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**WORLD TRADE CENTER ASSOCIATION**  
**LOS ANGELES - LONG BEACH**

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## **News Release**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, May 9, 2011**

### **Mercedes-Benz to Launch Driving School in Los Angeles County**

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**Los Angeles**— Daimler Benz has announced its plan to open North America's first Mercedes Benz Driving Academy in Los Angeles by October 2011. The World Trade Center Association Los Angeles-Long Beach (WTCA LA-LB), a subsidiary of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), played a significant role in facilitating Daimler's decision to locate the Academy in Los Angeles County.

The Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy is an innovative driver's education program designed with a unique combination of interactive classroom sessions, online learning and behind the wheel training. The goal is to make young people better and safer drivers and prepare them for today's driving environment. The Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy philosophy goes beyond basic car control skills and rote learning of traffic rules through the use of state of the art teaching techniques and supervised practice.

"Vehicles, highways, and the driving environment have changed dramatically over the past 60 years, however driver education remains relatively unchanged in the U.S.," said Alexander Hobbach, Senior Manager of Business Innovation at Daimler AG. The first such Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy was launched in the United Kingdom in 2009. It already boasts first-time driver's license pass rates nearly double the UK national average.

The WTCA LA-LB began working with the Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy in October 2010. A Los Angeles County trade and investment delegation led by LAEDC CEO Bill Allen, visited their UK facility this past March. Allen and the delegation discussed with Mercedes representatives ways to prepare for the driving school's opening in Los Angeles this fall.

Consul General Wolfgang Drautz and the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany provided significant support for this recent trade and investment mission to Europe. The Consulate played a major role in arranging meetings with leading German automobile companies such as Daimler Benz.

Locally, the WTCA LA-LB is assisting the Academy in making key connections and establishing relationships with elected officials, educational institutions and law enforcement organizations. These connections are essential to the Academy's growth and success.

Daimler's business innovation team, headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, is managing the launch of the Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy. The WTCA LA-LB's collaboration with Mercedes-Benz will facilitate future partnerships and encourage the development of new projects in Los Angeles County as Daimler continues to generate innovative products and concepts.

"We will continue to work with Daimler Benz to ensure the success of this new venture and we hope this will lead to further investments in Los Angeles County in the future," said Vance Baugham, president of the WTCA LA-LB.

#### **About the WTCA**

The World Trade Center Association Los Angeles – Long Beach (WTCA LA-LB) works to support the development of international trade and business opportunities for Southern California companies as the leading international trade association, trade service organization and trade resource in Los Angeles County. It also promotes the Los Angeles region as a destination for foreign investment. The WTCA LA-LB is a subsidiary of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. For more information, visit [www.wtca-lalb.org](http://www.wtca-lalb.org) or call +1 (213) 680-1888.

#### **ABOUT THE LAEDC**

The LAEDC, the region's premier economic development leadership organization, is a private, non-profit organization established in 1981 under section 501(c)(3). Its mission is to attract, retain, and grow business and jobs for the regions of Los Angeles County. Since 1996, the LAEDC has helped retain or attract more than 171,300 jobs while providing \$8.4 billion in direct economic impact from salaries and more than \$136 million in annual tax revenue benefit to local governments and education in Los Angeles County.

[**Editor's Note:** To schedule interviews, please contact: Colin Maynard at 213-236-4845 or 213-446-0016, [colin.maynard@laedc.org](mailto:colin.maynard@laedc.org). For more information about LAEDC visit [www.laedc.org](http://www.laedc.org) and [twitter.com/laedc](https://twitter.com/laedc).]

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