



LOS ANGELES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



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News Release

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Alhambra and Cerritos Named Los Angeles County's "Friendliest" Cities

*Alhambra wins top honors for cities with populations greater than 60,000,
while Cerritos wins for cities with less than 60,000 residents*

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) today announced the cities of **Alhambra** and **Cerritos** as the winners of its annual "Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County" competition at its 15th Annual Eddy® Awards. Inaugurated in 1996, the Eddy® Awards gala has become the most important economic development award program in the state of California, and is attended by more than 600 leaders from the business, government, and education communities.

The **City of Alhambra** took the top honors as the most business-friendly city in L.A. County for the cities with more than 60,000 residents. Located eight miles east of downtown Los Angeles, Alhambra is often referred to as the "Gateway to the San Gabriel Valley." The city offers a favorable combination of housing, business, employment and recreational opportunities. Alhambra's Economic Development Element in its General Plan provides a blueprint to sustain and grow commerce and businesses including industrial and central business district project areas, financial assistance in redevelopment areas, land acquisition, negotiated sales, lease agreements with an option to purchase, rent subsidy, and rebates.

The business-friendly assistance Alhambra offers to businesses starts with the help and wealth of information found on the city's website and extends to its timely customer service and modest and reasonable rates charged for business license and utility user tax and fees.

In partnership with the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association, Alhambra hosts several programs each year to boost local businesses such as its *Summer Jubilee* and *Taste of Alhambra*.

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LAEDC Names “Friendliest” City Winners

The recent Downtown make-over project included cityscape beautifying and free façade painting to businesses and restaurants in the area. The redevelopment efforts of Alhambra and its Redevelopment Agency have resulted in favorable impacts on the local economy by boosting property values, eliminating blight, and providing employment as well as new shopping, dining, and entertainment uses for the residents and the region. Alhambra was named a finalist in 2009, its first time entering the competition.

In the category of cities with less than 60,000 residents, the **City of Cerritos** rose to the challenge and took the top prize. Located in the heart of the Los Angeles Metro Area, Cerritos offers businesses a strategic location in a community with a solid fiscal position, exceptional services and a tradition of strong city leadership. The city provides fast-track permitting, is a “no/ low” property tax city with no utility user tax, and has two redevelopment project areas, and a business retention and expansion program.

The city’s economic development priorities are taken from their Economic Development Strategic Plan that focuses efforts to ensure the success of existing businesses. A city ombudsman escorts businesses through the complexities of local, regional, state and federal agencies and regulations.

Cerritos is committed to providing a well planned, safe, and attractive community for its businesses that improve the economic climate and that also maintain a high quality of life for its residents. The city is home to the world’s first and most successful regional auto mall, the Cerritos Auto Square and was a finalist in 2007 and 2008.

“We’re delighted to present our fifth annual award to these very deserving cities,” said Bill Allen, LAEDC president and CEO. “The cities of Alhambra and Cerritos best represent what can be achieved when our city governments work side by side with the business community to create business-friendly environments where quality jobs can grow. Each year, this competition reveals that more and more cities are being proactive in their efforts to retain and attract quality jobs and businesses in their communities. The ability and commitment of our local governments to attract and retain good jobs is absolutely essential if our region is to regain its economic vitality and sustain our quality of life in the future.”

The winners were selected based on the following criteria:

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

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LAEDC Names “Friendliest” City Winners

The LAEDC created the “business-friendly” award category in 2006 to recognize cities within the County that are proactively promoting business-friendly programs and services.

In addition to announcing the winners of the *2010 Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County* competition, the LAEDC also recognized Do Won Chang, CEO and Founder of the Forever 21 apparel brand, and healthcare provider Kaiser Permanente as its individual and corporate honorees, respectively.

Headquartered in the City of Los Angeles, Forever 21 began in 1984 and has since become synonymous with trendy, affordable fashions. Chang and his wife Jin Sook Chang emigrated from South Korea in 1981 in search of the American Dream, and began their fashion empire with their first store in Highland Park. Since then, Forever 21 has grown to 457 stores in 15 countries with sales of nearly \$3.0 billion annually. In Los Angeles County, Forever 21 operates dozens of stores throughout the region’s malls and shopping centers, employing more than 3,000 people and thousands more through their supply network.

Kaiser Permanente is the largest private employer in the County with more than 36,000 employees working at seven medical centers and dozens of outpatient medical offices as well as specialty laboratory, pharmacy, and manufacturing facilities and regional headquarters. Their leadership in electronic medical records system enables their physicians to electronically access of all of Kaiser Permanente’s members nationwide. Their Southern California workforce numbers nearly 58,000 technical, administrative, and clerical employees and caregivers, and more than 6,800 physicians representing all specialties.

About the Eddy Awards®

The Eddy Awards® were introduced by the LAEDC in 1996 to celebrate individuals and organizations that demonstrate exceptional contributions to positive economic development in the region. For sponsorship and event information, please contact Justin Goodkind at (213) 236-4813 or justin.goodkind@laedc.org. For more information about the Eddy Awards®, visit www.laedc.org/eddy.

About LAEDC (www.LAEDC.org)

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), the region’s premier business leadership organization, is a private, non-profit organization established in 1981. Its mission is to attract, retain, and grow businesses and jobs for the regions of Los Angeles County. Since 1996, the LAEDC has helped retain or create more than 162,000 jobs, providing \$8 billion dollars in annual economic impact and more than \$136 million dollars in annual tax revenue to support local government and schools.

[Editor’s Note: For advanced interviews and images, please contact Aida Mayo or George Mc Quade at 818-340-5300 or 818-618-9229. Email Publicity@mayocommunications.com.]

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