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## 2017: The Best Year Ever For Long Beach Tourism



The Cove, a transformed underpass just outside of the Seaside Meeting Rooms on Seaside Way, is the convention center's newest turnkey event space. The creative use of space such as The Cove and the Long Beach Arena has helped the city's hospitality and tourism industry achieve back-to-back record years. (Photograph courtesy of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau)

By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

If you think this headline sounds familiar, you're right. Last year, the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) touted 2016 as the "best year ever" for tourism in Long Beach. Convention bookings, attractions and major events brought millions of people to the city, resulting in a record-breaking economic impact to the area. But this year, as it turns out, was even better.

An estimated 7.2 million people attended Long Beach's major attractions, fairs and festivals this

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## Port Of Long Beach's Major Capital Projects Reach Construction Milestones

By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

The two largest capital improvement projects at the Port of Long Beach are now far enough along that they have significantly changed the face of the port. The towers for the Gerald Desmond Bridge's replacement, a cable main-stayed bridge, are now the highest structures in the city. Meanwhile, the Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project – in which two aging terminals are being combined into a state-of-the-art, low emissions operations facility for Long Beach Container Terminal – is now entering its final phase.

The second phase of the Middle Harbor project, which cost more than \$200 million and expanded LBCT's intermodal rail yard and container yard, was

completed and turned over to LBCT in October, according to Managing Director of Engineering Services Sean Gamette. "We finished that phase under budget and on schedule," he said.

Tom Baldwin, director of the engineering department's program management division, said that eight stacking areas (also referred to as "stacks") for containers were added to the container yard and that the intermodal rail

**Looking Toward 2018 . . .  
Unfinished Business**  
Pages 8-9

yard was extended. "The stacks are about 1,400 linear feet long. They are about nine containers wide and six containers high, and they are managed by automatic stacking cranes," he noted.

On November 27, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commis-

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By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

In 2017, the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center hosted 297 conventions. Among them was ComplexCon, organized by Complex Media and put on by Reed Exhibitions. Thirty-five thousand people had attended the inaugural convention in 2016. In 2017, attendance swelled to around 50,000.

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## National Organization Spearheads Campaign To Increase Employment Among City's Disabled

By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
Staff Writer

When Daniel Tapia, owner of Long Beach's 4th and Olive Bistro and Wine Bar, worked as a sommelier and beverage manager at a Beverly Hills restaurant, he says he was pushed out due to

his disability. The retired Navy submariner uses a cane to walk.

Instead of filing a lawsuit against his former employer, Tapia said he decided to channel his frustration into making a positive impact: starting a restaurant that focuses on hiring disabled employees, particularly veterans.

Now, after its first year of business, 4th and Olive has approximately 15 employees; five of whom are disabled and eight of whom are veterans. According to RespectAbility, a national non-profit organization dedicated to the empowerment and advance-

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## Why Millennials Shouldn't Be Neutral On Net Neutrality

By Assistant Editor Samantha Mehlinger

This year, China introduced rules requiring online news outlets to staff editorial personnel trained and approved by the government to ensure that any re-

ports and opinion pieces adhere to the country's communist party line, as announced by the Cyberspace Administration of

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## Long Beach Development Services Director Amy Bodek To Lead County Planning Department

■ BY **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

Amy Bodek, director of Long Beach Development Services (LBDS), is expected to be confirmed as the new head of planning for Los Angeles County by the County Board of Supervisors on December 5. In a call with the Business Journal, Bodek said she will stay on with City of Long Beach through the end of December, and will begin working at the county on January 22.



"I was contacted by the county in July to see if I would be interested in talking to them about the position and what that might entail, so this has been going on for a while," she said. "I wasn't really actively looking for anything. So it was quite nice that they reached out to me."

In her new role, Bodek will oversee the department of regional planning, which has about 200 employees. "It's a similar

size [department] and it's a similar budget," she said.

Bodek said she expects to encounter projects involving a wider variety of land uses than she does in her current position. "I will be dealing with the unincorporated areas of the county. Most cities have their own planning regulations, so we would not be overseeing that," she said. The department manages a planning commission, zoning administrator hearings and an airport land use commission. The latter deals with projects adjacent to Los Angeles International Airport and the Santa Monica, Long Beach and Van Nuys airports, she explained.

When asked how long she has worked for the city, Bodek quickly rattled off that it has been 24 years, six months and 19 days. "I really enjoyed working for the City of Long Beach and the city has been very great to me and my family over the years," she said.

"It has been a joy, honestly. It has been frustrating and joyful," Bodek said of her time working for the city. "And you know, my time here has been really rewarding. What I am most sad about leaving is, you know, I have an incredible team and an incredibly dedicated staff. And I have been really fortunate to be able to work with these folks who really do try to do the best that they can for the city. So that is going to be kind of hard. But on the other hand, I am ready for something new."

Bodek plans to remain a resident of Long

Beach, where she has lived for 25 years. "I'll be taking on a different role as a private citizen. But I frankly still intend to use my voice to advocate for a lot of the great things that the city is doing," she said.

Bodek has begun transitioning some projects and documents to LBDS staff. She estimates that City Manager Pat West will identify an interim department director in a couple of weeks. ■

## Now You Can Text To 9-1-1 Service

Reggie Harrison, director of disaster preparedness and emergency communications for the City of Long Beach, shows off the logo for the new 9-1-1 service: "call if you can – text if you can't" that became operational on December 1. The service provides an alternative for those who find themselves in a situation where it is too dangerous to call 9-1-1, and it is especially important for residents with speech or hearing impairments. Harrison noted that "while this new texting service is available to the public, I want to remind everyone that calling 9-1-1 remains the most effective method to access emergency personnel." Here are guidelines for how to text to 9-1-1: (1) enter the numbers "911" in the text "To" field; (2) the first text message to 9-1-1 should contain the location and brief description of the emergency and the type of help needed; (3) push the "Send" button; (4) be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 text taker; (5) text in simple words. Do not use abbreviations, emojis, or slang; (6) keep text messages brief and concise; and (7) do not text and drive. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson)



## Long Beach Transit Deploys On-Bus Security Officers

In late October, Long Beach Transit (LBT) launched a new pilot program to promote safety on its buses. The Transit Ambassador Program places uniformed security officers specialized in public transit on LBT buses to enhance customer experience and security. They are registered with the state and contracted through Allied Universal Security Services. "The presence of the Transit Ambassadors onboard LBT's buses will aid in enhancing the customer experience as well as improving safety and service quality, LBT CEO Kenneth McDonald said in a prepared statement. "These Transit Ambassadors will be visible to our customers, available to assist and help mitigate problems if they occur." Pictured are Transit Ambassadors Joel Najara and Alfred Johnson riding on an LBT bus. (LBT photo)



## Long Beach City College Honored For Green Efforts

A project by Long Beach City College to increase energy efficiency at its two campuses has resulted in the institution receiving the "Community College Energy Award" at the November 28 Green California Summit. According to a statement from the college: "The project refurbished and upgraded cooling systems . . . resulting in an annual reduction of 713,000 kilowatt hours of electricity and a \$90,000 a year savings in energy costs." Pictured accepting the award for LBCC were Executive Vice President Ann-Marie Gabel, who oversees the college's green efforts, and Medhanie Ephrem, deputy director for facilities, planning and construction. (LBCC photo)



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The Aquarium of the Pacific is the fourth most attended aquarium in the country, with 1.7 million visitors annually. While the number of visitors from other countries has increased in recent years and there is steady attendance from out-of-state visitors, the majority are from Southern California. Thanks to the region's diverse population, the Aquarium of the Pacific sees an equally diverse audience of visitors. It is consistently ranked in surveys of the nation's top aquariums as number one in visitor diversity.

The Aquarium offers new programs, special events, and exhibits each year to engage visitors and connect the public with current ocean and environmental issues. Working in tandem with the Aquarium's staff, the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau has served as a long-standing partner in promoting the Aquarium as a premiere attraction and raising awareness of its new exhibits. The Aquarium also offers a discount combo ticket with the Queen Mary.



Visitor surveys reveal that people come to the Aquarium looking for a fun and entertaining day out with friends and family, and more than 80 percent rate their overall satisfaction as excellent. In 2015 the Aquarium won a Travelers' Choice Award for Aquariums, as awarded by TripAdvisor® travelers, and received the TripAdvisor® Certificate of Excellence in 2017.





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(Continued From Page 1)

China in May. Internet providers must also adhere to these restrictions.

China isn't the only country notorious for policing speech on the Internet. This year, as reported by Slate, Russia blocked access to websites that promoted anti-government protests. North Korea is a more extreme example – most people aren't even allowed access to the Internet there.

Meanwhile, in the country that many look to as the embodiment of freedom, the ball got rolling on what some (including myself) would argue is a slippery slope to censorship: ending net neutrality, as proposed by the Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai.

It's an issue many pundits and bloggers have said Millennials care quite a bit about – and if you took a look at your Twitter and Facebook feeds since Pai made his proposal public on November 21, you can see the evidence of that. My Facebook feed, for example, was flooded with friends urging people to call their elected representatives or sign petitions to support upholding net neutrality rules put in place under the Obama administration. (And, full disclosure, I have signed more than one such petition.) A video by late night TV host John Oliver has also been widely recirculated by those hoping to inform friends about what net neutrality is and why doing away with it is, despite Oliver's comedic delivery, not a laughing matter.

However, as I have come to discover, little research has been done on this generation's stance on net neutrality, despite the

fact that we were the first generation reared on Internet use.

What is net neutrality? Well, as the name suggests, it is a policy that keeps the Internet as a neutral ground. Net neutrality rules prevent internet service providers (ISPs) from blocking any websites. It prevents them from controlling how fast certain websites load. Without net neutrality, an ISP like Charter or Frontier could charge websites a premium to ensure their content loads faster, thereby influencing what content people are more likely to view or can view, and potentially hurting businesses that don't have the funding to pay the premium.

In essence, net neutrality prevents ISPs from controlling what information you access online, or how fast you get that information. It requires ISPs to treat all Internet use the same. But Pai wants to undo that by rolling back 2015 net neutrality rules instituted by the organization he now oversees.

The FCC's press release on the matter is titled, "Chairman Pai Circulates Draft Order to Restore Internet Freedom and Eliminate Heavy-Handed Internet Regulations." Well, that's not misleading at all.

Millennials grew up on the Internet. Our coming of age mirrored the evolution of social media networks as they shifted from blog platforms like Xanga and LiveJournal, to the now irrelevant Myspace, to Facebook, to Twitter, and on and on. We grew up with dial-up and now have high-speed Internet in our back pockets. If you ask us a question, chances are we'll whip out our phones and ask it the same question with a prompt of "Hey Siri" or "Hey Google."

So it's shocking to me that a recent poll

by Morning Consult, a market research firm, and Politico of about 2,000 voters revealed that only a quarter of people aged 18 to 29 strongly support neutrality, with 17% somewhat supporting it. A combined 23% strongly and somewhat oppose it, while 36% don't know or have no opinion.

And the survey question posed was very specific as to the impacts of repealing net neutrality: "As you may know, net neutrality is a set of rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which say Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as Comcast, Time Warner, AT&T, and Verizon, cannot block, throttle or prioritize certain content on the Internet. Knowing this, do you support or oppose net neutrality?"

Maybe the numbers turned out the way they did because the sample size is, in comparison to the entire population of registered voters, pretty small. Or maybe it reflects an ignorance among the general population somewhat by way of the old adage, "You don't know what you have until it's gone."

A college friend of mine who is a mid-level Google employee and resident of San Francisco said things are a little different up in the Bay Area, where net neutrality is hugely important to Millennials.

Although Google could theoretically benefit from the repeal of net neutrality, the company opposes it, according to my friend, who prefers to remain anonymous. "The general consensus is that removing neutrality protections rewards established, legacy companies at the expense of new startups," he said.

He noted that, while he personally owns

shares of such an established company, if he were to, say, leave and create a start-up, the loss of net neutrality would have a discriminatory impact on him. He noted that, while start-ups aren't exclusively staffed by Millennials, they make up a sizable percentage of those firms' employees.

"Losing net neutrality puts [companies] like Google in a taller castle with a bigger moat, and rewards the people who have already made moves at the expense of those who haven't yet," my friend said.

Noting that Microsoft once had a virtual corner on Internet browsers with its Internet Explorer, my Google buddy made an apt observation: "Google never would have become a thing if Microsoft could have deprioritized our traffic."

Imagine that the Politico poll had said the following: "Knowing that ISPs can block the Press-Telegram but not block the Business Journal, or vice versa, and could make one website run slower and one faster based upon which pays more or which they prefer, do you support or oppose net neutrality?"

Insert any other news outlets: CNN versus Fox, for example. Or how about streaming services: Netflix versus Hulu. How about search engines? E-mail service providers? Online retailers?

How would you answer?

Millennials should care about this issue, not just because it affects us as those who are more likely to be starting out in younger companies, like my friend noted. It also challenges the way we have become accustomed to living and communicating: freely, without dictation by private companies or the government. ■

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The Long Beach Planning Commission approved a project to replace the existing Alamitos Beach concession stand along Shoreline Drive. The project includes three buildings, which feature a modern restaurant and cafe, recreational equipment storage, outdoor recreation areas, restroom facilities and improvements to existing parking. (Rendering courtesy of the City of Long Beach)

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

## Development News

### Alamitos Beach Concession Stand

During its special meeting on November 30, the Long Beach Planning Commission approved the replacement of the existing Alamitos Beach concession stand and café located at 780 E. Shoreline Dr. The project entails replacing the current concession stand and café with three buildings, an outdoor recreation area and improvements to on-site surface parking. Building A will house the concession stand and restaurant totaling 4,315 square

feet with a maximum height of 27 feet. The first floor includes a modern restaurant, with an indoor kitchen and restrooms, while the second floor provides outdoor seating. The sale of alcoholic beverages is proposed for the site. Building B will include restrooms and storage space for use by patrons and beach visitors, and totals 817 square feet with a maximum height of 12 feet. Totaling 430 square feet with a maximum height of 12 feet, Building C will store recreational equipment for beachgoers. The play space includes concrete seating, a grassy mound, a scramble wall, a slide and a pedestrian pathway. The recreation area includes outdoor games and ping pong tables.

The new project is required to provide a total of 40 parking spaces based on the square footage of restaurant and other space. The proposal calls for the improvement of existing surface parking from 146 to 155 parking spaces, with electric vehicle stations being moved closer to the drop-off area, and regrading existing disabled-accessible parking spaces. Twenty-five bicycle racks are also to be included in the project. Because the proposed site is in the California Coastal Zone, it falls under the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission, which must also approve the project.

### Long Beach State Sports Clubhouse

The Long Beach State athletics depart-

ment announced plans for a new women's soccer and softball clubhouse facility during a press conference on November 30. Located between George Allen Field and the school's softball complex, the \$3.5 million project includes team lounges and locker rooms. The university matched a \$200,000 donation by Doug and Sandra Leafstedt, while Deputy Athletics Director Cindy Masner made a challenge gift of up to \$50,000.

### Up Next On The Planning Commission Agenda

At this Thursday's, December 7, meeting, the Long Beach Planning Commission is considering addendums to the Midtown Specific Plan Programmatic Environmental Impact Report and General Plan amendments to allow for the construction of two affordable housing developments. A five-story, 48-unit development proposed at 1836-1852 Locust Ave. requires a change from moderate density residential and traditional retail strip commercial designations to a mixed use designation on 11 lots. A five-story, 102-unit development, including 3,938 square feet of commercial space, located at 1795 Long Beach Blvd., requires the same designation changes for 13 lots.

The approval of 205,060-square-foot warehouse space located at 1901 W. Pacific Coast Hwy. within the California State University Research and Technology Center is also on the commission's agenda.

### Marcus & Millichap Multifamily Housing Report

On November 30, Marcus & Millichap released its 4th quarter multifamily market research report, including information on the Long Beach and South Bay area. According to the report, in the 12 months since the end of 3rd quarter 2016, the number of units built was 350, with 156 in Long Beach's Edison luxury apartment building. Currently, more than 1,400 units are under construction in Long Beach, for a total of almost 2,500 units in the South Bay area. The report notes that the vacancy rate for multifamily has increased from a cycle low to 2.9% in Long Beach. The South Bay's vacancy rate rose to 2.8%. Vacancy rates

## Realty Views

### First-Time Homeowner Growth To Pace Market



By **TERRY ROSS**

Amid the lowest rate of homeownership in decades, there is new optimism that the housing market is going to get an infusion of new blood in the next year as the first-time homebuyer segment of the real estate market is predicted to outpace the overall housing market in terms of growth in 2018. During the recent Mortgage Bankers Association Convention in Denver, a survey conducted by Genworth Financial showed that 57% of mortgage executives see the first-time buyer segment as more robust than the overall home-buying market in the coming year. Thirty-one percent believe the first-time market will be the same as over-

all housing, while only 12% think it will slow down. Mortgage executives are crediting more low-down-payment loan products and more lenient underwriting guidelines as two of the keys in expanding this market segment, said the study, as well as better education among consumers about the advantages of homeownership and the newer financing options that are available. "Despite their emergence as today's fastest-growing home buying demographic, first-time home buyers still face many headwinds," Rohit Gupta, president and CEO of Genworth Mortgage Insurance said. "While some of these, such as shortages in affordable inventory, are environment-driven, others can be addressed via improved awareness on the various low-down-payment solutions available in today's market. Ensuring that the right tools from both a product and educational standpoint are in place is imperative to supporting the continued positive trajectory for these buyers." While the younger generations who have typically been associated with first-time home purchases have notoriously been unable or not that motivated to buy because of high student debt levels, low-paying jobs

or other priorities, this study is the first in some time to look at this market demographic as a growth area. Because older, more well-established owners have tended to stay in place for much of the last decade and not sell and move up, builders have wanted to tap the fresh, first-time segment of buyers with homes that meet their needs – including affordability. And there may be more good news – at least nationally – on that front. According to the Zillow real estate site, the rate of appreciation in home values is beginning to flatten. Zillow Chief Economist Svenja Gudell noted that in a normal market the annual rate of growth is around three percent. In May the rate was 7.4% but has decreased each month since and was 6.5% in October. Even in the bottom third price tier where prices are going up faster, the trend is a cooling off of price appreciation. In October, the rate of appreciation in that bottom third of home prices was 8.7% – the lowest appreciation level in two years. A report by First American Financial Corporation notes that the housing market has been under-performing since May – and this is due to inventory shortages – and shortages create upward pressure on prices.

Affordability is down 9.6% from the previous year – a statistic that is not good for first-time buyers. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) just announced that new single-family home sales rose at the highest pace in 10 years as they rose 6.2% in October – this is almost 9% above a year ago. "The October report shows strong sales growth at entry-level price points," Granger MacDonald, NAHB chairman, said. "In markets where builders are able to provide homes for families with different household budgets, they can fulfill a growing demand for housing." It is clear from the statistics that builders are finding opportunities in the first-time market, especially since financing has become easier. And, even though prices continue to climb, this will give them the incentive to build more housing units for the first-time segment that appears to be on the verge of making a comeback in the housing market. (Terry Ross, the broker-owner of TR Properties, will answer any questions about today's real estate market. E-mail questions to Realty Views at [terryross1@cs.com](mailto:terryross1@cs.com) or call 949/457-4922.)



below 3% support rental rate increases, the report states, as South Bay average monthly rents increased 5.6% to \$2,013, while Long Beach “remained affordable” despite a 7.3% increase to \$1,795 per month.

**Long Airport Parking Structure A Reopens**

After closing for renovations in January, Long Beach Airport officials celebrated the reopening of Parking Structure A with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 22. The \$5 million renovation included a new glass elevator, an outdoor stairwell, a dual-lane exit, LED lighting, the addition of 80 Clean Air Vehicle parking spaces and a fresh coat of paint.

**Raintree-Evergreen Sales Price Reductions**

At tomorrow’s, December 5, meeting, the Long Beach City Council is considering the approval of two price reductions for city-owned properties currently in escrow with Raintree-Evergreen LLC. The sale of the property located at 127-135 E. Broadway at The Promenade North was originally approved for \$8.2 million. During the entitlement process, it was determined that a dedicated alley would be required to develop on the site. Also, a portion of The Promenade will remain under city ownership, as it was included in a previously approved project. The initial sale was for 45,280 square feet, now reduced to 37,962, bringing the new sales price to just over \$6.87 million. The sale of the properties located at 125-133 N. Long Beach Blvd and 234-248 E. Broadway were originally approved for \$7.3 million. The entitlement process indicated a

dedicated alley and corner cut were necessary to develop the property, reducing the parcel size by 1,268 square feet. The requested sales price is just under \$7.1 million. According to city documents, the reduced prices are still the highest offered and provide the best value for the city.

**Retail News  
Rite Aid**



The new Rite Aid located at 4525 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. at the Traffic Circle had a soft opening in mid-November. Now serving customers, the store is hosting an official grand opening and ribbon cutting early next year.

**The Pie Hole Coming To Belmont Shore**

On December 9, The Pie Hole is opening two new locations, including a Long Beach store at 5277 E. 2nd St. in Belmont Shore. The local store will feature new Pie Hole menu items including pear cranberry double crust, peppermint chocolate chip and eggnog custard pie with gingersnap crust. The store is giving away free pies and coffee, merchandise and gift cards to the first 60 people in line. The new stores bring the company’s Southern California locations to eight, with

another store in North Carolina and two in Tokyo. All locations open at 8 a.m.

**Residential Property News  
Stepp Commercial**

Stepp Commercial Principal Robert Stepp represented Seaward Road Enterprises LLC in the \$2.65 million sale of the Redondo Avenue Apartments to Teddy 48 LLC through Chris Eto with Stasia America Properties. “Belmont Heights remains one of the best residential and lifestyle submarkets in Long Beach, popular for its independent spirit and artistic culture,” Stepp said. “Its location near Retro Row on 4th Street and its vast array of merchants offer a truly urban lifestyle, and the property’s below-market rents and



non-rent controlled status offers a 20% rental upside over time.” Located at 362 Redondo Ave., the two-story, 1964 building includes seven two-bedroom units and one four-bedroom unit. The property also includes renovated kitchens, hardwood flooring and private garages. ■

**14-Unit Multi-Family Property**  
1142 E. 1st St.  
Long Beach, CA

CBCBlair.com/  
multifamily

All information is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

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# Unfinished Business

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor  
**BRANDON RICHARDSON**, Senior Writer  
and **ANNE ARTLEY**, Staff Writer

With 2017 drawing to a close, there are a number of unresolved or unfinished matters that will impact the City of Long Beach in the future. The Business Journal has compiled a list of updates for several of these issues, including: efforts to put rent control on November’s ballot, the Land Use Element, the port’s proposed Pier B railyard project, the future of Community Medical Center, the East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, recreational marijuana, a police body cam-

era pilot program, an impending Styrofoam ban and the replacement of the Belmont Plaza Pool.

## Rent Control Ballot Initiative

An effort by Housing Long Beach (HLB), a local nonprofit dedicated to supporting affordable housing and renters, to place rent control on the November ballot was still stalled as of December 1. The organization’s executive director, Josh Butler, had originally submitted an intent to circulate a petition for a rent control ballot measure to the city clerk on November 8, but soon after he was informed that the paperwork was incomplete.

Butler must complete and attach language for a proposed rent control ordinance to the city clerk in order for the petition to be forwarded to the city attorney, who then has 14 days to review the language of submitted documents, according to Butler. City Attorney Charles Parkin previously in-

formed the Business Journal that a minimum of 27,000 signatures, or 10% of all registered Long Beach voters, would be necessary for the proposal to make it onto the ballot.

Butler hopes to resubmit the paperwork this week, he told the Business Journal. He has been working with Eviction Defense Network, a Los Angeles law firm that provides HLB with legal clinics, to craft the ordinance language.

“This is a new process for us. We are not electioneers,” Butler said. “I am sure there are going to be a lot of surprises along the way for us, but they think that this is a worthwhile cause, and it’s a fight that we need to win.”

HLB is partnering with Long Beach Gray Panthers, Latinos in Action California and other groups to drum up volunteer support. HLB has not asked any elected officials for support of the initiative and has no plans to, Butler said.

## Land Use Element

The proposed Land Use Element, the city’s outline for its goals and policies regarding future development, is scheduled to be presented to the Long Beach Planning Commission during its December 11 meeting. The maps were revised earlier this month due to controversy regarding building heights. If the commission approves the revised plan and maps, the issue would next go to the city council for discussion and approval. No date has been set before the council.

## Pier B Railyard Project

Port of Long Beach Interim Deputy Executive Director Duane Kenagy told the Business Journal that he expects the final environmental impact report (EIR) for a Pier B railyard expansion project to go to the board of harbor commissioners for a vote sometime in January. The draft EIR for the project was released in December of last year. The document included numerous options to expand rail infrastructure at Pier B. Staff’s recommendation was to choose the largest project scope, which would build out rail as far north as 12th Street in Westside Long Beach. The project would also eliminate ramps to the Shoemaker Bridge, which connects the Westside to Downtown Long Beach. Earlier this year, the Business Journal interviewed several Westside business owners and executives who were concerned about the project putting them out of business, as well as potential health risks to employees. Port executives see the project as a way to boost efficiency and take trucks off the road, which they believe could improve air quality.

## Hotels Respond To Council Safety Resolution

The Long Beach Hospitality Alliance has taken further measures to ensure the protection of employees in area hotels after the city council passed a resolution supporting the safety of hospitality workers in October. The hospitality alliance is a nonprofit trade organization representing the local hotel and restaurant industry and operating under the auspices of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce.

In the past month, the alliance formed a safety steering committee and met with Robert Luna, the city’s chief of police. The organization is also working with the Women’s Shelter of Long Beach to determine which educational programs can provide hotel employees with updated safety training. Pam Ryan, Alliance chair and founding member, outlined the recent efforts of the alliance in an e-mail to the Business Journal.

“The alliance always has placed a priority on safety in our workplaces. As the city and others recently added their focus on this issue, the alliance decided to deepen our engagement,” Ryan, who is also the general manager of the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel, stated.

Ryan emphasized that the alliance was already collaborating with nonprofit organizations and city officials to educate staff about issues such as human trafficking, sexual harassment, CPR training and workplace violence.

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## Police Body Cameras

A year-long pilot program in which 40 patrol officers and supervisors in the Long Beach Police Department's West Patrol Division were equipped with body cameras concluded last month. According to a department public information officer, the results of the program are under review with details anticipated to be presented to the city council in early 2018. No information on the program will be released prior to the council presentation, at which point future use will be determined. Of the 10 comparable departments used during Long Beach police salary discussions, six require officers to wear body cameras, including Anaheim, Huntington Beach, Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Santa Ana police departments and the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

## Recreational Marijuana

The Long Beach City Council is expected to vote on an emergency ordinance placing a temporary ban on recreational marijuana business licenses prior to January 1 as part of its November 14 decision to allow licenses in the city. The ordinance legalizing the sale of recreational marijuana is expected to be brought to council by June 2018. The emergency ordinance is a measure to avoid legal action against the city, as recreational marijuana becomes legal in the State of California as of January 1, with individual city's having the option to legalize it or not. Vice Mayor Rex Richardson requested language to be included related to jobs, labor peace and equity. City staff's

recommendations include maintaining a maximum of 32 dispensaries, approved as part of Measure MM by Long Beach voters in November 2016.

## Belmont Pool

Though the \$103 million Belmont pool complex proposal was approved by the Long Beach Planning Commission in March and four appeals against the project were denied by the city council in May, the project still requires the approval of the California Coastal Commission. According to a commission spokesperson, the City of Long Beach is expected to submit the proposal to the commission for their consideration sometime in 2018. The project includes two Olympic-sized pools, a diving well, recreational and therapy pools and two spas.

## Styrofoam Ban

The controversial ordinance banning the use of certain plastics in Long Beach, including expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), approved by the city council is currently being drafted by city staff, including the Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau (ESB). According to the ESB, there is no update on the ordinance, as it is not to be presented to the city council until sometime in 2018. The ban is to be implemented in phases, with city-owned properties and restaurants with 101 or more seats having to comply within nine months of the ordinance's passage, and smaller restaurants complying within 18 months. The council re-

quested additional study on the impacts of similar bans on small businesses, which could alter the ordinance and its timeline.

## Uncertain Future For Community Medical Center Long Beach

MemorialCare Health Center announced in November that Community Medical Center Long Beach, a hospital it operates near the traffic circle, will no longer be able to provide acute care services by June 2019 due to noncompliance with state seismic codes. The hospital sits on a larger, more active fault than previously thought, and hospital executives do not believe continued medical operations at the facility would be feasible, from a business perspective, without acute care services.

City staff provided an update on the issue to the Long Beach City Council on November 14. The city owns the property and leases it to MemorialCare at a rental rate of \$1 per year. A PowerPoint presentation outlined impacts to the city, including longer transport times for emergent patients by emergency personnel.

Staff outlined a plan to conduct a peer review of the study MemorialCare commissioned, community outreach and a city council study session on the future of the site by May 2018. Staff recommended that a request for proposals for future use and leasing of the site be issued in June, with a tentative council vote slated for October 2018.

## Breakwater Study

On November 21, City Manager Pat West sent a memo to the mayor and city council detailing the progress of the East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. Commonly known as the "breakwater study," the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been working to identify ways to reconfigure the breakwater to improve the ecosystem of the bay. Four potential options have been identified, and cost estimates have been completed, according to the memo. Various steps, including modeling to evaluate effects on habitats, and conducting cost effectiveness and cost analysis plans, must still be undertaken. A draft feasibility report of each potential model must also be completed before a preferred plan is selected. This process was extended from September 2017 to May 2018. Federal funding of \$275,000 was secured for the continuation of the study process, with \$194,00 budgeted for fiscal year 2018.

## 2nd & PCH

The site of the former SeaPort Marina Hotel is all but unrecognizable as demolition crews remove the last remnants of debris from the hotel. The prominent corner in southeast Long Beach is set to become the site of a 245,000-square-foot retail center named 2nd & PCH after the intersection at which it is located. Center-Cal Properties LLC, which is developing the project, expects a formal groundbreaking ceremony in January, with the goal of opening by summer of 2019. ■



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## Port Projects

(Continued From Page 1)

sioners approved the first contract for the final phase of the Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project. “The construction contract itself was worth about \$146 million, and it is to complete the wharf,” Gamette said. “The full length of the Middle Harbor terminal wharf will be 4,200 feet when done.” Construction on this project should begin in February, he estimated.

“Phase 3 itself primarily consists of fin-

ishing the wharf, finishing the container yard, finishing the rail yard and building an administration building for our tenant,” Gamette said. Lee Peterson, the port’s media relations manager, noted that the administration building will be built to LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design) Gold standards. Completion of the project is slated for December 2020.

This summer, the board of harbor commissioners approved a budget adjustment for the project, bringing the overall

budget to \$1.439 billion up from \$1.314 billion, according to Baldwin.

“We are confident that we will be able to finish within that budget. We will be giving a comprehensive report to our board on that subject on December 11,” Gamette said.

Gamette pointed out that because much of the new, automated equipment already installed and slated for installation within Middle Harbor is electrified, it will advance the port’s environmental efforts. “It’s a big deal for us from the standpoint of sustainability and being green,” he said. The

terminal will also aid the port in providing more efficient service, he noted. “That’s a big deal for the Port of Long Beach. We need to remain competitive.”

Baldwin added, “I have been working on this project for at least the past 10 years and . . . the team has taken a lot of pride in the work we have done to date. It has just been an honor to be a part of this program where we have implemented these new technologies that are enabling the terminal to be as efficient as possible to reduce our emissions.”

The Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project has reached a milestone in the past month, with its two main towers having become the highest structures in the City of Long Beach, according to Interim Deputy Executive Director Duane Kenagy. Today, December 5, the port plans to celebrate the “topping out” of the towers at the height of 515 feet.

“This is the first major highway cable-stayed bridge in California,” Kenagy said. “We’re doing it in cooperation with Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration. And because it is a first, and because it is what in the industry we call a ‘signature bridge,’ it obviously has a lot of challenges,” he continued. “And we have been able to address all those. And we are making great progress.”

Construction crews are using two movable scaffolding systems weighing three million pounds each to build the westbound and eastbound approaches to the bridge. The westbound approach should be completed within a week or two, Kenagy said. The eastbound approach is about 40% complete.

The majority of support piles and bridge columns are complete, with the exception of those that need to be built where the existing Gerald Desmond Bridge currently stands, Kenagy said.

“We are getting ready to start constructing the first part of the main span of the bridge. Engineers call it the ‘pier table,’” Kenagy said. “It is the first segment of the main span bridge, which is a steel frame with precast, lightweight concrete panels. We started casting those panels a couple of months ago.” All the steel used for the bridge project is from the United States, he noted.

The new bridge’s grade will be less steep than the existing bridge, making it easier to traverse for truckers, Kenagy noted. “Probably one of the most important features of the bridge is that it will have safety shoulders on both sides of the travel ways. That’s something that you don’t have on the existing bridge,” he said. The bridge will feature three lanes in each direction, as well as a bike path.

The last budget adjustment for the bridge project was in 2015, bringing the total amount to \$1.467 billion. “We are still within that budget,” Kenagy noted.

“Right now, the contractor’s latest forecast has substantial completion of the bridge in December of 2019,” Kenagy said. Originally, the port intended to open the westbound traffic lanes on the bridge as early as spring 2019, but the potential to open both sides at once by using an alternative detour route to accommodate construction is now under consideration, Kenagy explained. “If the alternative detour plan proves feasible, then that would allow us to pull five or six months out of the construction, which is of course good for everybody.” ■

The Port of Long Beach is celebrating the “topping out” of the two main towers for the bridge that will eventually replace the adjacent Gerald Desmond Bridge. The towers, at 515 feet, are the highest structures in the city. (Photograph provided by the Port of Long Beach)





# Long Beach City Council Preview

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
Staff Writer

The following items are up for discussion at tonight's, December 5, meeting of the Long Beach City Council.

**Council Voting On Continuing Two Business Improvement District Assessments** – The council will vote to continue the assessments for the East Anaheim Street Parking and Business Improvement Area and the Magnolia Industrial Group Property and Business Improvement District. The proposal calls for a one-year extension for each district.

**Representatives Consider Cancelling January 2 Meeting** – Councilmembers decide whether to cancel the meeting on January 2, 2018, in honor of the new year holiday and add an additional meeting on January 30.

**Council To Receive And Consider Commission Appointments** – The council may approve nominations to non-charter commissions. These include: airport advisory, cultural heritage and economic development. The council will also consider appointments to the Homeless Services Advisory Committee and the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Board.

**City May Lease Property For Business Development Purposes** – Representatives can allow the city manager to execute the lease of a city-owned property at 309 Pine Ave. to the Long Beach Community College District and BlankSpaces, LLC, a coworking space. Coworking is a type of open space office environment usually shared by those not employed by the same agency. The property will also be used for business development consulting.

**Proposed Agreement To Fund Upgrades To Convention Center** – The city manager may be permitted to enter into an agreement with SMG, a Pennsylvania-based venue management group, to complete various construction projects at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center. The investments total around \$1,400,000. Some of them include elevator and escalator improvements, storm drain pipe repairs and the upgrade of the marquee sign in the Terrace Plaza.

**City May Purchase New Fire Pumps** – Councilmembers will vote to approve a contract with Derotic Emergency Equipment to purchase six fire pumps with their accompanying equipment, for a maximum amount of \$4,806,865.

**Proposed Agreement Provides Immunization Program Funding** – Representatives may authorize an agreement to receive \$1,170,815 from the state's department of health services for services to promote and provide the use of vaccines from the period of July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2022.

**Recommended Resolution To Adjust Rates For Water Services** – The city council will vote to approve a resolution of the City of Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners to set the rates for city water and sewer services. The charges to residents must be reduced due to the recent settlement reached in *Lejins vs. City of Long Beach*. ■

## Port Of Long Beach Awards \$3 Million In Health Grants

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

In late November, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners approved \$3 million in community grants to fund local health care efforts benefiting people who are more likely to be affected by respiratory and cardiopulmonary issues.

The funding comes from the port's Community Grants Program, which the board voted to expand in 2016. The pro-

gram allocates \$65 million, to be spent over the next 10 to 15 years, toward community efforts that mitigate the impacts of the port's operations.

"The port considers itself a part of this community, and we listen to our neighbors," Harbor Commission Vice President Tracy Egoscue said in a prepared statement. "This kind of targeted help to our neighbors was exactly what we envisioned when we started the Community Grants Program. We're honored to help fund these projects to improve community health."

The grants awarded are as follows:

- \$970,000 for Dignity Health St. Mary Medical Center's Respiratory Rescue Program which provides mobile health screenings, education and home visits.
- \$920,000 for The Children's

Clinic's Breathe Better Together program, which provides home medical visits for those in need of asthma and cardiopulmonary care.

- \$600,000 for MemorialCare Medical Center Foundation's Community Health Worker Asthma Intervention Program.

- \$360,000 for the city health department's Cambodian Community Asthma Management Program

- \$150,000 for the California Aquatic Therapy and Wellness Center's Respiratory Health Improvement Program.

In October, the board also awarded \$743,631 for nine air filtration projects in Long Beach, Compton and Paramount, bringing total grant awards to about \$3.7 million for 2017. For more information about the Community Grants Program, visit [www.polb.com/grants](http://www.polb.com/grants). ■

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# Campaign To Employ More Of City's Disabled Residents

(Continued From Page 1)

ment of people with disabilities, Tapia is providing much-needed opportunity. Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, RespectAbility's president, said that 34% of individuals with disabilities in the U.S. are employed. The number is even lower in Long Beach. According to a RespectAbility study, which draws on data from the U.S. Census, only 21% of residents with disabilities are employed.

"Business owners are reluctant to hire people with disabilities because they think it'll be costly or time-consuming or distracting," Philip Kahn-Pauli, RespectAbility's policy and practices director, said. "But the process of integrating a person with a disability into your workforce can be straightforward and cost very little money."

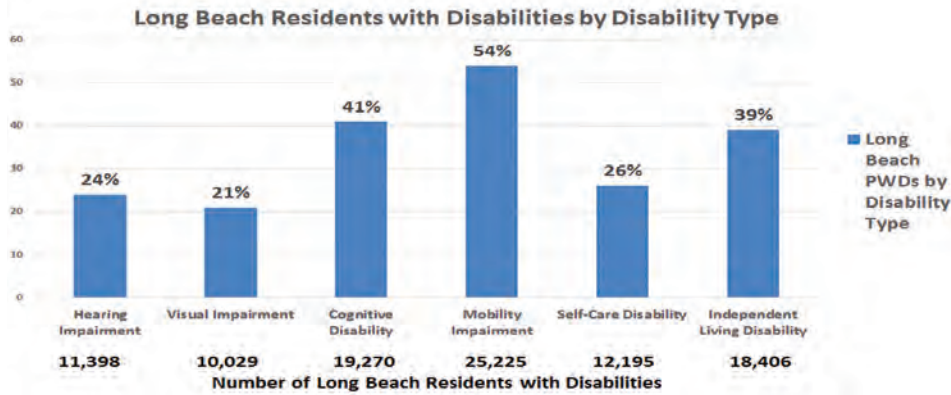
The disproportionate number of unemployed individuals with a disability relative to the total disabled population in Long Beach spurred the RespectAbility team to implement a project in the city, according to Kahn-Pauli. The organization found that 46,000, or roughly 10%, of the population in Long Beach is impaired. This falls below the national average of approximately 20%, according to statistics from the U.S. Census. But, despite their lower representation, more people with disabilities in Long Beach are unemployed compared to the national average.

The organization obtained its data through the American Community Survey, a yearly analysis conducted under the U.S. Census Bureau. It measures demographic information from the same areas evaluated by the census every 10 years. The Long Beach Health Department does not keep its own record of individuals with disabilities but references figures from the census.

Through a \$25,000 grant from the Knight Foundation, which supports the city's efforts to increase economic growth, RespectAbility is taking steps to ensure the workforce in Long Beach is more accessible to individuals with disabilities. According to Kahn-Pauli, the organization defines a disability as any impairment that impacts someone from entering the workforce and living independently.



Daniel Tapia, owner, 4th & Olive Bistro and Wine Bar. (Business Journal photograph)



About 46,000 Long Beach residents have one or more disabilities. Source: Chart provided by RespectAbility.

"We look at physical and mental disabilities," Kahn-Pauli explained. "A disability can include mobility impairment and limb loss, but we also look at mental health. About half of the population with a disability has a non-visible one. This covers autism, as well as intellectual and learning disabilities."

RespectAbility broke down disabilities in Long Beach into categories: 24% of residents are affected by a hearing impairment, 21% by a visual impairment, 41% by a cognitive disability and 54% by a mobility impairment. In addition, 26% of the local population has a condition that makes it difficult to perform self-care tasks, such as bathing, dressing and eating, and 39% are impacted by a disability that prevents them from living independently. This includes the capacity to perform tasks such as preparing meals, using the phone and conducting housework, according to the U.S. Census definition. Many people have more than one disability, which places them in multiple categories, Kahn-Pauli said. This is why the percentages add up to more than 100%.

The RespectAbility team is taking a systematic approach to provide support for disabilities. After the organization received the grant in May, staff began the process of conducting research and forming local partnerships to improve early intervention and diagnosis. Some of the partner organizations include Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College, AbilityFirst - Long Beach Center, Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network, as well as the mayor's office. AbilityFirst is a California-based nonprofit that manages programs promoting progress in the disabled community. Pacific Gateway is a public agency serving Long Beach, Signal Hill and the area surrounding Los Angeles Harbor. It connects adults and youth to job opportunities, and employers to skilled workers.

"Our effort has been to work with local partners to identify key barriers and try to develop new strategies to overcome them," Kahn-Pauli said. "Some of them match up with national barriers in terms of stigma and lack of understanding of disabilities. Some are physical like public transit access and getting in and out of buildings. Wheelchair users need other mobility aids to enter the workforce."

Tapia said he has found that people with a disability are stereotyped as "unhip" and "uncool." Or that sometimes, able-bodied people with helpful intentions take those intentions too far, which in Tapia's perspective is almost as damaging.

"Some people think we need anyone's help to do anything," he said. "My body is already limiting my choices, I don't need anyone else

adding to that. I push my employees as hard as I would somebody with an able body. My job is not to baby them, my job is to open doors for them and let them do with [an opportunity] what they can."

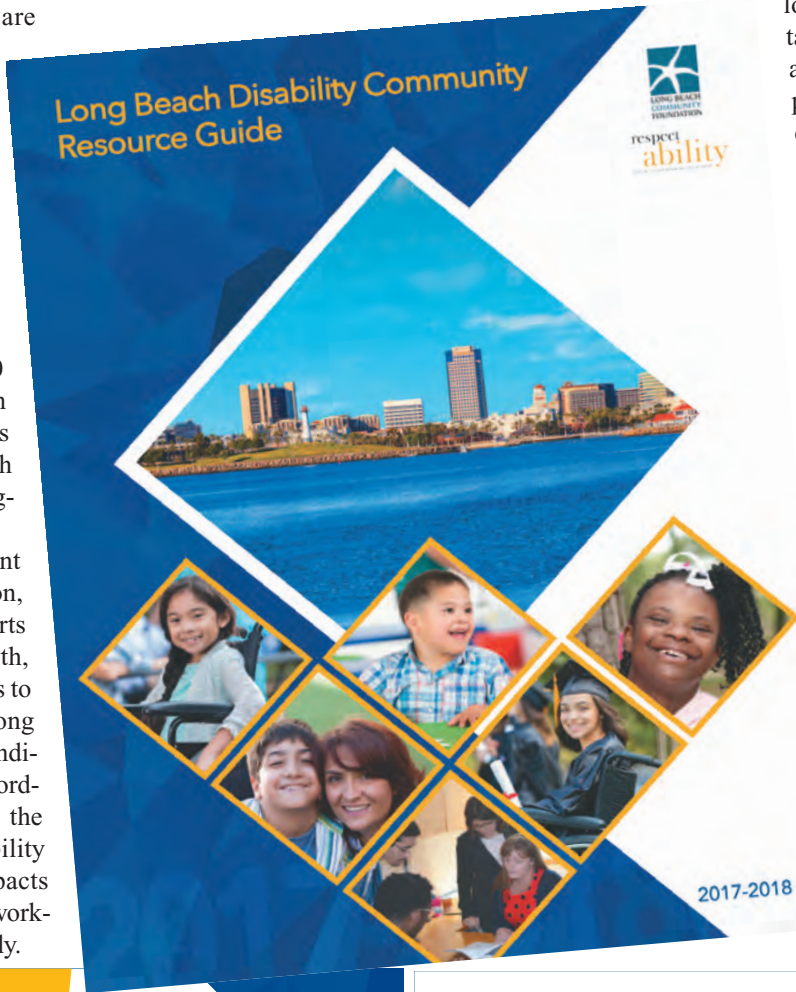
RespectAbility featured Tapia's restaurant in its #RespectTheAbility campaign, which highlights companies that employ or are run by people with disabilities. When conducting interviews with Long Beach community members about desired resources, Kahn-Pauli found that many expressed a need for more role models in the disabled community.

"Something we heard from both the provider side and from self-advocates is that there's a great need for mentorship opportunities," he said. "The experience of having a disability can be very isolating. You might not have many role models to look up to."

To address the "hunger" Kahn-Pauli found among parents of disabled children for more information, RespectAbility released a comprehensive catalogue of resources. These in-

(Please Continue To Top Of Next Page)

From organizations serving youth to workforce development programs to community health providers, the Long Beach Disability Community Resource Guide can help to connect individuals to vital resources in the Long Beach area and beyond.



## Youth Support Organizations

### Bayfront Youth and Services

(562) 595-8111  
bayfrontys.org  
324 E. 37th St., Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** Bayfront Youth and Services provides a comprehensive support system that promotes safe and nurturing environments for mental health treatment services for children, adolescents and caregivers.

**Keywords:** Youth, Mental Health

### Boy Scouts of America, Long Beach Area Council

(562) 427-0911  
longbeachbsa.org  
401 E. 37th St., Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** Boy Scouts of America prepares young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

**Keywords:** Youth, Mentoring

### Boys & Girls Clubs of Long Beach

(562) 595-5945  
bgclbl.org  
3711 Long Beach Blvd., Suite 1017, Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** The Clubs provide a safe, welcoming, positive environment where kids and teens have fun and build supportive relationships with peers and caring adults.

**Keywords:** Youth, Kids, Teens, Peers, Mentoring

### Junior Blind of America

(323) 290-6295  
juniorblind.org  
5300 Angeles Vista Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90043

**Mission:** The mission of Junior Blind is to ensure that children, youth and adults facing challenges always have a place to turn. Through two service divisions, Junior Blind serves a broad array of children, adults and families throughout California. Through one division, they serve children, youth and adults with visual impairments and multiple disabilities. Through the other, they assist children in the child welfare system, with a particular specialty in service to medically fragile children and those with physical, cognitive, mental health and other special needs.

**Keywords:** Children, Youth, Adults, Mentoring, Community, Early Intervention Services

### LBCC Shared Science - STEM Project to Increase Science Majors

(562) 938-4111  
lbcc.edu/studentequity  
1515 Hughes Way Long Beach, CA 90810

**Mission:** LBCC Shared Services provides training to LBCC Equity STEM majors that have had physics, chemistry and engineering course experience become STEM interns to K-12 students in an afterschool STEM program developed by the LBCC partner, "Shared Science" a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit.

**Keywords:** College, High School, Mentoring, STEM

### LBCC Specialized Summer Bridge Disabled Students Programs and Services

(562) 938-4111  
lbcc.edu/event/summerbridge-program  
4901 East Carson St., Long Beach, CA 90808

**Mission:** This program at Long Beach City College helps transition high school students with disabilities to college life.

**Keywords:** High School, Transition, College, University

### Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD)

(562) 997-8257  
lbUSD.k12.ca.us  
5201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, CA 90803

**Mission:** LBUSD supports the personal and intellectual success of every student, every day. LBUSD, which educates 75,000 students across 84 schools, is the L.A. County's second-largest school district.

**Keywords:** Students, Youth

### Long Beach Blast

(562) 437-7766  
lbbast.org  
820 Long Beach Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90813

**Mission:** The mission of Long Beach Blast is to improve success for at-risk students through collaboration and innovative approaches to mentoring and learning.

**Keywords:** Students, At-risk, Mentoring

### Long Beach Community Action Partnership

(562) 216-4600  
lbcap.org  
117 W Victoria St, Long Beach, CA 90805

**Mission:** This partnership provides dynamic pathways to self-sustainability for low income individuals and families through advocacy, education and energy assistance.

**Keywords:** Low-income, Advocacy, Education, Families, Mentoring, Youth, Leadership

### Long Beach Early Childhood Education Committee

lbccc.org  
Miller Family Health Education Center:  
3820 Cherry Ave, Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** The committee ensures that all children in Long Beach grow up healthy, safe and educated by increasing accessibility to affordable early childhood education services and increasing public awareness of future impact of early childhood education.

**Keywords:** Education, Youth, Advocacy, Early Intervention

### Long Beach Youth Opportunity

(562) 570-4700  
pacificgateway.org/youth  
3447 Atlantic Ave # 3, Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** Youth Development, career advising, tutoring, internship programs for 14-24-year-olds

**Keywords:** Youth, Career, Tutoring, Internship

### The Junior League of Long Beach, Inc.

(562) 989-6400  
jllb.org  
3515 Linden Ave., Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** The Junior League creates youth (5th-8th grade) programs for leadership skills, communication skills training, conflict management strategies, decision making, goal setting, life skills, and healthy lifestyle choices.

**Keywords:** Youth, Leadership, Community, Mentoring

### Vondel & Associates LLC (Life Transitioning for the Blind - Schools & Educational Services)

(562) 480-3871  
buzzfile.com/business/Life-TransitioningForBlind-562-480-3871  
2254 Gaviota Ave., #7, Signal Hill, CA 90755

**Mission:** This organization primarily operates in the educational services industry for people who are blind or visually-impaired.

**Keywords:** Blind, Education

### YMCA OF GREATER LONG BEACH

(562) 279-1700  
lbymca.org  
3605 Long Beach Blvd #210, Long Beach, CA 90807

**Mission:** The mission is to put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Early Intervention, Community, Mentoring





clude family support organizations, employment services for adults, and college support organizations. The guide is also available in Spanish, which addresses a necessity unique to Long Beach, according to Kahn-Pauli.

“The majority of students with disabilities in Long Beach Unified [School District] are Latino,” he said. “This brings up issues like the need for early diagnosis and intervention as well as cultural conceptions of disabilities.” Kahn-Pauli clarified that RespectAbility does not identify someone speaking English as a second language as disabled. But, he said, a language barrier can pose a significant challenge for a parent in determining whether or not a child has a disability.

According to Kahn-Pauli, the organization’s key focus areas for improvement in Long Beach are employer engagement, the transition from school to work, and increasing early intervention and diagnosis from kindergarten through 12th grade. He noted that many students who drop out of school do so because they have an undiagnosed disability.

“This is the first segment of what we’d like to be a long-term project,” he said. “We want to see disabled students at Cal State Long Beach and Long Beach City College find pathways to internships and we want to develop a yearly parent resource fair. We’d also like to identify local partners who will take over the reins for us.” ■

## Planning Commission Recommends Approval Of Restoration, Oil Well Land Development Plan

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
 Staff Writer

The City of Long Beach Planning Commission voted November 30 to recommend that the city council to approve an environmental impact report for the Los Cerritos Oil Consolidation and Wetlands Restoration Project.

The proposal allows for the restoration of land currently used as an oil field owned

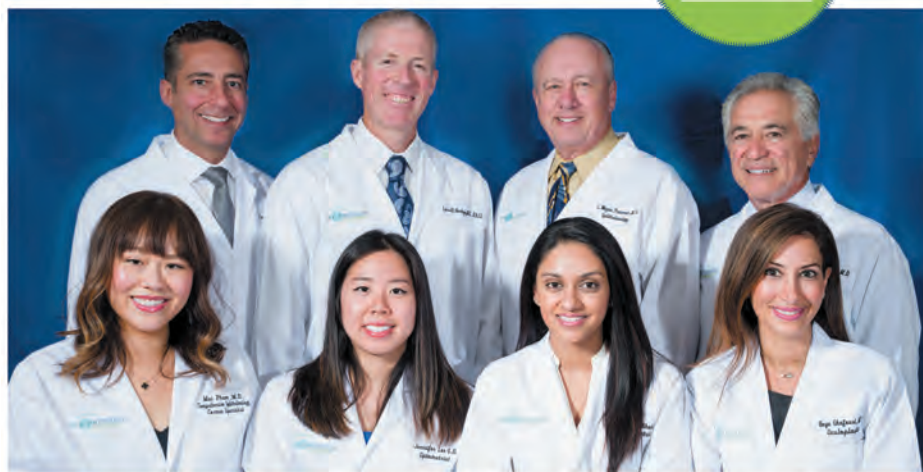
by Synergy Oil & Gas. The company will move operations onto city land and a site currently used as a pumpkin patch and Christmas tree lot. The properties in question are located near 2nd Street and East Pacific Coast Highway.

Development Services Director Amy Bodek said, “There were folks who were against the project related to fracking issues and wetlands issues. But Synergy owns the property, and they own the mineral rights. And they have the absolute right to develop the oil rights. And we do feel very confident that the plan is a really good way to minimize oil operations over the long term and then get the wetlands restored.”

A date for the item to be heard before the city council has not been set. ■

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## Best Year Ever – Again!

(Continued From Page 1)

year, breaking last year's tourism record of 6.8 million people, according to the CVB. Overnight visitors to the city had an estimated economic impact of \$300 million. These visitors generated \$26.4 million in transient occupancy tax (also called the hotel bed tax) that directly benefited the city's General Fund – another record set.

Multiple hotel managers in downtown told the Business Journal that they attributed strong occupancy rates and revenues to a steady year of conventions and events held at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. Conventions

Through early November, 297 conventions and meetings booked by the CVB were held in Long Beach. These conventions and meetings generated 238,197 overnight stays in hotels, an increase of 18% from 2016, according to the CVB.

More than 507,400 people attended conventions and meetings in Long Beach this year, based on CVB estimates. These events alone generated \$4.9 million in transient occupancy tax revenue.

One of the largest of these events was Twitchcon, a national online gaming convention that brought 40,000 attendees to the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center in November. ComplexCon, a lifestyle and culture festival and convention dreamed up by musician Pharrell Williams, also took place at the center in November, returning for a second year and generating national media buzz.

It's thanks to the upgrades made to the center over the last four years that Long Beach has been attracting such large-scale, buzzworthy events, according to CVB President and CEO Steve Goodling and convention center General Manager Charlie Beirne.

"What's happening is we're hitting this stride," Goodling said. "When you have special event spaces, you have to know how to execute them. The staff here has become very proficient at executing special events."

The Pacific Room at the Long Beach Arena, a venue with theatrical rigging and lighting that enables reconfiguration of the space to accommodate everything from banquets to concerts, has been one of the key venues that has helped the CVB bring in new business. The Pacific Room upgrades debuted in 2013 and, since then, it has been responsible for attracting 54 conventions and more than \$158 million in estimated economic impact, according to CVB figures.

This year, a new special events venue debuted: The Cove, an outdoor street party space equipped with ready-to-go theatrical lighting, chandeliers and a full array of contemporary furniture and accents.

These venues have left an impression on convention-goers, according to Goodling and Beirne. For example, 2U, an education technology company that partners with universities for online learning, held its convention here this year, and the experience left an impression on attendees. "They were blown away by the destination," Goodling said. "The attendees had such a great time [that] they asked the planner if they could come back. It was the first time in her career

The staff of the Long Beach Area Conventions & Visitors Bureau are dedicated to promoting Long Beach as a tourism and conventions destination. The CVB's efforts helped make this the best year yet for tourism in Long Beach. The staff is pictured at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center. Front row, from left: Gregg Hanniford, senior vice president (VP) sales/services; Caribe Hourigan, national sales director; Anne Renken, national sales director; Michael Mitchell, visitor services manager; Jan Miller, membership director; Bob Maguglin, director of public relations; Gary Watters, sales coordinator; Barbi Mason-Ajemian, VP, convention services; Jamie Weeks, digital communications manager; Jennifer Kohatsu, national sales director; Loren Simpson, director of digital communications; and Jeff Forney, VP of marketing and membership. Pictured in the back row, from left: Claudette Baldemor, membership director; Heather Gonzalez, national sales director; Yvonne Riner, VP sales; Marykay Lui, national sales director; Erica Morris, digital communications manager; Karen Thomas, executive assistant; Lilian Olguin, sales coordinator; Steve Goodling, president and CEO; Iris Himert, VP special projects; Lori Elgayar, convention services manager; Susan Valen, national sales director; Jenni Pearl, senior convention services manager; Pauline Taylor, sales coordinator; Kathy Ford, sales coordinator; and Julie Taber, senior visitor information specialist. (Photograph provided by the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau)



she has ever had staff asking to return to the same destination.”

Stacey Chattam, senior director of strategic events for 2U, said that the company’s June convention in Long Beach, which brought in 1,250 attendees, exceeded expectations. The fast-growing tech company moved its annual event from Disneyworld to Long Beach. “Long Beach is set up to give a sense of safety and it’s walkable from all the hotels. The convention center staff and the CVB staff really wanted the business and worked for it and helped us, and made it really just a great meeting,” she said.

Staff from the CVB and convention center, as well as the city government, helped 2U pull off a successful event. “The CVB and Steve [Goodling] and the mayor even got involved in getting us the permits so we could actually have a party on the beach,” Chattam said. The company is already in talks to hold its convention in Long Beach again, she noted.

The CVB and convention center management have also developed a reputation for service. Beirne noted that upgrades were made to the center to accommodate the Internet bandwidth required for Twitchcon to be a success. “We went from one gigabyte to 10,” Beirne said of the Internet speed, noting that fiber was installed.

Beirne also pointed out that the CVB’s sales missions to cities throughout the country have helped bring in new business. The mayor, hotel managers and others key to the local hospitality and tourism industry attend these sales missions, while other destinations typically send only sales staff, Beirne noted.

This year, two national publications recognized Long Beach as a conventions destination, including New York-based Successful Meetings magazine, which honored Goodling as a “trailblazer” in the industry. Goodling said the honor was really a reflection of the city as a whole. Similarly, meetings publication BizBash inducted Goodling into its hall of fame this year, which he also said was due to progress in the city overall.

“For us to break through the national level of awareness for our city, that to me was a huge [deal]. Because it’s not easy to earn recognition of the press, especially in our industry,” Goodling said. “Here we are, the 35th largest city in the United States, and we’re getting national recognition which is usually bestowed upon cities like New York City, San Francisco [and] L.A.”

Conventions and meetings on the books for 2018 aren’t as strong in number as this year, but Goodling and Beirne expect to be able to fill in gaps with short-term business – meetings and events that are scheduled less than a year in advance.

“Next year is a little lighter. However, we have historically gone through that cycle,” Goodling said. “And what it means is we just have to find more short-term convention center business.”

## Hotels

Overall, Long Beach hotels experienced gains in occupancy and revenue this year, according to Bruce Baltin, managing director of CBRE Hotels, a global

(Please Continue To Next Page)

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## Best Year Ever – Again!

(Continued From Page 15)

firm that provides analyses and forecasts of hotel markets.

"It's a very strong market," Baltin said of Long Beach. "Occupancy in 2017 ended the year around 79%, which is very, very strong." The occupancy level of Long Beach hotels increased by 1.4% compared to last year, he noted. Average daily room rates charged for overnight stays increased by about 3.4%.

Baltin attributed the growth to travelers visiting for conventions, business and leisure. "Other cities are experiencing it as well, but Long Beach is doing very well compared to those cities," he said of the industry's growth. Asked what he would attribute Long Beach's success to, he replied, "The strength of the city and the marketing of the [Long Beach Area] CVB."

Pamela Ryan, chair of the Long Beach Hospitality Alliance and general manager of the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel, agreed that 2017 has been a good year for the overall hotel industry, as well as for her hotel. "The convention center has been ahead of pace, which has helped the city and certainly this hotel as one of the larger hotels in the downtown area," she said. "We have definitely benefited from the conventions coming into the center and staying in our buildings."

In addition to citywide convention business, Ryan said the Renaissance relies upon in-house group bookings by corporate clientele as well as by airline

staff. Group bookings are key to the hotel because they typically generate catering business, she explained. Ryan said that the Renaissance experienced an increase in revenue per available room this year.

Greg Keebler, general manager of the Hilton Long Beach, noted that, while the convention industry fared well this year, his hotel does not benefit as much as others in the downtown area because it is the furthest from the convention center. "Overall for 2017 we have had a good year," he said. "Definitely we have seen slowing in some segments, but overall this year we'll end up about as projected."

Group bookings are "softening up" not only in Long Beach but also nationwide, according to Keebler. "We're all struggling to get to our group numbers for 2018, '19 and '20, as we do see the economy starting to crest," he said. "Usually group [business] is the first indicator of that crest because companies are not booking quite as far out. There is a lot more short-term business," he explained.

Kristi Allen, manager of the Hotel Maya and the vice president of hotel operations for Ensemble Hotel Partners, said that 2017 was the best year for the Maya. "On the hotel side, we had our strongest year yet in average [room] rates and revenues. Yet [we] are bracing for the market to flatten out in 2018 as most experts predict in the Long Beach/L.A. market," she said. She noted that the Maya's Latin brunch series at its restaurant, Fuego, helped bring in additional visitors to the hotel this year.

"Highlights of the year of course in-

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## Welcome To Long Beach

A dual brand Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites hotel by Hilton opened at Douglas Park on November 30. The 241-room hotel features both traditional hotel rooms and extended stay suites with kitchens, as well as 1,500 square feet of meeting space, a gym and other amenities according to General Manager Jef Lawrence. Above, executive staff took time from preparing for the dual-brand hotel's opening on November 30 to pose for the Business Journal. From left, are: Jef Lawrence, general manager; Cristina Riverol, regional director of operations; Irma Escobar, director of housekeeping; Jenifer Jones, sales manager; Angel Trubee, director of sales; Jane Jazayrli, sales manager; Mark Adams, director of engineering; Joe Gargano, food and beverage manager; Shella Ebalobor, finance manager; Colter Ferguson, front office manager; and R.J. Escobedo, hotel manager. (Staff photograph by the Business Journal's Brandon Richardson and exterior photograph by the Business Journal's Pat Flynn)



clude all of the continued growth and development in Long Beach and the hope that these new residential projects and mixed-use developments eventually bring in additional demand for hotels in Long Beach," Allen added.

The Holiday Inn Long Beach Airport experienced a 7% decrease in occupancy this year, according to General Manager Mooyon Kim. He attributed the dip to receiving fewer bookings from conventions and corporate group business. The first

quarter was very strong for the hotel, but bookings in the summer were softer than anticipated, he explained. Kim has been able to raise the average daily room rate for the Holiday Inn, resulting in a 3% gain in revenue this year.

A new extended stay hotel is planned adjacent to the Holiday Inn, where an existing two-story structure is slated to be demolished in December or early January, according to Kim. The new hotel – a six-story, 125-room Staybridge Suites –

should be completed within two years, he said.

The city's newest hotel, the Hampton Inn & Homewood Suites, opened at Douglas Park on November 30. Jef Lawrence, general manager of the Hampton Inn & Homewood Suites, cited growth in the Douglas Park area as the impetus behind the hotel's development. "If you take a look at all of the exciting activity that is going on in the area with the development of the [Long Beach] Exchange [and] all

of the parcels of commercial real estate that are being developed right in our backyard, there is just a really great opportunity to provide value to a variety of different travelers," he said, referencing retail and industrial property developments in the business park.

Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), said that a new hotel like one planned at the corner of Ocean

(Please Continue To Page 21)

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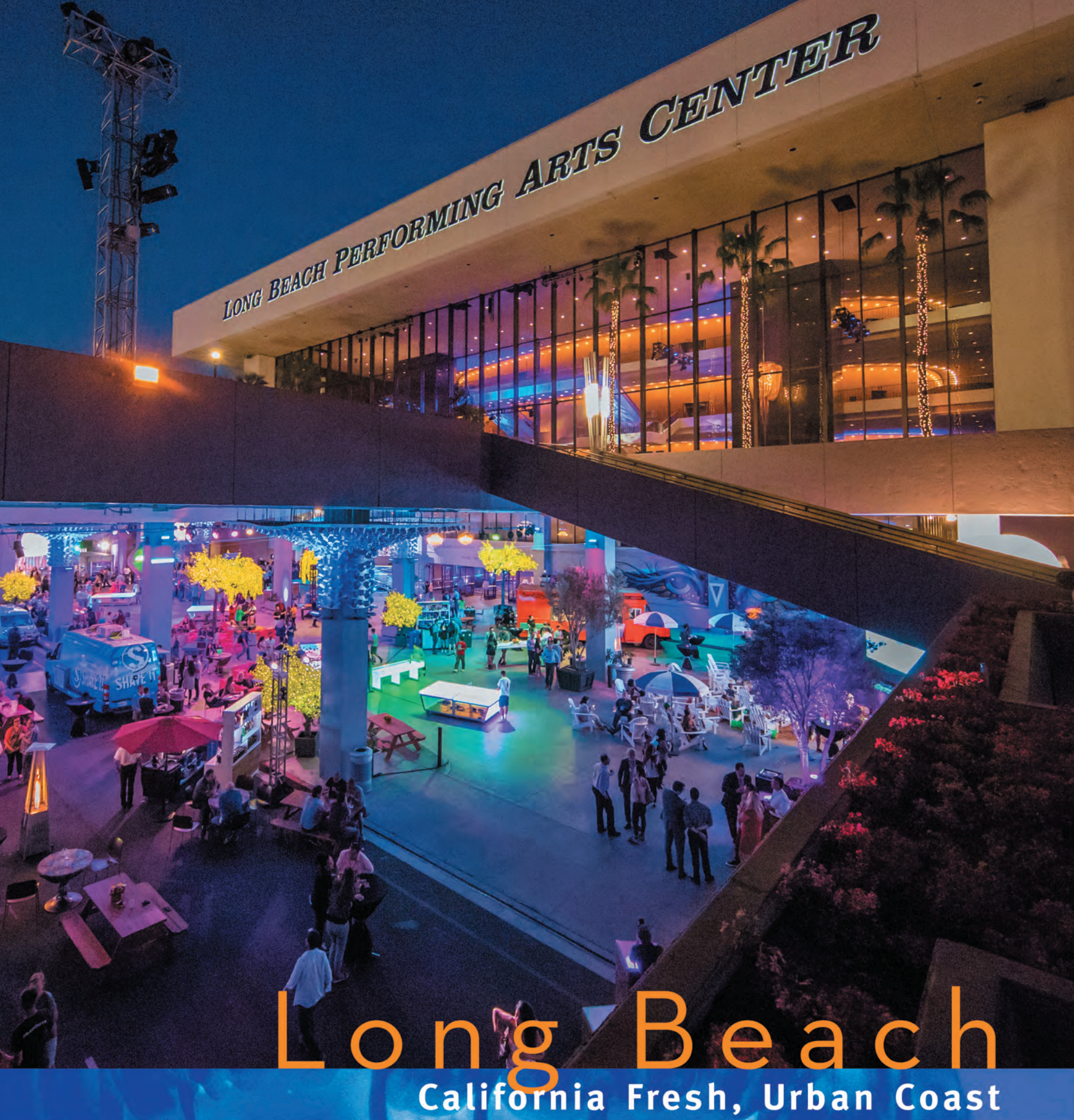


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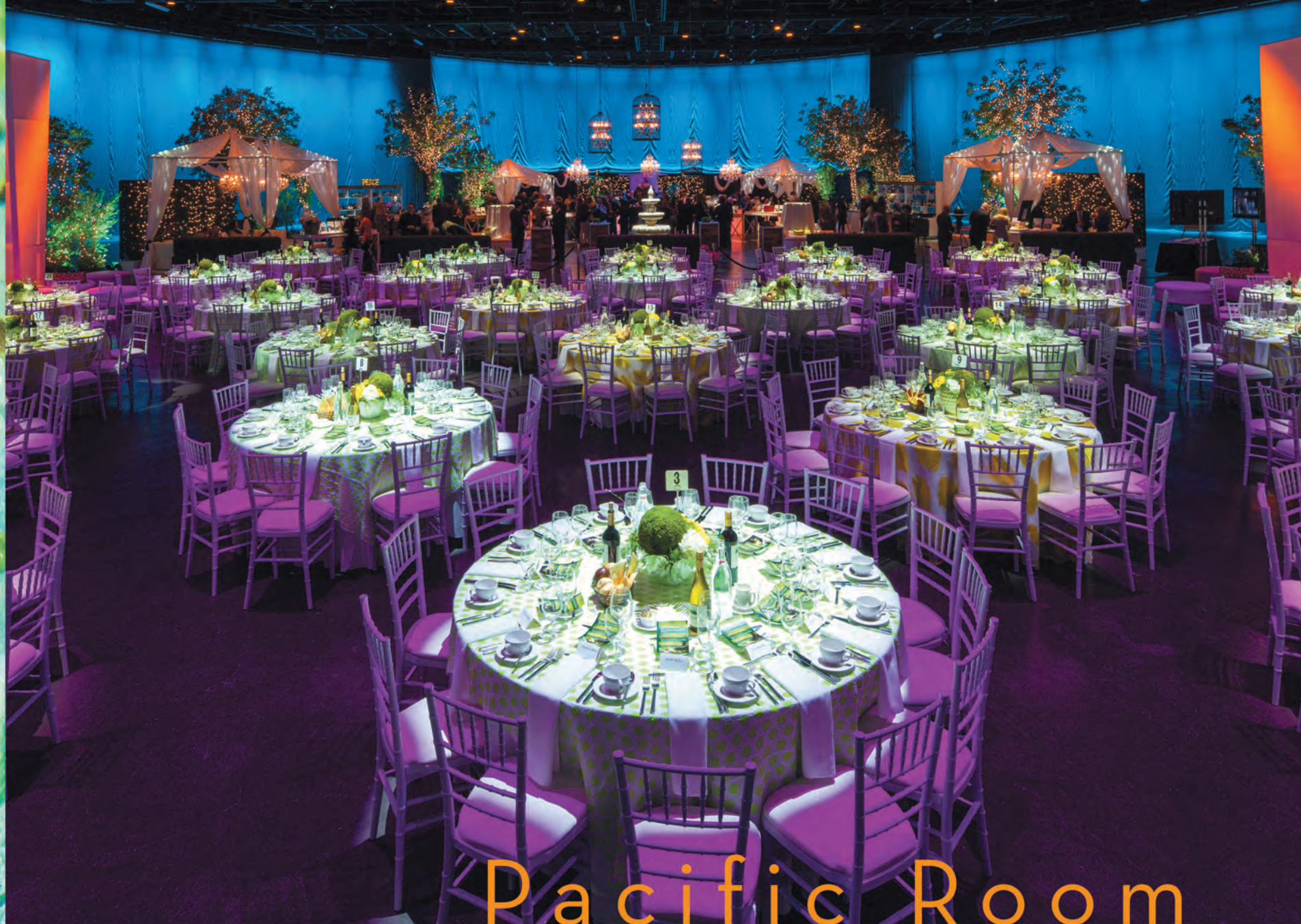
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## Best Year Ever – Again!

(Continued From Page 17)

Boulevard and Pine Avenue is needed. “We could use an additional hotel downtown near the convention center,” he said. “The project that’s planned [at Ocean and Pine] is a great project because it’s designed to be a show stopper. It has three-story atrium glass windows looking out onto Ocean Boulevard, a rooftop swimming pool capturing the sun setting over Palos Verdes. [It’s] walking distance to the convention center. Any time you have a new project like that, it creates news for your city, your destination and for your convention center business.”

## Waterfront Attractions

Long Beach’s waterfront attractions experienced a strong year in 2017, and all plan to add new events and programming next year.

The Aquarium of the Pacific is on track to beat last year’s record attendance. President and CEO Jerry Schubel told the Business Journal that he expects 1.7 million people to have visited the Aquarium by year’s end. The nonprofit’s projected general revenue for the year is \$38 million.

“These figures represent a very successful year for the Aquarium,” Schubel said via e-mail. “Last year was previously the Aquarium’s best year to date in terms of revenue and attendance, and 2017 is on track to match it.”

Schubel is projecting a bit of a decline in revenue and visitors next year due to ongoing construction of the facility’s new wing, which will add new gallery space and an interactive theater. “Projected 2018 revenue is \$37 million, and projected attendance is about 1.67 million visitors,” he said. “We budgeted conservatively due to the construction but we expect to beat those numbers.”

Construction of the new wing is on schedule, according to Schubel. “The concrete slab for the new wing was poured in November, and the placement of structural steel will begin in December and continue through early next year,” he said, noting that portholes have been cut into fences surrounding the construction so that visitors can see the progress. “While the layout of several Aquarium facilities has changed, the visitor experience and events schedule are unaffected by the construction. I encourage Long Beach residents to visit, enjoy our many events and programs, and watch as progress is made on the construction,” he said.

2018 is the Aquarium’s 20th anniversary year, and the nonprofit has a number of celebratory programs and events planned. “Through exhibits, videos, promotions, contests, challenges and more, the Aquarium will celebrate its 20 years of connecting people with the ocean,” Schubel said. “The Aquarium will highlight animals that have been residents for all 20 years.”

Carnival Cruise Line, which operates three cruise ships from Long Beach, is also expanding its facilities. “In early 2017 we broke ground on the expansion of the cruise terminal that will allow us to grow our business out of the city for years to come,” Carlos Torres de Navarra, vice

president of strategic and commercial port development for Carnival, stated via e-mail. “We are still on target to be ready with the improvements for Carnival Splendor’s arrival in early 2018. Next year our guests will be greeted by a much larger terminal and a terminal experience that will be a first for the industry.”

Torres de Navarra also stated, “In 2017, like the previous 14 years, we continued to deliver great vacations onboard the Carnival Imagination, Inspiration and Miracle that sail from the City of Long Beach on a year-round basis.”

Catalina Express, a company offering daily water travel to Catalina Island from Long Beach, San Pedro and Dana Point, had a slightly stronger year than in 2016, according to President and CEO Greg Bombard. “We had a good summer because the weather has been great here in Southern California,” he said, adding that the water temperature during the summer was conducive to swimming and diving.

“It was interesting because this last summer we saw quite a few people who were not necessarily going overnight [to Catalina Island] but staying just for the day,” Bombard said, adding that his company added more trips to the island to accommodate this travel.

Improvements to the island’s venues, such as the Descanso Beach Club, as well as new attractions like a zip line and additional hiking trails, have been bringing more people to the island, Bombard observed. Having more rain last year also helped improve water supplies on the island and helped its natural habitat – both factors that are good for tourism, he noted.

In 2018, Catalina Express is ending its popular promotion that enabled people to ride free on their birthdays. “We did that for six years. We started that on our 30th anniversary and we’re now over 36 years in business,” he said. The program helped bring people to the island who had not been there in years or had not yet visited, he noted. Bombard said the company may roll out a new promotional program next year, but declined to say what it might be just yet.

The restaurants, shops and businesses of Shoreline Village, downtown’s waterfront boardwalk, also had a good 2017, according to Assistant Property Manager Sergio Gonzalez. “It has been really good this year. Even better than some years in the past,” he said, adding that there was a lot of foot traffic on the boardwalk.

Summer is the busiest time of the year at Shoreline Village, and Gonzalez estimated that this year there was a slight increase in visitors at that time. While winter months are normally slower for the area, he noted that, so far, he has seen an uptick in visitors compared to years past.

“We’re getting ready to kick off our holiday schedule this weekend. Pretty much every weekend from now until Christmas we’ll be having live music,” Gonzalez noted. “We are going to have a Santa Claus who is going to be here for photo ops for folks who would like to sit on his lap and take a picture,” he added. “Long story short, we are doing our best to put our best foot forward, provide the best events for free to the community, and then give back to other programs that are doing the same.” ■




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# When Every Day Is Your Super Bowl: Convention Center Manager Charlie Beirne On Maintaining A Competitive Edge

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

After six years working in Long Beach as the general manager of the convention center, New Jersey native Charlie Beirne has plenty of glowing things to say about what the facility has become, and working with the partners who helped make it happen. Beirne has developed a rapport with his staff and city partners, as well as an unrelenting appreciation for the temperate weather. What he will perhaps never get used to, however, is the way Californians behave when the temperature gets south of 70 degrees.

"The funniest thing for me to get used to out here is how people react to the rain," Beirne said. When it's 60 degrees outside, don't be surprised if you run into him wearing shorts and flip flops when off the job. "And the rest of the people are out with hoodies and gloves on, which I can't get used to. I really can't," he said, chuckling.

Having studied finance in college, Beirne's career began as a controller for Atlantic County, New Jersey. At the time, a fellow local football coach asked him for his support in running for mayor of the town Ventnor. "We told him we'd help him get elected on one condition: he stopped coaching. True story," Beirne recalled. He was elected, and asked if Beirne would be interested in becoming the city's business administrator. He took on the position and eventually became city manager.

Later, Beirne decided to try his hand in the private sector. His experience in municipal finance translated well to managing convention centers and entertainment venues, which involved working closely with local governments. In 1999, he became director of finance for the Atlantic City Convention Center with

SMG, a global entertainment and conference venue management company based in Pennsylvania that also manages the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center.

"Atlantic City was a little different. It's twice the size of here, but half as busy," Beirne said, comparing the venue to Long Beach's convention center. "We had Boardwalk Hall, which was the same size as ours here. The cool thing is it was built in 1929," he noted. The venue was refurbished and reopened in 2000, and subsequently hosted major boxing events and musical acts including Bruce Springsteen, Paul McCartney, Lady Gaga and more. Over the years, he worked his way up to general manager of the center.

In 2011, SMG sent Beirne to Long Beach to assist Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau President and CEO Steve Goodling in planning and implementing capital improvements to the convention center here, and he ended up staying on past what was originally meant to be a temporary assignment.



New Jersey native Charlie Beirne has served as the general manager of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center for the past six years. He oversees a staff of 140 full-time employees, and can't get enough of the California sun. (Photograph provided by the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau)



Pictured is the lobby of the 3,000-seat Terrace Theater at the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, a complex managed Charlie Beirne and his staff. (Photograph provided by the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau)

"We were doing so much working with Steve [Goodling] and the CVB and the city on capital items [that] it was just a natural flow into keeping it going and working together," Beirne said of the decision to stay in Long Beach.

Beirne's two sons were both grown and out of college, which also made the move easier. He still owns a house in Ventnor, and his wife lives bi-coastally, he noted. He has been tempted on occasion over the years to be closer to family, but each time Goodling has a tried-and-true method to convince him to stay. "Every time I was thinking about making a move back to the East Coast, Steve would always remind me with the weather forecast," Beirne said. "You know, 'Hey, it's 30 degrees and raining [in New Jersey]. I say, 'Yeah okay, I'll stay for more.'"

When Beirne joined the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, he saw potential in the facility and in its staff. "We just had to make some changes. Not personnel changes, but ideological changes, if you will," he said,

explaining that a shift was made toward a more customer service-oriented focus.

"The first major project that I worked on with Steve was the Arena, the Pacific Ballroom. And that was two years from design to opening," Beirne said, referring to the transformation of the Arena into a turn-key facility with theatrical rigging for easy space conversion. That project was completed three years ago. "It has really done well for us."

Beirne and Goodling have worked side by side on a number of major projects since then, most recently overseeing the completion of the outdoor special events space, The Cove. "The capital improvements [made] in all the areas, especially all the special unique turnkey spaces we have, are only going to benefit us – meaning the center and the city – for years to come," Beirne said.

"I very rarely spend time in the office. I encourage our guys to be out and about looking at the facility. Is it clean? Is it presentable to the clients?" Beirne said. "Every day is different. It never goes the way I planned it, because something always comes up. That's what's great about our industry – every day is different."

The most challenging aspect of Beirne's job is overseeing the coordination of multiple events being held at the venue at once. "Since we are not a typical arena and/or convention center, we are like a campus, so we have multiple programs going on at the same time. And it's a balancing act, quite honestly," he said. "I tell our guys every day, that's their Super Bowl. That's their big day. That's the big event, no matter how big or small the event is."

The best part of his job, on the other hand, is that it fits perfectly with his self-professed personality as a people person. "You know, sometimes I stand at the entrance and just say hello to people for the heck of it

and just get their reactions," Beirne said. "I try to instill in our staff that the most important person they meet here is the first person they have contact with. Because that's how you set the tone."

In addition to improvements made to the center itself, development and changes in Downtown Long Beach are also helping the center's competitive edge, according to Beirne. "It's nice for me to see the clients and people out and about at night time, going to the restaurants, going to the shops and everything," he said. "It's a cool area to live in, be part of and work in, no doubt."

Beirne feels that the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center is positioned well among its competition. "I like to be a winner, so I think we're doing great," he said. "We compare our team [and] our facility to any one in the country that SMG manages, quite honestly. Or any other competitor. I think we're top of the list." ■





ComplexCon 2017 had 50,000 in attendance at the Long Beach Convention Center, which was 15,000 more than its inaugural event in 2016. The convention focuses on street culture and includes art, food, musical performances, panel discussions and brands such as Nike creating unique installations. According to Senior Vice President of Reed Exhibitions and head of ComplexCon Aaron Levant, ComplexCon is 'home to stay' in Long Beach. Pictured at ComplexCon 2017 from left: Moksha Fitzgibbons, ComplexCon chief revenue officer; Marc Ecko, Complex media co-founder and fashion designer; Japanese artist Takashi Murakami; and Levant. (Photograph courtesy of Reed Exhibitions)



## ComplexCon Is Home To Stay In Long Beach

(Continued From Page 1)

In 2003, Aaron Levant, senior vice president of Reed Exhibitions and head of ComplexCon, started Agenda, a creative lifestyle fashion trade show. Through this venture, Levant built a relationship with Complex Media founder and fashion designer Marc Ecko.

"Around 2015, Marc and myself started putting our heads together to see how we could take these cool companies that we each have and put together what we think is the street culture version of Comic Con," Levant told the Business Journal. "They are a really big media brand, we're a huge events company, and putting our brains and power and resources together just kind of created a 1+1=3 kind of thing."

Reed Exhibitions is no novice when it comes to running events. In addition to Agenda and ComplexCon, the company has put on New York Comic Con and around 500 other fan-centric events. The company has built a relationship with Long Beach and its Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and plans to continue Agenda and ComplexCon in the city.

In 2017, Reed Exhibitions held ComplexCon, TwitchCon and two Agenda events in Long Beach. Levant said working with the CVB and its President and CEO Steve Goodling is always a great experience. He explained that CVB and convention center staff are always supportive and accommodating in helping them navigate, and sometimes push, the boundaries of the convention, while representing the interests of the city and its residents.

Levant said he has a personal affinity for the city, having started Agenda here and returning after hosting the event in other cities. He said after experiencing other venues for the event he preferred the Long Beach convention center campus because it is an interesting facility due to its inclusion of an arena, theaters, exhibit halls and a diverse meeting and

gathering space, both indoors and out. He said the combination of these features is unique.

"Some people might take this the wrong way, but I think we're a big fish in a small pond. Like, in New York and L.A., there are many big events that come through the city and we would just be another event," Levant said. "But we come to Long Beach and they really appreciate us there. Year one, the mayor came and gave us the key to the city. I don't think that would be happening in L.A. or New York. So we appreciate that our event is a big event."

Aside from the available facilities, Levant said Long Beach's location is important. He explained that ComplexCon attempts to draw its audience from San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties, as well as the Inland Empire. Long Beach's central location to these areas makes it the perfect meeting place to maximize attendance.

Next year, Levant said the convention is expanding to utilize outdoor space around Rainbow Lagoon Park, as well as expanding in coming years to include comedy that will be featured in the Terrace Theater. As the event continues to grow in size, Levant explained that the goal is to transform it into a gathering similar to Austin's South By Southwest. This would mean expanding to other venues and event spaces throughout the downtown area, including bars, restaurants, the Queen Mary and hotels, in order to offer a wider array of activities and locations for people to congregate.

According to Levant, what makes ComplexCon such a special event is that it aggregates different event formats, such as fashion and sneaker conventions, music concerts, TED Talks, food festivals, arts fairs and pop-up shops, all in one space. He explained that this is culturally significant in that it brings such a diverse group of people and projects together, and embodies the event tagline – "the internet in real life." This year, the likes of Frank Ocean and Lana Del Rey attended the event as spectators and ex-

perienced it organically with other attendees, a phenomenon Levant said is not common at other events.

"Some people would see our audience as a nuisance – a bunch of young kids running around, and hip hop. In some communities, that's frowned upon. But in Long Beach we have been met with open arms by the community," Levant said. "That's very helpful because I've done events in

other cities where the community was petitioning to keep us out. We're excited that Long Beach sees the potential in our audience and the economic impact that we can drive and how working together with the city can be a great marriage."

"Our company is home to stay in Long Beach with many of our different events," Levant added. "We're excited to continue to build and hold lots of events there." ■

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# Improvements Continue To Increase Long Beach Convention Center's Appeal



Yesterday, December 4, marked the official grand opening of the 600-foot-long Rainbow Bridge, which connects the Pine Avenue convention center entrance to the performing arts theaters, meeting rooms and arena on Seaside Way. The \$10 million pedestrian bridge includes 3,500 programmable LED lights, which will loop 10 different five-minute shows every night. (Photograph courtesy of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau)

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

Since opening adjacent to the Long Beach Arena in 1978, the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center has undergone several expansions and renovations to become the campus that it is today. However, there are still more improvements to come, according to Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Today, the convention center campus includes the Pacific Room at the Long Beach Arena, the Terrace and Beverly O'Neill theaters, exhibit halls, meetings rooms and outdoor event space such as the Terrace Theater Plaza and The Cove. The Cove is the newest event space, which opened to events in July.

"With the paintings from POW! WOW! artists and the other elements, it really does feel like a cool space. I like it because it has an authentic feeling to it," Goodling said of The Cove. "As one client said, they were shocked to find an underpass turned into a special event space. I think because it is an underpass and you have all the brick and all the cement and you have this cool lighting, it's just very original and unique."

The Cove is the result of a \$1.5 million investment to transform the streets and underpass area on Seaside Way, just outside of the Seaside Meetings Rooms below the Terrace Theater. The space features six crystal chandeliers hanging from the concrete overhead, special light fixtures designed to look like barnacles, marine motifs on the walls, ceiling and pillars, and 110 stage and pinpoint lights.

Being located directly on the street, The Cove allows for food trucks to drive right up to the event space for guest engagement. Goodling said this perk is especially appealing to younger party planners

and has been a huge success. With a chuckle, Goodling joked that spilled drinks and dropped food is not a big deal since it is a street and not carpet or tile.

Since opening, Goodling said six parties

have been held at The Cove, including one hosted by John Molina and two convention opening parties: the National Association of Port Authorities and the International Association of Emergency Managers.



The \$1.5 million renovation of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center fountain in the Terrace Theater Plaza is scheduled to begin in January. The renovation will transform the fountain into a Bellagio-like attraction featuring choreographed water, light and music shows nightly. The project is expected to be completed by May. (Image courtesy of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau)



Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center General Manager Charlie Beirne, left, and Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau President and CEO Steve Goodling have worked together over the past several years to transform once ordinary or unused places in and around the center to active, exciting event spaces that have drawn national recognition from meeting planners, event organizers and meetings publications. (Photograph courtesy of the Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau)

"The response from those who have used it has been that they've just fallen in love with the place. [The Emergency Managers Association] had an opening party there and they said it created such a buzz for the entire convention and started it off perfectly," Goodling said. "These special event spaces are doing what we had hoped they would do and that's just creating an impactful experience that people want to talk about and want to share on social media."

Adjacent to The Cove and spanning more than 600 feet, the Rainbow Bridge connecting the Pine Avenue convention center entrance to the theaters, meeting rooms and arena on Seaside Way opened to the public yesterday, December 4. According to Goodling, weather delays had pushed back the completion of the bridge; however, it was opened to certain conventions in the latter part of the year for attendees to use, because it had been promoted to their convention planners.

The feedback has been really good from the conventioners," Goodling said. "It really is a functioning piece of art. It's built to be a cascading wave and it's modeled a little bit after the High Line in New York. It really is a great pedestrian bridge."

Named to follow the theme of Rainbow Harbor, the more-than-\$10 million bridge includes 3,500 LED lights the size of a quarter, which can be individually programmed. Lighting programmers are currently working on 10 different five-minute shows to run in a cycle every night. To add to the ambiance as pedestrians stroll across the bridge, wireless speakers will play the same music as the convention center's next renovation – the Terrace Theater Plaza fountain.

The convention center fountain, built just off Ocean Boulevard more than 30

(Please Continue To Top Of Next Page)



years ago, has never been renovated. This will all change in January, after the removal of the Christmas tree, when a \$1.5 million renovation is scheduled to begin. The renovation includes a full upgrade and will culminate in water and light shows accompanied by music playing through wireless speakers, giving the plaza a mini-Bellagio vibe, Goodling explained.

"There will be constant shows that are choreographed with the music," Goodling said. "We'll have different shows every month. There will actually be shows that celebrate the different holidays and things like that."

The pool configurations will remain the same and nozzles will be added to the upper fountain to activate the entire space with water and lights, according to Goodling. The shows will run every night and can be customized for special events and parties to light up in colors requested by the planner. The renovations are expected to be completed by May, according to Goodling.

Recently, the Terrace Theater Plaza has been used more and more as a special event space, even hosting the Kings of Chaos musical performance during this year's Long Beach Grand Prix. With the capacity to host up to 5,000 people, the completion of the Rainbow Bridge and the fountain renovations, Goodling said the plaza's appeal is only increasing, making it the campus's third turnkey event space.

The Rainbow Bridge and plaza fountain projects are financed through the city's Tidelands Funds. The Cove was financed

by the Tidelands Funds, the CVB and SMG – Private Management for Public Facilities.

Another forthcoming improvement is a \$600,000 investment to convert the exhibit halls to LED lighting, which is more cost effective while enhancing brightness. Goodling explained that the project is to be completed by February in time for a carpet convention; the LED lighting will allow attendees to see the true colors of the carpet, something the current lighting is not bright enough to accomplish.

The Pacific Room, The Cove and the Terrace Theater Plaza are all scalable to be able to accommodate from 100 to thousands of guests during events, according to Goodling. This feature allows for more diverse event bookings and makes Long Beach a more appealing destination for events and conventions. He noted that these investments are beneficial in terms of Long Beach's economy, citing that the Pacific Room alone has generated over \$180 million in conventions because its versatility resonates with planners and because it saves them money.

"Stepping back and looking at it, we've had clients say, with all of the social spaces we have created, that it's very atypical of a convention center to have people collaborate and connect and catch up with one another," Goodling said. "All these improvements have helped to differentiate the facility from others. That is very important. These enhancements have helped us become more competitive, while providing a really great experience." ■



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# CVB National Sales Director Marykay Lui On Getting Creative And Tackling Tech

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

Bay Area native Marykay Lui feels she has the best of both worlds in her job as national sales director overseeing the Northern California and Pacific Northwest markets for the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

A graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, Lui got her feet wet in the hospitality and tourism industry as an employee of the Westin Long Beach before ultimately moving back to San Mateo in 2010 to be closer to her and her husband's families. Shortly thereafter, the CVB gave her an opportunity to stay connected to Long Beach while working remotely in her hometown.

"I was working in a hotel in San Francisco and then the CVB called me a little more than a year after that and said, 'Hey, would you like to work for Long Beach again?'" Lui recalled. "It was great because I missed Southern California."

Lui was tasked with focusing on corporate business in the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, which she admitted is a tough market to crack. "Corporate planners are very busy, don't have time to chit-chat and [are] very transaction-based," she said. "If I get a lead, time is of the essence. And if I don't respond right away, the opportunity is lost. First impressions count, and many times there are no second chances."

In addition to the fast-paced nature of Bay Area corporations – many of which are tech-oriented – breaking into that market can be difficult because those businesses typically use third parties to book events, according to Lui. Knowing which third party firms to develop rela-



Marykay Lui is a national sales director for the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau based in San Mateo. She is tasked with securing conventions and meetings business from corporations and associations from the Bay Area to the Pacific Northwest, and recently booked a software firm, Medallia, for an upcoming convention in Long Beach. (Photograph by Caught In The Moment)

tionships with is key in getting that business, she explained.

It can be difficult to capture the attention of major corporations in the Bay Area and Northwest because they typically gravitate toward first-tier convention markets such as San Diego or San Francisco, according to Lui.

Corporate planners still associate the name Long Beach with the city's history as a Navy town to a degree, Lui noted. But, once she has a foot in the door and is able to showcase what the city now has to offer, that perception changes. "When they come out to see Long Beach they're

actually really surprised at all the changes that our downtown has undergone. So that's really great to see," she said.

Improvements made to the convention center in recent years help appeal to the trend of "experiential" meetings, in which attendees can engage and participate in conventions rather than sitting and listening. "Having all of the new space at the convention center offers these options and has given our city an edge," Lui said.

Lui has brought in meetings business from Kaiser Permanente, Dignity Health and Applied Materials, among other companies and organizations. Recently, she

booked Medallia, a San Mateo-based software company, to hold its convention in Long Beach in 2018.

In addition to striking up relationships with new clientele by working trade shows and making office visits, Lui leverages social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram with the help of the CVB's in-house social media team. The use of social media is particularly popular in the Bay area, and is a useful tool to get the word out about Long Beach, she explained.

Soon, Lui plans to leverage social media not only to advance Long Beach as a convention destination, but also to give back. She is attending the California Association of Executives' (CAE) annual trade show, where various CVBs pitch their destinations for conventions, and has come up with a creative way to give back to areas in Northern California impacted by recent fires.

"The fires that we had in the North Bay, I mean, it was just devastating. The Hilton Sonoma burnt down, [as did] a lot of wineries," Lui said. "A lot of families lost their homes and jobs."

Lui had an idea to both engage people at the CAE event while helping out. "I thought, why don't we do a social media push?" she said. Her concept is named "Post with Purpose." For each tweet using the hashtag "MeetInLB," the CVB will donate \$5 to fire recovery efforts. "I am hoping it will be a big success, because I really want to do something to impact local communities," she explained.

CVB staff are encouraged to take this kind of creative initiative rather than operating by a playbook of sorts, according to Lui. "That is why I love the job – because we're given the creativity and the freedom to do what's relevant in our market," she reflected. ■

## Long Beach First Leg Of Professional Cycling Race Amgen Tour Of California Set For May

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
Staff Writer

Long Beach is hosting the first day of this year's Amgen Tour of California, a professional cycling event, on May 13. This marks the event's 13th year and the first time in 11 years that it will go through Long Beach.

The men's race takes place over seven days, with stops in 10 other California cities. It allows, at most, 18 teams with seven riders each to compete along a 600-mile course. The race is designed to cover a variety of terrain, in order to accommodate cyclists' different specialties. A separate women's race will occur over three days in Northern California. Both competitions end in Sacramento on May 19.

"We knew we wanted to go back to Long Beach the last time we were there . . . in 2007," the tour's president, Kristin Klein, said. "There's so much support from the city and it's such a strong cycling community. Long Beach is an iconic location. It's a destination location." Klein is also the executive vice-president of AEG Sports, which owns and operates the Amgen tour.

AEG's vice president of communications, Michael Roth, recalled the "tremen-



dous skyline" from the last time the tour was in Long Beach.

"The ocean made the helicopter [photo] shots really spectacular," he said. "The fans were not only enthusiastic but also very knowledgeable about cycling."

Klein pointed to several initiatives that demonstrate the city's commitment to promoting cycling. These include the bike share program, which allows users to set up

an account to borrow bikes placed at different locations around the city. She also expressed interest in the Beach Streets events, when certain corridors are closed to vehicular traffic to encourage the use of bikes and public transit, as well as to support local businesses.

"The Beach Streets have such a festive environment," Klein said. "We want to collaborate on these events to get everyone ex-

cited about the Amgen tour. All the riders will come in about a week before. We'll see a lot of action going on in the street." On May 11, Amgen will hold the official team presentation to introduce the teams and riders. It is a public event and the location is not yet determined.

Roth compared the Amgen tour to the level of the Tour de France, as many of the participants are world champions or Olympians. But he and Klein emphasized that it is an event for the community and not just geared toward professional athletes. In addition to the race itself, the day of the kickoff will include food vendors and a lifestyle festival with 40-50 interactive booths that promote health and wellness.

"We'd like to get out how everyone can utilize cycling as a platform to live a healthy lifestyle because, at the end of the day, that's what's really important to all of us here," Klein said.

Amgen, the race's title sponsor, is a biotechnology company that examines therapies to improve the lives of those that suffer from serious illnesses. It utilizes human genetics to understand the biological mechanisms of diseases and develop new treatments. ■





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# Rehrig Pacific Company Turns Your Trash Into Your Trash Cans

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

Most people who visit Long Beach inevitably notice the large purple recycling carts sitting curbside, near homes or maybe just during a scene from the Academy Award-winning film “La La Land.” The Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau (ESB) estimates there are about 120,000 purple trash carts in the city, with an equal number of the gray trash carts. The city also has more than 1,000 public litter cans (PLCs) throughout the city. The company behind the production of these trash receptacles, and the creation of what is now known in the industry as “Long Beach Purple,” is Vernon-based Rehrig Pacific Company.

“We were founded in 1913. We started in the wooden battery box industry, if you can call it an industry at that time,” Brad Gust, environmental sales manager for Rehrig, said. “Today we service 11 different industries, the waste and recycling industry just being one of those. It’s a large portion of our business but we also do automotive, emerging markets, Pepsi, Coke, the bakery industry — a lot of those guys are common customers of ours.”

Gust said an injection molding process is used to make the standard trash and recycling carts utilized by residents throughout the country. He explained that the company will produce around 3.8 million carts this year alone in five of its do-



Rehrig Pacific Company produces the rolling trash and purple recycle carts for the Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau (ESB) to be distributed to Long Beach residents. The company also produces the more than 1,000 public litter cans dispersed throughout the city. Pictured from left: Erin Rowland, waste diversion officer for the Long Beach Public Works Department; Diko Melkonian, ESB manager; Leigh Behrens and Elisa Calderon, ESB recycling specialists; and Brad Gust, environmental sales manager for Rehrig. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Brandon Richardson)

mestic facilities nationwide. The main containers take between 70 and 85 seconds to make, according to Gust, with the lids taking half that time.

Rehrig, and the environmental industry as a whole, are focused on “closing the loop.” For the Los Angeles company, this

is done by purchasing millions of pounds of recycled plastic (also known as post-consumer resin or PCR) in the form of pellets from Talco Plastics Inc.’s post-consumer division in Long Beach. Currently, carts contain about 30% PCR and 70% new high-density polyethylene (HDPE or

No. 2 plastic), which equates to more than 60 million pounds of recycled products being used by Rehrig this year.

“That laundry detergent bottle that you threw away last month could be in another cart that’s delivered in another month or two back to the city. And the

## Your Guide to a Waste-less Season

Holiday decorating, office parties and colleague gifts are all opportunities to waste less.

An infographic featuring three strings of colorful holiday lights (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple). Each string has a circular light bulb that contains a tip for reducing waste. The tips are: 1. Buy beverages in large bottles &amp; provide reusable mugs or glasses. 2. Serve fresh fruits, nuts or vegetables &amp; avoid single-serving packaging. 3. Hosting a catered party? Donate the excess food: contact Foodfinders.org for info. 4. Use reusable or edible decorations so you'll have less to dispose of. 5. Buy gifts that use less packaging like movie tickets or gift certificates. 6. Wrap gifts in reusable items like scarves or cloth shopping bags. 7. Donate unwanted office equipment to local nonprofits: LB-exchange.org.



carts, as they expire, get used as well. At the end of their useful life, the products that we make are 100% recyclable,” Gust said. “So it’s completely sustainable. Once you get so many turns, if it doesn’t meet the quality standards to go in a cart, we can throw that in our other products that don’t necessarily have the rigors that the carts face – Pepsi and Coke pallets, we do beer kegs.”

The amount of recyclable material used in the containers is not higher due to the stress put on the carts by the automated trash trucks during collection. Gust said that the containers are guaranteed for 10 years, which requires the current ratio of new and recycled plastics. He explained that certain recycled plastics are more desirable because they give the carts more elasticity, which is crucial for longevity against the automated trucks clamps.

In addition to removing plastics from the waste stream through utilizing recycled materials, Gust noted that these environmental practices generate jobs and tax revenue for Long Beach and surrounding cities. Also, while using recycled materials does have some economic benefits for Rehrig, Gust said they are minimal due to the amount of money necessary to wash, grind, pelletize and transport such massive quantities of plastic.

Plastics other than HDPE, including polystyrene, commonly known as Styrofoam, do not have as strong a domestic market when it comes to recycling, according to Diko Melkonian, ESB manager. These plastics have been shipped to China to be recycled for other uses, how-

ever, Melkonian explained, China is looking to stop this practice. He said this is partially the reason many municipalities are exploring methods to reduce plastic waste, such as the Long Beach City Council’s recent decision to move forward with a ban on Styrofoam.

The ESB is looking to revamp the PLCs citywide by replacing bins as part of the Long Beach Clean Team initiative.

“As part of the city’s clean team initiative, which is a program to clean up and beautify the city, we intend to switch them out and get prettier ones out there,” Melkonian said. “We have gone through and inventoried what’s out in the field and the next step will be to look at if there are other appropriate places to set out some more litter containers. We’re not looking at it from a number perspective but more of a need, so we’ll go out and assess certain neighborhoods and see what the need is there.”

The PLCs are also emptied by automated trash trucks with large clamps, which makes placing them difficult as the location cannot have any obstructions, such as parked vehicles. Melkonian explained that this is why bus stops are the most common placement for the public trash cans, as well as the high volume of foot traffic. PLCs do not have wheels, as the residential carts do, but instead have a heavily weighted bottom to ensure they are not moved by the public. A by-product of this safety measure is that the cans cannot be moved to clear them of an obstruction blocking the truck’s clamp.

(Please Continue To Page 31)

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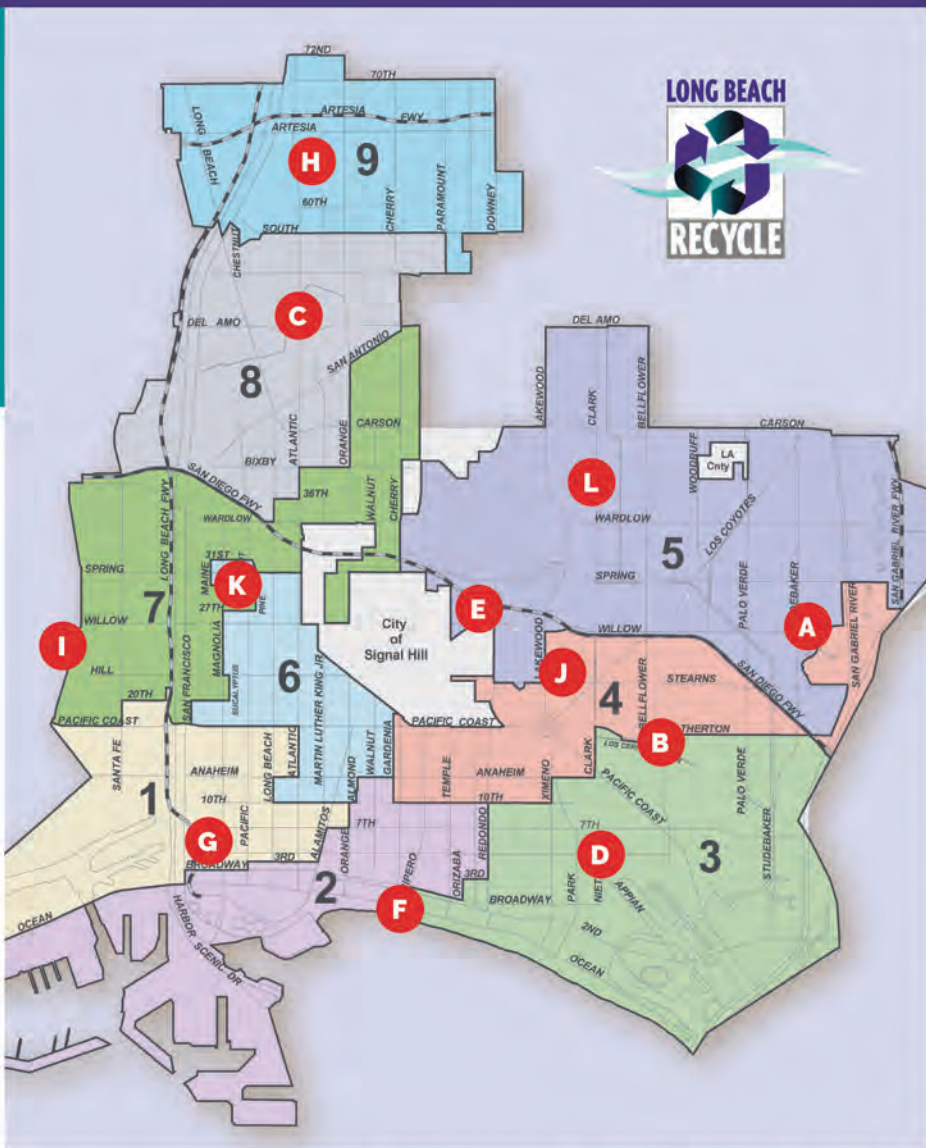
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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>A. El Dorado Park</b><br/>2760 N. Studebaker Rd.,<br/>South parking lot, behind<br/>administration building</p> <p><b>B. CSULB Recycling Center</b><br/>5800 Atherton Blvd.<br/>east of Bellflower Blvd.</p> <p><b>C. North Police Substation</b><br/>4891 N. Atlantic Ave. at Del Amo<br/>Blvd. enter on 46th St.</p> <p><b>D. Fire Station #14</b><br/>5200 Eliot St.<br/>at Colorado Ave.</p> <p><b>E. City Operations Center</b><br/>Environmental Services Bureau<br/>2929 E. Willow St.</p> | <p><b>F. Bixby Park</b><br/>1st St. at Cherry Ave.</p> <p><b>G. Cesar E. Chavez Park</b><br/>Golden Shore St. at 4th St.</p> <p><b>H. Houghton Park</b><br/>Myrtle Ave. at Harding St.</p> <p><b>I. Hudson Park</b><br/>Hill St. at Webster Ave.</p> <p><b>J. Stearns Park</b><br/>Corner of 23rd St. and<br/>Roycroft Ave.</p> <p><b>K. Veterans Park</b><br/>28th St. at Pine Ave.</p> <p><b>L. Wardlow Park</b><br/>Monlaco Rd. at Rutgers Ave.</p> |
|---|--|







## Next Stop For Long Beach Transit: A Bus Fleet Powered By Alternative Fuels

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
Staff Writer

With a plan to replace the diesel and gasoline-hybrid buses in its fleet with compressed natural gas (CNG) and battery electric operated vehicles, Long Beach Transit (LBT) is on the road to further reduce its carbon footprint.

Natural gas vehicles produce 20% to 30% fewer greenhouse gases than those powered by gasoline or diesel, according to information from the Southern California Gas Company, a natural gas provider. Also, a CNG engine is 90% quieter than a diesel engine.

The current LBT fleet comprises 69 diesel buses, 89 gasoline-hybrid vehicles, 85 CNG buses and 10 zero emission vehicles operated by battery. The hybrid vehicles, equipped with two engines, one powered by electricity and one by gasoline, are estimated to cut emissions by about 75% compared to standard diesel buses, according to information from the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, a national organization that supports environmental sustainability.

LBT's goal is to phase out the diesel and gas-hybrid vehicles to create a fleet run completely by alternative fuels. Kenneth McDonald, the president and CEO of LBT, said he would like to reach this objective by 2020.

According to McDonald, the average bus is retired after 12 years of service, or 500,000 miles. Most of the diesel and gas-hybrid buses are already close to that limit, he said.

"We can improve the efficiency of our day-to-day operations and improve the quality of air in our community," he said. "We want to make sure we're good corporate citizens who are looking out for the health and welfare of the people we serve."

LBT purchased 40 new CNG buses in 2016. With the help of a grant, the agency is now able to equip them with upgraded engines that have "near zero" emissions. These were not available at the time of the bus purchase. The \$600,000 grant used to purchase the engines is from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee (MSRC) of the South Coast Air Quality Management District Near Zero Incentive Program.

"We would like to head closer and closer to zero emissions," McDonald said. "It's an investment in the community we serve: to put zero noxious gases into the environment. In the community we live in, there are lots of trucks because of the port. We do what we can to reduce the smog and emissions in the air." McDonald predicted that in the next five to six years LBT will reduce about 80% of its emissions

Kenneth McDonald is the president and CEO of Long Beach Transit. His agency is phasing out diesel and gasoline-hybrid buses to create a fleet run completely by alternative fuels. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Anne Artley)

## Toyota Announces Renewable Power And Hydrogen Generation Station At Port Of Long Beach

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

On November 30, during the Los Angeles Auto Show, Toyota Motor North America Inc. announced it will build the world's first megawatt-scale carbonate fuel cell power generation plant at the Port of Long Beach.

Dubbed Tri-Gen, the facility will support the Toyota Logistics Services operations at the port. The facility will generate approximately 2.35 megawatts of electricity and 1.2 tons of hydrogen daily. This production is enough to power 2,350 homes and 1,500 vehicles.

"For more than 20 years, Toyota has been leading the development of fuel cell technology because we understand the tremendous potential to reduce emissions and improve society," Doug Murtha, group vice president of strategic planning for Toyota, said in a press release. "Tri-Gen is a major step forward for sustainable mobility and a key accomplishment of our 2050 environmental challenge to achieve net zero CO2 emissions from our operations."

Tri-Gen will use biowaste sourced from California agriculture to produce water, electricity and hydrogen, making it Toyota's first North American facility to use 100% renewable power. Toyota partnered with Air Liquide to build the largest hydrogen fueling station in the world at the port – which supplies Toyota's on-site fuel

cell vehicles, including its heavy duty, class 8 truck – known as the Portal Project.

FuelCell Energy developed Tri-Gen supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, the California Resources Board, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Orange County Sanitation District and research from the University of California, Irvine.

In addition to Tri-Gen, Toyota plans to continue to work on creating hydrogen fuel infrastructure for consumers who now have access to hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, such as Toyota's Mirai sedan. California currently has 31 retail hydrogen stations, and through partnerships with companies, including Shell, the company plans to increase that number.

"Toyota has been part of the cultural fabric in the U.S. and North America for 60 years and is committed to advancing sustainable, next-generation mobility through our Toyota and Lexus brands," the company stated.

The facility is scheduled to come online in 2020. For more information, visit [www.toyotanewsroom.com](http://www.toyotanewsroom.com). ■



Toyota Motor North America Inc. announced it will build Tri-Gen, the world's first megawatt-scale carbonate fuel cell power generation plant, at the Port of Long Beach. Slated to come online in 2020, the plant would generate 2.35 megawatts of electricity and 1.2 tons of hydrogen daily, which would power all its port operations including its hydrogen fuel cell-powered heavy duty, class 8 truck, known as the Portal Project (pictured). (Photograph courtesy of Toyota Motor North America Inc.)



from 10 or so years ago, when it began to phase out diesel vehicles in favor of hybrid buses.

The agency plans to purchase as many as 89 more zero-emission, battery-electric buses by 2021. While most of its buses are 40 feet long, these will be 30 or 35 feet to better navigate residential streets.

Federal grants cover about 80% of all bus costs, while LBT funds the remaining 20%, according to McDonald. The average battery-electric bus costs about \$1 million.

LBT is also installing a wireless advanced vehicle electrification (WAVE) system to charge the bus batteries in front of the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. This project is slated for completion in March.

“We will be able to bring the buses in and stop them over what looks like a manhole cover,” McDonald explained. “The buses are charged wirelessly. You don’t have to take them back into the garages to refuel like you have to with gasoline. We can charge a vehicle without plugging it in, and recharge it while it’s in service. It helps us extend the range of the vehicle.”

The agency is also considering extending its environmental program outside of transit.

“We have a lot of roof space on our buildings, so we’re talking with power companies about how we can utilize more solar for power, so we can be less and less dependent on fossil fuel,” McDonald said. ■



The inside of a zero-emission bus operated by battery. Long Beach Transit currently operates 10 battery-electric buses, with a goal to purchase as many as 89 more by 2021. White daisies distinguish these buses from the rest of the fleet. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Anne Arley)

## Turning Trash Into Trash Cans

(Continued From Page 29)

According to the ESB, in 2016, 162,428 tons of trash were picked up on residential routes, 20,008 tons on commercial routes and 612 tons on PLC routes. All recycling route collections in 2016 combined came to 28,236 tons.

While many municipalities adopted blue as the color to represent recycling carts, Rehrig’s Jack Weber developed the nationally recognized Long Beach Purple. Gust said Weber recounts going through 20 different versions and many jokes about Barney the dinosaur before landing on the finished product that was used when the city first introduced the 18-gallon recycling bins.

“Then the industry realized that if we made it easier on people they would do more. So the rolling cart is much bigger,” Melkonian explained. “If I remember correctly, when we moved from the bins to the rolling carts, in that first year we saw something like a 70% increase in recyclables.”

Currently, Long Beach is the only city to use the color, but Gust said he still gets asked by industry folk in Florida, New York and Chicago, among others, if the company still makes the “crazy color purple.” ■

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 Long Beach Water



# CalChamber Releases List Of New Employment Laws Affecting Businesses In 2018

**Editor's Note:** Last month the California Chamber of Commerce released the list of new employment laws scheduled to take effect in 2018 or beyond that will have an impact on businesses in California. The Business Journal is running the information about each law as a service to its readers. For more information, business owners should consult with HR or legal professionals. Unless specified, all new legislation goes into effect on January 1, 2018.

## Parental Leave For Small Employers

An important new law requires that small employers provide new parents with up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave.

SB 63, the New Parent Leave Act, requires small businesses with 20 or more employees to provide eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to bond with a new child – leave that must be taken within one year of the child's birth, adoption or foster care placement.

SB 63 requires employers to provide parental leave only for baby bonding; it does not require employers to provide leave for other reasons, such as a family member's medical issue.

The New Parent Leave Act will have the greatest impact on employers with 20 to 49 employees who are not currently required to provide baby bonding leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act or the state California Family Rights Act.

If an employee takes this leave, an employer must maintain and pay for coverage

under a group health plan at the same level and conditions that coverage would have been provided if the employee had continued working.

Before the leave starts, an employer must provide the employee with a guarantee of reinstatement to the same or comparable position. Failure to provide the guarantee will be deemed a violation of the law, as if the employer refused to provide leave.

Employers can be sued if they don't comply with provisions of the Act.

## Hiring Practices And Enforcement

Employers will see significant changes to their hiring practices in 2018, including applicant selection processes and compliance with Form I-9 and immigration laws.

### Ban-The-Box Law

AB 1008 prohibits employers with five or more employees from asking about criminal history information on job applications and from inquiring about or considering criminal history at any time before a conditional offer of employment has been made. There are limited exemptions for certain positions, such as those where a criminal background check is required by federal, state or local law.

Once an employer has made a conditional offer of employment, it may seek certain criminal history information. However, before denying employment because of a criminal conviction, these specific steps must be followed:

- The employer must first conduct an in-

dividualized assessment to determine whether the conviction has a direct and adverse relationship with the job's specific duties that justifies denying employment.

- Any preliminary decision not to hire because of a conviction history requires written notice to the applicant, who must be given the opportunity to respond. A specific timeline and process for this step must be followed. The employer must consider any information provided by the applicant before making a final decision.

- Any final decision to deny employment because of the criminal conviction requires another specific written notice to the applicant.

### No More Salary History Questions

AB 168 bans employers from asking about a job applicant's prior salary, compensation or benefits (either directly or through an agent, such as a third-party recruiter). In addition, employers cannot rely on salary history information as a factor in determining whether to hire the applicant or how much to pay the applicant. However, an employer may consider salary information that is disclosed voluntarily by the applicant without any prompting.

AB 168 further requires an employer to provide a job applicant, upon reasonable request, with the pay scale for the position.

### Worksite Immigration Enforcement And Protections

The Immigrant Worker Protection Act (AB 450) provides workers with protection from immigration enforcement while on the job and imposes varying fines from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for violating its provisions.

AB 450's provisions include the following:

- Employers cannot give federal immigration enforcement agents access to non-public areas of a business without a judicial warrant.

- Employers cannot provide these enforcement agents access to employee records without a subpoena or judicial warrant. This prohibition does not apply to Form I-9 or other documents for which a Notice of Inspection was provided to the employer.

- Employers must follow specific requirements related to Form I-9 inspections. Those requirements are to:

- o Post a notice to all current employees informing them of any federal immigration agency's inspections of Forms I-9 or other employment records within 72 hours of receiving the Notice of Inspection. This notice must also be given to the collective bargaining representative, if any.

- o Provide a copy of the Notice of Inspection to an affected employee upon reasonable request.

- o Once the inspection is over, provide each "affected employee" and the employee's collective bargaining representative a copy of the inspection results and written notice of the employer's and employee's obligations arising from the inspection. This must be done within 72 hours of receiving the results. An "affected employee" is one identified by the inspection results as potentially lacking work authorization or having document deficiencies.

This bill also makes it unlawful for employers to reverify the employment eligibility of current employees in a time or manner not allowed by federal employment eligibility verification laws.

## Alcohol Servers

AB 1221 requires that businesses licensed to serve alcohol make sure each alcohol server receives mandatory training on alcohol responsibility and obtains an alcohol server certification. These requirements go into effect in 2021, after the course is developed by the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

## Discrimination, Harassment And Retaliation Protections

Several new laws expand employee protections for 2018. Many of these laws focus on gender equality and gender identity/gender expression protections.

### Harassment Prevention Training: Gender Identity/Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation

California employers with 50 or more employees must provide supervisors with two hours of sexual harassment prevention training every two years.

Under SB 396, covered employers will have to make sure that any mandatory training course they use also discusses harassment based on gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

SB 396 also requires employers to display a poster on transgender rights that the Department of Fair Employment and Housing will develop.

### Harassment Prevention Training: Farm Labor Contractors

SB 295 affects the sexual harassment prevention training that must be provided to receive a farm labor contractor's license. The bill now requires that training be conducted or interpreted into a language understood by the employee, and that the Labor Commissioner receive a list of harassment prevention training materials used and the number of individuals trained.

### Gender Identification: Female, Male Or Nonbinary

SB 179 will allow California residents to choose from three equally recognized gender options – female, male or nonbinary – on state-issued identification cards, birth certificates and driver licenses. For changes to birth certificates, the law is effective on September 1, 2018. For changes to driver licenses, the law is effective on January 1, 2019.

The bill also makes it easier for individuals to change their gender on legal documents, effective on September 1, 2018.

### Employment Discrimination: Gender Neutral Language

AB 1556 revises California's Fair Employment and Housing Act by deleting gender-specific personal pronouns in California's anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, pregnancy disability and family/medical leave laws by changing "he" or "she," for example, to "the person" or "the employee."

### Fair Pay Act Expansion

AB 46 extends California's Fair Pay Act – which prohibits wage discrimination on the basis of gender, race and ethnicity – to cover public employers; existing law only covers private employers.

### Data Collection: Sexual Orientation

AB 677 requires that, beginning no later than July 1, 2019, various state labor agencies collect voluntary, self-identified infor-

# 2018

# Economic Outlook

## A Comprehensive Look At The State Of The Local Economy

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mation pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity in the regular course of collecting other types of demographic data.

### LGBT Rights For Long-Term Care Facility Residents

SB 219 enacts the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Long-Term Care Facility Residents' Bill of Rights, strengthening anti-discrimination protections for LGBT individuals living in long-term care facilities. Among other things, SB 219 makes it unlawful to willfully and repeatedly fail to use a resident's preferred name or pronoun or to deny admission to a long-term care facility because of gender identity or sexual orientation. Facilities are required to post a notice about the protections and follow recordkeeping requirements.

### Human Trafficking

AB 260 extends the list of businesses that must post a human trafficking information notice to include hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns. Meanwhile, SB 225 requires the human trafficking notice to include a new number for those who wish to send text messages. Businesses are not required to post the updated notice until on or after January 1, 2019.

### Anti-Discrimination Protections For Veterans

AB 1710 expands the current protections for members of the armed services by prohibiting discrimination in all "terms, conditions, or privileges" of employment. This legislation conforms state law to the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) by protecting servicemembers in civilian jobs from hostile work environments.

### Health Facilities:

#### Whistleblower Protections

AB 1102 increases the maximum fine for a violation of whistleblower protections in healthcare facilities from \$20,000 to \$75,000.

### Wage And Hour

A few new California laws affect employers' wage-and-hour obligations in 2018, some of which are related to enforcement. Keep in mind that on January 1, 2018, the state minimum wage increases to \$10.50 per hour for employers with 25 or fewer employees and to \$11 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees.

To learn more, download the 2018 Minimum Wage Hike Brings Changes for California Employers white paper (nonmember download).

### Labor Law Enforcement, Retaliation

SB 306 allows the Labor Commissioner to investigate an employer — even without a complaint from an employee — when the Labor Commissioner suspects retaliation or discrimination against a worker during a wage claim or other investigation. The Labor Commissioner also can obtain a court order prohibiting an employer from firing or disciplining an employee, even before completing its investigation or determining retaliation has occurred. SB 306 also creates a new citation process for alleged violations and penalties.

### Increased Liability For Construction Contractors

For certain private construction contracts entered into after January 1, 2018, AB 1701 imposes liability onto the general contractor for any unpaid wages, benefits or contributions that a subcontractor owes to a laborer who performed work under the contract.

### Barbering and Cosmetology

Two new laws affect barbering and cosmetology employers and licensees. SB 490 allows workers licensed under the Barbering and Cosmetology Act to be paid a commission in addition to a base hourly rate if certain conditions are met. AB 326 requires Board of Barbering and Cosmetology schools to include information on physical and sexual assault awareness in the required health and safety course for licensees beginning July 1, 2019.

### Workplace Safety And Workers' Compensation

SB 258 relates to the safety of designated cleaning products, including general cleaning, air care, automotive, or polish or floor maintenance products used primarily for janitorial, industrial or domestic cleaning purposes. Provisions of SB 258 state that:

- Manufacturers of the designated cleaning products must disclose the chemicals in those products and create product safety data sheets; and
- Employers that have these designated cleaning products in their workplace must obtain the safety data sheets from the manufacturers and make them available at the workplace.

As for workers' compensation, several bills were signed into law for 2018.

AB 44 requires employers to provide a nurse case manager to advocate for employees injured during the course of employment by an act of domestic terrorism,

but only when the governor has declared a state of emergency. The Division of Workers' Compensation will adopt regulations on the scope of the employer's obligations and the contents of a required notice.

SB 189, which is effective on July 1, 2018, clarifies when owners, officers of businesses, members of boards of directors, general partners in a partnership and managing members of LLCs may be excluded from workers' compensation laws.

AB 1422 extends the automatic stay on liens filed by medical providers who are charged with criminal fraud.

SB 489 extends the billing deadline for providers of emergency treatment services from 30 days to 180 days. ■

### Reminder: State Minimum Wage Increases On January 1

Businesses with 26 or more employees will see the current minimum wage of \$10.50 per hour increase to \$11 per hour effective January 1, 2018. Businesses with 25 or fewer employees were provided a one-year delay in the state's minimum wage law. On January 1, their minimum wage will increase from the current \$10 per hour to \$10.50 per hour. Some cities and counties have established minimum wage increases that are separate from the state rate. Long Beach follows the state schedule. State legislation (SB 3) requires the minimum wage to increase to \$15 per hour no later than 2022. ■

## CITY OF LONG BEACH

### BID OPPORTUNITIES

| TITLE   | BID NUMBER    | DATE       |
|---|---------------|------------|
| S-1 Sewer Lift Station Rehab Project (SC-0275)      | WD-05-18      | 12/07/2017 |
| Citywide Printing Paper                             | ITB LB18-016  | 12/08/2017 |
| Citywide Printed Envelopes                          | ITB LB18-031  | 12/08/2017 |
| Traffic Signal Work at Four (4) Locations           | R-7066        | 12/13/2017 |
| Dive Team Equipment                                 | ITB FD18-046  | 12/14/2017 |
| Comm. Rehab Program Anaheim St & Cherry Ave         | ITB DV18-040  | 12/20/2017 |
| Houghton Park Community Center                      | R-7113        | 12/21/2017 |
| Pharmacy Benefits Manager                           | RFP LW18-050  | 12/21/2017 |
| Radiologist Services                                | RFP HR18-045  | 12/21/2017 |
| Design-Build Svcs for Phase II Terminal Area Impro. | RFP AP18-033  | 12/22/2017 |
| Baggage Handling System Maintenance                 | RFP AP18-035  | 01/03/2018 |
| Develop & Implement Traffic Calming Measures for    | R-7053/R-7056 | 01/10/2018 |
| Traffic Exiting the I-710 into Long Beach           |               |            |
| Qualification and Selection of Peer Reviewers       | RFQ DV17-112  | Continuous |

**\*\*Some of the listed projects have scheduled mandatory pre-bid meetings which may have already occurred due to publication lead times\*\***

### Bidder Registration

To receive notifications of bid opportunities, register with the City of Long Beach at [www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/](http://www.longbeach.gov/finance/business-info/purchasing-division/purchasing-division/). Additional details on upcoming bids and how to register can be found on the website.

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## Small Business Showcase – Southeast Long Beach



### Cesar's Bistro

On December 2, Colombian immigrants Luz Torres and Cesar Villarreal celebrated the three-year anniversary of their restaurant, Cesar's Bistro, located at 6240 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. "In 2013, we came to visit [the U.S.] – San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego – and Cesar liked Long Beach so much," Torres said. "He always wanted to open a restaurant here in the U.S. At the time, he saw it as an opportunity and the perfect time. So we decided to come the next year to start the project." The married couple currently has six employees who help them serve up what they dubbed "new Latin American cuisine," which is a mix of South American and Caribbean flavors. Villarreal studied the culinary arts in Argentina and has worked as a chef in Peru, Brazil and Colombia, where the couple still owns a catering business. Torres explained that the most important fact about the bistro's food is that everything is made from scratch, fresh and made to order. "When you build relationships with customers, they come and just become friends and family here," Torres said. "We don't have family here, so when customers come and give us a hug and they appreciate what we do, that's the best part. To know that we are doing something good for people who appreciate it." For more information, call 562/494-1000 or visit [www.cesarsbistro.com](http://www.cesarsbistro.com).

### Purple Yoga

After selling his ad agency in 2000, Joe Vogt spent several years soul searching for what was next. "I was looking for a new career path," Vogt said. "I thought back to my yoga experience – I dabbled a little bit in the mid 1990s – and thought it might be a place that I could apply my skill set and I started to pursue it. The rest is history." While living in Downtown Fullerton in 2005, Vogt opened his first Purple Yoga studio. He eventually moved to Long Beach and decided to open a second location in his new hometown. Purple Yoga's Long Beach location opened at 6535 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. in 2010. Vogt describes the studio as a full-service center, which includes two yoga rooms, a locker room, showers and a boutique store to satisfy all yogi needs. He explained that he has between 25 and 30 instructors at the Long Beach studio, which offers hundreds of classes per week, including the popular hot yoga, yoga teacher training and workshops. "Fitness in general is important but I find that what yoga offers is exercise evolved. It's addressing a couple of needs that people might not even understand they are missing," Vogt said. "You can look at it as meditation in motion. If you come in, I'm going to give you a great workout. But I'm also going to help you exercise your mind and help you understand and appreciate that the physical and mental development are very closely intertwined." For more information, call 562/596-5700 or visit [www.purpleyoga.org](http://www.purpleyoga.org).



### Belmont Shore Veterinary Hospital

The Belmont Shore Veterinary Hospital has been caring for residents' pets since the 1970s. Originally located on 2nd Street, the business now occupies the property at 6222 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. Doctors Rachel Sitler and Elyse Frank will celebrate their 11th anniversary of owning the practice come April. "Elyse and I decided that we wanted to give it a try with our main goal to have truly excellent patient care and to have a place where you like coming to work," Sitler said. "Where the staff enjoyed being there and where we worked a lot on the psychology of the practice and making sure people were happy and kind to one another." The practice has about 20 employees, including six registered veterinary technicians, which Sitler said is uncommonly high. Sitler said she is licensed as a general practitioner and often refers patients to specialists for more specific treatments. She explained that her practice's level of customer service, including longer-than-usual appointment times, sets it apart from other veterinary offices. "We are fortunate to work in an area where people treat their pets like family. That person-animal bond is unbelievable and being part of people's family and being included in that is pretty spectacular. The back wall of my office is covered floor to ceiling and all across with cards from people." For more information, call 562/961-0028 or visit [www.belmontshorevet.com](http://www.belmontshorevet.com).



### Long Beach Waterbikes

Long Beach natives Melissa and Michael Almquist grew up on Alamitos Bay. The two met while working as gondoliers in the Naples canals and even got married on the sands of the Alamitos Peninsula. In January, the pair purchased Long Beach Hydrobikes, located at 110 N. Marina Dr. on the docks behind Ballast Point Brewing, renaming the business Long Beach Waterbikes. "When we got the business, we purchased it with 13 bikes and they were in pretty bad condition," Melissa, pictured here, said. "Over the past year, we've been working so hard to bring the waterbike rentals up to par. We ended up with a fleet of 30, which is the largest hydrobike rental fleet in the world." Essentially, a waterbike is a bicycle on two pontoons. The waterbikes can be ridden around the bay and through the Naples canals during the day and at night beginning in January when the business begins moon-glow cruises, in which LED lights are attached to the bikes with a black light on the dock to guide riders back. The couple offers free rentals to active military and veterans every day, as well as to their entire family on Veterans Day. "Before people even get on the bikes they are intrigued because it's literally a bicycle on floats and you're riding a bike on the water," Melissa said. "And then they come back having experienced the area and how pretty it is and how beautiful the weather is here and they are so happy it's contagious." For more information, call 562/546-2493 or visit [www.lbwaterbikes.com](http://www.lbwaterbikes.com).





# Support Local Small Businesses

## Michael Levy Gallery

After growing up in an artistic household, his father a fashion designer and his mother a pattern designer, Michael Levy started in the art business nearly 40 years ago, later opening his gallery in 1983 in Belmont Shore. He relocated to Downtown Long Beach and then Naples before settling in his current location at 6226 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. “For the first 15+ years I was representing emerging artists,” Levy said. “Then, by accident, I fell into this niche of doing estate work for banks, insurance companies and estates in probate liquidating blue chip collections, which I have found more satisfying because you never know what’s going to come in.” Entire blue chip collections, including artists such as Picasso, Chagall and Dali, are given to Levy’s gallery to sell and Levy keeps a commission on each sale. At any given time, the gallery has several hundred pieces, from paintings to prints to sculptures, even some glass and woodwork. Levy also allows any piece to be returned to the gallery by customers to be used as credit for another, regardless of how long ago the original purchase was. “I always suggest that people go look at a lot of art. Because it’s just like anything else, the more you look at, the more mature your taste becomes,” Levy said. “I love when people see a piece and react to it and are not sure why. But they allow that to happen. To me, that’s the fun part.” For more information, call 562/856-9800.



## Hawkes & Smythe

For nearly 18 years, Richard Smythe has owned and operated Hawkes & Smythe, a fine furniture and interiors store, at 6346 E. Pacific Coast Hwy. adjacent to the movie theater at the Marina Pacifica Mall. “I got into it in the late ’80s. You’ve got to really be on your toes now,” Smythe said. “It’s a wonderful business and I’ll be in it until I die.” He explained that he very rarely carries antiques. Rather, the high-end furniture store carries new, handcrafted pieces. The majority of Smythe’s merchandise is made in the United States, Italy, England and France. When it comes to upholstery, he explained that the U.S. can’t be beat, with other countries ordering American. However, he noted that Italian inlays and hand-painted pieces are incredible. Smythe said that the general public is smart and sophisticated, making trust and integrity crucial in the business of selling furniture for thousands of dollars apiece. Though he currently has two part-time employees, Smythe said he has run the business himself since opening. “I love furniture. It’s a disease, really. It’s true, you get hooked and you’re done for. I live, eat, breathe furniture, fabrics, window treatments. You become like an addict – things stacked everywhere: paintings, lamps, fabrics,” Smythe said. “This is a business that’s a passion. You have to love it in order to survive and you have to know what you are doing.” For more information, call 562/342-9782 or visit [www.hawkesandsmythe.com](http://www.hawkesandsmythe.com).

## Small Business Dollars & Sense

### Gearing Up For The Golden Years: Four Tips To Help Small Business Owners Plan For Retirement



By NATASHA  
MATA

**B**ecoming financially stable so you can live comfortably in retirement is a goal that many of us spend our entire careers working towards. According to a recent Wells Fargo/Gallup survey, 82 percent of small business owners said they are currently saving or investing money towards their retirement, and 76 percent said they think they’ll have enough money to live comfortably in retirement.

While it’s great to see that most small business owners are thinking ahead and saving for the future, there are other areas that should be addressed when preparing for retirement.

#### Start with a succession plan

Even if your plans to retire or transition your business are distant, planning for your company’s future now will help you in the long-term. It’s a great idea to create a transition plan while you’re writing or updating your business plan. Whether you want to sell the business, or pass it on to a family member or an existing employee, you will need a clear strategy that outlines your plan.

#### Max out your savings

As you map out your retirement savings strategy, it’s helpful to take a long, hard look at your current finances to determine how much money you can afford to put aside each month. Once you have a savings goal in mind, set up an automatic monthly transfer into a savings account and/or self-employed retirement plan. Some options include individual 401(k)s, Simplified Employee Pension Plan (SEP-IRA), and businesses with up to 100 employees may consider a Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees (SIMPLE IRA). Talk with your financial planner or accountant to learn more.

#### Build an emergency fund

In addition to your retirement savings accounts, it’s important to maintain an easily accessible emergency fund for your small business. No matter how well you plan, the unexpected can happen and having cash reserves is an important component of your overall financial picture. Start by putting cash aside when profits are comfortable, and if you can swing it, allocate a portion or all of your tax return into this account.

#### Know your business’ worth

If selling your business is part of your retirement financial plan, then you need to make time for the proper business valuation process. Even if you think you know the value of your business, only a professional appraiser can truly put a number to it and say how much your business is worth to an outside buyer. Make sure to hire an experienced appraiser, and consider starting the process early. If the value is less than what you expect, having time on your side to make adjustments in your business and then requesting an updated valuation could increase the worth.

There are many important steps you can take now to get your finances in order and enjoy a comfortable retirement. The key is to get started early and stay committed.

*(Natasha Mata, a 22-year veteran of Wells Fargo, is region bank president of the greater Central Los Angeles Area, which includes Long Beach and some North Orange County cities.)*



# Shipping Holiday Cheer

The Port of Long Beach moved tons of holiday treasure this year to make your season bright – more than ever before!

By building a near-zero emissions cargo terminal, more on-dock rail to speed goods to their destinations, a new bridge to improve traffic and more, we're working to make every season green, now and into the future.

