

News Release

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Santa Clarita and Vernon Named Los Angeles County's Most Business-Friendly Cities

*Santa Clarita wins top honors for cities with populations greater than 50,000,
while Vernon wins for cities with less than 50,000 residents*

Los Angeles— The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) today announced the cities of Santa Clarita and Vernon as the winners of its annual “Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County” competition at its 13th Annual Eddy Awards on November 17, 2008. The Eddy Awards are attended by more than 700 leaders from the business, government, and education communities.

The City of Santa Clarita emerged as the most business-friendly city in LA County for the cities with more than 50,000 residents. Santa Clarita does not assess a utility user tax, allowing businesses to save up to five percent or more on their electric, telephone, water, and gas bills, and it has recently been designated as a State of California Enterprise Zone. Santa Clarita offers its businesses and residents a highly educated workforce, available land for development, site selection assistance, and expedited plan reviews and permit processing.

It is also a thriving center for industry clusters such as aerospace manufacturing, bio-medical, entertainment, and technology. CNN/Money Magazine calls this city one of the Best Places to Live in California. They also boast the distinction of having the most “Outstanding New Economic Developer of the Year” on their staff, according to the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and have been recognized numerous times for their award-winning marketing materials.

Santa Clarita was also named a finalist for the LAEDC's Most Business Friendly City award in 2006 and 2007. Finalists for this category this year included the cities of Cerritos, Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena.

The City of Vernon was selected as the winner for the category of 50,000 and fewer residents. Vernon provides its own water and natural gas service, fiber optic system, and its own electric utility company with rates that are consistently ten to 40 percent lower than those outside the City. Vernon does not have a utility user tax and its redevelopment agency has spent nearly \$40 million on infrastructure improvements and land for economic development.

The City offers a "one stop" service counter where questions regarding zoning requirements, building codes and/or public works can be answered. Vernon also boasts the distinction of being named *Most Competitive* among 12 other industrial cities (six in Southern California and six in other states), according to the Kosmont Companies business costs analysis report. Vernon is home to several major brand names including Farmer John, Seven for All Mankind, BCBG, and Karen Kane. This small city of only 100 residents and more than 50,000 employees is home to companies who manufacture everything from hot dogs to haute couture. Finalists for this category also included Culver City, Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada, and Monrovia.

"We're delighted to present our third annual award to these very deserving cities," said Bill Allen, LAEDC president and CEO. "The cities of Santa Clarita and Vernon 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. Their success can be attributed to the proactive attitude of their Mayors, council members, and city staff. We are encouraged that so many LA County cities are being proactive in their efforts to retain and attract quality jobs and businesses in their communities especially during these difficult economic times. The ability and commitment of our local governments to attract and retain good jobs will be absolutely essential if our region is to sustain its economic vitality and quality of life

in the years to come.”

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

In support of the LAEDC’s mission to retain and attract quality jobs to Los Angeles County, the LAEDC announced this award category in 2006 to showcase the cities within the County that are proactively promoting business-friendly programs and services. Last year, the City of Lancaster was name Most Business-Friendly and the City of El Segundo was the inaugural winner for the “Most Business-Friendly City” award in 2006.

About the Eddy

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 more information about the Eddy Awards®, including sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.laedc.org/eddy. **For past Eddy honorees please visit: <http://www.laedc.org/eddy/about.html>**

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 147,700 jobs, providing \$7.3 billion dollars in annual economic impact and more than \$124 million dollars in annual tax revenue to support local government and schools.

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