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Whittier and Duarte Named Los Angeles County's Most "Business-Friendly" Cities

Whittier won top honors in the "large city" category, while Duarte won in the "small city" category.

LOS ANGELES, CA - The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) announced this year's winners of its *Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County* competition live at the 17th annual Eddy Awards® at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, naming **Whittier** winner in the population 60,000 and over category, and **Duarte** in the population 60,000 and under category.

Inaugurated in 1996, the Eddy Awards® gala has become one of the most important economic development award programs in the state of California, and is attended by more than 600 of the region's business, government and education leaders. In 2006, the LAEDC created the *Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County* award category to recognize cities within the County that are proactively promoting business-friendly programs and services in the interest of attracting and retaining good quality jobs for their residents.

"We are delighted to recognize the cities of **Whittier** and **Duarte** with this year's Eddy Award®," said Bill Allen, LAEDC President and CEO. "Both cities stand out as model communities in Los Angeles County by proactively engaging and working with businesses and the private sector to create jobs for their residents. Each year, this competition reveals that more and more cities in the county are proactively implementing strategies that are in alignment with L.A. County's first-ever Strategic Plan for Economic Development that will ensure a strong, diverse and sustainable economy for L.A. County."

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

2012 MOST BUSINESS FRIENDLY CITIES

60,000 and Over Category: City of Whittier

The City of Whittier values its unique history and works with local merchants and entrepreneurs to provide new opportunities, preserve its historic commercial shopping district, and maintain a healthy balance of social, civic and business activity. Whittier's significant investment and policies designed to support businesses have resulted in millions of dollars of private investment and business growth. Whittier's business visitation program, quarterly economic development newsletter, "Buy Whittier" purchasing policy, and Guide to Doing Business in Whittier assist entrepreneurs start up and maintain successful businesses in the City. The City's ombudsperson serves as a facilitator for businesses navigating the City licensing and permitting procedures. The City's many business incentives and special zones are used to attract, retain, and expand businesses and jobs. To help Whittier businesses during the recession, the City developed the highly successful Local Economic Stimulus and Business Assistance Plan, which offers reduced fees and fee subsidies. Its business outreach and visitation plan with partners including the LAEDC, SASSFA WorkSource Center and California Manufacturing Technology Consulting collaborate to assess business needs and provide assistance. The City's film friendly ordinance makes filming easy, resulting in commercials, made-for-cable movies and major motion pictures, such as *Disturburbia* and the *Back to the Future* Trilogy filmed in the City. Whittier's philosophy of "A safe business community leads to a prosperous business community" is realized through its highly successful Community Based Policing Program, a partnership between the Police Department, city residents and businesses. Home to California "Distinguished Schools", a Community College, private university and trade schools, more than 400 acres of playgrounds and recreation opportunities, over 1,750 acres of open space preserved for hiking and biking, art galleries, boutiques and entertainment venues, Whittier has a rich tradition in the arts. Through the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, Whittier has supported the LA County Strategic Plan for Economic Development, led by the LAEDC. *Whittier was a "Most Business Friendly City" finalist in 2009, 2010 and 2011.*

60,000 and Under Category: City of Duarte

Duarte has a history of a business friendly approach and exhibits its business friendly approach with programs and practices that make its community a great place to do business, live and work. In the past year, Duarte has amended its Filming Ordinance by becoming one of the first cities to adopt the California Film Commission's Model Ordinance and Guidelines for Best Practices in Film Regulations and Policies; in response to the voices of local struggling businesses, the City adopted a 12-month suspension of Code Enforcement on selected temporary sign regulations; and the City Council entered into a contract with "Nextdoor" to establish a private social networking site for local neighborhoods to foster neighbor and citywide social communication. The network will also provide communication between residents and the local business community. The City of Duarte has a pro-business attitude mindset that is shared by its entire staff and is driven by the overarching desire to encourage economic development, bolster the city's economy, and create a better Duarte for residents and employees alike. The City Manager, Community Development Director and other key Staff outreach to the business community through regular business visits. Duarte supports quarterly business seminars on topics such as business management and website development, hosts job fairs that focus on local businesses and workforce development, networking breakfasts, and provides adequate staffing for its one-stop permit center in order to streamline the development process. It also funds the Duarte View Newspaper, which provides local businesses with affordable advertising opportunities. These city-funded services provide Duarte businesses with critical assistance and exposure as an added benefit offered at little to no cost. Duarte has set the standard that every employee be dedicated to the economic development goals of the City, with the Planning Department staff acts

as economic development liaison for businesses desiring assistance. This assigned team is dedicated to implementing the recently adopted City of Duarte Economic Development Strategy. Recent customer satisfaction indicate that they were “extremely satisfied” with the service received and with the “knowledgeable staff”. Adopted in July 2011 by the City Council, the City’s plan incorporates input from the Duarte Economic Development Commission. Through the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, the City has shown their support for the LA County Economic Development Strategic Plan. Duarte is home to California’s Distinguished Schools, trade schools, nearby Community Colleges and Universities, job opportunities, 39 parks, an 18-hole golf course, affordable housing options and a low crime rate. *Duarte was a “Most Business Friendly City in LA County” award Finalist in 2010 and 2011.*

EDDY AWARD HONOREES

In addition to announcing the winners of its Most-Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County award, the LAEDC also recognized three Honorees for their outstanding achievements in economic development throughout Los Angeles County in 2012:

Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Chairman and CEO of Magic Johnson Enterprise, has become known worldwide for his business prowess and philanthropy work in Los Angeles County’s most challenged and underserved urban communities.

Celebrating over 20 years of success, the Magic Johnson Foundation has become one of the most recognizable philanthropic organizations in Los Angeles County and around the world. Mr. Johnson also serves as Chairman and Founder of the Magic Johnson Foundation, where his unwavering commitment to transform Urban America continues through HIV/AIDS Awareness & Prevention Programs, Community Empowerment Centers, and the Taylor Michaels Scholarship Program.

NBCUniversal is one of the world’s leading media and entertainment companies in the development, production, and marketing of entertainment, news, and information to a global audience. NBCUniversal owns and operates a valuable portfolio of news and entertainment television networks, a premier motion picture company, significant television production operations, a leading television stations group, and world-renowned theme parks. Comcast Corporation owns a controlling 51% interest in NBCUniversal, with GE holding a 49% stake.

The **California Institute of Technology (Caltech)**, led by President Jean-Lou Chameau, is a world-renowned science and engineering research and education institution, where extraordinary faculty and students seek answers to complex questions, discover new knowledge, lead innovation, and transform our future. Caltech recently retained its Times Higher Education World University Rankings as the world’s best research university.

Caltech also manages the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) for NASA, and owns and operates large-scale research facilities such as its world-renowned seismological laboratory and a global network of astronomical observatories that includes the Palomar Observatory and the W. M. Keck Observatory.

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 and job creation 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 THE LAEDC

The LAEDC, the region's premier economic development leadership organization, is a private, non-profit public benefit organization established in 1981. Its mission is to attract, retain, and grow business and jobs for the regions of Los Angeles County. Since 1996, the LAEDC has helped to retain or attract 177,975 annual jobs in Los Angeles County with an estimated labor income, including wages and benefits, of \$10.8 billion. Taken together with the supported indirect and induced economic activity, a total of more than 400,000 annual jobs with labor income of more than \$21 billion were impacted, accounting for an estimated \$850 million in property and sales tax revenues to the County of Los Angeles.

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