a local television news anchor.

**ADRIN NAZARIAN***California Assembly*

Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian is in his fourth term as the representative for the 46th District, which includes central-southern San Fernando Valley neighborhoods Studio City, Sherman Oaks, Van Nuys, Universal City, North Hollywood, Panorama City, North Hills, Valley Village, Lake Balboa, Toluca Lake and Valley Village. He chairs the Assembly's Aging and Long-Term Care and 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games

committees, and sits on its budget, health and transportation committees. He has served on the boards of several community-based organizations including the East Valley YMCA and the YWCA. Prior to being elected, he served as chief of staff to Councilman Paul Krekorian and as an aide to Congressman Brad Sherman.

**LINDA NORTHRUP***City of Agoura Hills*

Linda Northrup, a founding partner at Westlake Village law firm Northrup Schlueter, was elected to the Agoura Hills City Council in 2015 and served as mayor from 2018 to 2019. She is proud that when she was mayor, she and the city worked with Los Angeles County to rebuild the Jess Thomas Bridge, destroyed in the Woolsey fire, in less than six months, thereby restoring a

crucial evacuation route. Her law firm specializes in real estate, construction, business advice and dispute resolution. She has been recognized for her work as a lawyer and community leader, receiving the Business Journal's Trusted Advisor award in 2014 and was honored as a Super Lawyer in 2007 and 2011. Northrup also served as a director for a local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity and on the Los Angeles County Woolsey Fire After Action Task Force.

**R. REX PARRIS***Mayor of Lancaster*

R. Rex Parris is serving his fourth term as mayor of Lancaster, his hometown. Since being elected in 2008, he has worked to revitalize the city, starting with a redevelopment of the downtown area. He is also responsible for the city's push into alternative energy, working with the solar power and electrical vehicle industries to make Lancaster a net zero community. Under his leadership, Lancaster was named by the Los Angeles Economic

Development Corp. as the Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County in 2013. Parris is a career lawyer, having started Parris Law Firm in 1985 with his wife, Carrol. The practice represented Porter Ranch residents following the natural gas leak that began in 2015 and was the first to file suit against Southern California Edison after the Woolsey Fire in 2018.

**ANTHONY PORTANTINO***California State Senate*

Anthony J. Portantino is a state senator representing the 25th District which encompasses portions of the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys. He was elected in 2016 after defeating Republican Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich. Prior to that, Portantino served in the State Assembly from 2006 to 2012. During his break from public office, he joined University of Southern California as a legislator in residence

and as Unruh Institute of Politics visiting fellow. Earlier, he served 8 years on the La Cañada Flintridge City Council, including two terms as mayor, and he is active on the La Cañada Flintridge and the Armenian American Chambers of Commerce. He chairs the Pasadena City College Bond Oversight Committee. He served on the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and also supported foothills preservation in Pasadena, La Crescenta, La Cañada Flintridge and Altadena.

**LUZ RIVAS***California Assembly*

Luz M. Rivas was elected to the California State Assembly in June 2018 and represents the 39th Assembly District. It is the community she grew up in, the northeast San Fernando Valley. She said she has built her career "at the intersection of engineering, education and public service," founding nonprofit DIY Girls as a way to encourage young girls to pursue careers in science, engineering and technology. She worked as an electrical

design engineer for Motorola. She also helped write environmental technology curricula for area high school students before being appointed to the Los Angeles Board of Public Works. Rivas is proud that she "secured over \$1 million to build better play areas for kids in my district and additional \$5 million to build an educational facility in the Valley to teach people about reducing greenhouse gases."

**MONICA RODRIGUEZ***Los Angeles City Council*

Monica Rodriguez was elected to the Los Angeles City Council in July 2017, becoming the first woman to serve the 7th District communities of Sylmar, Mission Hills, Pacoima, Sunland-Tujunga and North Hills. She began her career as an aide to two L.A. City Councilmembers and later served as a member of Mayor Richard Riordan's administration, where she led community revitalization efforts and co-founded the F.I.R.E Academy, an after

school program for at-risk youth. She served nearly 10 years as an executive with the California Association of Realtors, where she developed the Mortgage Protection Program, protecting families from foreclosure during the economic downturn in 2008. Later, as commissioner of the Board of Public Works, she created the city's Small Business Academy, which helps small and minority- and women-owned businesses compete for infrastructure and public works contracts.

**DAVID RYU***Los Angeles City Council*

Los Angeles City Councilmember David Ryu represents the 4th Council District, which includes Sherman Oaks, Toluca Lake and several areas of the Los Angeles basin. He recently became Assistant Council President Pro Tempore, the council's third-highest rank, in addition to becoming the first Asian-American to serve on the city council. Ryu studied economics at UCLA, public policy and administration at Rutgers University, won a

United Nations graduate internship and was a Netkal Fellow at USC's School of Social Work. As senior deputy to Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Burke, he worked on issues such as public health, housing, children and family services, transportation and senior services. Ryu said he is proud of "passing one of the strongest anti-corruption laws in modern L.A. history – and continuing to work for more."

**ADAM SCHIFF***U.S. House of Representatives*

Now in his 10th term in Congress, Adam Schiff has been in the headlines this year by overseeing the impeachment hearings of President Donald Trump. As the congressmemember representing the 28th Congressional District, which includes Burbank and Glendale and portions of the East San Fernando Valley, Schiff has focused on growing the economy, bolstering national security, helping small businesses and improving education, safety and

health care for children. "I am proud of the work I have done to help my constituents during the coronavirus crisis, to hold the President accountable, and to pass the Armenian Genocide Resolution," said Schiff, a former federal prosecutor and state senator.

**DAVID SHAPIRO***City of Calabasas*

David Shapiro has served on the Calabasas City Council since 2013, including a stint as mayor last year. He formed the first Mayors Youth Council to encourage residents between the ages of 14 and 21 to become more involved in city, government or philanthropic causes. In November he presided over the first Calabasas celebration of Veterans Day, an event with more than 100 vets in attendance. Shapiro, an attorney, serves on the

regional council for the Southern California Association of Governments for Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village and Malibu. He also serves on the League of California Cities Policy Committee and the board of the Valley Economic Alliance.

**BRAD SHERMAN***U.S. House of Representatives*

Congressman Brad Sherman from Sherman Oaks represents the San Fernando Valley in the House of Representatives. He has been in Congress since 1997 and is currently serving his 11th term. Sherman is a senior member of both the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Financial Services Committee and is a member of the Science, Space and Technology Committee. He was elected late last year to serve as chair of the Financial

Services Subcommittee on Investor Protection, Entrepreneurship and Capital Markets. Sherman is a tax law specialist and certified public accountant. Prior to joining Congress, Sherman was on staff at one of the nation's big-four CPA firms. While at the firm, he audited large businesses and government entities, provided tax law counsel, and advised entrepreneurs and small businesses on tax and investment issues.

**CHRISTY SMITH***California Assembly*

Christy Smith was elected in November 2018 to represent the 38th Assembly District communities of Agua Dulce, Castaic, Santa Clarita, Simi Valley and the northern San Fernando Valley. A 37-year resident of Santa Clarita, she has spent her career in public service with a specialty in education, starting as an analyst with the Education Department. She went on to serve two terms as a board member for the Newhall School District and is

a founder of the Valencia Valley Technological Education Foundation. She served as chair of the Measure E Proposition 39 bond campaign for the Newhall District, which has provided \$60 million for facility and technology upgrades. Most recently, she authored a proposed bill that would require the Office of Emergency Services to work with the disabled and special needs communities any time it updates California's State Emergency Plan. Smith is campaigning as the Democratic candidate for California's 25th Congressional District.

**CAMERON SMYTH***Mayor of Santa Clarita*

Cameron Smyth entered his fourth term as mayor this year. When the coronavirus pandemic hit, he took to Facebook Live to update residents and answer questions. Last year he spearheaded support to pass the Jobs Creation Overlay Zone, a real estate development designation that streamlines permitting for office and industrial projects with the aim of attracting corporate headquarters to

Santa Clarita. Smyth was first elected to the Santa Clarita City Council in 2000, serving six years, including two terms as mayor. He left the council in 2006 after his election to the California Assembly representing the 38th District. In 2012, he left state office and returned to the Santa Clarita City Council in 2016.

**SHARON SPRINGER***Mayor of Burbank*

Sharon Springer joined the Burbank City Council in 2017 and became mayor last year. In January, she participated in the groundbreaking of Warner Bros.' Second Century Project, which includes the construction of new office towers. She coordinated adoption of a citywide emergency order to control the spread of COVID-19. She also oversaw approval of the 777 Front Street, First Street Village and Avion mixed-use projects. Springer has

lived in Burbank for 25 years. Starting in 2009, she was an original member of the Sustainable Burbank Commission. In 2015, she served on the board of Burbank Water & Power. Springer sits on the Airport Noise Task Force Committee, which consists of councilmemb0.5 innal Aviation Administration to improve noise at Hollywood Burbank Airport.

**HENRY STERN***California State Senate*

Henry Stern is a sixth-generation Californian and native of the 27th Senate District, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Ventura counties. He was elected state senator in November 2016 after being endorsed by environmental groups, teachers and school board members from Los Angeles and Ventura county school districts and the Association of Los Angeles County Sheriffs, among others. Stern has lectured at UCLA and UC

Berkeley, enjoys volunteering at his local Boys & Girls Club and is a member of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Advisory Committee, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, American Jewish Committee and Truman National Security Project. He is an alumnus of Harvard University and UC Berkeley Law School. Stern's father is actor Daniel Stern.

**ILLECE BUCKLEY WEBER***Mayor of Agoura Hills*

This term is Illece Buckley Weber's second round as Agoura Hills mayor, serving previously from 2014 to 2015. She was first elected to the council in 2011. Weber has her own civil litigation law firm, Nunziato Buckley Weber, in Westlake Village and has been active with Women Lawyers of Los Angeles and Century City Bar Association for many years. An affection for the natural beauty

Agoura Hills offers has prompted her to take environmentally conscious roles in the community, including serving on the city's Public Works, Environmental Sustainability and Annexation board as well as the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Advisory Committee. "I am most proud of protecting the environment, supporting open space purchases, naturalizing our creeks, and ensuring that our air and water are clean," she said.

**ALICIA WEINTRAUB***Mayor of Calabasas*

Alicia Weintraub has served as mayor of Calabasas beginning last year. She has been a Calabasas city councilmember since 2015 and served as Mayor Pro Tem in 2018-19. She also has served in many capacities in the Calabasas area: She was president of Malibu Las Virgenes Council of Government (2017-2019); vice chair of the Calabasas Planning Commission (2013-2015); Calabasas Environmental Commissioner (2011-2013); Co-chair

of the Calabasas Environmental Commission Ad Hoc Committee for Coyote Education (2011-2013); and a director of Temple Aliyah, Education Committee (2011-2013). She also is a member of Calabasas Historical Society and Sierra Club. As a professional highlight, she cites helping the community respond to two emergencies: the November 2018 Woolsey Fire and this year with the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE VALLEY 200 HEALTH CARE



RICHARD ALLEN

Palmdale Regional Medical Center

Richard Allen is chief executive of Palmdale Regional Medical Center. He has held this position since 2012 and has more than 25 years of experience as a hospital chief. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives, an international professional society of health care leaders. Allen also is on the board of the Hospital Association of Southern California, which represents 181 hospitals – 46 percent of the hospitals in

the state. He is executive vice president of the United Hospital Association, which represents investor-owned hospitals in California. Previously, Allen served as chair of the Los Angeles Hospital Leadership Council, and he held positions with the American Hospital Association and chaired one of its sections.



MATTHEW ALPERT

*Alpert Vision Care
Wink Optometry*

Dr. Matthew Alpert owns and operates Alpert Vision Care, a third-generation optometric practice in Woodland Hills, and he owns and operates Wink Optometry in Calabasas and Westlake Village. He won the Young Optometrist of the Year Award in 2002, and he is the past president of the San Fernando Valley Optometric Society. Dr Alpert was featured on the television

program “The Doctors” in 2012 and the American Optometric Association chose him to be a spokesman for its “Eye on Nutrition” awareness campaign, in which he was featured on national television discussing the role of nutrition and ocular health. Dr. Alpert is a director of VSP Global, the largest managed vision care company in the United States, and he worked with Google on some aspects of its Google Glass. Recently he returned from his third trip to Soweto, South Africa, where he helped develop a clinic in which 30,000 children receive eye care.



PETER GROSSMAN

Grossman Burn Centers

Dr. Peter Grossman is the medical director of Grossman Burn Centers based in West Hills with locations in Bakersfield and in Kansas City, Mo. The facilities treat burn patients from around the world. He is the past president of the Los Angeles Society of Plastic Surgeons and a clinical instructor of medicine at UCLA. He is a board-certified plastic surgeon whose private medical practice is divided between cosmetic

and reconstructive surgery and the care of burn-injured patients. Grossman sits on several boards including the Grossman Burn Foundation board, and he has won numerous honors, including the Giving New Hope Award, Frist Humanitarian Award and the Armand Arabian Leaders in Public Service Award. “This year I am proud of being part of a team that is building smart phone apps using AI which will make expert burn and wound diagnosis globally more accessible,” Grossman said.



ALICE ISSAI

Adventist Health Glendale

Alice Issai has been president of Adventist Health Glendale for 2 years. Previously, she was chief operating officer at Keck Medical Center of USC, UC Irvine Health and Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center. Issaai is a board member of the American Heart and Stroke Association and has served as a team member on her hospital’s ongoing medical missions to Armenia. In her tenure, Adventist Health Glendale

earned its first 5-star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as the 10th ranked hospital in Southern California. “My big vision is for us to become a true tertiary center, offering state-of-the-art, highly specialized care with advanced medical procedures that will attract patients from all over Southern California,” she said. Issai holds an MBA degree from Pepperdine University.



BERNARD KLEIN

Providence Holy Cross Medical Center

Dr. Bernard Klein is chief executive of Providence Holy Cross Medical Center, a 377-bed, not-for-profit facility in Mission Hills. Providence Holy Cross was ranked a Top Regional Hospital by U.S. News, a Top 50 hospital by Healthgrades, a Magnet Designated hospital by a nurses’ association and a Top Place to Work in Healthcare by Modern Healthcare. Previously, he served as the chief medical officer for the hospital. Klein is

a board-certified Internal Medicine physician and has an MBA from the Emory University Goizueta Business School. He is chair of both the Facey Foundation and the Hospital Association of Southern California.



KELLY LINDEN

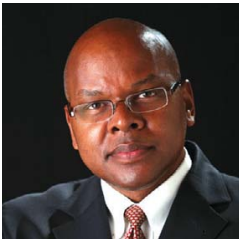
Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center

Kelly Linden is chief executive of Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center, a 392-bed acute care hospital in Burbank. She has been with Providence 8 years and previously served as chief operating officer at Methodist Hospital in Arcadia. She said she’s proud that the hospital has earned an industry award for safety and that it is one of U.S. News & World Report’s Best Regional Hospitals. Linden’s 30-year career has included

operational leadership, strategy and business development for hospitals and ambulatory facilities, and she has led multimillion-dollar complex hospital campus developments. Linden has a bachelor’s degree in business administration and an MBA with an emphasis in finance from Loyola Marymount University. She sits on the board of the Better Business Community and has been named one of the Fifty Women of Influence by Pasadena Magazine.

‘My big vision is for us to become a true tertiary center, offering state-of-the-art, highly specialized care with advanced medical procedures that will attract patients from all over Southern California.’

– Alice Issai, Adventist Health Glendale



ABNER MASON

ConsejoSano

As founder and chief executive at ConsejoSano, Abner Mason leads the North Hollywood company that helps patients engage with their health care insurance coverage, with emphasis on multicultural populations. ConsejoSano’s clients are typically health plans and provider groups with Medicaid and Medicare Advantage patients. He also is the founder and co-chair of Health Tech 4 Medicaid. Previously, Mason was founder and

chief executive of the Workplace Wellness Council of Mexico, which provides member companies with wellness programs. From 2002 to 2009, he worked as executive director of the AIDS Responsibility Project, where he created business councils on HIV/AIDS in Mexico and Jamaica. Mason has served on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and as chief policy advisor to the governor of Massachusetts. “I am proud of our team’s ability to provide our patient and member engagement services during COVID-19 for our clients, especially for safety-net providers like Federally Qualified Health Centers,” he said.

**MARK MILLER***West Hills Hospital and Medical Center*

Mark Miller is the president and chief executive of West Hills Hospital and Medical Center. Miller has held several HCA Healthcare executive positions including chief operating officer of Grand Strand Health in HCA's South Atlantic Division and chief executive at Lake City Medical Center in HCA's North Florida Division. Miller is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the National Association

of Health Services Executives. He serves on the board of the Calabasas Chamber of Commerce. He said during the coronavirus pandemic, "I am most proud that we have been able to serve our community and support our frontline health care workers who have worked so hard to care for us all."

**EDWARD MIRZABEGIAN***Antelope Valley Hospital*

In January of last year Edward Mirzabegian became chief executive – again – of Antelope Valley Hospital. He held that position from 2007-2013, during which time which Mirzabegian transformed the hospital's financial standing from an \$18 million loss in 2007 to a \$24.6 million profit in fiscal year 2010. Mirzabegian said he's pleased that in the last 18 months, the hospital has overcome instability and

poor public perception. Between engagements with the hospital, he was chief executive of Avanti Hospitals Healthcare System in southeastern Los Angeles, among other posts. He is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and speaks on health care and hospital leadership issues. Additionally, he serves on the boards of more than a dozen professional and community organizations.

'Over the past several months, I have had the honor and privilege of working with 800 health care heroes. Our staff have consistently showed up, day after day, during this pandemic. Sometimes heroes wear masks.'

— James K. Theiring, Mission Community Hospital

**NATALIE MUSSI***Los Robles Health System*

Natalie Mussi joined Los Robles Health System as chief executive in January 2014. Prior to her appointment, she served as chief operating officer of Los Robles since October 2008. During this time, she led Los Robles through its Level II Trauma Center verification, Comprehensive Stroke accreditation, acquisition of Thousand Oaks Surgical Hospital and the additions of the Cardiovascular Institute, Center for Advanced Wound Healing

and Women's Health Partners. Mussi came to Los Robles from Centerpoint Medical Center in Independence, Mo., where she served as the chief operating officer for 5 years. She holds a master of health administration degree and a bachelor of science degree from the University of Southern California. She serves on the board of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Ventura County, the Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast and is an Advisory Board Member of the Boys and Girls Club of Moorpark.

**PAYMAN ROSHAN***Kaiser Permanente Panorama City Medical Center*

Payman Roshan is senior vice president and area manager for the Kaiser Permanente Panorama City Medical Center and Antelope Valley service areas. He is responsible for all of the Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and health plan operations in an area that serves more than 417,000 members. Previously, Roshan served as chief operating officer for three years at Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park, where he led the day-to-

day operations of the hospital. He also served as assistant medical center administrator for support services at the Baldwin Park Medical Center. He is on the board of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association.

**MURTAZA SANWARI***Kaiser Permanente – Woodland Hills Medical Center and Western Ventura County Area*

Murtaza Sanwari is the senior vice president and area manager of the Kaiser Permanente Woodland Hills Medical Center and the western Ventura County area, where he oversees all health plan and hospital operations. Prior to this role, he was the chief operating officer of Kaiser Permanente Panorama City Medical Center. He also oversaw a crisis earlier this year when a water line

break caused a temporary shutdown of the Woodland Hills hospital. "With an amazing team, we safely transferred all patients, closed ambulatory services and reopened the campus within a week following loss of water, a first among hospitals in California," he said.

**ROGER SEAVER***Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital*

Roger Seaver is president and chief executive of Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital, a 238-bed, nonprofit community hospital and trauma center in Valencia. Prior to leading Henry Mayo, Seaver served as president of Northridge Hospital Medical Center from 1997 to 2000 and he served at Glendale Memorial Hospital from 1978 to 1997 as chief financial officer, chief operating officer and chief executive officer. He served as chair of the Hospital

Association of Southern California in 2009 and was re-elected to the board in January 2018. He's on several other medical-related boards, and he's co-chair of the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp. He said he's proud that a 15-year dream to build a new patient tower was realized when it opened in October. "This accomplishment is part of our commitment to be a great place to work for health care workers and a great place for physicians to continue to grow their specialty capabilities," he said.

**DALE SUROWITZ***Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center*

Dale Surowitz is the outgoing chief executive of what used to be Providence Tarzana Medical Center. The hospital added the Cedars-Sinai name recently after combining in a joint venture. Surowitz announced earlier in July that he would leave the hospital in September to be chief executive of the Los Angeles Jewish Home, a senior care facility in Reseda. He is active in the community and has served on the boards of the Woodland Hills

Chamber of Commerce and the Valley Industry and Commerce Association. He also served as vice chairman of the San Fernando Valley chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, and he is on the board of the Valley Economic Alliance. He was the 2016 recipient of the Fernando Award. Asked to cite a recent professional accomplishment, Surowitz said: "Completing the joint venture of the hospital with Cedars-Sinai and creating a preeminent health care institution servicing the Valley for generations to come."

**JENNIFER SWENSON***Adventist Health Simi Valley*

Jennifer Swenson has been president of Adventist Health Simi Valley since 2015. She has more than 30 years of experience in health care, starting in finance but moving into operations, which is her passion. Swenson has held the roles of chief financial officer and chief operating officer and now chief executive officer at Adventist Simi Valley. "During my tenure, we have been recognized for achieving top 10 percent in the nation for our

quality and safety results," she said. Previously, she was corporate vice president for Kettering Health Network in Kettering, Ohio. Swenson is a member of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Gold Coast Health Plan Commission, the California Hospital Association, the Noontime Rotary Club of Simi Valley and the American College of Healthcare Executives. She holds an MBA from Ohio University and bachelor's degree in business administration from Pacific Union College.

**JAMES K. THEIRING***Mission Community Hospital*

James K. Theiring is the chief executive of Mission Community Hospital a safety-net, nonprofit community hospital that opened in 1923, making it the oldest in the San Fernando Valley. He was recruited as the chief financial officer and was promoted to chief executive in 2011. He has more than 25 years of professional experience in health care. Theiring serves as a vice chair on the Valley Industry and Commerce Association and is a trustee of

the United Hospital Association. He formerly served on the board of the Hospital Association of Southern California. Theiring graduated from California State University - Northridge and is a certified public accountant. "Over the past several months, I have had the honor and privilege of working with 800 health care heroes," he told the Business Journal. "Our staff have consistently showed up, day after day, during this pandemic. Sometimes heroes wear masks!"



Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital

henrymayo.com/care



 Henry Mayo
Newhall Hospital

For your safety:

- All employees and any visitors have their temperatures taken daily.
- Emergency Department patients are screened before entering the building. Suspected contagious patients are immediately isolated.
- All elective surgery patients are tested for COVID-19 days before their surgeries.
- All employees and visitors wear masks.
- Social distancing in all waiting areas.
- Extra cleaning of all rooms and surfaces.

**GUSTAVO VALDESPINO***Valley Presbyterian Hospital*

Gustavo Valdespino is president and chief executive of Valley Presbyterian Hospital. The nonprofit in Van Nuys is one of the largest acute care hospitals in the San Fernando Valley with 350 beds. Valdespino has more than 25 years of hospital management experience, including serving as senior vice president of operations for Tenet Health Corp.'s Southern California region, president and chief executive of St. Vincent Medical Center and

chief executive of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Orange County. He holds a master's degree in public health from UCLA and completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School. "I am very proud of our team at VPH for the courageous and successful manner in which they handled the coronavirus pandemic challenges," he said. "Through everyone's focus and determination we have been able to keep our patients and employees safe through these challenging times."

**JILL WELTON***Dignity Health - Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center*

Jill Welton has been president and chief executive of Dignity Health-Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center for two years. In her first year, Welton and the leadership team improved the hospital's quality outcomes and patient experience scores. In her second year, the focus has been on ensuring patient safety. The hospital was one of the first drive-through COVID-19 testing sites for Los Angeles County and one of the first to

perform convalescent plasma donations to further aid in the fight against the coronavirus. Welton earned her master's degree in nursing from Holy Names University in Oakland and her bachelor's in nursing from California State University - Hayward. She was a recipient last year of Business Life's Women's Achievers Award and serves as one of the newest board members of the Glendale Chapter of the YWCA.

**PAULA WILSON***Valley Community Healthcare*

Paula Wilson's appointment as president and chief executive of Valley Community Healthcare in 2004 was the culmination of a 25-year career with the nonprofit center, which began as a free walk-in clinic in 1970. During her time as vice president of Planning and Development, she spearheaded a \$6 million capital campaign that resulted in the purchase and renovation of the present 40,000 square foot North Hollywood center. In recent

years, Wilson focused on expansion and Valley Community Healthcare opened its North Hills Wellness Center in 2015 and the Student Health Center at Los Angeles Valley College last year. She was the 2016-17 chair of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County and is on the boards of the California Primary Care Association and Healthcare L.A. Managed Care IPA. She received the Business Journal's Women in Business award in 2009 among other honors.

**KIMBERLY WYARD***Northeast Valley Health Corp.*

Kimberly Wyard is chief executive of Northeast Valley Health Corp., a position she has held since 1996. Wyard joined the staff in 1974, the year after Northeast Valley opened its first health center in the city of San Fernando. She said she's proud that she and her team have opened new health centers, expanded access to 82,000 patients a year and received recognition as a health center quality leader. Northeast Valley now has 17 health centers.

She served as president of the board of Healthcare L.A. She is a member of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County and serves on its board. She is also a member of the California Primary Care Association and of the National Association of Community Health Centers and serves on the Health Care for the Homeless Committee.



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With the health of our entire community at risk, we are working on the front lines to ensure that the most vulnerable among us get the care and treatment needed so that they, and our community stay healthy.

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THE VALLEY 200 ORGANIZATIONS



ICON OF INFLUENCE

BILL ALLEN

Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.

Bill Allen has served as chief executive at the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. since 2006. He helped create the Valley Economic Alliance in 1994, headed it for four years and remains active in the alliance as well as other Valley matters. He won the Fernando Award in 2018. His family moved to Encino in 1959 so his father, entertainer Steve Allen, could produce his comedy series “The Steve Allen Show” at NBC Studios in Burbank. After attending USC, Bill Allen worked at CBS, where he supervised production of the show “Designing

Women.” In the 1990s he was president at production company MTM in Studio City, where he oversaw production of “Remington Steele,” “St. Elsewhere” and “Newhart.” As a recent accomplishment, he said the economic development corporation quickly launched a COVID-19 Community Resource Connector, which was visited more than 75,000 times in its first two months “as small businesses, micro-enterprises, community serving nonprofits and even individuals turned to the LAEDC for help accessing loan and grant capital as well as technical assistance.”



JILL BANKS BARAD

*Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils
Jill Barad & Associates*

Jill Banks Barad is a longtime civic leader and businesswoman in the San Fernando Valley. Through her consulting firm, Jill Barad & Associates, she has provided services for federal, state, local and judicial campaigns, as well as for statewide and local ballot measures. Barad is the founder and chair of the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils, a coalition of 34 neighborhood councils.

She also was the founder and president for 15 years of the Sherman Oaks neighborhood council. Her civic engagement has included serving on the boards of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Habitat for Humanity SFV and the Valley Community Legal Foundation. She was reappointed by Mayor Eric Garcetti for her second 5-year term as a commissioner for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Barad has been recognized with multiple awards, including as a six-time finalist for the for the Fernando Award, the highest award for volunteerism in the San Fernando Valley.



SONYA KAY BLAKE

Valley Economic Alliance

Sonya Kay Blake is president and chief executive of the Valley Economic Alliance, taking over earlier this year from longtime chief Kenn Phillips. As such, she facilitates economic development in the San Fernando Valley. Previously, she was director of Community Business in Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Office of Economic Development. She said she is proud that she helped the mayor establish a \$10 million small business

microloan and entrepreneurship program for homeless people called LA: EnterPRISE. Among her past roles, Blake served as chief executive of the National Association of Women Business Owners – Los Angeles and director of the Office of the Small Business Advocate for then-Gov. Gray Davis. She graduated from Yale University and the UCLA Anderson Graduate School of Management. In 2010 she was nominated for a Daytime Emmy as producer of a public service announcement for the Legal Aid Foundation.



KEN CRAFT

Hope of the Valley

Ken Craft is the founder and chief executive of Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission. Starting in 2009, Hope of the Valley has quickly become a leading provider of housing and homeless services in the San Fernando Valley. Craft started it with the distinct purpose of preventing, reducing and eliminating poverty, hunger and homelessness by offering immediate assistance and long-term solutions. Hope of the Valley now has 15 program sites scattered

throughout and beyond the San Fernando Valley. The Mission provides food, shelter and care to over 2,100 clients annually. Craft said he is proud that his team quickly responded to the COVID-19 crisis by opening and operating six new homeless shelters and 36 trailers housing 260 vulnerable homeless clients during the pandemic.



DIANA DUENAS

Former Chief of Encino Chamber of Commerce

Although officially leaving her position as longtime chief executive of the Encino Chamber of Commerce at the end of last year, Diana Duenas has had the opportunity in her new position with the Gelb Group to continue her involvement. When COVID-19 struck, she continued to work with the chamber board to help it navigate through the uncertainty, thanks to the generosity of Rickey Gelb. Asked what recent accomplishment

she is proud of, Duenas said: “Mentoring and the work I have been fortunate to be able to continue doing to help businesses and the community flourish during these trying times.” She also serves on the board of the United Chambers of Commerce and is co-chair of its Government Affairs Committee. Now with the Gelb Group, Duenas helped coordinate active shooter training with Los Angeles Police Department for the staff as well as implement other team development strategies. She was nominated this year for an “Inspirational Women of the San Fernando Valley” award but the event was postponed due to the coronavirus.



TISH GREENWOOD

California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks

Tish Greenwood is the executive director of the California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks, located at The Oaks shopping center. Greenwood has worked at the J. Paul Getty Museum where she was an analyst in the budget and finance office; as ad sales manager at Photo L.A. in Santa Monica; and ArtSlant, where she was an account executive. She received a bachelor’s in art history from John Cabot University in Rome and earned

a master’s in museum studies from Georgetown University and in contemporary art from Sotheby’s Institute of Art – New York. “Witnessing how art can connect us, help us heal, transform our thinking, and allow us to express a wide range of emotions continues to be the fuel that keeps me inspired,” she said.



ICON OF INFLUENCE

DAVID HONDA

*California State University – Northridge’s Construction
Management Program
David Honda Construction
Commerce Department*

David Honda is known for his prolific civic engagement. He is the project operator for the Commerce Department’s Minority Business Development Agency in Pasadena, which recently received a federal CARES Act grant. For 20 years he has been co-chair of California State University – Northridge’s Construction Management Program that funds student scholarships and

provides other support. He heads his eponymous construction company, which is finishing a project in Reseda to convert a church into a new home for the Child Development Institute. Among his many affiliations, Honda is past chairman of the Fernando Award Foundation; a member of the Valley Economic Alliance’s new Regional Commercial Development Committee; has been a director of the Hollywood Bowl Society; past president of the Asian Business Association-Los Angeles; and was a delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business. Honda also has won numerous awards, including the Fernando Award in 2009.



GAIL LARA

Women’s Collaborative Mentoring Program

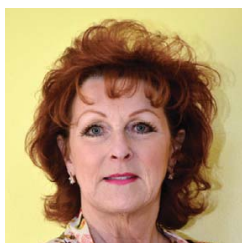
Gail Lara is the executive director of the Women’s Collaborative Mentoring Program at the Valley Economic Alliance. She brings to the position more than 18 years as a business owner and experience in small-business development and training. The mentoring program serves economically disadvantaged women-owned small businesses with no-cost training and mentoring services. Lara is also a business coach with Operation Hope and

runs its Launch + Grow women entrepreneur’s program. Over her career she has served more than 5,000 business owners. Lara also serves on such boards as the Special Needs Network (autism awareness) and the North Valley Regional Chamber. She helped charter a “Speaking Your Business” Toastmasters club that recently celebrated its second year. Also, she said “I’m honored to be chosen as one of Mayor Eric Garcetti’s Small Business Commissioners to serve the small business community for the city of Los Angeles.”

**REBECCA LIENHARD***Tierra del Sol*

Over the course of 30 years with Tierra del Sol, which serves those with developmental disabilities, Rebecca Lienhard has championed inclusion and value for people with disabilities. She said she is proud that Tierra del Sol “has successfully transitioned over 100 people with complex developmental disabilities from segregated day services to inclusive and meaningful lives in home communities.” Lienhard has served on numerous community

boards and committees, such as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities’ Employment First Committee, and she has been vice president of the board of Southern California Association of People Supporting Employment First. She currently serves on the board of Woodbury University School of Business. Additionally, she is serving on two of California’s Department of Developmental Services Workgroups, specifically System and Fiscal Reform and Community Resources.

**BRIGETTE LODEN***Community Foundation of the Valleys*

Brigitte Loden is the executive director of the Community Foundation of the Valleys, a nonprofit that inspires, encourages and facilitates charitable giving for lasting impact in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys. Loden, a lifetime volunteer, also has served as vice president of development for Providence Health and Services Southern California Region and past president of the Southern California Association of Healthcare

Development. Loden has received the Business Journal’s Women Who Mean Business award for nonprofit leadership, the Southern California Association of Healthcare Development’s Outstanding Leader of the Year award and Association of Fundraising Executives, Greater San Fernando Chapter’s Fundraiser of the Year award. As a recent professional accomplishment, she cited the community foundation’s creation of a COVID-19 response fund to support small and mid-sized local nonprofits that are providing critical services to vulnerable people who have been hurt financially by the pandemic.

**TOM MANZO***California Business and Industrial Alliance*

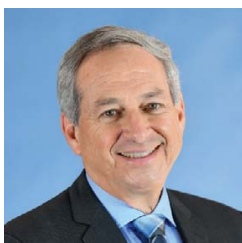
Three years ago, Tom Manzo started an organization called the California Business and Industrial Alliance, or CABIA, to fight the state’s Private Attorney General Act law after the manufacturing business he ran in the San Fernando Valley was snagged by it. He said he is surprised how well-known CABIA has become in a relatively short time – and has gotten the attention of those who support PAGA. “In late March we sent a

letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom asking for a moratorium on PAGA lawsuits during the COVID-19 crisis,” Manzo said. “We got a rebuttal from the largest labor organizations in the U.S.: the California Labor Federation, Teamsters, SEIU, and others totaling 28 union supporters on why PAGA should stay and naming our organization. I consider that an accomplishment.”

**KATHY NORRIS***Valley Industry Association*

Kathy Norris has for 25 years been president and chief executive of the Valley Industry Association, a business-to-business organization of 300 members in the Santa Clarita Valley. She has played a leading role in creating a number of events and programs that help local businesses, such as the annual VIA Bash, VIA Leadership Program and bi-annual CEO Forums. She is involved in civic affairs, such as the Soroptimists International of the

Greater Santa Clarita Valley, and she has served on the board of the SCV Business Alliance, among others. In 2013, she received the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce leadership award, and she was selected as one of its Top 51 Most Influential People 8 years.

**MICHAEL R. OLENICK***Child Care Resource Center*

Michael Olenick, Ph.D., has been president and chief executive of Child Care Resource Center since 2003. He oversees all programs, projects, and services provided to more than 50,000 children and families each month in a service area spanning 22,500 square miles. For more than three decades, he has served on numerous boards and committees at the county, state and national level. He is a past president of both Child Care Aware of America and the

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. He was a Governor’s appointee to the California State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care and an appointee on the Speaker of the Assembly’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education. He currently serves on the California Child Welfare Commission; serves on the board of Zero to Three, the nation’s premier voice for babies; and he chairs the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles. He said he is proud to have participated on the Assembly’s Blue Ribbon Commission and for “moving 900 staff to work virtually in less than two weeks in March.”

**DAVID PHELPS***Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce*

David Phelps has been president and chief executive of the Sherman Oaks Chamber of Commerce since 2018. After the safer-at-home order came down, Phelps and the chamber responded with several initiatives, including setting up the second COVID-19 testing drive-through in the San Fernando Valley. Phelps worked with the mayor’s office to appoint several chamber members to his task forces for reopening businesses in Los

Angeles. He also created an online directory highlighting businesses open during the pandemic, as well as a vetted resource page with key links to private and government financial assistance. Phelps currently serves on the board of FilmLA.

**GLORIA POLLACK***Gelb Charitable Foundation*

Gloria Pollack is community liaison of the Gelb Charitable Foundation and focuses on its scholarship program that awards grants to local students. She’s a veteran board member of the United Chambers of Commerce and ONEgeneration. She also is chair emeritus of Child Development Institute. Pollack has been presented with a variety of local awards including the Fernando Award, Armand Arabian Leaders in Public Service Award, and

the United Chambers Inspirational Woman award, among others. Last year she was named the Nonprofit Leader of the Year at the Business Journal’s Women’s Council awards. In March, Child Development Institute will celebrate its Silver Jubilee and honor Pollack as Woman of the Year. She said she’s proud that the scholarship program has taken off. “All public high schools in the Valley have had recipients,” Pollack said. “We have gone from 50 scholarships annually to 100, and more than 40 are getting another \$1,000 for their second and third year.”

**ICON OF INFLUENCE****HOLLY SCHROEDER***Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp.*

Holly Schroeder is president and chief executive of Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corp., which works to attract and retain businesses in the Santa Clarita Valley. Prior to joining the economic development group in September 2013, she served for 8 years as executive officer of the Los Angeles Ventura Chapter of the Building Industry Association. Currently, she is chair of the Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board, chair of the supervisory committee for Logix Federal Credit Union and is on the board of the Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital Foundation.

As for a professional accomplishment she is proud of, she cited the economic development corporation’s launch last summer of a locally focused job board called LiveWorkSCV.com, designed to connect Santa Clarita Valley residents with careers at local companies. “As the economy recovers from COVID, I think this tool will help SCV residents find job opportunities closer to home,” she said.

**MATTHEW SWEARMAN***Valley Village*

Matthew Swearman is the senior director of development and donor relations at Valley Village, which serves adults with developmental and intellectual challenges. Before joining Valley Village two years ago, he worked as a public affairs and public relations professional for more than 15 years. Swearman is on the board of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, and he serves on VICA’s executive committee and foundation

board. In 2017, he received the 12th Annual President’s Award from VICA. “I am proudest of my contributions to Valley Village’s mission and to the business community through VICA’s executive committee and board of directors,” he said.

**M C TOWNSEND***Regional California Black Chamber of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley*

MC Townsend is president and chief executive of the Regional California Black Chamber of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley. The chamber provides educational forums and other services for small, minority- and women-owned businesses. Widely known as “Madame Townsend,” she has served on numerous boards and commissions, including as a director on the

National African American Drug Policy Council in Washington and as a community advisory member of USC Community and Global Engagement at the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics. She is chair emeritus of the Los Angeles Business Federation and is president emeritus of the California Black Chamber’s Council of Chambers, a group of 28 minority chambers in the state. She was a director of the Fernando Awards from 2013 to 2015 and served on the board of the United Chambers of Commerce. “Minority women are the fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs in America,” Townsend told the Business Journal. “I’m proud as president in creating a strategic platform for eligible businesses for productive brainstorming, thus giving serious value to their deliverables.”



NANCY HOFFMAN VANYEK
Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce

Nancy Hoffman Vanyek is chief executive of the Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce, a position she's held for 27 of her 33 years at the organization. Vanyek is one of only three chamber executives to hold a Diamond ACE (Accredited Chamber Executive) designation from the Western Association of Chamber Executives. Her recent accomplishments include: securing a \$1.3 million job training contract to support job

creation and retention; successfully championing the independent craft brewing industry, lowering fees for brewers of this size; and leading the creation of the San Fernando Valley Regional Foundation to advance economic, community, and educational development. The recent professional accomplishment she's proudest of is creating and launching the Save Small Business Coalition – a nationwide group of 150 chambers and business organizations working to find the quickest way for businesses to have access to relief funding during the economic challenges due to COVID-19.



STUART WALDMAN
Valley Industry and Commerce Association

Stuart Waldman is president of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, the largest business advocacy organization in Southern California. Prior to joining VICA, Waldman spent 11 years working for the state Assembly members representing the San Fernando Valley. Seven of those years were spent as chief of staff to two Assembly members, including then-Speaker Bob Hertzberg. From 2001 to 2008, Waldman

was an appointed member on the state's Board of Accountancy, which oversees the state's CPAs. Waldman served in the Army from 1987 to 1989. He is on the boards of LA28, which is the organizing committee for the 2028 Olympics; the CSUN Foundation, the Granada Hills Charter High School Foundation and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, among others. He said no events in the 1984 Olympics were held in the San Fernando Valley. "As a member of the bid committee and now a member of the board of LA28, I worked to ensure that at least three events will take place in the Valley," Waldman said.



DIANA WILLIAMS
West Valley Warner Center Chamber of Commerce

Diana Williams is the chief executive of the West Valley Warner Center Chamber of Commerce. She is also the director of the Chamber of Commerce Community Benefit Foundation. Williams has launched the Valley Biz Buzz Podcast, Community Choice Awards and Valley Regional Forum, among others. She serves on two of City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield's

Community Action Teams including economic development and beautification. She serves on the board of the United Chambers of Commerce, Pierce College Business Advisory Council and Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel's Advisory Council among other civic responsibilities. She said she is proud that "our chamber of commerce was ready for the business community to lean on during the pandemic. We have accomplished a state of readiness for which we are extremely proud."



RANDY WITT
*Fernando Award Foundation
Randy Witt Productions*

Randy Witt, known for his civic involvement, became chair and chief executive of the Fernando Award Foundation in the last year. The award encourages and recognizes volunteerism and philanthropy in the San Fernando Valley. Witt also is the immediate past chair of the Valley Economic Alliance and remains on the management team of its board. He owns Randy Witt Productions in Sherman Oaks, which produces commercials, corporate videos, television shows, events, and award videos. He

has worked with legends such as Dick Clark and Steve Allen, and counts Rick Caruso, Valley Presbyterian Hospital, and many nonprofits among his longtime clients. In addition, he has served on various boards and with community organizations. He told the Business Journal that he is proud to have successfully led collaborative efforts in developing the economic alliance's strategic plan and then installing new leadership there with Sonya Kay Blake as chief executive and Fred Gaines as chair.

ICON OF INFLUENCE



CONGRATULATIONS!

Dr. Michael Olenick

President & CEO, Child Care Resource Center

2020 San Fernando Valley Business Journal's 200 MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS!

Dr. Michael Olenick has been advocating for children and families for 40+ years!

Dr. Olenick continues to strategically lead the agency during the Covid-19 pandemic by keeping 1,000 CCRC staff members safely working as they serve the community. He manages a budget of \$332 million and ensures that direct services are provided to 50,000 families a month.

He served on the Board of Directors of Zero to Three, and is the Board Chair and Public Policy Chair for the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles.



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THE VALLEY 200 REAL ESTATE



MICHAEL CUSUMANO

Cusumano Real Estate Group

Michael Cusumano is chief of the Cusumano Real Estate Group in Burbank. His company last year completed the 480,000-square-foot Talaria at Burbank, which the Business Journal named the Mixed-Use Project of the Year. It also won the Grand Award at the 2019 Gold Nugget Awards, a national honor. Cusumano is chairman of the Providence Saint Joseph Foundation and sits on more than a dozen other community

boards. He has received numerous awards, including the 2017 Mary Alice O'Connor Vision Award from the Burbank Family Services Agency. The Cusumano family, the largest owner of multifamily units in the region, donated \$10 million to Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center Emergency Services Campaign in 2018. The family also has funded the Cusumano Family Neuroscience Center at the medical center and the Cusumano Family Radiation Oncology Department at the Disney Family Cancer Center, also at the medical center. As a professional accomplishment, he said he "took advantage of historically low interest rates and structured and closed 15 permanent financing transactions of \$175 million-plus for existing portfolio assets and maintained 99 percent occupancy across the portfolio."



RICKEY GELB

Gelb Group

Rickey Gelb is managing general partner and founder of Gelb Group, a real estate development and property management company in Woodland Hills focused on the San Fernando Valley. A longtime civic leader, he has served as director of four banks, belonged to more than 20 organizations and served on numerous advisory boards. From his first Award of Merit in 1984 from the City of Hope, Gelb has been recognized more than 1,000 times. A couple noteworthy awards include the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, a national award that recognizes those who help the less

fortunate, and the Fernando Award, a local honor that recognizes volunteerism. Asked to cite a recent accomplishment, he said: "We currently have two buildings that are up and running on solar and we are just starting on our third building and hope to be done by the end of the year."

ICON OF INFLUENCE

'Offering clarity, advice, and providing solutions to our clients' concerns regarding their leases during the pandemic.'

— Sheryl Mazirow of Mazirow Commercial speaking about a recent accomplishment of which she's proud.



LEWIS HORNE

CBRE

Lewis C. Horne is the divisional president for advisory services with responsibility for CBRE's business in Southern California, Arizona and Hawaii. Long active in the community, he is co-chair of the Central City Association, Homeless Initiative and is past chair and current board member of the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp. He also serves on the boards of the L.A. Business Council and World Trade Corp. Los Angeles

as well as on the advisory board of the Caruso Catholic Center. He is vice chair of Catholic Big Brothers, Big Sisters and is a past board member of Didi Hirsh Mental Health Services. He was recipient of the Man of the Year for Constitutional Right Foundation in 2018; the Spirit of Life Award of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in 2016 and the Manager Innovation Award from CBRE in 2010 and 2013. He said he is honored "to have been able to play an important role in our community to help solve our region's homeless crisis" and for having helped his company's professionals embrace technology "to help elevate the way we conduct business and communicate effectively."



SHERYL MAZIROW

Mazirow Commercial Inc.

Sheryl Mazirow is president and founder of Mazirow Commercial Inc. She has more than 30 years' experience in commercial real estate, and she specializes in tenant representation and advisory services for companies leasing, selling or buying office space. She has been recognized as one of the Women of Influence in Southern California commercial real estate. The Business Journal gave her the Lifetime Achievement award at the Women's Council

last year and in past years gave her the Executive of the Year award and Business Woman of the Decade award. Mazirow holds the Certified Commercial Investment Member designation, which less than 1 percent of the world's commercial real estate professionals achieve. Mazirow serves on the board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Greater Conjeo Valley. As a recent accomplishment, she cites "offering clarity, advice, and providing solutions to our clients' concerns regarding their leases during the pandemic."



SHAWN MORADIAN

Tarantula Hill Brewing Co.

Thousand Oaks Boulevard Association

Shawn Moradian became the youngest president in the history of the Thousand Oaks Boulevard Association in 2016. The 39-year-old also developed a craft brewery, Tarantula Hill Brewing Co., in Thousand Oaks, and he runs a family real estate operation that owns property in the city. As head of the association, Moradian is responsible for revitalizing downtown Thousand Oaks into a

walkable entertainment, shopping and residential hub. The organization is working to develop a half-mile section of the boulevard near the Civic Arts Plaza. Moradian also serves on the board of the Thousand Oaks Police Charitable Foundation. When asked what makes him proud, he said, "the honor of curating new gathering places for my hometown community to enjoy, and at the same time helping local entrepreneurs start their dream businesses."



HESSAM NADJI

Marcus & Millichap

Hessam Nadji is president and chief executive of Marcus & Millichap, a commercial real estate brokerage based in Calabasas with professionals throughout the United States and Canada. Nadji joined the company in 1996 as vice president of research and expanded the company's real estate transactional leadership by becoming a provider of market trends, analysis and expertise.

He began serving in his current role in April 2016. Nadji is frequently sourced in media outlets such as the Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, CNBC, Fox Business TV and Investor's Business Daily, among others. He is a member of the National Multi Housing Council executive committee, the Urban Land Institute, International Council of Shopping Centers and NAIOP. Since the pandemic, he said, "We executed post-COVID-19 safety business continuity measures, helped clients with 80 research reports and 18 webcasts attended by about 75,000 investors since March." Also, a financing company was purchased.



LINDY PEARSON

Cresa

Cresa Los Angeles Associate Lindy Pearson works at one of the largest of 50 offices of Cresa, the nation's largest corporate real estate firm specializing in tenant representation and corporate services. She represents companies throughout the San Fernando and Conejo valleys, helping them find space (office, research and development, manufacturing and warehouse). Pearson is responsible for the business development efforts of the Woodland

Hills office, including sponsorships, events and networking activities. She works with her husband, Rick Pearson. She is a member of ACG 101 Corridor, The Exchange, and Align Women networking organizations dedicated to community involvement and non-profit support. She also went on the board of ONEgeneration and is co-chair of Child and Family Guidance Center's Development committee and a frequent donor to various nonprofit organizations. "I was looking to join a new board, so when ONEgeneration asked me to be a part of their organization – I was thrilled," she said.



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President & CEO

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IRON MAN 2019



Chris McKenzie
SILVER MEDAL WINNER
TRANSACTION OF THE YEAR



Kevin Cooper
Sr. Vice President



Amy Garcia
Assistant to CEO



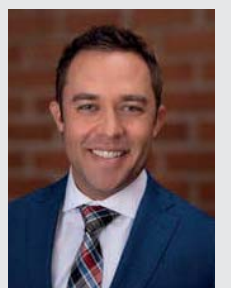
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**RICK PEARSON***Cresa*

Rick Pearson is a 30-year commercial real estate veteran, who has spent his career representing tenants. A principal of Cresa, the largest commercial real estate firm in North America that exclusively represents occupiers of space, Pearson believes that the commercial real estate industry is built to help property owners but doesn't do a good job helping the tenants. In addition to helping tenants negotiate their leases, he also helps his clients with the tenant improvements, purchasing furniture, hiring project team members and space utilization. Pearson, who works with his wife, Lindy, in their Woodland Hills office, is a second-generation San Fernando Valley native who graduated from California State University – Northridge. He has served on several Valley-area nonprofit boards, including the Child Care Resource Center. He also is chair of the Child and Family Guidance Center.

**ARTHUR PFEFFERMAN***Coldwell Banker Commercial*

Arthur Pfefferman is executive vice president of Coldwell Banker Commercial in Porter Ranch. He has more than 25 years' experience in the acquisition and disposition of investment properties, investment analysis, leasing, development, and valuations. He is a registered Los Angeles County property tax appeals board agent. Pfefferman also is known for his civic involvement, serving on many boards and commissions over the years. He's a past member of the U.S. Small Business Administration Advisory Council, a past president of the Cultural Affairs Commission for the city of Los Angeles, a co-founder and past president of the United Chambers of Commerce and an active Rotarian. He has received the Fernando Award, given annually to one Valley resident in recognition of their volunteerism. Asked what accomplishment he's proud of, he said he and his firm contribute pro-bono services to organizations requiring advice and counsel. "We do the right thing for the right reasons for everyone from all walks of life," he said.

**TONY PRINCIPE***Westcord Commercial Real Estate Services
T.R. Funding*

Tony Principe is a principal and president of Westcord Commercial Real Estate Services in Thousand Oaks. A 33-year veteran and top producer specializing in office properties, Principe has handled more than 3,500 sales and lease transactions totaling \$4 billion. Principe also is co-managing partner of T.R. Funding, which has developed and rehabilitated more than 50 properties throughout the region. T.R. Funding also develops Finish Line Auto Clubs, which are exclusive collector car storage facilities. Among other honors, Principe was twice presented with the Power Broker Award by Costar Group and Commercial Property News, and the Business Journal once gave him an award for closing the largest office deal of the year. Principe is the past chair of the California Museum of Art Thousand Oaks. Long active in the community, Principe served as president of American Heart Association, Ventura County Chapter, among other civic responsibilities. As a recent accomplishment, Principe said his firm last year acquired an 80,000 square foot building at John Wayne Airport in Orange County that will be the next Finish Line Auto Club.

**JEFF PUFFER***Delphi Business Properties*

Jeff Puffer has been president and chief executive of Delphi Business Properties in Van Nuys for 2 ½ years, since he took over ownership. He joined Delphi in 2003 and quickly established himself as the top agent in the company, amassing more than \$500 million in sales. In 2014 and 2015, he was chosen Broker of the Year by the Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley business journals. In 2016 and '17, he was Delphi's Broker of the Year for being the top producer, and he made Delphi's Presidents Club every year since 2005. He is past president of the American Industrial Real Estate Association. He also is vice president of the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors, Greater Los Angeles Chapter, and is set to be president of the chapter next year. "Leading Delphi during the COVID-19 crisis has been a challenging yet valuable leadership experience," he said, "and as a result of long days and hard work during this time, there is no doubt in my mind that Delphi is emerging as a top market leader during this pandemic."

**NANCY STARCZYK***Real Estate*

Nancy Starczyk has worked in residential real estate in the Santa Clarita and San Fernando valleys more than 32 years. She has served as president of the Southland Regional Association of Realtors, as regional chair and chair of its Government Affairs committee. She currently sits on nine boards and is chair of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce representing 65,000 employees. As director for both the California and National Associations of Realtors, Starczyk advocates for home ownership and property rights. She has been named Woman of the Year for the 38th Assembly District, named one of the 51 Most Influential People in Santa Clarita Valley, received Realtor/Member of the Year award three times and was the recipient of the Community Service Award for the Southland Regional Association. Starczyk has served on numerous other boards and served various civic duties. She said that as a "key contact" at the realtors association, "my government advocacy has allowed me to work more in-depth on legislative bills. Plus, at the chamber, I have had the opportunity to work more closely with businesses other than real estate."

**MICHAEL TINGUS***Lee & Associates-L.A. North/Ventura*

Michael Tingus became president of Lee & Associates-L.A. North/Ventura in 2004 and since then has ranked as one of the top producing brokers in the region each year. His expertise includes the sale and leasing of industrial, office and retail properties as well as land development throughout Southern California. Tingus was appointed to the Initial Planning Commission for the city of Calabasas in 1993 and served for five, 2-year terms, two of those years as chairman. He has transacted in excess of 1,100 acres of development land sales and has sold or leased properties valued in excess of \$3 billion over his career. Earlier this year he was honored at the Business Journal's Commercial Real Estate Awards event in the categories of Best Land Sale, Best Office Sale and Best Industrial Lease. Tingus was a Top 5 producer for Lee & Associates L.A. North / Ventura last year. He said he is particularly proud of "getting four of my five kids graduated from high school and off to college and the Navy!"

**'Leading Delphi during the COVID-19 crisis
has been a challenging yet valuable
leadership experience.'**

— Jeff Puffer, Delphi Business Properties

**MEL WILSON***Mel Wilson and Associates-Realtors*

Mel Wilson is a residential broker and owner of Mel Wilson and Associates-Realtors in Northridge but also is well known for his community service and his sports career. A business major at California State University - Northridge, he is one of CSUN's Top Fabulous 50 alum in the David Nazarian School of Business and Economics. As CSUN's first All-America Football player, he was inducted into CSUN's Athletic Hall of Fame. Wilson also was a draft choice of the New York Giants. His public service and awards are voluminous. He was a founding member of the Valley Economic Alliance and last year was recognized as the Valley Humanitarian of the Year by the alliance. He was president of the United Chambers of Commerce and the Pacoima Chamber of Commerce and is the founding chair of the Pacoima Enterprise Zone Advisory Commission, among many other civic involvements. He told the Business Journal that his passion to create affordable housing drove him to achieve his master's degree in commercial real estate while in his 60s.

CONGRATULATIONS MIKE TINGUS

On being named to the Valley200

The team at Lee & Associates-LA North/Ventura thanks you for your leadership in positioning our brokerage among the best in the region



Mike Tingus, President
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Top 5 CRE Brokerage

San Fernando Valley Business Journal

Top 10 CRE Brokerage

Los Angeles Business Journal

Top 15 Brokers

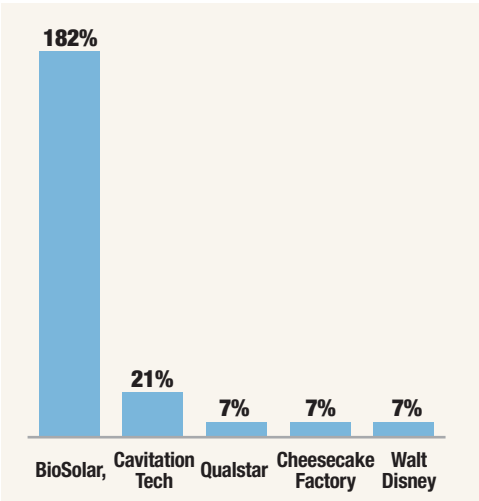
National Real Estate Investor

VALLEY 50

The Valley area's biggest public companies.

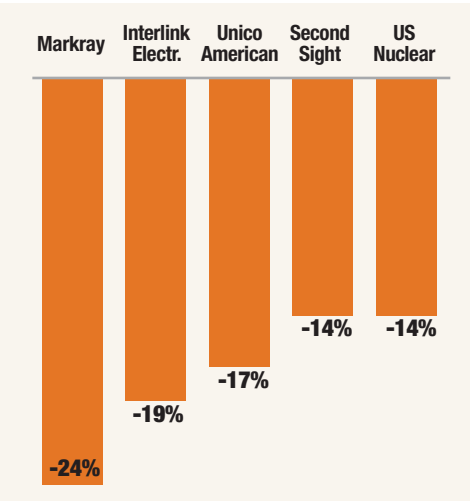
TWO-WEEK BEST PERFORMERS

Percent Change from Jul 1. - Jul. 15








TWO-WEEK WORST PERFORMERS

Percent Change from Jul 1. - Jul. 15



FIVE HIGHEST P/E RATIOS

As of Jul. 15

	Simulations Plus.	124.29
	Semtech	100.57
	Calavo Growers.	91.76
	American Homes	91.45
	AeroVironment.	45.26

FIVE LOWEST P/E RATIOS

As of Jul. 15

	BioSolar.	2.36
	Velocity Financial.	5.10
	PennyMac Financial . . .	5.28
	Dine Brands Global. . .	7.59
	Trio-Tech Int'l	9.39

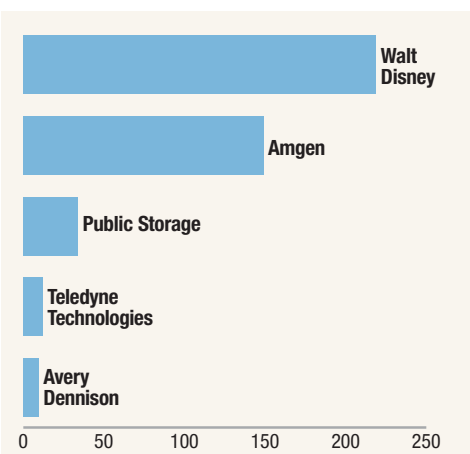
TOP 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS

Average daily volume

Company	Volume
BioSolar.	42,195,100
Walt Disney	13,176,507
MannKind	2,807,458
Cheesecake Factory	2,307,094
Amgen	2,254,627
California Resources	2,231,969
Cinedigm	2,219,421
American Homes 4 Rent	1,429,974
PennyMac Mortgage	1,162,076
Atara Biotherapeutics	1,008,512

FIVE BIGGEST MARKET CAPS

As of Jul. 15



INDEXES As of Jul. 15

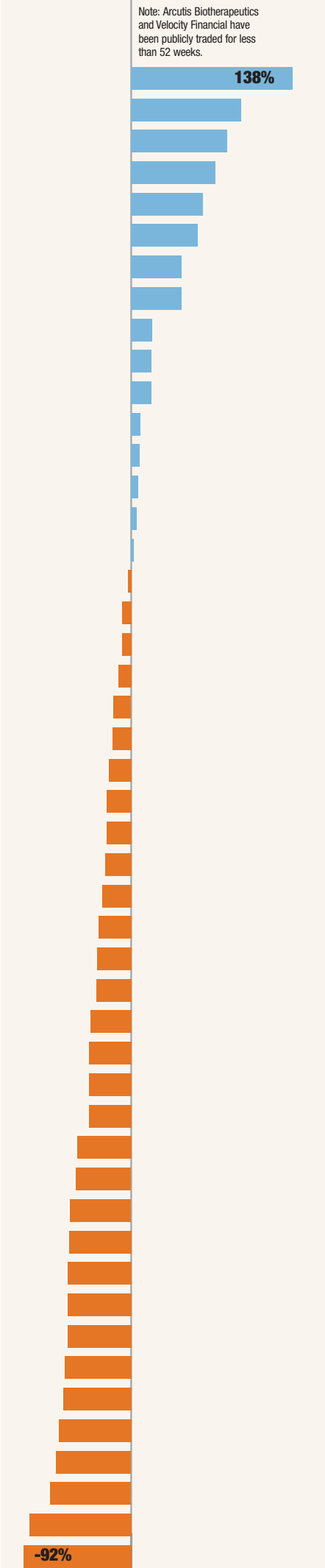
	Dow Jones Industrial	NASDAQ	S&P 500	Valley 50
Jul. 1	25,734.97	10,154.63	3,115.86	1914.42
Jul. 15	26,870.10	10,550.49	3,226.56	1934.50
Point Chg.	1,135.13	395.86	110.70	20.08
2-Wk % Chg.	4.4%	3.9%	3.6%	1.0%
YTD % Chg.	-5.9%	17.6%	-0.1%	-5.5%
52-Wk Chg.	-1.7%	28.0%	7.1%	0.4%

COMPANIES

All closing prices as of Jul. 15

Company	7/15 Price	Two Week % Change
Arcutis Biotherapeutics	28.94	-9.1%
Velocity Financial	3.85	1.3%
Interlink Electronics	4.40	-18.9%
Simulations Plus	62.38	2.0%
PennyMac Financial Services	42.46	1.8%
BlackLine	85.31	-2.1%
MannKind	1.67	-1.2%
Cinedigm	1.91	6.1%
Amgen	253.31	-0.7%
AeroVironment	77.66	2.0%
ASGN	69.03	5.6%
B. Riley Financial	22.62	6.2%
Teledyne Technologies	321.89	5.8%
Semtech	53.30	4.4%
American Homes 4 Rent	27.26	-2.4%
Trio-Tech International	3.09	-2.8%
Avery Dennison	118.99	4.4%
Flamemaster	8.33	-3.7%
Research Solutions	2.41	0.4%
Tutor Perini	12.55	6.8%
Atara Biotherapeutics	13.80	-8.2%
Marcus & Millichap	27.95	-1.5%
Walt Disney	120.90	7.0%
Taitron Components	2.50	-3.7%
PennyMac Mortgage	18.05	3.2%
LTC Properties	37.34	-3.6%
Tejon Ranch	14.02	-2.0%
Public Storage	192.80	-3.2%
PS Business Parks	131.17	-2.1%
Bank of Santa Clarita	9.35	1.6%
Limoneira	13.67	-2.8%
Unico American	4.24	-17.3%
BioSolar	0.01	182.4%
US Nuclear	0.69	-13.8%
Calavo Growers	60.38	-2.4%
Mission Valley Bancorp	8.95	-2.7%
Salem Media Group	1.17	1.7%
Cheesecake Factory	23.27	7.0%
Markray	0.01	-24.1%
NetSol Technologies	2.67	0.2%
APEX Global Brands	0.64	-12.0%
Qualstar	2.68	7.2%
Capstone Turbine	3.35	-2.9%
Dine Brands Global	41.20	0.6%
Cavitation Technologies	0.01	20.5%
Zalemark	0.01	-8.3%
BNK Petroleum	0.09	-10.5%
Tix	0.18	-10.0%
Second Sight Medical Products	0.86	-14.0%
California Resources	1.18	-4.8%

52-WEEK % CHANGE



AROUND THE VALLEYS



Universal City: Peacock’s ‘New World.’



Woodland Hills: Judi Prejean.



Reseda: Rendering of proposed apartments at 6834-6840 N. Baird Ave.



Westlake Village: 200 N. Westlake Village Blvd., part of a \$55 million portfolio sale.

► SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

ENCINO

Real estate firm **SK Management Co.** has divested two of its core lines of business. The commercial property management firm has sold its apartment management business to affiliates of **WinnCompanies** in Boston, and its homeowners association management business to **Partners Community Management** in Pasadena. The company did not disclose financial terms of either deal. SK President **Bruce Steinbaum** said in a statement he is “extremely pleased” with the transactions, which were made as part of the company’s succession planning process. Financial advisory firm **Calabasas Capital** advised SK Management on both transactions.

RESEDA

The Los Angeles City Council has approved plans for a residential development that will add 27 units to the housing inventory in Reseda, according to city records. The proposed four-story multifamily project would be built across two parcels at 6834-6840 N. Baird Ave., replacing a pair of existing buildings. Designed by architect **Richard Welsh**, the complex will accommodate 44 vehicles in its parking. Four of the units are being earmarked for low-income households. Bell Canyon-based **LBMP Baird LLC** is the developer while the site is owned by **SIUL Holding Trust**.

UNIVERSAL CITY

NBCUniversal’s Peacock streaming service officially rolled out nationwide July 15 following a limited-access period that started April 15 for some customers of parent company **Comcast Corp.** The Universal City-based service offers a free ad-supported option as well as premium tiers. Subscribers to Comcast’s Xfinity X1 and Flex products and Cox’s Contour app will have free access to Premium Peacock. Combined, Comcast and Cox subscribers give Peacock a total of 24 million potential viewers. Peacock’s free tier offers more than 7,500 hours of programming, and the premium tier provides more than 15,000 hours for \$4.99 a month. Both of those tiers are ad-supported. The service is

launching with nine new series, including the Peacock original “Brave New World” and the BBC drama “The Capture.” Peacock said only a “sampling” of the new shows will be available on the free tier.

WINNETKA

Grocery Outlet Bargain Market has opened a new location at 19718 Sherman Way in Winnetka. The store has created about 25 jobs, according to the company. Grocery Outlet, based in Emeryville, operates by purchasing bulk closeouts and excess inventory from name brand food manufacturers, then selling them to the public for below retail value. With more than 350 locations throughout Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Pennsylvania, it is one of the largest budget banners in the grocery industry. It is run by local independent owner-operators **Walter Calderon** and **Martha Campos**.

WOODLAND HILLS

Signature Bank is expanding to Southern California with four new private client banking offices, including one in Warner Center. The New York-based bank has hired **Judi Prejean**, formerly senior vice president at **Bank of the West** in Los Angeles, as executive director of West Coast banking operations. Prejean will be based at the Warner Center branch, which expects to open this summer. Other branches are planned for Newport Beach, Beverly Hills and Ontario. In all, Signature will hire 45 people as part of the West Coast expansion.

National labor and employment law firm **Fisher Phillips** has opened an office in Woodland Hills with Los Angeles Managing Partner **Todd Scherwin** serving in the same capacity at the new location. The Valley office, located at 21600 Oxnard St., is the firm’s sixth in the state; its other locations are in Irvine, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco. “Our Woodland Hills attorneys are already fully embedded in the Valley’s communities as trusted business advisors and serve as key resources to clients on workplace law issues, so this office is a natural fit for our firm’s growing California

footprint,” Scherwin said in a statement. “We are excited to be a part of this community, particularly in the Warner Center as it continues to be a thriving business area and expect to grow Fisher Phillips’ presence in the Valley over the next few years.”

L.A. City Council member **John Lee** announced an expansion of his Small Business Relief Fund into Watts, San Pedro, South L.A., and the west San Fernando Valley. The fund will provide interest-free loans to sole proprietors and small businesses in City Council districts 3, 9, 12 and 15 that have been unable to access government grants and loans. That includes West Valley territories of Woodland Hills, Canoga Park, Reseda, Tarzana and Winnetka. Money from loan repayments will be recycled back into the fund and reissued as loans to other small businesses. To be eligible, businesses must have normal revenues under \$1 million and 15 or fewer employees. Applicants must submit proof of 12 months of timely paid rent through March 2020, and must have submitted an Economic Injury Disaster Loan Application to the Small Business Administration. The expanded fund is the result of a partnership between Lee and the organization **Change Reaction**. The nonprofit’s founders, **Greg** and **Jodi Perlman**, donated \$1 million to Lee’s office in April to create the Council District 12 Small Business Angel Fund. So far, it has issued about \$400,000 in loans to 30 small businesses in Lee’s District 12.

► VENTURA COUNTY

THOUSAND OAKS

Amgen Inc. this month announced an additional investment of \$421 million in Chinese biotech **Beigene**, adjusting its stock ownership to 20.3 percent. The company initially invested \$2.7 billion in cash for 20.5 percent ownership of Beigene in October. In a statement, Amgen said its additional investment “reflects Amgen’s confidence in the progress the companies are making in their ongoing oncology collaboration in China,” referring to the companies’ agreement to advance 20 medicines from Amgen’s pipeline. Beigene also agreed to commercialize Amgen drugs Xgeva, Kyprolis and Blincyto in China as part of the collaboration.

VENTURA

The **Ventura County Economic Development Collaborative** has launched Business Forward, a website it hopes will serve as a one-stop virtual information hub for local business owners. The collaborative is a private, county-funded nonprofit that provides business consulting, funding and other initiatives to support the region’s economy. It designed Business Forward as a central repository listing the collaborative’s resources and services alongside those offered by Ventura County and its 10 cities, the county’s Workforce Development Board, local chambers of commerce, business associations and incubators. That includes specific resources for women and minority-owned businesses, tax and permit assistance and subsidized employee training. Business Forward went live earlier this month.

WESTLAKE VILLAGE

Shareholders of **ImmunoCellular Therapeutics** have voted to implement a reverse stock split at a ratio not less than 1-for-3 and not greater than 1-for-10. The exact ratio will be determined by the company’s board of directors on or before Dec. 31. ImmunoCellular, which had been researching cancer therapies at a location in Calabasas and later Westlake Village, sold its assets for \$1 million to an unnamed private biotech company last summer after a fall from grace that involved securities fraud charges, failed research concepts and multiple high-level resignations. ImmunoCellular had curtailed its operations and delisted from the New York Stock Exchange in October 2018; its stock now trades on the over-the-counter market.

A massive multi-property office portfolio, totaling 256,602 square feet in Westlake Village, has traded for \$55 million, according to brokerage **Newmark Knight Frank**. The portfolio consists of two buildings covering 195,906 square feet located at 2801 and 2815 Townsgate Road; and a two-building, 69,707-square-foot campus found at 100 and 200 N. Westlake Blvd. The seller is **Topa Equities**, and the buyer **Omninet Capital**. “The buyer and seller are very sophisticated private family offices, which further validates the narrative that a majority of the sales taking place right now involve noninstitutional investors,” Newmark Knight Frank Executive Managing Director **Sean Fulp** said in a statement.

— Compiled by Andrew Foerch

CALENDAR

Thursday, July 23

13th Annual San Fernando Valley Business Hall of Fame Awards
Valley Industry & Commerce Association
5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Virtual event
\$100; \$250 including dinner
(818) 817-0545 or cathy@vica.com

Friday, July 24

July Networking Luncheon
Filipino American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Los Angeles
11:50 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Virtual event
\$10 members; \$15 guests
(888) 670-7717 or info@faccgla.org

Tuesday, July 28

Networking Breakfast – Coffee, Contacts and Comedy
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Virtual event
\$9
(818) 349-5676 or info@northridgechamber.org

Wednesday, July 29

Network Connection Breakfast
Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Virtual event
\$10 members; \$15 guests
(818) 989-0300 or sanfernandovalleychamber.com

Thursday, July 30

Business Mixer
Calabasas Chamber of Commerce
5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Virtual event
Free
(818) 222-5680 or info@calabasaschamber.com

Wednesday, Aug. 5

Staying Connected Breakfast
West Valley – Warner Center Chamber of Commerce
7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Virtual event
\$10
(818) 347-3747; RSVP by Aug. 4

12th Annual State of the County Luncheon With Supervisor Kathryn Barger
Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Valencia
24500 Town Center Drive, Valencia
\$75
(661) 702-6977 or hello@scvchamber.com

Thursday, Aug. 6

Business@Breakfast
Calabasas Chamber of Commerce
7:15 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Calabasas Country Club
4515 Park Entrada, Calabasas
\$30 members; \$35 guests
(818) 222-5680

Monday, Aug. 10

Networking Luncheon
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rosie’s BBQ & Grillery
8930 Corbin Ave., Northridge
\$25; add \$5 at the door
(818) 349-5676 or nikki@nvrcc.com

Thursday, Aug. 13

Breakfast with the Chamber
Chatsworth – Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce
7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Emle’s
9250 Reseda Blvd., Northridge
\$20 members; \$25 guests
(818) 341-2428 or Exec@ChatsworthChamber.com

Doing Business Online: Electronic Contracts, Signatures and Records
Small Business Development Center
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.
Virtual event
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Wednesday, Aug. 19

Chamber Breakfast
Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Embassy Suites by Hilton
39375 Fifth St. West, Palmdale
\$15 members; \$20 guests
(661) 538-0607 or avhispanicchamber@gmail.com

Monthly Business Luncheon
Palmdale Chamber of Commerce
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Holiday Inn
38630 Fifth St. West, Palmdale
\$25 members; \$30 guests
(661) 273-3232 or palmdalechamber.org

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Outreach and Training
Small Business Development Center & Antelope Valley Transit Authority
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Antelope Valley Transit Authority
42210 Sixth St. West, Lancaster
Free; includes lunch
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Thursday, Aug. 20

Protecting the Company’s ‘Secret Sauce’: Trade Secret Basics
Small Business Development Center
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.
Virtual event
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Tuesday, Aug. 25

Networking Breakfast – Coffee, Contacts and Comedy
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Dave & Buster’s
9301 Tampa Ave., Northridge
\$25 members; \$30 guests
(818) 349-5676 or info@northridgechamber.org

2nd Annual Congressional Current Affairs Forum With U.S. Rep. Mike Garcia
Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce
2 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Virtual event
Free for members; \$10 guests
(661) 702-6977 or hello@scvchamber.com

Wednesday, Aug. 26

Network Connection Breakfast
Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
7:15 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Braemar Country Club
4001 Reseda Blvd., Tarzana
\$25 members; \$30 guests; add \$10 after Aug. 23
(818) 989-0300 or sanfernandovalleychamber.com

Thursday, Aug. 27

Business-4-Breakfast
Lancaster Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
A.M. Café
44205 10th St. West, Lancaster
\$12 members; \$20 guests
(661) 948-4518 or lancasterchamber.org

Tuesday, Sept. 1

Chamber Luncheon
Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Embassy Suites by Hilton
39375 Fifth St. West, Palmdale
\$25 members; \$30 guests
(661) 538-0607 or avhispanicchamber@gmail.com

Thursday, Sept. 10

Breakfast with the Chamber
Chatsworth – Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce
7:30 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Emle’s
9250 Reseda Blvd., Northridge
\$20 members; \$25 guests
(818) 341-2428 or Exec@ChatsworthChamber.com

Business @ Lunch
Calabasas Chamber of Commerce
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Calabasas Country Club
4515 Park Entrada, Calabasas
\$35 members; \$40 guests
(818) 222-5680

Friday, Sept. 11

Networking Breakfast
Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Best Western Posada Royale Hotel & Suites
1775 Madera Road, Simi Valley
\$20 members in advance; \$25 members at the door; \$30 guests
(805) 526-3900 or info@simichamber.org

Monday, Sept. 14

Networking Luncheon
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rosie’s BBQ & Grillery
8930 Corbin Ave., Northridge
\$25; add \$5 at the door
(818) 349-5676 or nikki@nvrcc.com

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Business Planning – Part 1
Small Business Development Center
10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
College of the Canyons
University Center, Room 222
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Monthly Luncheon
Valley Industry Association
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Valencia
24500 Town Center Drive, Valencia
\$50 members; \$65 guests
(661) 294-8088 or admin@via.org

Wednesday, Sept. 16

Chamber Breakfast
Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Embassy Suites by Hilton
39375 Fifth St. West, Palmdale
\$15 members; \$20 guests
(661) 538-0607 or avhispanicchamber@gmail.com

Tuesday, Sept. 22

Networking Breakfast – Coffee, Contacts and Comedy
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Dave & Buster’s
9301 Tampa Ave., Northridge
\$25 members; \$30 guests
(818) 349-5676 or info@northridgechamber.org

Business Planning – Part 2
Small Business Development Center
10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
College of the Canyons
University Center, Room 222
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Creating Financial Projections
Small Business Development Center
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
College of the Canyons
University Center, Room 222
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Thursday, Sept. 24

Business-4-Breakfast
Lancaster Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
A.M. Café
44205 10th St. West, Lancaster
\$12 members; \$20 guests
(661) 948-4518 or lancasterchamber.org

Calabasas Pumpkin Festival Kick-Off Mixer
Calabasas Chamber of Commerce
5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Civic Center Plaza
Calabasas City Hall
100 Civic Center Way, Calabasas
Free
(818) 222-5680 or info@calabasaschamber.com

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Network Connection Breakfast
Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
7:15 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Braemar Country Club
4001 Reseda Blvd., Tarzana
\$25 members; \$30 guests; add \$10 after Sept. 27
(818) 989-0300 or sanfernandovalleychamber.com

Tuesday, Oct. 6

Chamber Luncheon
Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Embassy Suites by Hilton
39375 Fifth St. West, Palmdale
\$25 members; \$30 guests
(661) 538-0607 or avhispanicchamber@gmail.com

Thursday, Oct. 8

Federal/State Basic Payroll Tax
Small Business Development Center
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
College of the Canyons
University Center
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Saturday, Oct. 17

Calabasas Pumpkin Festival
Calabasas Chamber of Commerce & City of Calabasas
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; also on Sunday, Oct. 18
Juan Bautista De Anza Park
3701 Lost Hills Road, Calabasas
\$5 in advance; \$10 at the gate
(818) 222-5680 or info@calabasaschamber.com

Monday, Oct. 19

Networking Luncheon
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Rosie’s BBQ & Grillery
8930 Corbin Ave., Northridge
\$25; add \$5 at the door
(818) 349-5676 or nikki@nvrcc.com

Tuesday, Oct. 20

Monthly Luncheon
Valley Industry Association
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Valencia
24500 Town Center Drive, Valencia
\$50 members; \$65 guests
(661) 294-8088 or admin@via.org

Wednesday, Oct. 21

Chamber Breakfast
Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Embassy Suites by Hilton
39375 Fifth St. West, Palmdale
\$15 members; \$20 guests
(661) 538-0607 or avhispanicchamber@gmail.com

Tuesday, Oct. 27

Networking Breakfast – Coffee, Contacts and Comedy
North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
7 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Dave & Buster’s
9301 Tampa Ave., Northridge
\$25 members; \$30 guests
(818) 349-5676 or info@northridgechamber.org

Wednesday, Oct. 28

Network Connection Breakfast
Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
7:15 a.m. – 9 a.m.
Braemar Country Club
4001 Reseda Blvd., Tarzana
\$25 members; \$30 guests; add \$10 after Oct. 25
(818) 989-0300 or sanfernandovalleychamber.com

7th Annual Celebration of Excellence Gala Dinner
Valley Presbyterian Hospital
6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Skirball Cultural Center
2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles
\$250
(818) 902-2980 or Foundation@valleypres.org

Tuesday, Nov. 10

Business Planning - Part 1
Small Business Development Center
10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
College of the Canyons
University Center, Room 222
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita
Free
(661) 362-5900 or cocsbdc.org

Send items for the calendar section of the Business Journal to mmadler@sfbvj.com.

COMMUNITY OF BUSINESS™

Greater Valley business events



1. Clay Lacy Aircraft Mechanic Scholarship winners at March 12 awards event with Los Angeles United School District faculty members and Clay Lacy executives.

2. Taylor Wilson, winner of Clay Lacy flight training scholarship.

3. Joseph White, Clay Lacy scholarship winner, on the tarmac.



4. West Hills Hospital held a moment of silence on June 19, or Juneteenth, to honor George Floyd and promote an inclusive culture.

5. Staff and community members at West Hills Hospital take a moment of silence on Juneteenth.

6. Nurses and other hospital staff participate in West Hills Hospital's moment of silence on June 19.

7. A store of American Freight, formerly known as Sears Outlet, held an opening ceremony June 27 at 320 W. Rancho Vista Blvd. in Palmdale. At center with scissors is Gerald Collins, manager of American Freight, joined by representatives from the offices of Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Congressman Mike Garcia, the City of Palmdale and the Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Retail: Reopening a Lot of Work for ‘Nothing’

Continued from page 1

restrictions to cover the entire state.

“We’re seeing an increase in the spread of the virus,” Newsom said during a digital news conference last week. “It’s incumbent upon all of us to recognize soberly that COVID-19 is not going away ... until there is a vaccine or an effective therapy.”

Regulatory ping-pong

Celnick said bouncing between open and closed is wasting money, labor and time for restaurants that typically gain most of their income from dine-in customers.

“Business started to improve,” he said. “I hired back a couple of employees who were working for us before. And then the governor slams the door in our face again. We went down into the tank. Business just dropped like off a cliff.”

The guidance allows delivery and to-go orders, and restaurants can still seat dine-in patrons outdoors. Celnick said he added several outdoor tables along the sidewalk in front of Grandi, but it’s making little difference to the bottom line – he said revenue is less than half of what it was before the pandemic began.

“Restaurants are not one-size-fits-all. Restaurants that have drive-throughs or large patios have an advantage over restaurants that don’t. In effect, Newsom’s policies are providing a distinct benefit to these types of restaurants,” he said.

Ron Peskin, owner of **Brent’s Deli** in Northridge and Westlake Village, said reopening his dining rooms was “a whole lot of work for a whole lot of nothing.”

He said Brent’s spent a few thousand dollars installing plastic dividers and hiring back employees to adhere to the guidance, only for regulators to walk it back weeks later.

“They let you open for three weeks and then they close you down. So you hire all these people back. They lose their unemployment. They come back, they’re not making any money because there’s no business, and then we have to fire everybody again,” he said.

Peskin and Celnick both said the PPP loans they received through the CARES Act likely won’t be enough to cover their losses.

Following the state’s latest order, the California Coalition for Safe Re-Opening, a group of chambers and business associations throughout the state that jointly lobby for proposals to reopen California’s economy in a safe and effective manner, issued a statement: “The economy cannot survive in an environment of ‘open one month, close it down the next month. ... There must be adequate access to regular COVID-19 testing and the state must pass legislation to fund the California COVID-19 Emergency Business Interruption Fund to cover losses related to all government and health department orders including forced closures, social distancing requirements and gathering limits.”

Among the Coalition’s members are the **California Restaurant Association** lobbying group in Sacramento and the **Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce**, the latter of which joined in reaction to Newsom’s latest order.

Chamber Chief Executive **Nancy Hoffman Vanyek** issued a statement urging regulators that the inconsistent guidance is causing a misuse of resources and damaging the hospitality industry’s workforce.

“Our businesses have vigilantly kept up with state, county and local orders, investing time and finances into rehiring employees and readying their businesses for reopening. Many restaurants invested heavily, hoping for a lucrative holiday weekend, but instead were met with food and financial waste as the allowed models highly restrict sales and production,” she said.

Los Angeles City Controller **Ron Galperin** released an updated jobs map July 13 illustrating a citywide loss of more than 250,000 jobs since the pandemic hit. Food service is the hardest hit



Mixed Messages: 8One8 Brewery in Canoga Park is open for take-out, but regulations have confused customers into thinking it's closed.

sector, suffering more than 75,000 lost jobs.

“A lot of businesses are gone,” Celnick lamented. “These mom-and-pops, they’re not faring well.”

Celnick and another owner-partner opened Grandi in the fall of 2018 as a spinoff of the popular **Andre’s Italian Restaurant**, a 57-year-old Italian comfort food staple in the Fairfax District. Andre’s and Grandi are both known for their cafeteria-style service, where servers dish out plates of prepared foods in a single-file line.

Celnick said the coronavirus has rendered this model – and buffets, too – unfeasible, at least for the foreseeable future. When dining rooms reopened, he pivoted Grandi and Andre’s to an at-the-counter ordering system that will return when current regulations are lifted.

While Andre’s is kept afloat by a large and loyal following, Celnick admitted, “the viability of Grandi is in doubt.”

Breweries

Also required to close under the state’s order are indoor bars, wineries, breweries and tasting rooms, which L.A. County regulators had allowed to reopen June 19 with a few operational caveats such as physical distancing between groups of patrons.

When the Department of Public Health issued specific regulations, local brew masters were shocked – the guidance, as initially written, seemed to mandate bars and breweries to close down operations entirely.

According to **Bryan Olson**, co-founder of **8One8 Brewing** in Canoga Park, “When the Health Department mandate was announced, they said ‘breweries, tasting rooms, brewpubs, wineries are closed.’ We had to have a phone call with the Health Department (to ask if) we can still manufacture, sell to wholesale and sell to go. They said, ‘Oh, yes, you can still do that.’



PHOTO BY MICHAEL AUSHENKER

Bygone Days: Cafeteria line at Grandi Italiani in Canoga Park, now unfeasible with virus.

But it doesn’t portray that way when you read it.”

It’s an important semantic clarification – Olson said 8One8 has had trouble making sales this month because customers think the brewery is closed altogether.

“People don’t realize we’re open for to-go’s,” he said.

Olson pointed out another issue with the restrictions: bars and breweries with kitchens are allowed to continue serving food and drinks to dine-in customers outdoors, but those without kitchens are banned from all sales on the premises. Also, the order prohibits breweries from contracting with third-party food vendors in order to resume outdoor service operations, closing a crucial line of business for 8One8.

When bars and breweries were allowed to reopen tasting rooms in June, regulators required them to serve a “bona fide meal” with the sale of any alcohol.

“They didn’t want people to sit and enjoy a beer in a bar setting. They wanted more of a restaurant setting,” Olson explained.

To remain compliant during the opening, 8One8 partnered with an adjacent restaurant to serve food. The partnership isn’t allowed under the new guidance.

That has resulted in a crushing environment for 8One8 at an already tumultuous time.

“Five or six days into the new order, we’re 75 percent down on sales,” Olson said.

He and the brewery’s other owner-partners wrote a letter to regulators explaining the disparities in the new order and pushing for reform.

“This recent order was a kick to the shins for all of us who have put the energy and money forward to comply with this changing environment,” the letter stated. “The end result is our business and industry being shut down while similar businesses remain open because they can make a meal in their own kitchen.”

Health Care: Viral Market Discounts Senior Stocks

Continued from page 1

million, compared to \$20.3 million for the same quarter a year ago.

The big number didn't come from the performance of its nursing homes, but from the sale of facilities. LTC sold off a 21-property portfolio for \$78 million in net proceeds. The properties were managed by Preferred Care, a Florida-based operator that filed for Chapter 11 reorganization status in 2017, the result of multi-million dollar personal injury lawsuits in Kentucky and New Mexico, according to a Reuters report.

The divestiture of the 21 properties – a series of transactions involving homes with 2,500 beds in Arizona, Texas, Iowa, Kansas and Colorado – plus another \$17 million from the liquidation of an unconsolidated joint venture – gives LTC money for shareholders and acquisitions at a time when most of the industry is in defense mode.

"The Preferred Care portfolio sale is a solid example of our capital recycling initiative – selling older, less strategic properties and investing in newer assets," the company told the Business Journal in an email. "We are firm believers in capital recycling and will continue to do so strategically, strengthening the portfolio and investing in newer assets."

The company's stock plummeted along with the rest of the market in March, but quickly recovered. In one day – between March 17 and 18 – it fell from \$30.99 to \$24.74, and then climbed back to \$42.79 on June 8, its highest point since the pandemic took hold of the country. Shares closed on July 15 at \$37.34.

In general, REIT shares for companies with sizable senior housing portfolios have taken a nosedive because of contagion concerns and declines in occupancy rates, according to a report from Biznow.

Chief Executive Wendy Simpson attributes the company's success to being well positioned as a mid-size REIT.

"Against this challenging backdrop, LTC remains highly liquid and conservatively capitalized, which will allow us to respond to future new business opportunities when the pricing of assets and our investment classes can be reasonably calculated," Simpson said during the company's first quarter conference call.

"One of our primary goals right now is to further increase liquidity while focusing on maintaining a strong and flexible balance sheet," added Chief Financial Officer Pamela Shelley-Kessler on the call. "We believe this increased financial flexibility and liquidity will allow LTC to better compete for and complete accretive transactions when the time is right."



Portfolio: Interior of Hamilton House, an LTC-owned facility in Cedarburg, Wisc.

Mid-market position

"The mid-size REITs are really well positioned in that they haven't been in the public eye so their share prices haven't been as impacted, and then they can look at smaller deals – it gives them a leg up," said Lisa Widmier, vice president of capital markets for senior housing and investment banking at real estate brokerage CBRE Group. "Private equity is best positioned here, but mid-sized REITs that can pay cash for turnaround deals do have an advantage because there is a lack of breach financing currently in the market."

The large REITs such as Welltower will wait for the larger deals, Widmier said, because of their investment parameters. The fact that there aren't many large deals brokered right now put them in a holding pattern.

Mid-size trusts, on the other hand, have already started buying up properties – Widmier pointed to Tennessee's National Health Investors recent \$100 million line of credit to perhaps do just that.

LTC said it is looking to explore other ways to best deploy capital, such as providing structured finance for existing partners, while operators are focused on protecting staff and residents from COVID-19.

"These vehicles could include preferred equity investments, mezzanine loans, bridge loans, construction loans and unit tranche loans, which we believe provide a better risk-adjusted return and a shorter investment horizon in

today's environment," said Clint Malin, chief information officer for LTC, during the conference call. "These solutions can assist operators by providing them with liquidity through releasing trapped equity in their properties, bridging maturing loans while waiting for the market to return to normal, funding construction for shovel-ready projects, funding existing projects where other investors have backed away from their commitments and providing an exit plan for equity investors who may have their own liquidity needs."

Malin added that LTC will look to more traditional acquisitions and development investments long term.

"We have capital, we are opportunistic and creative. But we do not seek growth for growth sake and are not going to acquire communities simply because we have funds from a disposition," the company added in its email, referring to its Preferred Care portfolio divestiture.

Industry discount

The senior housing industry has been docked 500 basis points overall by capital markets, CBRE's Widmier said, due to the pandemic.

"Not because of a decrease in demand, but because the owners of the communities, the operators, have made a decision not to accept, for some period of time, new residents," she added.

"I can tell you, from our latest data, skilled nursing occupancy eroded further in April from the March time period, because in March we were just starting to feel the impacts," said Bill Kauffman, senior principal at the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care, a nonprofit focused on investor research on the industry. "We ended the month at 78.9

percent, which was down 441 basis points from March. That's a really significant decline."

Because of government health orders, there was a several months gap where elective surgeries weren't taking place. That also contributed to the industry's financial problem because a lack of elective surgeries means a slowdown on patient admissions to nursing homes, Kauffman told the Business Journal. "Hospitals are a major referral source to nursing homes," he noted.

For REITs, that means depressed activity in mergers and acquisitions, and, just like other industries during the pandemic, exploring other options and getting creative with finances, Kauffman said.

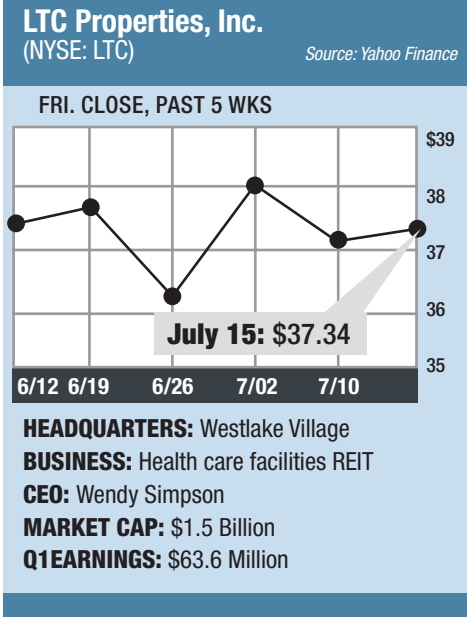
LTC has said as much with Malin's suggestion of mezzanine loans and other financing solutions, offering operators liquidity while waiting on the market to return to normalcy. Simpson called it an "REIT done differently."

"People aren't entering into transactions because of all the uncertainty," added Kauffman. "Maybe directly or indirectly, some of the REITs can work with the operators. ... The question is, what can they do to help each other?"

For LTC, operator support has so far involved helping facilities source personal protective equipment, deferring rent for certain operators and advocating for government assistance.



Kauffman



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‘It’s a crazy time to launch a consulting business based on personal relationships and interactions.’
STEVE NISSEN, Nissen Consulting Group, PAGE 6



‘Aerospace is in our DNA.’
STEVE HOFBAUER, City of Palmdale, PAGE 6



‘You want to have something in a good position before you leave.’
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COMMENTARY

The City’s Shakedown Machine

The unfolding corruption scandal involving Los Angeles City Hall denizens and real estate developers is absolutely shocking. On the other hand, it’s not at all surprising. It’s almost to be expected.

Huh?

I mean this: It’s shocking to read the details of the pay-for-play charges, including allegations of \$1.5 million forked over to City Councilman Jose Huizar along with the use of hookers (apparently called “dessert”) and other purported payola supposedly in exchange for him greasing the path so downtown developers could squeeze their big building projects through the city’s Byzantine bureaucracy.



ONE MORE THING
Charles Crumpley

And of course, Huizar isn’t alone in prosecutors’ cross hairs. The Justice Department claims he oversaw a veritable criminal enterprise involving sundry real estate types and City Hall players, all at the feeding trough. The San Fernando Valley’s own Mitchell Englander, who abruptly and mysteriously resigned his City Council seat 1 ½ years ago, pleaded guilty earlier this month to a federal charge of obstructing an investigation into whether he accepted money and escort services from a what was described as “a businessman.”

Yeah, all that’s shocking. The broad scope. The depth. The brazenness. All of that.

But on the other hand, it’s not surprising. The reason: City Hall is set up to be a shakedown machine for real estate developers. Somehow, somewhere, some people would take it too far.

The city sets up roadblocks to construction projects, and developers have to pay certain people to get them taken down.

The existing old zoning codes along with other hurdles make it so restrictive that it’s nigh onto impossible for developers to build much of anything substantial in the city without getting a one-off variance or some kind of exception. And for that, developers have to trudge to City Hall, hat in hand, where they’re met by city officials with their hands out.

When I was a young reporter and even more naïve and idealistic than I am now, I asked a real estate developer why he and others in his industry were so involved in local politics. He patiently explained that a developer must be “involved.” The city sets up roadblocks to construction projects, and developers have to pay certain people to get them taken down. Usually the payment is a legal, or kind of legal, quid pro quo. The developer or the developer’s employees or family members contribute to a campaign or host a fund-raising dinner or some such, and the hurdle soon disappears. The developer told me that he didn’t know any of his fellows who felt good about the system,

“but that’s the cost of doing business.”

I’ve seen much the same system in other cities. But it seems egregious in Los Angeles, where substantial projects are routinely approved through a one-off spot zoning process and where City Council members have openly said they vote for or against any construction project based on how the council member in that district votes. In other words, every City Council member has their own potentially profitable fiefdom, and a mutually protected one at that.

In that environment, it is not surprising if eventually some people lose their moral compass and take matters too far. The temptation is too great. The details of what they do may be shocking, but the fact they succumbed to the enticement of riches is almost expected. The fact that the system appears set up for shakedowns almost gives graft an institutional blessing.

David Ryu, the Los Angeles City Council member from the Valley, is on the proper track. He has proposed killing a provision in the city charter that allows council members to override the decisions of the city’s planning commission.

“It allows the City Council on the spot, on a whim, to change the decision (of the planning commission),” Ryu was reported as saying in May. “It is too much power pretty much in the hands of one individual and creates an environment rife for corruption.

“We’re almost mini-mayors or fiefdoms,” Ryu said. “So, in reality the city of L.A. is almost like 15 cities in one.”

Will the ongoing City Hall scandal prompt the City Council to truly break up its shakedown machine?

Let’s watch.

Charles Crumpley is editor and publisher of the Business Journal. He can be reached at ccrumpley@sfbvj.com.

Save Our Businesses. Wear a Mask

By STUART WALDMAN

About a month ago, there was a glimmer of hope that things were getting better. The number of COVID-19 cases were beginning to drop, and more tests were becoming available. Nonessential businesses were also allowed to reopen. If they complied with state and local health orders and public health requirements, businesses could resume operations and begin to bring their employees back to work. This was great. Reopening meant a road to economic recovery. It all seemed promising.

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I know we were all excited to go back to our favorite restaurants and begin supporting local businesses again – I definitely was. While it was a different experience, it was great to see businesses implementing physical distancing rules and requirements to keep their workers and customers safe.

One thing that was not okay – was the surprising amount of people I saw who were not wearing masks and not taking precautions.

I get it. It can be annoying having to wear a mask. They’re uncomfortable and they’re not fashionable. And if you wear glasses, I’m sure you share the annoyance I have of having them fog up. But as we clearly saw, people refusing to wear masks and refusing to follow recommended precautions resulted in another spike in COVID-19 cases, increased hospitalizations and businesses

being forced to shut down once again.

I wear a mask not only because it keeps me safe, but because it more importantly keeps those around me safe. Refusing to wear a mask puts workers at grocery stores and workers at restaurants at an even higher risk. Those workers have families who, if they contract COVID-19 from someone who refuses to wear a mask, will pass it on to their family members. To me, that is undeniably problematic.

What’s even worse is businesses are now liable should a worker contract COVID-19 whether at home or at work. Employers are required to pay an employee workers compensation should they end up testing positive for COVID-19 and it is all thanks to those individuals who choose not to wear a mask when they’re out in public.

Evidence strongly supports that the use of masks helps mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Studies have clearly shown that masks alone reduce transmission, and, in other countries, masks have played a huge role in containing outbreaks. If the evidence and studies are there, why are we not following the evidence?

It is hard to deny the current divide in our country, but if you support businesses and want the economy to bounce back, the rules must be followed.

I want to get back to normal just as much as anyone else. I want businesses in the San Fernando Valley to begin thriving again. I want my kids to see their friends and have play dates. I want to go to a football game and cheer on the Rams. And of course, I want folks to be able to attend and enjoy the amazing events put on by the Valley Industry

and Commerce Association.

I miss it all. Unfortunately, we are not there yet, and we’ve set ourselves back by refusing to wear masks. Businesses ultimately end up suffering when a person chooses not to wear a mask. The turn of events has been devastating. In the San Fernando Valley, a restaurant was forced to close its doors because their employees were being attacked for asking customers to wear a mask.

Too many businesses have permanently shut their doors due to COVID. And too many workers have lost their jobs as a result of those businesses shutting down. Added regulations and rules for employers have not made things any easier to operate. There is no reason why we should be making the situation worse.

If you are out at a grocery store, restaurant, bar or anywhere really, please wear a mask. It should not be a worker’s responsibility to ask a customer to wear a mask and then hear about why it is unconstitutional. This is not political, and we should not be making it political.

COVID-19 is real and so are all of the health and economic impacts we have seen over the last four months. It is going to take all of us doing our part as Angelenos and Californians to overcome this public health and economic crisis.

Do what’s right. Protect businesses. Protect workers. Wear a mask.

Stuart Waldman is president of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association, a business advocacy organization based in Van Nuys that represents employers in the San Fernando Valley at the local, state and federal levels of government.

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