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## Long Awaited 2nd & PCH Project Gets Green Light

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

**A**t its meeting on September 7, the Long Beach Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the 11-acre, 245,000-square-foot 2nd & PCH development on the site of the defunct SeaPort Marina Hotel.

CenterCal Properties LLC designed the property in partnership with owner Raymond Lin, whose family has owned the SeaPort Marina Hotel for more than 20 years. The project includes 95,000 square feet of retail space, 70,000 square feet of restaurant space, a 25,000-square-foot fitness and health club, and a 55,000-square-foot Whole Foods.

During the planning commission meeting, more than 25 public comments were made — with more

against than in favor of the proposal. Many of those speaking against the project were from local labor unions and cited the lack of pro-labor language, such as local hiring, prevailing wage agreements and safety protections, as the source of their opposition. Several commenters, including a spokesperson from the Coalition for Responsible and Equitable Economic Development L.A., cited negative environmental impacts such as air pollution as the reason for opposing the project.

According to Steve Shaul, senior director of development for CenterCal, unless an appeal of the commission's decision is filed, the demolition of the SeaPort Marina Hotel is likely to begin this month. If an appeal is filed, it would be taken before the city council, which would then vote on final approval of the development. ■



## Economists Weigh In: Will Federal Tax Reform Stimulate Economic Growth?

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

**W**hen it comes to tax reform, the Trump administration has made it clear that its main goal is to simplify the tax code and cut taxes, but it has not offered too much in the way of specifics. In an August 30 statement, the White House indicated it would push for corporate and personal tax cuts, cut special interest loopholes, and overall simplify the tax code itself. While the argument for such reform is that it would stimulate economic

growth, economists interviewed by the Business Journal explained that the real outcomes might be more complex than that.

"The Trump administration has advanced this tax reform plan that is basically cuts in taxes," Robert Kleinhenz, economist and executive director of research for Los Angeles-based Beacon Economics, said. "The experience in the past with tax cuts has been that those [translate to] reduced revenue to the United States government. So if it advances on that front and then

also pushes for heightened infrastructure spending to rebuild America's infrastructure, I think the implication is that the administration doesn't really care much about attending to the budget deficit."

Daniel White, director of fiscal policy research for Moody's Analytics, made a similar observation. "It doesn't appear that deficit neutrality is something that they are interested in," he said. In other words, the tax cuts being proposed would likely impact both the budget and deficit, he explained.

"Continuing to do the math, it

**"Divide By Nine"**  
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## What Local Businesses Owners Want In Tax Reform

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

**W**hen Donald Trump was elected president, the stock markets hit historic highs in anticipation of what he would do for business, including his promise to cut corporate taxes. Until recently, revisiting the tax code has taken a back seat to other initiatives such as health care and immigration reform. But Trump has begun beating the drum for tax reform again, releasing a basic list of

(Please Continue To Page 35)

## Series Of Land-Use Meetings Begin September 30

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

**I**n response to resident pushback on proposed Land Use and Urban Design element maps presented during the August 17 Long Beach Planning Commission meeting, the commission requested city staff to conduct additional community outreach. The primary concern of residents was increased building heights and density. In statements following the meeting, Mayor Robert Garcia and several councilmembers came out in support of the commission's request. Below is the list of community meetings:

**Saturday, September 30, 3 p.m.**  
Veterans Park Community Center  
101 E. 28th St.

**Wednesday, October 4, 6 p.m.**  
Whaley Park Community Center,  
5620 E. Atherton St.

**Saturday, October 14, 11 a.m.**  
Best Western Golden Sails Hotel,  
6285 Pacific Coast Hwy.

**Wednesday, October 18, 6 p.m.**  
Expo Arts Center • 4321 Atlantic Ave.

## MILLENNIAL PULSE The 9/11 Generation

By Assistant Editor Samantha Mehlinger

Every generation has their "where were you when?" event that changed the course of their collective future and how they see the world. For Baby Boomers, I've been told it was the assassination of John F. Kennedy. For older Millennials, it was 9/11.

That morning, I found my parents and brother staring at our little 10-inch TV set in the kitchen. I must've asked what was going on about 50 times before someone explained to me that a plane hit the World Trade Center. I had

(Please Continue To Page 5)





Mmeje

social welfare at University of California, Berkeley, and a master's in health services administration from University of Michigan. He replaced **Tamra Kaplan**, who was



Kaplan

named COO at Miller Children's & Women's Hospital Long Beach. Kaplan received a bachelor's degree in biology from University of California, Irvine and her Doctor of Pharmacy from University of the Pacific . . . Long Beach Police Chief Robert Luna has promoted two lieutenants for the positions of Commander: **Erik Herzog** is commander of the east patrol division. He has served as the acting commander of the field support division, which includes the police service dog unit, S.W.A.T, air support, traffic section and special events and planning. He holds a bachelor of science degree in vocational education from California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) and is a graduate of the Sherman Block Leadership Institute. **Lloyd Cox** is now the commander of the internal affairs division. Cox oversaw the gang and violent crimes division, which includes homicide, robbery and the career criminal apprehension team. He holds a bachelor of science degree in professional studies from CSULB and a POST Management Certificate. Chief Luna also announced command staff assignment changes effective September 9. These include – Office of the Chief of Police: **Paul LeBaron**, chief of staff, Investigations Bureau and **Lloyd Cox**, Internal Affairs Division; **Don Wood**, Detective Division, and **Robert Smith**, Gang and Violent Crimes Division. Patrol Bureau: **Michael Lewis**, South Division; **Steve Lauricella**, North Division; **Jeffrey Berkenkamp**, West Division; **Joel Cook**, Field Support Division. Support Bureau:

**Ikenna Mmeje**, the CEO at Doctors Hospital of Manteca, was named chief operating officer at Long Beach Memorial, part of the MemorialCare Health System. Mmeje earned his bachelor's degree in public health and



### Richard D. Browning High School Opens

Fourth District Councilmember Daryl Supernaw, left, joins Principal Felicia Anderson and Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education Member Jon Meyer in welcoming the first class of students to Long Beach's newest school, Richard D. Browning High School, at Obispo Avenue and Hill Street. Browning will focus on academic pathways to careers in culinary arts, hospitality and recreation. "The pathways at Browning High will lead to some of the fastest growing careers in the near future," Anderson said. "We are preparing students for management and executive level jobs in international hotels and resorts. They will be the cutting-edge developers of travel tourism and the top chefs at restaurants." The inaugural class at Browning will consist of 150 freshmen with the high school adding a new crop of ninth graders each year until it reaches capacity. Ultimately, the 10-acre, state-of-the-art campus will serve approximately 800 students in grades 9 through 12. Richard D. Browning owned the Browning Automotive Group, which was located in Long Beach from 1960 to 1980, before relocating to larger facilities at the Cerritos Auto Mall. After Browning passed in 1991, his son Kent, who worked with his father for 16 years, took over. Today, the automotive group includes 14 franchises in 9 locations and 900 employees. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

**Liz Griffin**, Port Police Division; **Alex Avila**, Security Services Division; and **Rudy Komisza**, Training Division. Luna said commanders typically rotate every few years to further community engagement and career advancement opportunities . . . The Aquatic Capital of America, a non-profit organization that promotes aquatic activities in Long Beach, is inducting 15 new members into its hall of fame. Water polo players recognized are: **Ryan Bailey**, **Bruce Bradley**, **Dixon Fiske**, **Bob Horn** (also a coach) and **Edwin Knox**. Swimmers include **An Simmons Baxter**, **Gunnar Larsson** and open water swimmer **Lynne Cox**.

Sailors are **John Shadden** and **Charles Kober** (also a coach). Other honorees include: surfer **Jericho Poppler Bartlow**, diving coach **Glenn McCormick**, diver **Kelly McCormick**, **John Nunn**, a rower and coach,

and **Roy "Dutch" Miller**, lifeguard pioneer. The induction ceremony is on September 21 at 6 p.m. at the Pete Archer Long Beach Rowing Center, 5750 Boathouse Ln. To purchase tickets, visit: [igfn.us/f/1hcw/n](http://igfn.us/f/1hcw/n).

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(Continued From Page 1)

endless more questions, but there were no answers.

I was kept home from school and watched TV in another room. Nearly every channel was dark or simply displayed pictures of candles or flags. Thirteen-year-old me gave up and put on the news.

I turned it on just in time to see a black shape come streaking into frame, crashing into the second tower. With much of the country and the world, I watched it all. Outside, fighter jets passed over our neighborhood.

In my journal entry that day, scrawled in Milky Pen, I wrote, "The towers are gone. It's terrorists," not really knowing what a terrorist was.

A couple days later, the airspace was still a dead zone. My chattering class of fellow 8th graders at Hoover Middle School fell silent during P.E. class when, as we sat on a basketball court for roll call, a hulking C-17 took off overhead. We knew where it must have been going.

The following days are often reflected upon as a time when the nation came together. And we did. But we were also a nation feeling a potent mixture of fear, vengefulness and patriotism. And we couldn't have known it, but we were also on the precipice of great division. Perhaps we should have seen this coming when President Bush, in wise foresight, felt the need to visit the Islamic Center in Washington, D.C., and proclaim that Muslims were not our enemy.

On my block, nearly every home suddenly had a flag hanging on its porch. It was heartening to see. But soon after they were hung, someone spray-painted black marks on every single one of them.

Weeks later, one of my classmates, perhaps sheltered or still unable to comprehend, asked me, "Why can't everyone just get over it already?"

We went into high school at a time of anthrax scares, fears of school shootings, and the cloud of a foreign concept hanging over our '90s-era heads: war. Air travel went from being something fun to vastly unpleasant. It was hard to look at planes the same way.

By 2009, I was a senior in college preparing to go abroad for a short course in England. During a prep seminar, our professor informed us that we were luckier than prior groups who had taken the class. For years, he noted, students were advised not to wear any clothing identifying themselves as Americans.

There were strong feelings about the War On Terror abroad, and many were not good ones, he relayed. But apparently, the tide was turning. Obama was our president, and he played better overseas than our former cowboy in chief. That's not quite how he phrased it, but I'm quite sure that is what he meant.

It seemed it had only taken eight years for the world to go from feeling boundless compassion for us to a lot of anger.

When we boarded the plane, the terror threat level was orange.

After having spent a few days in the birthplace of Shakespeare, we took a bus to London. Staring out the window as we passed through its outer suburbs, a bulletin board caught my eye.

Obama's face was superimposed on

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's, who then was still in power in Iran. Next to their combined visage was the phrase, "Who poses the greater nuclear threat?" I wondered if my professor had been right about the way the world thought about America. No one else on the bus noticed.

I recently learned the bulletin board was part of an advertising campaign by Russia Today, a media outlet funded by the Russian government. Funny how things start to make sense in hindsight.

Shortly thereafter was the Arab Spring – an up swell against repressive regimes in the Middle East that had many feeling hopeful about that region, finally. But the resulting unrest and pushback from governments and militia, including the great humanitarian crisis that is the Syrian Civil War, put a rather sobering stopper in that hopefulness.

In the interim, ISIS has carried out more attacks than I could count offhand, including the 2015 massacre in Paris, which hit home for Long Beach with the loss of California State University, Long Beach student Nohemi Gonzalez.

Those of us Millennials who are now in our late 20s and early 30s were pre-teens and teenagers on 9/11, and grew up as our nation went to war – one we hoped would put a stop to terrorism. It is now our nation's longest. We have grown up watching the war, fighting in the war, and protesting the war, and we are not quite sure to what end. Terrorism rages on.

My classmates and I were 13 when terrorists drove planes full of innocents into

some of our nation's most cherished buildings. We saw our president's face turn ashen as this news was whispered in his ear while he read to even younger children. We watched people jumping out of the tallest structures in New York, and saw them collapse with many more inside. We saw the center of our national defense in flames. For Millennials, this was the Pearl Harbor of our formative years.

But we also saw a nation come together in one common purpose: to support one another. A human instinct most purely embodied in the individuals on United Flight 93, who drove their own plane into the ground to spare their fellow countrymen.

That was a powerful thing to witness as adolescents.

This is not my typical column. I'm not going to throw a bunch of statistics at you to prove some kind of point about people in my age set. Instead, I hope you'll see in this collection of experiences glimpses into our formative understanding of the world at large, and thereby perhaps better understand us, regardless of where we land on the proverbial "issues."

My only real point is that I hope, as a generation, we live with the greater human purpose we learned on that day and in the days following, instead of clinging to fear and anger as we inherit leadership of our country. ■





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■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**  
Senior Writer

Development News

**‘Innovative’ Housing Concepts Underway By Alamitos Bay Partners**

Three urban town home (UTH) developments are coming to Long Beach with more in the pipeline. Alamitos Bay Partners – a joint development venture between Scott Choppin, founder and chief executive officer of Urban Pacific Multi-Housing LLC, and private investors Neal Thompson and David Sazegar – is behind the projects.

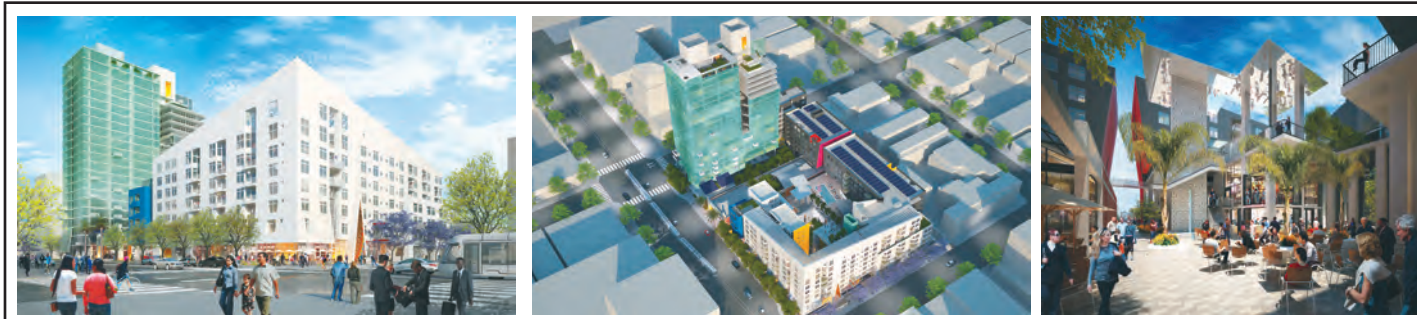
“This UTH offer was specifically designed to house large, dual and multi-generational urban families. Many of these families that are attracted to this housing type are already living as an economic unit,” Choppin said. “It’s going to be somewhere between two and four wage earners and somewhere between two and five young people.”

Rents for a five-bedroom town house could range from \$2,600 to \$2,800 per month, which normally would not place the unit in the “moderate” column in terms of pricing. However, with the model of targeting large, multi-income families, Choppin argues the units will be affordable for what they are offering.

Long Beach has a higher percentage of urban family renters than most cities in the state, according to Choppin. He said the city also has one of the highest percentages of small apartment properties in the state. Taking these two facts into consideration, Choppin explained that his urban town homes fit with the city fabric and fill a niche that has not been available in Long Beach before.

The project located at 325 Daisy Ave. is nearing completion and features two four-bedroom, three-bathroom units. The building is 3,400 square feet, and each unit has a two-car, direct-access garage. The other two projects will be located at 1719 Cedar Ave and 538 Golden Ave. The Cedar project consists of four five-bedroom units in a 7,400-square-foot building, while the Golden project consists of three five-bed-

(Please Continue To Next Page)



**Ratkovich Properties Increases Number Of Broadway Block Residential Units**

Ratkovich Properties’ Broadway Block, a mixed-use development proposed at the former Acres of Books site along Long Beach Boulevard between Broadway and 3rd Street, has had several changes made to the original proposal, according to President Cliff Ratkovich. The project consists of one 22-story and one seven-story building and originally included 375 residential units. However, the updated proposal increased the number of residential units to 392. Additionally, the project includes 30,000 square feet of restaurant, retail, art gallery and Cal State Long Beach creative space. Ratkovich explained that the project will connect the downtown core with the adjacent East Village Arts District. He said he hopes to have city approval by the end of the year and begin construction in 2018. (Renderings courtesy of Ratkovich Properties)



From left, Alamitos Bay Partners, LLC, renderings of urban town home projects on Cedar, Golden and Daisy avenues. The latter is under construction.



Alamitos Bay Partners, a joint venture that includes Scott Choppin, pictured, founder and CEO of Urban Pacific Multi-Housing LLC, is creating urban town homes that Choppin describes as an innovation in Long Beach residential development. (Photograph by the Business Journal’s Larry Duncan)

Realty Views

**How Are Builders Adjusting Their Strategy?**



By **TERRY ROSS**

With the massive changes that have impacted the building and development industry over the past decade, the questions of what to build, when to build and how to build have taken on much more importance and are not as easy to answer as they once were.

From just about every corner of the real estate market, you hear about a lack of housing inventory. This is due to current owners not moving as often, as well as a shortage of new construction to keep up with demand.

But one of the big questions facing

builders of all kinds is, “Whom do you build for?” Is it for the Millennial generation that is mostly looking for a starter home with a low down payment, or is it the older buyer who is going into a second or third move-up and has more income and equity to put into a larger home?

According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), home building is floundering compared with soaring demand, and inventory is at its lowest level in two decades. But according to the John Burns Real Estate Consulting Company, which advises builders on emerging trends, the 65-and-over demographic is propping up the current homeownership rate, which is down almost 6% from 12 years ago and stands at 63.7%. Burns goes on to note that the older homeowners bought in a time of more affordable housing during their working years and in a stronger economy that offered no-down mortgage programs for veterans, among other financial tools that are no longer available to buyers.

That study also noted that the percentage of homeowners rises as incomes rise, skewing towards older buyers. The Burns group noted that the median-income

household – after taking out retirees who may already own a home – is about \$64,000 per year, but only 58% of those households own a home. They feel this trend will drive homeownership down over time since the 80% homeownership rate of those that pass away over the next eight years will decline.

This is, of course, based on the assumption that the younger generation – who is paying off student debt and may not get the economic opportunities that their parents had – will not fill the void. An increase of one percentage point in the median household income (based on data from 2010 to 2016) leads to a 2.1% upswing in building, according to information from NAR.

With higher pay comes the ability to purchase a more expensive home – and new homes are usually on the higher end in any given area.

Then there is the relationship between new homes and prices: a step-up of one percentage point in home prices results in an average 1.2% increase in permits taken – but with an important distinction. When price growth starts to hit at about 24%, builders see higher land costs and incomes

begin to not support the high sales costs, so developers tend to pull back.

Economists see the next six or seven years yielding a 6% annual increase in home prices in California – not withstanding a global event – but no bubble on the horizon because of the difference in the financial mindset today.

For instance, in 2006 – before the recession and at the height of the housing bubble – 43% of California borrowers had a second mortgage. Last year that number was 4.8%. The median down payment in 2006 was 11.8%, while last year it was 18.6%. Borrowers are less leveraged, and lenders are not extending credit as they did a decade ago.

Builders are watching these trends closely and are having to do more research than ever to find the right mix of product at the right price for today’s buyers and for those that will be in the market in just a few years.

(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.)



room units in a 5,700-square-foot building. All seven units include 3.75 bathrooms and two-car, direct-access garages.

“They are demonstration projects to prove the concept. This is a true innovation,” Choppin said. “Nobody else is making this offer, and this is a really radical solution to providing moderate-income housing to middle class families.”

The Daisy project is scheduled to be completed by the end of the month, according to Choppin. Cedar is expected to break ground next month, while Golden is scheduled to break ground in December or January.

Currently, the joint venture expects another 5 to 10 deals to be announced in the next 18 months in Long Beach, according to Choppin. In the near term, he said the group is aiming for 8 to 10 deals per year, bumping up to between 50 and 70 deals per year within the next three years. Within five years, Choppin said the group hopes to expand the concept to markets in the Bay Area, San Diego, Portland, Seattle and Denver.

Within a 10-mile radius of the Urban Pacific headquarters in Long Beach, Choppin said the group is monitoring over 500 land sites that it has identified as fitting the zoning characteristics and size needed for urban town homes.

“This housing innovation was created in Long Beach, and we are serving this innovation first to the needs of the City of Long Beach and the population of people that live here. I’m motivated by that,” Choppin said. “We’re a gateway city. We’re a city of immigrants, and everybody that comes here will need the capability to find good housing. This provides that.”

## Single-Family Community Riverdale Unveils Model Homes

On Saturday, Brandywine Homes and Integral Communities unveiled model homes for tours as part of Riverdale, a joint venture residential development. The project includes 131 detached single-family homes as part of a gated community located at 4747 Daisy Ave., once the site of the Will J. Reid Boy Scout Camp.

“There are virtually no new residential developments located in the South Bay, which is a prime area for families looking to live in a place with easy freeway access and low commute times to both L.A. and Orange County,” Dave Barisic, principal in charge of sales and marketing at Brandywine, said. “This exclusive gated neighborhood is designed to appeal to growing and established families with children, as well as empty nesters. A perfect community to call home.”

Riverdale includes homes with three or four bedrooms ranging from 1,900 to 2,250 square feet. Each home will include two-car garages, patios, master suites and eco-friendly features. The community also includes a resort-style clubhouse with a meeting room, a junior Olympic-size pool and spa with cabanas, outdoor dining areas and a tot lot. Home prices start in the low \$600,000s.

As part of city approval, the project included the development of the C. Molina Park on 3.3 acres located at 4951 Oregon Ave. The park features a turf soccer field, playground, restroom facilities, a walking path, parking and landscaping.

(Please Continue To Next Page)

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The Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites dual hotel by Nexus Development Corporation has been delayed due to this year's weather, according to a Nexus spokesperson. The Douglas Park hotel was original scheduled to open this month but the opening is now expected in mid-November. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

**New Hotel Opening Delayed  
By One Month Due To Weather**

After projections of a mid-September opening, the Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites dual hotel project by Nexus Development Corporation is now expected to open in mid-November, according to Stephanie Zachan, marketing manager for Nexus. "Unfortunately, the record rainy season of 2017 slightly delayed our construction schedule," Zachan said in an email to the Business Journal. Evolution Hospitality will oversee operations of the new hotel and has named Jef Lawrence general manager. Lawrence, originally from Salt Lake City, has lived in Long Beach since 2014. "This is the first time in my 20-year career in hospitality working directly in the community

where I live. So I am very excited to be able to provide opportunities for people to work, learn, grow and give back to the community right here in Long Beach," Lawrence said in an e-mail to the Business Journal. "Furthermore, I am very much looking forward to partnering with other members of the local business community, the hospitality industry and the chamber of commerce as well as the convention and visitors bureau in developing relationships and welcoming more people to this amazing city." Lawrence was previously the general manager at Hyatt House in El Segundo.

**City Action**

At its meeting on September 7, the Long Beach Planning Commission voted



**Westin Long Beach Hotel Sold**

Last month, Boston-based real estate investment firm Rockpoint Group bought The Westin Long Beach for \$84.8 million. The 460-room hotel is located at 333 E. Ocean Blvd., across the street from the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. Highgate, a New York-based hospitality management company retained by Rockpoint to operate the facility, named John Ault managing director of the hotel. Negotiations regarding pay, benefits and work conditions are set to begin between management and hotel employees to resolve a years-long labor dispute, which resulted in countless early morning pickets of the hotel. Labor union UNITE HERE Local 11 was behind the picketing and protests, as it pushed for, and now achieved, union recognition at the downtown hotel. (Business Journal photograph)

unanimously to approve the construction of a 6,000-square-foot addition to the Little Owl Preschool, which requires the demolition of a two-story apartment building located at 3426 and 3470 Linden Avenue. A conditional use permit was also approved for a 1,839-square-foot Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf located at 5865 Linden Ave.

At its September 12 meeting, the Long Beach City Council will consider permits for sidewalk dining at the following restaurants: La Traviata Restaurant Lounge and Bar, located at 301 Cedar; Foundation Sandwich Shop, located at 160 The Promenade North; Starling Diner, located at 4114 E. 3rd St.; and The Pie Hole, located at 5277 E. 2nd St. ■

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**Long Beach Business Journal**



# Visionaries – Shaping The Future Of Long Beach

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**  
Assistant Editor

How do you envision the future of Long Beach?

With more than 450,000 residents and thousands of businesses, there is no shortage of ideas and opinions on the topic. But among the hundreds of thousands of stakeholders in the city, there is a collection of individuals who have cultivated the influence, the means and the drive to bring their visions for the future of Long Beach to reality. These community leaders and stakeholders have already begun planting the seeds that have the potential to grow our city's various industries and its landscape, and to foster a livable, connected and healthy community.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a visionary as "a person with original ideas about what the future will or could be like." Within these pages, the Business Journal highlights 12 visionaries from a variety of backgrounds with expertise and influence in their respective fields. They were chosen because of the magnitude of impact their ideas and plans stand to make on the city, and because their goals, though ambitious, are attainable. Many of these individuals are Long Beach residents, while others are investors in the community.

Mayor Robert Garcia opens the section with his vision for the future of the city as a whole, and what he is doing and intends to do to lay the groundwork for that vision to become reality. The 11 other visionaries are as follows:

## The Environment

Dr. Jerry Schubel, President/CEO  
Aquarium of the Pacific

## Cityscape

Cliff Ratkovich, President  
Ratkovich Properties



## Health Care

Dr. Alam Nisar M. Syed, Medical Director  
Radiation Oncology & Endocurietherapy  
Long Beach Memorial Medical Center



## Hospitality/Tourism

Steve Goodling, President/CEO,  
Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## International Trade

Rick Cameron, Managing Director  
Planning & Environmental Affairs  
Port of Long Beach



## Innovation In Government

John Keisler, Director  
Economic & Property Development Department  
City of Long Beach



## Entertainment

Taylor Woods, Principal  
Urban Commons



## Education

Jane Close Conoley, President  
California State University, Long Beach



## Livability

Brian Ulaszewski, Executive Director  
City Fabrick



## Community Engagement

Justin Rudd, Founder & Organizer  
Community Action Team



## The Arts

Ron Nelson, Executive Director  
Long Beach Museum of Art



All photographs by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan

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*“I think when you have multimodal communities, your neighborhoods are healthier.”*

# ENVISIONING THE FUTURE Robert Garcia

■ BY **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**, Assistant Editor

**T**wenty years from now, Mayor Robert Garcia envisions a climate resilient Long Beach with an active coastline, a still-bustling port, multimodal streets and healthier communities. Garcia and the city government are planting the seeds now to ensure that this vision becomes a reality.

At the top of the list of Garcia's goals for the city is activating its miles-long beach. "Twenty years down the road, I hope to see an active coastline with a reconfigured breakwater," he said in an interview at his city hall conference room overlooking the downtown shoreline. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently undertaking a study on reconfiguration options to allow for ecosystem restoration.

"We want more people to access the beach and the coast and the water. And the main way of doing that is making sure that we have enough coastal activity and restoration and tidal flow so that the water is not only incredibly clean but [also] so that people can actually enjoy it," Garcia said.

While Long Beach may never be a "surf town," improving water quality and flow could have economic benefits, Garcia pointed out. "It does a lot for the economy along the coast and businesses and home values. I think it's a huge economic boost to reconfigure the breakwater," he said.

Garcia envisions a bright future for the city's hospitality and tourism industry. "We're adding another Carnival Cruise Line terminal. We're building the Queen Mary development, Queen Mary Island. We're developing the downtown," he said. "I do think that 20 years from now we're going to be even more of a destination than we are today."

The city is currently investing in its communities with tax funds from Measure A, a sales tax measure approved last year to fund public safety and infrastructure improvements. "Ten years from now when that project is done, we're going to have a lot to show for when it comes to public streets and buildings," Garcia said.

Garcia also aims to improve streets so that they serve multiple modes of transportation. "We have got to build multimodal streets. We can't only build streets for cars," he said. "We are used to a car-only culture. And I think that we have got to diversify that. . . . I think when you have multimodal communities, your neighborhoods are healthier."

Two decades from now, Garcia also hopes that poverty will have dramatically decreased in Long Beach, where about one-fourth of the population currently lives below the poverty line. "Our biggest concentration of poverty in the city is in Central Long Beach. But we know already that poverty and crime also go hand in hand, and the crime is dramatically decreasing in the center of the city," he said. "I think the city is well-poised to help folks."

Garcia believes that Long Beach will still be known as a hub for international trade in the future but that such a future depends on making investments in the port today. "The port is having some really great months lately. We have got to continue that, strengthen the port, invest in the port," he said.

The port has been a major leader in implementing environmentally friendly policies such as its Green Port Policy and its joint Clean Air Action Plan with the Port of Los Angeles. This is just one piece in a greater puzzle of making Long Beach a climate-resilient city, one of Garcia's priorities for the future.

"We are part of the Paris Climate Agreement as a city. So we are planning for dramatic changes around climate," Garcia said, referring to the international agreement ratified by 146 countries.

"We know that 20 years from now the planet will actually be warmer, which means Long Beach will be warmer," Garcia said. "Overall, we're continuing to green the port and green the city and be environmentally responsible," he said.

When it comes to Long Beach's identity in the future, Garcia reflected, "I really think people associate us with international trade. But I also think that Long Beach will just become a much more international destination. And I think that certainly the downtown will rival downtowns on the coast anywhere in the country in the next five or 10 years."



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*“I would like to think that Long Beach and the Aquarium can open people’s eyes.”*



## THE ENVIRONMENT Jerry Schubel

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**, Assistant Editor

Throughout the country and the world, aquariums serve as places where people gather to learn about the world’s waters and the life within them. But in Long Beach, Aquarium of the Pacific President and CEO Dr. Jerry Schubel has a more far-reaching vision for the nonprofit institution, one that places it at the forefront of environmental outreach and education to inform communities and effect change.

“I think once we open Pacific Visions in the spring of 2019, that’s going to be the most powerful platform in the world for letting people explore alternative pathways to the future and to discover what we need to do to live in harmony,” Schubel said, referring to the planned new wing of the Aquarium. “You don’t do it by preaching, and you don’t do it with all these films that are gloom and doom. It’s a message of hope and creativity and innovation.”

The wing’s centerpiece will be the 300-seat Honda Pacific Visions Theater, which will screen original documentaries and films produced by the Aquarium, the storylines of which are currently being refined. Also included in plans for the wing are an expanding, changing exhibit gallery and an art gallery.

“Now we have a partner, Cortina Productions. And they will do most of the production of this,” Schubel said of the documentaries. Cortina Productions has created programs for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, multiple presidential libraries (including those of George W. Bush and Richard Nixon), the Newseum, and many other historical and cultural institutions. “They are among the best storytellers in the world, and they are our partners. So we know the content, but they can add the magic,” Schubel said.

In Pacific Visions, Schubel plans to educate visitors about potential solutions for and approaches to becoming resilient to climate change and improving the environment.

“It’s very clear that this addition is not traditional [for an] aquarium. There will be very few fish in it. . . . We want to tell the big story. And fish aren’t very good storytellers,” Schubel said.

“No matter how quickly we reduce greenhouse gas emissions – and we must – we’re going to live in a different world long before this century is over. And it will be a warmer world, a higher stand of sea level. There will be more frequent storms. Agricultural productivity [will go] down,” he said, adding that this picture could make people depressed. “On the other hand, you can look at it [as] what a wonderful opportunity.”

Because of Long Beach’s size and its assets – the beach, the port, the airport, et cetera – Schubel believes it is positioned to become a model of climate resiliency, with some help from the Aquarium.

“It has to be a city that embraces creativity and innovation, dealing with the new challenges that we have,” Schubel said. “I would like to think that we could be a leader in developing, refining and testing what are called ‘living shorelines,’ using oyster beds, mussel beds, seagrass beds to help protect the shoreline against storm surges and erosion.” Schubel said he has had preliminary discussions with new Long Beach Harbor Commissioner Frank Colonna on this topic.

Schubel is also an advocate for pursuing the development of aquaculture in federal waters off the California coast. “Farming fish in the sea, and particularly in federal waters, is a great opportunity for Southern California and I think it extends to Long Beach,” he said.

“With Long Beach, the big issues are drought – there will be more demands on fresh water in the future. And I think also air quality is going to be a big issue,” Schubel said. “I would like to think that Long Beach and the Aquarium can open people’s eyes. The traditional approaches to conservation often aren’t going to work in the future, so we have to challenge our own thinking.”

Through programming at the Aquarium and within its new wing, Schubel hopes to educate the public about upcoming challenges and opportunities to address them, from developing biodiesel for use in trucks to creating natural segments of the Los Angeles River to recognizing the role Long Beach’s existing businesses and institutions can play in the city’s future.





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*“Absent a compelling vision, an inspiring vision, development will not reach its full potential.”*

# **CITYSCAPE** Cliff Ratkovich

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**, Senior Writer

**W**ith more than 50 development projects in the planning phase, under construction or nearing completion citywide, the Long Beach cityscape is beginning to transform. These changes will be most prominent when viewing the downtown skyline, according to Cliff Ratkovich, president of Ratkovich Properties.

“I don’t know of any city in America that has more construction activity, more development on the horizon than Downtown Long Beach,” Ratkovich said. “Like most cities, the downtown is an important part of the city. It’s really the heart of the city, if you will. If the heart isn’t functioning, then the other parts of the city don’t function well.”

Ratkovich contrasted this activity and growth to the ’80s, when Long Beach was ranked as the fifth most blighted city in America. The downtown area was on life support with many parcels vacant or in extreme decay. Today, with parcels being filled in, Ratkovich explained that communities are becoming more connected.

Integral to this connectivity is Ratkovich Properties’ Broadway Block, which is planned at the former Acres of Books site along Long Beach Boulevard between Broadway and 3rd Street. The project consists of one 22-story and one seven-story building, which feature 392 residential units, and 30,000 square feet of restaurant, retail, art gallery and Cal State Long Beach creative space. Ratkovich said he hopes to have city approval by the end of the year and begin construction in 2018.

“What it affords us is the opportunity to do something that is much more than just developing a project or developing a building. There is a rare opportunity to really build community and to create a strong sense of place,” Ratkovich said. “We have carefully designed the project in such a way that . . . we will give it a sense of community that is rare to find in any other development downtown.”

Once completed, Ratkovich said Broadway Block would connect the downtown core with the adjacent East Village Arts District. This idea of viewing a develop-

ment as a truly integrated part of the community in terms of connecting areas of the city will become more commonplace, according to Ratkovich. He said this is the most sustainable and authentic way to create a positive atmosphere downtown that would then radiate out to the rest of the city.

As the downtown matures and parcels become scarce, Ratkovich said the only course of action is to build up. With the Broadway Block’s 22-story high-rise and the forthcoming 35-story second phase of The Current on the corner of Ocean Boulevard and Alamitos Avenue, Ratkovich said this process has already begun. However, he explained that the bar needs to be raised in terms of architectural standards.

“Long Beach, frankly, has a history of getting to the edge of greatness and figuring out a way to compromise and settle for mediocrity,” Ratkovich said. “What I think is most important is that the bar be raised higher and higher as far as design standards in terms of bringing a type of architecture and the types of buildings downtown that Long Beach truly deserves.”

As the downtown reaches a plateau in development, Ratkovich said there will be a ripple effect that causes rejuvenation throughout the city. He explained that as downtown rents increase, people unable or unwilling to pay those rates will likely move to fringe neighborhoods just outside of downtown. This shift would then cause development to expand to these fringe communities.

As improvements ripple through the city, Ratkovich stressed the importance of remaining sensitive to existing neighborhoods and residents. He said pure gentrification that turns a neighborhood into something it is not should not be the goal. A vibrant downtown would help each unique neighborhood aspire to become healthy and vibrant in its own way.

“Development doesn’t occur in a vacuum. It takes strong vision, and it takes strong leadership on multiple levels. Absent a compelling vision, an inspiring vision, development will not reach its full potential. I’m very optimistic about the future of downtown,” Ratkovich said. “There’s no scenario that I can envision — other than one that is more macro in its character — that can derail Long Beach from having a very bright future, both in the short term as well as the long term.”



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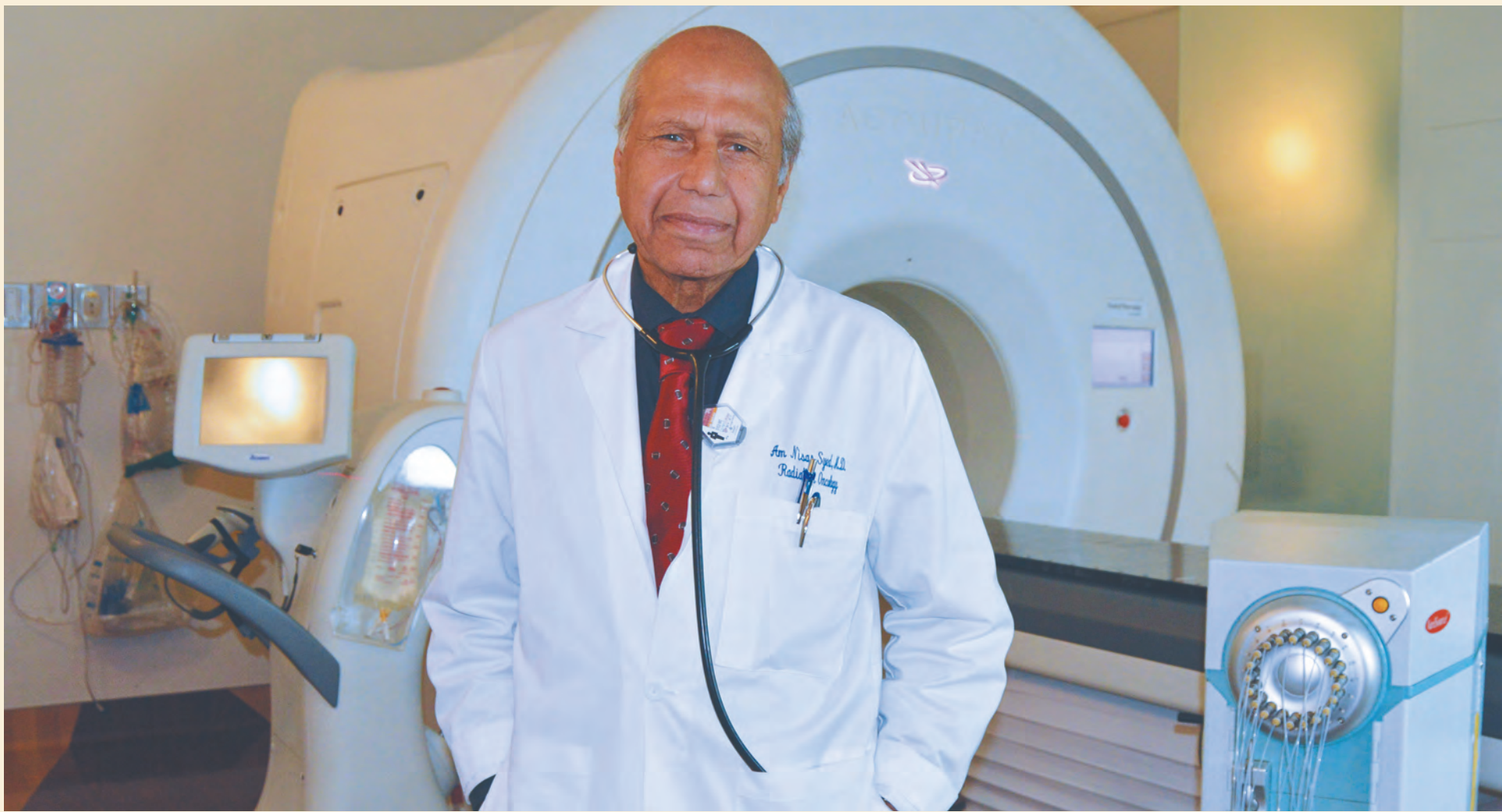
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*“We are the center of the world for the brachytherapy treatments and the training at Long Beach Memorial.”*



# HEALTH CARE Alam Nisar M. Syed

■ BY **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**, Assistant Editor

**T**hanks to the pioneering work of Dr. Alam Nisar M. Syed, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center has become an international training hub for a minimally invasive, localized treatment that helps preserve quality of life for cancer patients.

Syed has spent much of his career developing and refining modern brachytherapy, a process by which a radioactive implant the size of a grain of rice is injected into a tumor for a brief period of time to treat the cancer.

At the start of his career, Syed received his doctorate in India and became a board-certified surgeon in England. “I saw during that period when I was doing surgery [that] many patients had cancers where the surgery had to be very radical,” he said. “Like if they had tongue cancer or throat cancer, they had to have the tongue taken out and had the feeding tube [and] the breathing tube. Even if they are cured, they don’t have any life,” he reflected. “So having had the surgical experience, I thought I should do the radiation oncology and develop some techniques to take care of them and avoid the radical surgery.”

After completing a surgical fellowship in Chicago, Syed moved to Washington, D.C., to train with Dr. Erlich Henschke in the basic aspects of brachytherapy. “I just learned the principles, and then I moved here to USC. That’s where I started my developmental work of this technology,” Syed said.

“You implant needles directly into the tumor and send a radioactive source through it. And the treatment itself lasts five to 10 minutes,” Syed said of brachytherapy. “It travels under computer control. . . . And that goes into the tumor and travels a couple of millimeters every few seconds [and] . . . it treats those areas and then goes back to the container.”

Unlike traditional external radiation or chemotherapy, this technique localizes radiation therapy so that surrounding tissues and systems remain intact, with minimal radiation exposure. The technique can be used for early stage cancers or combined with other treatments if the disease is more advanced, according to Syed.

“[With brachytherapy,] you leave the normal tissues close to normal and the cure rates are improved,” Syed noted.

Despite the benefits of brachytherapy, many radiation oncologists are not trained in the technique, and it is not readily available at many medical centers, Syed explained.

Although brachytherapy was first employed when radium was discovered more than 100 years ago, the practice went by the wayside in the 1960s after more efficient external radiation technologies were developed, Syed said. For about 20 years, until Syed entered the field, there were no major developments in brachytherapy treatment. “It takes some surgical skills to do the procedure, and it’s kind of labor intensive,” he noted.

Syed founded the American Brachytherapy Society and is the founder of the Journal of Brachytherapy International. As the medical director of radiation oncology and endocurietherapy (another word for brachytherapy) at Long Beach Memorial, Syed estimated he has overseen the training of more than two thousand doctors who come from across the world to learn brachytherapy techniques.

“As a matter of fact, we conducted 22 annual brachytherapy workshops and symposiums right here at Memorial,” Syed said. “They get intensive course training but with their whole staff – physicians, nurses,” he said. Some choose to stay for weeks, months or even a year at a time. Syed and his team also travel to many countries to teach the procedure.

“We are always on the cutting edge. We are always looking on the ways to improve it,” Syed said. In the past 10 years or so, a technique to combine brachytherapy with focused radiation has improved cure rates. A tool called CyberKnife allows oncologists to treat patients with focused beams of radiation. “The result is almost like brachytherapy . . . but it still treats some surrounding structures,” Syed said.

Syed said it is important to continue training physicians in brachytherapy so more people have access to the treatment. “We are the center of the world for the brachytherapy treatments and the training at Long Beach Memorial,” he said.



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# CITY OF LONG BEACH

## BID OPPORTUNITIES

TITLE	BID NUMBER	DATE
Furnish & Deliver Resilient Seated Gate Valves	WD-33-17	09/14/2017
Homeland Security Grant Admin Support - REBID	RFP DC17-082	09/14/2017
Asphalt Concrete Materials (Delivery)	ITB LB17-077	09/14/2017
Steel and Related Metals - Citywide	ITB LB17-124	09/14/2017
Lake Water Quality Management	RFP PR17-136	09/14/2017
Prof. Website Redesign & Strategic Comm. Svcs		09/15/2017
Furnish & Deliver Sewer Cleaning Degreaser	WD-18-17	09/18/2017
Provide Roach Control Services	WD-24-17	09/18/2017
Enterprise Document Management System	RFP TI17-143	09/19/2017
HazMat RAE Air Monitors	ITB FD17-127	09/19/2017
Develop & Implement Traffic Calming Measures for Traffic Exiting the I-710 into Long Beach	R-7053/R-7056	09/20/2017
PCI Compliance Subject Matter Expertise (SME)	RFP TI17-144	09/20/2017
Rapid Deployment Kit(RDK) AreaRAE Syst. REBID	ITB FD17-125	09/20/2017
Episerver Design & Development Support	RFP TI17-138	09/22/2017
Water Resources Plan Preparation		09/25/2017
Historic Terminal HVAC Replacement	R-7097	09/27/2017
General Automotive Parts	ITB F518-003	09/27/2017
Groundwater Treatment Plant Chemical Tanks Replacement Project-Phase IV	WD-20-17	09/28/2017
S-1 Sewer Lift Station Rehab Project (SC-0275)	WD-31-17	09/28/2017
Air Filtration Units	ITB PR17-134	10/04/2017
Management Consult. for LAAFC Reg. Train. Grp	RFP FD17-135	10/05/2017
Airport Flight Information Display System	RFP AP17-142	10/09/2017
Airport Security System Maintenance	RFP AP17-141	10/12/2017
Development Opportunity at Long Beach Airport	RFP AP17-128	11/01/2017
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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*“You need to create facilities for conventions and conferences that are going to both permit personal experiences and ‘wow’ experiences.”*



# HOSPITALITY & TOURISM Steve Goodling

■ BY SAMANTHA MEHLINGER, Assistant Editor

The success of Long Beach’s convention, hospitality and tourism industries depends in part upon a forward-thinking approach to investment and collaboration – and Steve Goodling, president and CEO of the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, is the man with that plan.

Goodling has been recognized by national convention and meeting organizations and publications for his approach in repositioning the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center as a flexible, contemporary venue. In July, for example, he was named one of 25 of the most influential people in the meetings industry by Successful Meetings magazine.

Under Goodling’s purview, the center has in recent years seen its arena transformed with state-of-the-art theatrical rigging and lighting, and previously underutilized spaces converted to hip venues for parties and networking. Up next is an overhaul of the Terrace Theater plaza fountain, which when completed next year will entertain onlookers with a “mini Las Vegas-like” water show.

But if he has it his way, Goodling does not intend to stop there. And he’s tapping into emerging trends for inspiration.

“If you look at the last 20 years, we have become as a culture more experiential,” Goodling said. “The other trend that has been solid for the last decade, and I see it continuing, is personalization. . . . You need to create facilities for conventions and conferences that are going to both permit personal experiences and ‘wow’ experiences.”

One of Goodling’s future goals is to update the cavernous exhibit hall. “I believe that the ceilings should be lit. There could be LED lighting to accent the steel beams that are overhead, giving it a little bit more of a cool contemporary twist,” he said. Goodling would also like to upgrade the exhibit hall’s current concession stands to an “elevated food court” type of experience like that found in Long Beach Airport.

If he gets his way, Goodling will also see to it that the center’s ballrooms are equipped with similar technology as the arena. “It has to feel theatrical, and it

has to have components that make you feel that you’re in some place special.” Even smaller networking spaces within the convention center should be equipped with lighting and sound elements, he noted.

“Much like a theme park, you have to open a new ride every couple of years to be current and fresh. This business is no different,” Goodling said. “You have to continue to reinvent yourself in order to be fresh. And Long Beach has demonstrated that we have that capacity and the desire to do so.”

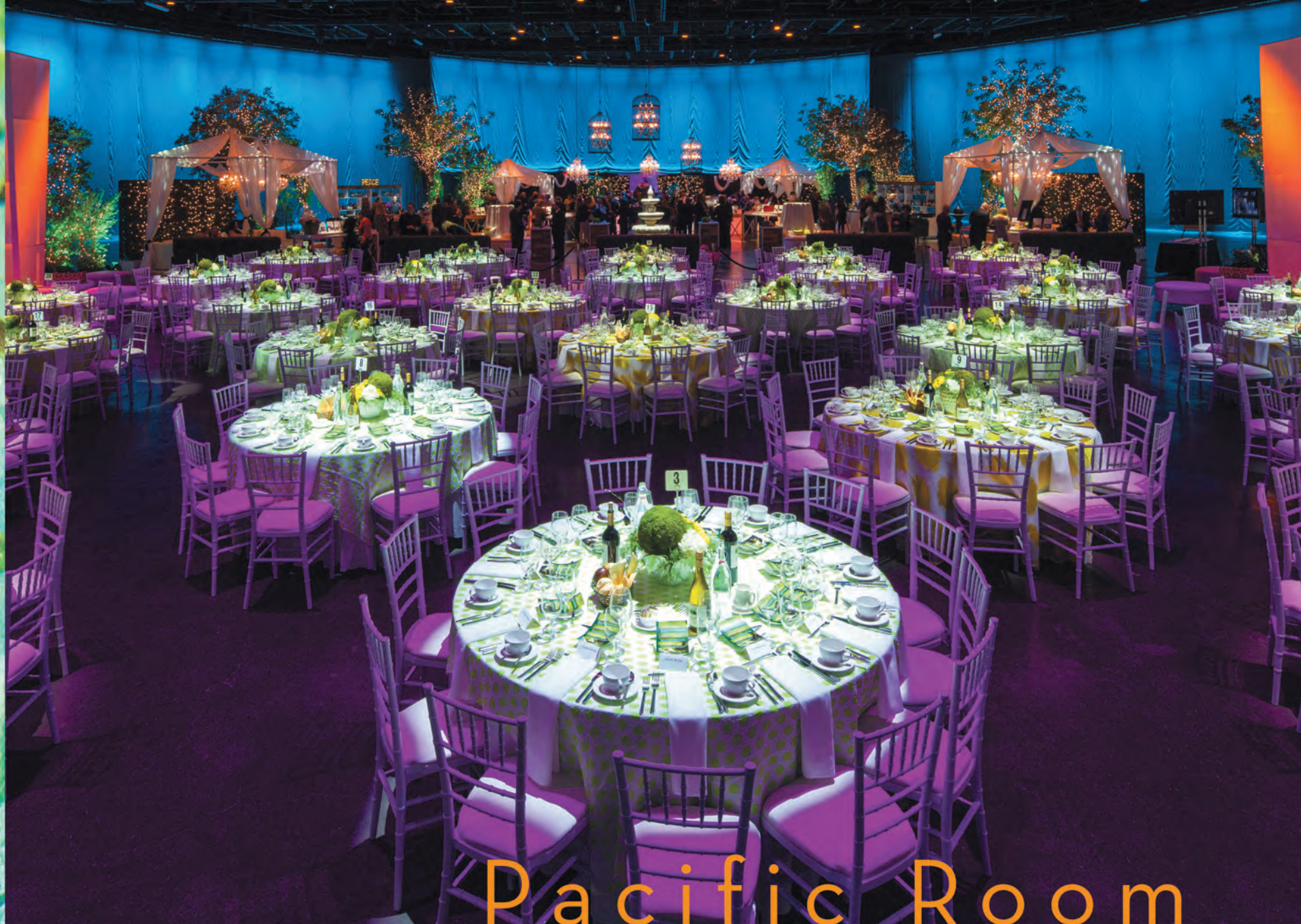
Goodling anticipates that gaming conventions like the upcoming TwitchCon are emerging as a major force in the convention industry. “These companies all require large bandwidth,” he said. “Right now, the convention center is undergoing a major upgrade in its wireless fiber bandwidth because of the types of groups we’re getting. We will now have the same bandwidth that Los Angeles and Anaheim have in their facilities.”

All this, of course, will require consistent funding. “With the convention center generating \$300 million in economic impact and \$27 million in just hard cash in terms of transient occupancy tax, it’s an investment that needs to be continued to be nourished,” Goodling said.

When it comes to enhancing Long Beach’s tourism industry, Goodling believes better mobility and connectivity are needed along the waterfront. “There needs to be a solution to get people from the Queen Mary and that side of Long Beach over to this side,” he said. “Other cities have solutions that are really cool. And what happens is, those mobility projects actually become rides . . . but they also serve a very functional purpose.”

Goodling also sees local businesses playing an important role in the city’s hospitality and tourism industries. Incorporating local goods and services into area hotels and events helps create a sense of community and appeals to visitors’ increasing desire for a customized experience. “The Pie Bar now is supplying pies in Mason jars to four hotels in their sundry shops. So it’s neat to see local businesses working with hotels and providing a local flavor,” Goodling noted. “And I think that’s really critical. . . . It’s helping local businesses grow, but it’s also creating a unique experience for visitors and convention attendees.”





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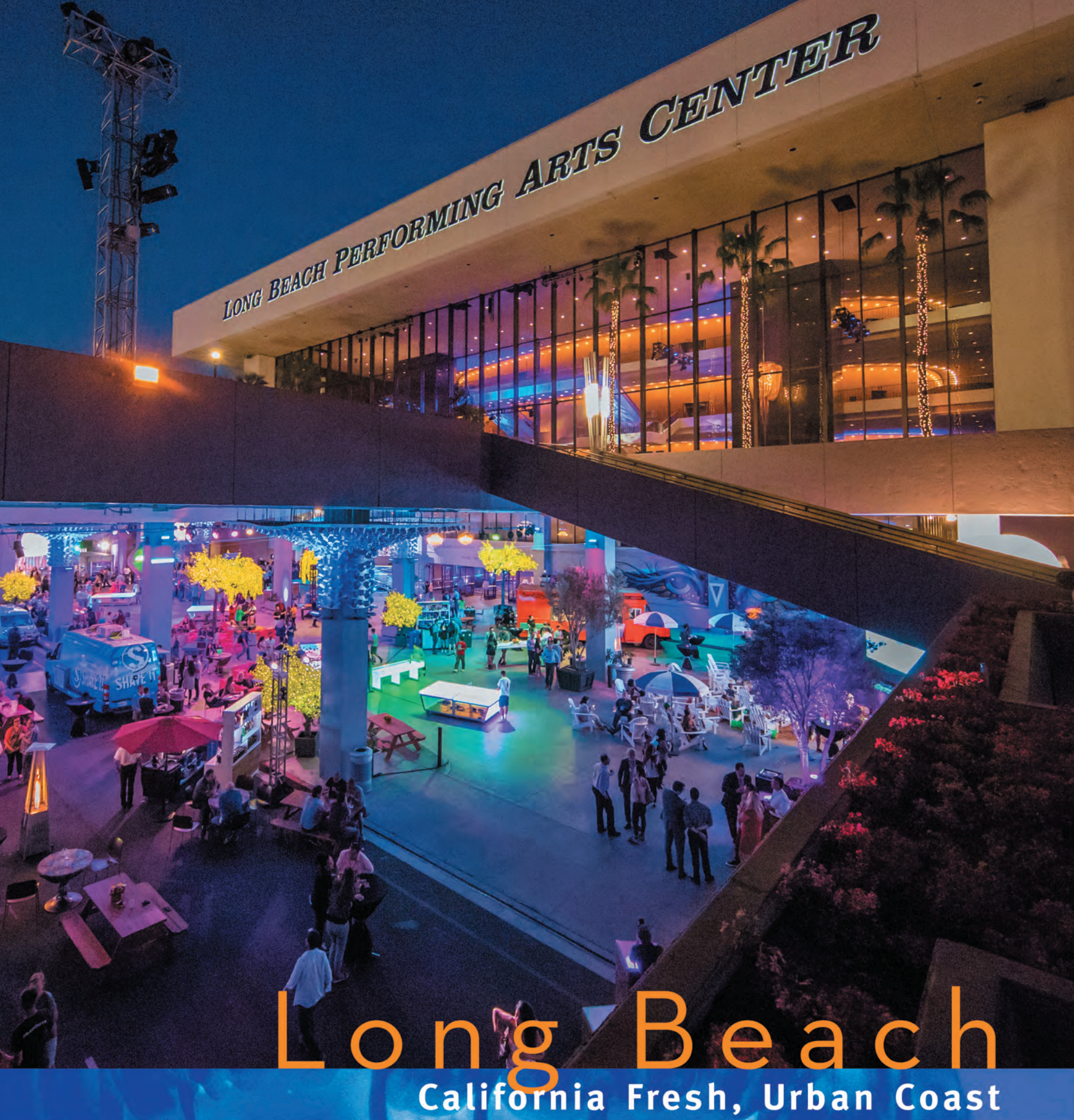


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*“We want clean air. We want jobs. We want healthy communities.”*

# INTERNATIONAL TRADE Rick Cameron

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**, Assistant Editor

**T**he Port of Long Beach (POLB) of the future needs to be one prepared for anything that comes its way – from changes in the shipping industry to cybersecurity threats, the port must have the infrastructure in place to be resilient. It also must be as efficient and green as possible to remain competitive and ensure the health of the environment and surrounding communities. This is the vision for the port of the future as detailed by Rick Cameron, managing director of planning and environmental affairs for POLB.

“Moving forward in the next 10 to 20 years, we’re working with the harbor commissioners right now to identify what the green port of the future looks like,” Cameron said. In the next six to eight weeks, port staff will collaborate with the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners on updating the port’s master plan. “That will be the core of where we want to have the roadmap for the green port of the future.”

POLB must be prepared for changes in shipping alliances and even company bankruptcies, according to Cameron. Last year, South Korean shipping line Hanjin, which had the majority stake in one of the port’s largest terminals, went bankrupt. Shipping alliances have shifted from four groups to three, and mergers continue to take place, he noted.

“OOCL and Cosco, they’re merging now,” Cameron said. “That’s another one of these transformational adjustments that we are having to make, with two of our major carriers now merging.” Both companies have orders on the books for ships able to carry 18,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) and 20,000 TEUs of cargo. Most ships calling on the Port of Long Beach today range in size between 10,000 and 14,000 TEUs, according to Cameron.

The port is already in the midst of several projects to prepare for the future, including a massive \$4 billion capital improvement program to become big ship ready. This program includes the Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project, in which Long Beach Container Terminal is being upgraded to handle the largest ships in the world, and the Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project, which will allow larger vessels to pass into the inner harbor.

“We need to also think about how we better utilize our existing resources and our infrastructure, our facilities,” Cameron said. “That goes back into being more efficient.” The port has been working with industry stakeholders – marine terminals, trucking companies, shipping firms and others – to identify ways to optimize the flow of cargo.

“We have containers now that will sit on the terminal for three to five days and are touched anywhere between 6 to 10 times. That’s not efficient,” Cameron said. To help alleviate bottlenecks, the port is looking into ways to share data among stakeholders to better plan out cargo movement, he noted.

The draft of the Clean Air Action Plan update, a document that lays out strategies for reducing air emissions for port operations, includes a provision for a universal truck appointment system that would ideally improve turn time of trucks visiting terminals, Cameron pointed out.

Investing in rail is another way the port is looking at increasing efficiencies and greening its operations. “One of our centerpiece projects is our Pier B on-dock support rail facility project,” Cameron said. Adding on-dock rail at Pier B could result in six to eight additional trains going out per week, reducing as many as 4,000 truck trips. The port may also soon pilot an electric switching locomotive within its complex, he added.

In continuing to advance its environmental initiatives, which have significantly reduced air emissions and improved water quality, Cameron said that the port must work with private industry to demonstrate and implement new technologies and with the state and federal governments to seek new sources of funding.

To ensure operational resiliency in the future when more equipment is likely to be electric, the port is investigating ways to be grid independent. “We’re looking at a pilot project that is going to add some renewable solar panels, some battery storage and even what we call a microgrid,” Cameron said. “That is all part of the green port of the future.”

In the end, Cameron said, “We want clean air. We want jobs. We want healthy communities.”



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*“It’s government thinking. All right, what can we do to support and strengthen the economic ecosystem?”*

# INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT John Keisler

■ By **SAMANTHA MEHLINGER**, Assistant Editor

**J**ohn Keisler, director of the Long Beach Economic and Property Development Department, wants the city government to run like Google: as a facilitator and disseminator of information in the interest of advancing economic development. It’s a vision that aims to set aside “the old government way” in lieu of innovative, self-sustaining approaches to fostering business within Long Beach.

“It begins with our role for creating economic opportunities for workers, investors and entrepreneurs. And what that means for us is that it’s not government creating economic development – it’s government facilitating opportunity and creating platforms for investors and entrepreneurs to leverage,” Keisler said.

Keisler likened the concept to the evolution of the technology industry, in which some of the most successful companies have achieved success by creating open systems for sharing information. “Does Google create any content at all? Zero. They connect people with it. They facilitate the transfer, the creation, the sharing of information,” he said. “And that has become an incredible economic engine. So I think as a city, we’re not looking to grow the city staff. We’re looking to create platforms and applications whereby we can connect people with each other, connect people with opportunity, with information. . . . We’re not looking at the city as the solution. We’re looking at the city as the facilitator.”

The Long Beach Innovation Team, which Keisler formerly headed, and the economic and property development department have already introduced a number of tools to support business. The city’s online BizPort application, launched last year, allows entrepreneurs to create business plans and navigate the city’s licensing and permitting requirements, thereby streamlining the process of starting a business.

The tool also gives users the ability to get information about what’s around the potential properties they might want to lease or buy. “We have a tool, Zoom Prospector, where they can get all that information about consumer spending and demographics. And doing a ring study, which to pay a consultant would cost \$15,000 to \$30,000, they can do for free,” Keisler said.

Keisler’s department has partnered with a group called StartUp Toolkit to test

a new mobile application for entrepreneurs. A beta test phase is planned in partnership with the Uptown Business Improvement District and is set to launch in October. Users will be able to download a free application, which will prompt them with a series of questions derived from Tufts University and Stanford University to assess the readiness of entrepreneurs.

“This has never been done by a city in particular, and we are the first financial partner as well as the first partner organization to beta test this,” Keisler said of the project. The application will provide insights and connect users with mentors to help them create a business plan, he explained.

One of the objectives outlined in the city’s recently approved Blueprint for Economic Development is to “strengthen the partnership for innovation and entrepreneurship between the city, educational institutions, and industry to promote economic opportunity” – a goal Keisler has already gotten a jump on.

The city recently partnered with California State University, Long Beach to launch the university’s first institute – the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The institute, which provides programming and mentoring for local entrepreneurs, grew out of a series of workshops Keisler and former Innovation Team Fellow Ryan Murray held at the school in the spring of 2016 in which student participants developed a plan for a center of innovation.

The first fellow from that institute now works within the Long Beach Economic and Property Development Department. “This is how serious we are. We aren’t just talking about this stuff,” Keisler said.

Another major initiative in the works is a 10-year fiber master plan for the City of Long Beach, which lays out the next steps to building out the municipal network for high-speed internet. The plan includes options for branching the network out to local businesses down the line.

“It’s government thinking. All right, what can we do to support and strengthen the economic ecosystem?” Keisler reflected. “These are the seven key areas that we need to build ecosystem strength around: real estate development, quality of life, place making, economic cooperation, innovation, business assistance, economic inclusion,” he said. “That is a very different approach.”



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*“The city is energetic – it’s youthful. There’s a very high appeal for experiential activities.”*



# ENTERTAINMENT Taylor Woods

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**, Senior Writer

In recent years, Long Beach has grown its presence in the entertainment scene. Summer And Music continues annual events such as Buskerfest and Punk Rock Prom, Music Tastes Good is gearing up for its second year, and the New Year’s Eve block party downtown continues to grow each year.

Most recently, the city council voted to ease the process that allows restaurants and bars to offer live entertainment, as well as street performers to entertain in public spaces. However, despite the forward strides, no large-scale entertainment infrastructure has been introduced in the city for nearly two decades, when the Aquarium of the Pacific was constructed in 1998.

“Southern California already has a tremendous appeal and coastal California even more so,” Taylor Woods, principal at Urban Commons, said. “The City of Long Beach is central to so many activities that people want to do when visiting Southern California but traditionally hasn’t been able to capitalize on the vicinity as it could and should and will.”

Early last year, Los Angeles-based real estate developer Urban Commons became the master leaseholder of the Queen Mary and the surrounding 65 acres of land and water. In August 2016, the company announced a massive \$250 million development around the ship, and in March of this year, Urban Commons announced its vision for Queen Mary Island – 700,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, bars and entertainment.

The two major entertainment components of Queen Mary Island are an amphitheater and an indoor adventure park. The 7,000-seat amphitheater will overlook the water and Long Beach skyline and would be slightly larger than the Greek Theater in Los Angeles. Urban Adventure – the 150,000-square-foot indoor adventure park concept by London-based Urban Legacy – will feature more than 20 interactive and experiential activities, such as ice climbing, surfing, canyoning, skydiving and zip lining, and will be the first facility of its kind in North America.

“It’s a limited amount of space. We can only do so much, but we can pack a

lot into a very small amount of space,” Woods said. “If they can do something that’s fun and exciting and thrilling and adventurous while they are here, and if they can be entertained and enjoy good music and good food here on the coast, we think that’s a recipe for long-term appeal.”

Once Queen Mary Island is completed and has had time to prove itself as a national and international destination, Woods said he thinks it will act as a catalyst for investment in entertainment citywide. He explained that he envisions entertainment to continue to evolve with a combination of technology and firsthand experience. However, he said with the rapid advancements in technology, it is impossible to know exactly what that future will include, but that Long Beach has the capability to remain on the forefront of that future.

“Long Beach is known for a lot of things, but entertainment and adventure have not been on that list in a very large way. The city is energetic – it’s youthful,” Woods said. “There’s a very high appeal for experiential activities. The whole city will benefit. With more people seeing this as a premium option and a singular location to go [to], that will spur other opportunities in the immediate vicinity and in Long Beach.”

Though the project includes a marina for visitors to dock boats, the Queen Mary Island plans do not include water-based activities in the ocean. Woods said he hopes the development inspires others to create more opportunities to get into the water and experience ocean life and activities.

Woods explained that the best case scenario has Queen Mary Island construction wrapping up in four to six years. However, the project still requires city and California Coastal Commission approval, which he admitted could delay the ambitious timeline.

“We’re excited to bring it all to life. This vacant parking lot has been sitting here for way too long,” Woods said. “As the facility is able to better accommodate larger groups of people and more frequent visitors, and with many more opportunities to experience different types of adventure and activity and entertainment all in one place, we see it as filling a very high demand in this region, so we are very excited to see it all come through.”





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## **EDUCATION** Jane Close Conoley

■ By **BRANDON RICHARDSON**, Senior Writer

According to SmartAsset, California ranked the second best state in terms of higher education, up from 2015 when it was ranked sixth but down from last year when it was ranked number one. The 2017 study found that the state has the eighth highest graduation rate in the country at 63% and the second highest return on investment, while remaining one of the top 10 most affordable systems. However, the state and Long Beach specifically still have educational challenges to overcome and goals to accomplish.

“To me, the most important one is protecting and expanding access to higher education. We can accept only the number [of students] that the state gives us money to educate,” Jane Close Conoley, president of California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), said. “Included in accesses, I would add the notion of affordability and can we keep our tuition low enough.”

Conoley noted that this past enrollment cycle, the college received 93,000 applications, though it only admitted 8,500 students between freshmen and transfer students based on available state funding. To maintain the public institution’s affordability, Conoley said staff will continue to look for alternative revenue streams beyond state support.

Looking to the future of the campus, Conoley said she envisions expansion, namely with the addition of 5,000 more students living on campus. Along with on-campus expansion, the school is working with Shooshani Developers LLC on the CSULB Downtown Village, a mixed-use development on the corner of Long Beach Boulevard and 5th Street, as part of the repositioning of the former City Place. The project will house about 1,000 students, faculty and staff and include classrooms and gallery space.

According to Conoley, the college hopes to also expand its online class offerings and hybrid classes, as well as increase its study abroad program and pathways for educational attainment and internships.

“Last year they placed 608 students in internships, and that was 38% better than the year before,” Conoley said. “The goal is the school would be able to

offer any student who wanted it an internship, preferably a paid internship.”

One of the largest undertakings in the education systems between Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College (LBCC) and CSULB is the creation of degree pathways, according to Conoley. The aim of the pathways is to ensure that small learning communities within high schools teach material that is relevant to certain degrees and that major-specific classes at LBCC and other local community college are transferable to CSULB, reducing length of stay and the need to repeat classes.

Conoley said the Long Beach education system currently has about eight complete pathways, which only 30% of students are currently enrolled in, but is working to increase that number.

“It seems like a no-brainer, but it’s incredibly hard to do. Moving that from eight to 25 to 83 would be perfect,” Conoley said. “I think more articulation and more partnership is certainly in the future for us.”

Maintaining leadership’s commitment to the Long Beach College Promise and expanding the number of participants is a long-term goal of Conoley’s. Additionally, she hopes to break down educational barriers and streamline programs to better serve students. She said the college is field-testing and checking the waters to see if CSULB could implement a program similar to LBCC’s in which first year tuition is waived for freshmen.

Some of the faculty and students at CSULB have also begun discussions regarding the transition of people who have been incarcerated into the university, according to Conoley. She explained that there is a civil rights problem in the U.S. where those sent to prison lose access to certain freedoms, which is not an issue in other countries. She said the reduction in recidivism is so dramatic when these individuals gain an education that it would really help state funds and Long Beach communities.

“If people would say we’re a better community and their life is better because Cal State Long Beach is here, that to me is a fabulous community goal. And I want everybody here to say this is the best place to work. If everyone inside thought it was the best place to work and people outside thought they were better off because the university is here, I think we’d be in the perfect situation.”





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*“What my hope is for livability is that we’re all living in communities that are nurturing, that are healing, that are physically and mentally fulfilling,”*



# LIVABILITY Brian Ulaszewski

■ BY BRANDON RICHARDSON, Senior Writer

Since his time on the Long Beach City Council, self-proclaimed urbanist Mayor Robert Garcia has promoted livability in the city. This has come in many forms — from residential and commercial development to increased walkability and bikeability and promoting the arts and culture. However, with a slew of duties, the city’s youngest mayor cannot devote all of his time on Long Beach’s livability. However, Brian Ulaszewski can.

As executive director of nonprofit organization City Fabrick, Ulaszewski focuses his time and efforts on promoting, advocating for and helping to implement progressive urban design in Long Beach that enhances the livability of communities. Ulaszewski concentrates on health and safety of community residents and increasing park and open spaces citywide.

“What my hope is for livability is that we’re all living in communities that are nurturing, that are healing, that are physically and mentally fulfilling,” Ulaszewski said. “Everybody is in walking distance of a park. We’re looking creatively at how we can transform our infrastructure. There’s a lot of resources to build substantial amounts of open space.”

Much of the focus of Ulaszewski and City Fabrick is in West, Central and North Long Beach, areas which are often disenfranchised in terms of livability qualities such as parks, bike paths and health considerations, including safety.

Looking at the future of parks, Ulaszewski said the budget is not keeping up with new space being added. He said currently each new park means the rest get a smaller wedge of allocated funds. However, despite this challenge, he said there are ample opportunities for developing more park and open spaces citywide in the future — whether by closing segments of streets as was done to create Gumbiner Park at 7th Street and Alamitos, utilizing the L.A. and San Gabriel rivers, or decommissioning the Terminal Island Freeway. The latter, according to Ulaszewski, has potential to add an El Dorado-esque park to the Westside in the next 20 to 30 years.

“We’re looking not just at equality but toward equity and realizing that all districts

aren’t created the same. All these neighborhoods have their different opportunities and different challenges,” Ulaszewski said. “Looking at it not as slicing up our resources nine ways for nine council districts, but looking deeper and looking where the needs are and where the opportunities are and looking through a lens of equity.”

One hurdle facing the progress of livability is parking, according to Ulaszewski. He said homes for people should be a higher priority than homes for cars, not just at a city level but also a personal and moral one.

“The parking lot that has 50 cars is more valuable than the apartment that has 20 units and 50 people?” Ulaszewski asked rhetorically. “You have people suing developers over [losing] a parking lot. I mean, where are our values when you’re thinking that way? Some people will say [parking] is a livability issue, but I will argue strongly that you eventually find that parking stall. You might just have to park a little bit farther.”

As Ulaszewski fights against forms of gentrification that displace a community’s current residents, he said one of the greatest challenges of increasing livability is the effect that follows. He explained that as a community is improved with new parks, retail and restaurants and is generally cleaned up, made healthier and safer — all the things he and his organization advocate for — it becomes more desirable to real estate investors as the new “cool place to be.”

New investors inevitably mean increased rents and potentially forcing out a community’s longtime residents. To combat this issue, Ulaszewski said he envisions a city with parks, bike lanes, safe streets and overall increased livability in all communities, avoiding a draw to any specific one but rather to the city as a whole. Livability would not be an amenity, it would be a fact of living in Long Beach.

Additionally, Ulaszewski said City Fabrick is consistently working with affordable housing developers such as Century Housing and LINC Housing to address affordability issues in the future as they continue working toward equity and equality of livability citywide.

“Hopefully, all the residents that we’re building this for will be here to enjoy it, and it’s not just for the people that are only now able to afford it,” Ulaszewski said. “I’d say it’s not dreaming. It’s visionary. We have a path toward implementation.”



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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Justin Rudd

*“My goal is to be able to inspire people to do what I am doing . . .”*

■ By BRANDON RICHARDSON, Senior Writer

Since 2001, Justin Rudd has coordinated more than 60 annual events as founder and organizer of his nonprofit Community Action Team, which he currently operates out of his one-bedroom apartment in Belmont Shore.

Rudd has organized book swaps, spelling bees, art contests, parades and monthly beach cleanups. He even successfully lobbied for the city’s one and only dog beach – Rosie’s Dog Beach, named for his late bulldog – 16 years ago. However, he said his work is far from done and he will continue adding to and expanding his events and projects.

“I guess my vision is to keep doing what I’m doing but to engage more people and do it on a larger scale,” Rudd said. “I would love to see more leaders. But more importantly, I would love to see more effective leaders who are actually getting it done and getting more people involved and engaged.”

Ultimately, Rudd said his goal is to inspire his peers and younger generations to take it upon themselves to organize events and engage the community. He described a trickle-down effect where he hopes to inspire a handful of people to begin organizing events who would in turn inspire other people and so on, until community events are frequent and commonplace citywide.

Having started monthly beach cleanups 18 years ago, Rudd said in the beginning there would be parents who would bring their babies and young children. Eighteen years later, these children are in high school and college, bringing in a whole new generation for him to reach out to and inspire.

“My goal is to be able to inspire people to do what I am doing or to help in what I am doing without having to pay somebody – but for them to love it enough and keep it simple enough so that it’s not a full-time job,” Rudd said. “I think we can all participate and help without getting paid, but I’m certainly open to having a full-time or part-time employee or employees.”

Though most of his current events are focused in or around the Belmont Shore area, Rudd said they are open to people citywide and he would like for events to expand out of the area. Without the use of a cell phone or car – by choice – Rudd said it is difficult for him to hold events out of the area but that he hopes others would take it upon themselves in the future.

Being passionate about animals, Rudd said he has long thought Long Beach needs another animal shelter – more specifically, a no-kill shelter. Additionally, he said he would like for a pet store which only sells rescue and shelter animals to open in the Belmont Shore area. Rudd said both of these visions should be achievable in his lifetime. It’s just a matter of working with the city and surrounding residents.

“Another vision is to get dogs legally on leash on the beach all year-round and then have other areas where dogs could be off leash,” Rudd said. “The municipal code says dogs are not legal on the beach. We’d have to change laws, and we’d have to get approval from the California Coastal Commission. That’s what I had to do for Rosie’s Dog Beach, but it happened.”

Rudd explained that technology, such as social media, has made community outreach and engagement more effective and cheaper by being able to maximize an event’s visibility and mass promote causes and projects. Moving forward and looking to the future, he said there is no telling how far the world will advance and the positive impacts these advancements will have on communities.

“When I started, I was just getting into e-mail. I was faxing back then and sending letters, sending press releases by U.S. mail. So if we are this far in 18 years, where are we going to be in another 10 to 20? There’s no telling,” Rudd said. “Every year, I seem to add one or two events or projects, and I’m going to continue to do that. I’m not at my limit and I’m still learning. After 18 years, I still have a lot to learn.”





*“There has never been a more exciting time in my time here in Long Beach than what’s happening right now. . .”*



# THE ARTS Ron Nelson

■ BY BRANDON RICHARDSON, Senior Writer

In the last several years, the City of Long Beach has encouraged the arts in many forms, from large events such as POW! WOW! down to the simple act of painting crosswalks into rainbows and piano keys. Art appreciation has increased in communities citywide, which creates new opportunities for expanding their presence in Long Beach, according to Ron Nelson, executive director of the Long Beach Museum of Art.

“I think that it’s growth in education that’s happened, the enlightenment of the community. There’s been a large shift with Mayor Garcia and the city council,” Nelson said. “There’s an appreciation that’s really sincere and thoughtful, that I have a lot of respect for and am thrilled to see it in place. In 5, 6, 10, 15 years from now, you’re not even going to know what the place looks like.”

One of the simplest ways to bring art to the city is through the architecture of the numerous projects being proposed for development, Nelson explained. He said the city could benefit from multiple new, architecturally significant buildings. He noted that a renowned architect would bring more positive attention to the city and increase its appeal as a destination.

One of Nelson’s long-term goals for the museum specifically is to expand the campus and incorporate Bluff and Bixby parks. To the east of the museum, Nelson is pushing for Bluff Park to be converted into a sculpture garden from South 36th Place, where it begins, to the museum premises. To the west of the museum is where Nelson envisions campus expansion.

“There are other Craftsman homes within the city that are significant, that could be moved – or in my opinion should be moved and treated as though they are a piece of art and sculpture,” Nelson said. “There are two pieces of property between us and Bixby Park that are currently privately owned. I think if we had two buildings and that property, we could expand our galleries.”

For programs such as POW! WOW!, Nelson said eventually they will expand to the rest of the city, as a majority of the murals have been focused in the down-

town and East Village areas, with only one mural of the 2017 event being located in North Long Beach. Nelson pointed out that for the project to gain the attention needed to garner initial success, the locations had to be high profile with national and international artists. However, he said as time goes on, the event will spread and more local talent can be utilized.

With community-based events such as POW! WOW!, Nelson said the goal is to make the arts more accessible to every resident citywide, particularly those in underserved communities. He explained that 11,000 students visit the art museum every year. He noted that Vince Staples, a popular rap artist from North Long Beach, visited the museum while in the 5th grade.

“He still remembers that. He wanted to film a public service announcement . . . inside the museum because of what that meant to him as a 5th grader. The voice he now has is much larger than the voice that we have,” Nelson said. “But that’s exactly the goal for me . . . to grab that kid and make a difference. To have them celebrate what this city is. We’re still not anywhere near where we can be yet.”

Nelson said the Long Beach Arts Council is doing good work and working as best it can with the limited amount of funds available, and he noted the uphill battle it is facing. But he thinks the city could do more. He said the arts should be given a more prominent seat at the table in the form of a full-fledged commission within city hall with the capability of making recommendations to the city council.

If his vision of the commission is achieved, Nelson said he would still want to see the arts council continue to grow and be able to handle more coordination and collaboration between all of the city’s museums. He said he appreciates the council’s efforts in bringing more of the arts to Long Beach.

“I really, really am excited about that vision and knowing what’s coming down the line and the possibilities of what could happen with that,” Nelson said. “There has never been a more exciting time in my time here in Long Beach than what’s happening right now. It’s going to change our city. It’s going to change our future.”



# Tax Reform

## Economists Discuss Possible Impacts Of Tax Reform

(Continued From Page 1)

doesn't look like the current thresholds that have been laid out are enough to keep it deficit neutral, so a lot of it is going to depend on the details in terms of what preferential tax treatments are repealed and specifically what deductions and exemptions are repealed as part of any personal income tax reform," White explained.

Kleinhenz said the Trump administration has indicated it may push for lowering the number of tax brackets. "It seems as though the idea or the upshot of that would be to really benefit higher income taxpayers more than anything else," he said. "We've got to

be mindful of the fact that when you take a look at where our income tax revenues come from at the federal level, something like half of the total tax collected comes from like the top 5% of taxpayers. . . .

"And therefore if one tries to reduce the burden on high income taxpayers and be revenue neutral, which is what the Trump administration intends to achieve, it almost undoubtedly has to come on the backs of middle income and lower income households," Kleinhenz explained.

"You would be hard pressed to find many tax experts in the United States who don't think that the tax code needs to be simplified and certainly overhauled," White said. "But how you do that within the parameters of tax equity? Are you just getting rid of all the tax preferences for people in the low- and middle-income categories, or are you

increasing tax burdens on higher incomes? That's really the key there."

White said many tax experts had been hopeful that the Trump administration would simplify the tax code and broaden the tax base while remaining revenue neutral. "They . . . seem to be sticking more to the supply side argument that if we cut taxes enough, economic activity will come to offset that. I don't know that is the case and I don't know that that is what will ultimately win over taxpayers," White said.

Cutting the corporate tax rate to 15% is one of Trump's more concrete proposals thus far.

"I think the biggest emphasis, especially from the Trump administration, is going to be on ways to lower the statutory corporate tax rate," White said. "Any time you're doing any type of tax reform, attempts to

broaden the base and decrease rates are generally a good thing. So if we can get rid of some of the tax expenditures in the current corporate income tax code, that will help us lower that rate."

Cutting tax breaks for certain special interests could be key in achieving this. "There are a tremendous amount of specific carve outs for special industries. For example, [the] oil and gas [industry] gets a significant amount of carve outs," White noted. "That's not necessarily in and of itself a bad thing. But if you're able to lower overall corporate tax rates, especially versus other countries, then that can make the United States more competitive in terms of a corporate environment."

Achieving such reforms is not likely to be easy, according to Kleinhenz. "As soon as you start talking about simplifying and eliminating deductions and tax breaks more generally, I think you will find that a whole variety of stakeholders will come out of the woodwork," he said. "The reality is that we have got a very complex tax code with a lot of things that benefit different tax-paying groups in the economy. So that makes it difficult under any administration, not just the Trump administration to achieve the kind of tax reform that I think a lot of people would like to see."

One of the biggest battles among legislators when it comes to corporate tax reform is likely to occur over the taxation of overseas profits, White speculated. When a firm brings overseas profits back the U.S., it is taxed at our corporate tax rate after already having been taxed abroad. "That is one of the reasons a lot of U.S. companies have a lot of cash sitting overseas," White said.

"Do we allow those companies to bring it back into the United States at a reduced rate? Do we change the tax code going forward so that maybe companies are only paying taxes on profits that are earned within the United States?" White queried. "I think doing those kinds of changes and making sure that those changes are revenue neutral is going to be the biggest battle over the next several months, if we actually get to tax reform."

In general, lowering corporate tax rates would allow companies to invest in their workforces and give raises to employees, purchase new equipment or property, or dispense more equity to shareholders – all outcomes that are good for the economy, according to White.

Still, he cautioned, "If we don't do that in a deficit neutral manner and we are giving a lot of money from the federal government away to do that, that can significantly increase the federal deficit." This could increase borrowing costs and "offset a lot of those economic positives from the lower tax rate, if not totally offset them."

Kleinhenz cautioned that cutting and reforming taxes may not result in economic growth. "The idea that we would use tax cuts to trigger growth in the economy is a very tenuous connection," he said. "Supply side economics and trickle down economics are terms that came about in the 1980s around the time of the Reagan tax reforms that made for marked changes in the tax code. But . . . since then, it has pretty much been established empirically that you can't really jump start growth in the economy simply by cutting taxes."

Trump has indicated he would like to grow the annual rate of increase in gross do-

(Please Continue To Top Of Next Page)

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mestic product to 3% or 4% in part via tax reform, Kleinhenz noted. "As far as most economists are concerned, it's just not possible to have growth of 3% or 4% on a sustained basis in the U.S. economy no matter what you do, because it is basically limited by our growth in the labor force," he said.

"Our labor force has been growing by less than 1% over the last 3 years, and generally grows by no more than a percent even if you look at a longer time horizon," Kleinhenz said. "So quite frankly, given recent performance of the economy, the growth in the labor force, the growth in productivity probably puts us at around 2% potential growth in the economy no matter what happens with the tax code."

Both Kleinhenz and White were skeptical about whether tax reform will even be addressed by Congress this year.

"The only thing I would emphasize again is that you can't overstate how busy Congress is going to be over the next three or four months," White said. "And even if there was relatively broad political consensus on what needs to be done with tax reform, which there isn't, it would be very difficult to get any major piece of legislation like that done before the holidays." ■

## Local Business Owners Weigh In On Tax Reform

(Continued From Page 1)

goals on August 30 and following it with multiple rallies in September.

As this national conversation ramped up, local business owners and executives shared their thoughts on what tax reforms they would like to see to help them grow.

Chris Wacker, president of Long Beach-based tech firm Laserfiche, said Trump ought to have gone for tax reform before he addressed other priorities. "It is certainly easier than health care reform or attempting to construct a wall," he said. "Big picture, my overall philosophical view is that taxes should be reduced," Wacker said.

Trump has indicated he would like to institute a tax holiday to allow companies like Laserfiche that earn profits overseas to bring them back to America at a reduced tax rate. "I think not only should that not be a holiday . . . it should be extended on a permanent basis," Wacker said. "We are the only country that taxes money made on foreign soil."

Blake Christian, partner and accountant with the CPA firm HCVT, supports the idea of a temporary tax holiday for firms with money abroad. He suggested a two-year window of time in which companies could bring their foreign earnings back to the U.S. at a reduced corporate tax rate of 10% to 15%. "I think that would have a massive stimulative effect and encourage big businesses to invest domestically more," he said.

Trump has proposed a 15% corporate tax rate from the current combined tax rate of 39%, according to a statement issued by the White House on August 30. "Even though Trump is talking about business tax rates as low as 15%, the GOP proposal is 25%, and they think that that's maybe overly optimistic," Christian said. "I would be happy with something maybe between 25% and 30%."

Christian noted that while Trump has indicated he would want a new corporate tax rate on the books for 10 years or more, such a proposal could be problematic considering the national deficit. "With the deficit



Pete Sverkos, co-owner of Retro Row restaurant Kafe Neo, said that although he has been in business for 10 years, he still has trouble understanding the tax code. Simplifying the tax code and providing cuts to or incentives for payroll taxes would benefit businesses, he argued. (Photograph by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan)

situation, I would prefer to see maybe a three- or five-year drop in rates, and then do a reset later once we see what the economy is like and what the deficit is like," he said.

Wacker offered a more extreme suggestion: to have no corporate tax rate and implement a flat personal tax rate of 15%. "I know it's radical, but profits shouldn't be taxed more than once, in my view," he said. The idea is one he said has been raging since he was in business school — that taxing a business for its income and then taxing the income of its workers is essentially double taxation, or taxing the same earnings twice.

Creating a flat personal tax rate with no deductions would simplify the tax code and ensure higher-earning individuals paid more into the system, Wacker argued. "People who are in the stratospheric income brackets, they pay very little taxes. And they have armies of accountants who ensure that they do pay no taxes," he said. "People wouldn't need tax accountants. They could just pay 15% on whatever they earned, and they could calculate that themselves."

Wacker said instituting such changes would benefit Laserfiche. "It would be less expensive for us to operate, and we could invest more money in the company," he said. "As it is, we're growing like crazy. We're now almost 400 people," he noted, adding that the firm just purchased 125,000 square feet of land to build more offices. "If we had lower taxes, we could do more of that."

Pete Sverkos, co-owner of Greek restaurant Kafe Neo on 4th Street, pointed to cutting payroll taxes as a means to help businesses. "Payroll taxes seem extremely high," he said.

"It is always hard for a business to keep up with the rising costs of food and labor and then on top of that getting taxed," Sverkos said. "If there were some incentives with regard to tax reform, I believe it would be a trickle down to the employees and to the pricing of product."

As the minimum wage rises, so does the amount businesses have to pay in payroll taxes, Sverkos pointed out. The same goes for other wage and salary increases. "If you were to raise the wage of an individual but you wouldn't have to pay an additional payroll tax on that wage, that allows you to focus on putting more money in the pocket of your employees," he said. "And that gives them more spending power, which would trickle down into them spending


more and paying more in sales tax and income tax. And I think that would be a benefit to the business owner."

Christian also said that payroll taxes should be addressed. "Maybe even allow a credit for the payroll taxes that people pay for the first 12 months on a new employee," he suggested. "I'd like to see something that would encourage people to take a little bit more of a gamble on first-year hires."

Craig Hofman, chairman of the board of Hofman Hospitality Group (parent company of Hof's Hut, Lucille's Smokehouse BBQ and Saint & Second), has two main desires for tax reform. "I hope they get rid of the death tax," he said. "Passing on a

family business without a 40% tax on the business's value is important to me as an owner of a family business." He added, "Also, most small to medium-size family businesses file as S [corporations], which are now taxed at the personal rate. If they lower the corporate rate, it should include S corps at that lower rate."

Overall, Sverkos would like to see the tax code simplified. "I can't ever figure it out. I think they have to do something with reducing the number of categories," he said. "It's like they are forcing business people to unnecessarily play a cat-and-mouse game with regards to what they are allowed to write off and what they are not allowed to." ■



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# Councilmember Opposes Bill To Permit Small Cell Network Construction

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
Staff Writer

Representatives from the League of California Cities, including those from Signal Hill and Long Beach expressed opposition to California Senate Bill (SB) 649, that allows construction of cellular structures of a certain size in public places, replacing the permitting processes set by local governments.

Eighth District Councilmember Al

Austin, who also serves as the Long Beach representative to the League of California Cities, voiced his “strong reservations” at an August 30 press conference at Pierpoint Landing in San Pedro. He characterized the effects of the measure as stripping power from individual cities.

“This would eliminate the city’s ability to manage the way in which telecommunications equipment is deployed in our neighborhoods and along our business corridors.

It would permit the telecommunications companies to be able to place cell structures without local government input,” Austin told the Business Journal. He also said that more than 250 cities opposed the measure.

Senator Ben Hueso of District 40 introduced SB 649. His district incorporates Imperial County and parts of San Diego. The bill would permit construction of “small cells” —structures with antennas that total no more than six cubic feet, with the total

associated equipment exceeding no more than 35 cubic feet, as defined in the bill.

The bill also authorizes a city or county to charge an annual fee of up to \$250 for each cell attachment to vertical infrastructure, such as a lamppost.

“It would be a flat rate, statewide. Whether you’re in a rural or big city, the rate would be the same,” Austin said. “It’s not the way the market really works.”

But Kish Rajan, the chief evangelist of CALinnovates, a coalition of technology companies based in San Francisco, told the Business Journal that setting a consistent standard for constructing small cells actually opens up the market and provides more opportunities for growth in the technology sector.

“(SB 649) is a prerequisite; it’s a necessity for the tech community,” he said. “It’s helping to create conditions in California so that the most advanced and robust communications networks can get built — and get built as fast as possible.”

Austin said he has the same goal as the telecommunications industry in terms of expanding access to technology and high-speed Internet but that he does not think the bill is following the right method to achieve it.

“I would like to see communities that don’t have access, that have been historically left out, included. Everybody wins when we do that. It’s just a matter of the telecom companies working with the city planning department to find that balance,” Austin said.

Rajan, whose organization includes partners such as AT&T and Uber, said the easiest way to reach new markets or underserved communities is to create an atmosphere that promotes investment, which the bill accomplishes by streamlining the permitting process.

“When you’re promoting an environment of innovation, that benefits consumers because services improve and costs come down. We’ve actually seen the cost of mobile data services come down over the past few years because of advancements in technology and competition.”

Austin, though, said he thinks holding cities to a uniform standard ignores their unique demographics.

“What distinguishes Long Beach from the next city? A whole lot of issues,” he said.

At the time of publication, the bill was read a second time and ordered to a third reading in the Assembly. ■



## City Of Long Beach Adds New CNG Fueling Station For Refuse Trucks, Street Sweepers

Fuel Operations Program Officer Oliver Cruz is pictured above in front of the compressor and dryer units of Long Beach’s new compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station. The station will provide a local source of clean fuel for the city’s fleet of CNG-powered refuse trucks and street sweepers. Cruz explained that the project was partially funded by a \$500,000 grant from the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee. The grants provide funding to assist in the construction of natural gas refueling infrastructure within the South Coast Air Quality Management District of which Long Beach is a part. The state-of-the-art time-fill fueling station is capable of providing a 10-hour, slow-fill capacity for 80 trucks and 20 sweepers, enabling them to refuel unmanned overnight. The system alleviates costly man-hours, while reducing the city’s carbon footprint, according to Cruz. “By powering fleets with renewable fuels, the city is looking at a potential reduction of more than 7,700 tons of carbon emissions per year,” Mayor Robert Garcia said in a press release. “Long Beach remains a committed leader in its efforts to ensure a zero emissions future.”



## City Attorney Parkin Announces Reelection Bid

City Attorney Charles Parkin announced on September 5 that he would seek another four-year term in next April’s city election. A 22-year veteran of the city attorney’s office, Parkin faced off in 2014 with a former councilmember and elected in a landslide. “I have spent my entire career with the City and I am very fortunate to work with a group of dedicated and hard-working public servants. Together our goal is to protect the public interest and provide sound legal advice and counsel to the City,” Parkin said in a prepared statement. For more information, visit: <http://www.parkincityattorney.com/>.



# City Council Continues Its 'Divide By Nine' Authorization

Over Seven Years,  
It Has Added Up  
To Millions Of Dollars

■ By **GEORGE ECONOMIDES**  
Publisher's Perspective

Following several proposals recommended by the Long Beach City Council's Budget Oversight Committee, the Fiscal Year 2018 budget that goes into effect October 1 was approved unanimously September 5 by the nine-member city council. But what usually does not get reported by local media and is missed by most residents is how councilmembers slip in their "divide by nine" approval.

Divide by nine comes from money referred to as "General Fund surplus," that staff finds at the last minute before the budget is passed. It's also referred to as "one-time resources" because it is not guaranteed that the money will be available the following year. Yet it always seems to be.

For its part, city management – which, of course, wants to keep the city council happy – looks the other way, with nary an objection that the money could be used to ----- (fill in the blank).

We should note, "divide by nine" is not part of the discussion at district budget meetings held by each city councilmember. How can they forget to bring it up?

The budget oversight committee members – currently Councilmembers Stacy Mungo, the chair, Suzie Price and Al Austin – then decide on how to spend this "surplus" money, which totaled more than \$3.5 million for the new fiscal year. Inevitably, the committee sets aside part of the surplus for the nine councilmembers ("divide by nine"), and then politely requests their colleagues to approve the money for themselves.

This year, as last, councilmembers allocated themselves \$750,000, or \$83,333 for each council district to use for "district priorities," with the caveat that "any exceptions must go to the city council for approval." Any chance a councilmember would vote against a colleague's request? You know the answer.

We hear you whispering about the fox guarding the hen house. What? Oh, yeah, there's an estimated \$10 million-plus deficit a year down the road.

How significant is the amount of "divide by nine" funds? It's huge. From Fiscal Year 2012 through 2017, councilmembers ap-

proved themselves \$37,543,207, or \$4,171,467 each if you divide that total by nine. That's according to the city's financial services department. You can now add another \$750,000 to that total.

Now, about those streets, sidewalks and alleys . . .

## Councilmembers' 2% Savings Idea

The Friday prior to the September 5 budget oversight committee meeting, Councilmember Mungo and Vice Mayor/Councilmember Rex Richardson issued a press release stating they would ask the full council to implement a mandatory 2% savings from each General Fund department. This was their idea of how to address that \$10.4 million shortfall for the FY

19 General Fund budget and the estimated \$8.7 million shortfall for FY 20.

While the city manager had already indicated as part of his budget message to councilmembers and residents that each department would attempt to save about one half of one percent during the year, Mungo Richardson determined it would be better to make the savings mandatory, increasing the savings amount to 2%.

There was no discussion of the idea during the September 5 council meeting. The 2% would have cut about \$9.2 million, a drastic cut to an already tight budget. Councilmembers could have led by example and taken the "divide by nine" money and trimmed next year's shortfall. Yeah, bad idea. ■

# Long Beach Hosts Expo On Disaster Preparedness – September 16th

■ By **ANNE ARTLEY**  
Staff Writer

Environmental disasters are grim occasions, but preparing for one doesn't have to be.

The City of Long Beach is hosting its 4th annual "READY Long Beach" Community Preparedness Expo from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, September 16, at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), 1250 Bellflower Blvd. The event takes place at Beach Circle, located on campus between the College of Business Administration (CBA) building and track. The expo is free and open to the public.

In addition to information booths, emergency preparedness demonstrations and emergency supplies available for purchase, the event also includes food, music, rides for kids and prizes. Complimentary parking is available at CSULB's parking structure off Atherton Avenue and Merriam Way.

Attendees can learn how to gather and store food and water and other basic survival tools as recommended by the federal government, how to create a family evacuation and response plan and how to involve neighbors in disaster planning.

The event is sponsored by Long Beach CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), in partnership with the Long Beach Fire Department, CSULB and other agencies.

For more information, visit [www.readylongbeach.org](http://www.readylongbeach.org). ■



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### Long Beach Guitar Repair

Brian Stewart, Guillermo Rios and Chris Baird (pictured from left) met while working at World of Strings, a guitar repair shop that was in business in Long Beach for around 50 years. When the business closed, the three men decided to continue their instrument repair careers by opening Long Beach Guitar Repair at 2930 E. 7th St. in May 2013. “It might sound corny. But when you help a player who has a problem and they have a gig that night and you can save the day and save the gig by making sure they can go and perform up to their potential and please the adoring crowd, then we’ve done our job and everything is right with the world,” Stewart said. He explained that unlike other instrument shops in the area, Long Beach Guitar Repair focuses on repair, while others focus on retail sales. With the exception of pianos, Stewart said the shop can perform complex repairs on almost anything with strings, including orchestral instruments. “We’re here to try and help people get out of their guitar what they want to get out of it,” Stewart said. “Sometimes that’s difficult if their expectations outweigh the ability of the instrument, but we’re just here to try and get them what they want.” For more information, visit [www.longbeachguitarrepair.com](http://www.longbeachguitarrepair.com).

### PJ’s Pet Cafe

Rossana Estravides opened PJ’s Pet Cafe on September 25, 2009, on the corner of Linden Avenue and Broadway. She relocated the business to its current location at 3412 E. 7th St. when her landlord sold the building and issued a 60-day notice to vacate the property. After months of searching with the help of her sister, Fiorella Rios, Estravides reopened with more space to care for dogs and make them special treats. “It’s much better for my doggies – more space to run and to stay free because I don’t put them in kennels during the day. All my doggies can stay together – different size, different mind, different personalities,” Estravides said. “My passion is my doggies, and I run this business with compassion.” Estravides specializes in birthday cakes, jerky and other specialty treats for dogs. She said each item is sold frozen to ensure the 100% natural ingredients remain fresh. She said the business would not have been possible if it were not for her sister who built everything in the shop, from shelves to displays. “We are a team. She is in charge of the construction to make everything cute. But it’s my responsibility to make the treats, the meals, the birthday cakes,” Estravides said. “Honestly, I enjoy doggies now more than people. My day passes so fast with these crazies.” For more information, visit [pjs-pet-cafe.local-cafes.com](http://pjs-pet-cafe.local-cafes.com).



### Haskell’s Prospector

In July 1979, Jose Luis Lemus, aka Louie, began working as a cook at Haskell’s Prospector at 2400 E. 7th St., where the bar and restaurant has been located since 1965. “It was kind of an accident. I brought a brother of mine here to apply for a dishwashing job, but he didn’t speak any English at all,” Lemus said. “So I left my name and phone number. About a week later, they called . . . and she needed me as a cook. And the rest is history. I’m here still.” Within months, Lemus was restaurant manager at age 19, and in 1992, Lemus purchased the business. For the next decade, he struggled with high rents until he purchased the property in 1999. After a couple of years, he said business was back up and he was comfortable. Today, the restaurant and bar has around 20 employees and features live music, DJs or karaoke most nights of the week. “You have to stay up with the times. People change. I’ve been here for so many years, I’ve been through three generations already. And what was popular 10 years ago, it might be dead today. So you have to keep up with what’s going on. That’s all I’ve been doing.” For more information, visit [www.prospectorlongbeach.com](http://www.prospectorlongbeach.com).

### Stanley Shade

Ryan LaFerrara’s grandfather, Sam, has owned Stanley Shade for more than 40 years; however, the business celebrated its 90th year in Long Beach this year. Sam immigrated to the United States from Italy when he was 12 years old and continues to work in the shop six days per week at 82 years old. He is just the third owner since the store opened, and he moved the business to its current location at 3265 E. 7th St. around 20 years ago. “Shades, blinds, shutters, drapes – I would say we have just about any type of indoor window covering there is,” Ryan said. “We do a lot of install work ourselves, but if we need extra help, we have other installers that we can call.” Ryan explained that the company works with many property management companies, as well as with the Port of Long Beach providing blinds for offices. When asked what sets their business apart, Ryan said, “I would say the personalized and customer service. Because my grandpa has been here for so long, people have been coming in here for 40 years and still know him by name and come in to see him, whether it’s for a small part or a new house they’re moving into. You won’t get service like that many places anymore.” For more information, visit [www.stanleyshade.com](http://www.stanleyshade.com).





Articles by Senior Writer Brandon Richardson.  
Photographs by the Business Journal's Larry Duncan

# Support Local Small Businesses



## Long Beach Skate

After living in Long Beach for several years, Tim and Carrie Scanlan opened Long Beach Skate at 3142 E. 7th St. “There seemed to be a void in the style of shop that I grew up in the ’90s and 2000s going to, which were community-first skate shops that were involved with the lives of the skateboarders and the lives of those in their neighborhoods,” Tim said. “Our tag line is ‘It’s not my shop, it’s not your shop, it’s our shop.’ I think that’s important.” Tim said being a community-first shop goes beyond the skate world, which is why he is very involved with the community, including serving as the treasurer for the Rose Park Neighborhood Association. This year, the shop hosted its 3rd annual Big heART show for local artists. “My favorite thing is setting up a complete for someone for the first time – a complete being a customized skateboard from all the different components,” Tim said. “When we cut out the grip tape, there are scraps. We put that all in a big grip tape ball that we keep in the front of the store. All these scraps are from first completes. I think it’s the largest grip tape scrap ball probably in the world. It shows just how many people have set up first completes here. It’s a huge deal.” For more information, visit [www.lbskate.com](http://www.lbskate.com).

## The Good Bar and Eatery

In December 2015, Blake Whytock received the keys to the defunct Bull Bar at 3316 E. 7th St., which he would quickly transform and reopen as The Good Bar and Eatery later that same month. The location has served as a bar and restaurant since the 1960s when Dick & Faye’s Cafe Bistro opened. “We went back and forth with ourselves on if we could do it at all. It’s kind of a dead zone in a sense – there’s not a lot of businesses around here,” Whytock said. “We thought we could be the ones that could kind of bring people back to this neighborhood.” Whytock ran and managed The Red Room on 4th Street for 14 years, which is where he really honed his skills for operating a bar. The Good Bar has a full kitchen that utilizes fresh, local ingredients and 20 rotating craft beers. The bar features live music or DJs most nights and premieres skateboard videos on a big screen. “There’s something for everybody. We’ve got video games in the front for the kids, a pool table, the food. I just love the community part of it. It’s something I always enjoyed when I bartended. I love to talk to people and find out about their lives,” Whytock said. “We love people, and we want people to have a good time.” For more information, call 562/433-6282.



## Dyzzy on Vinyl

After schlepping jewelry at a kiosk in the Lakewood Center Mall for seven years and selling records at swap meets on weekends, Kevin “Dizzy” Diehm opened Dyzzy on Vinyl on May 22, 1999, at 3004 E. 7th St. “Customers come in and they’ll see something on the wall – a record or a poster – and, boom, they just start reminiscing with me or whoever they’re with,” Diehm said. “Just reminiscing with people about bands and music, in general, or shows that happened way back when. That’s my favorite part. No doubt about it.” The record store focuses on used records at a fair price, Diehm explained. He said he favors classic rock bands from around the ’70s, including Wet Willy, Neil Young, Bob Dylan and Funkadelic when he’s feeling funky. He said he is not into new, commercial music but that the Long Beach music scene is oozing with talent. Diehm said one service that sets him apart is his ability to transfer vinyl records onto CDs for customers. “The atmosphere when you walk in, it’s almost like walking back in time. It’s just comfortable, it makes you feel good. I’m not a hard sell person, I’m not shoving anything down your throat,” Diehm said. “My goal is never to gouge anybody, which is why I’ll never be rich. But I’m happy.” For more information, call 562/438-8928.





# On Track for a Green Tomorrow

The Port of Long Beach is the greenest, fastest, most efficient gateway for goods from Asia to reach destinations all across America. We're investing in technology and facilities to get closer to our goal of zero-emission operations. Our skies are clearer, and our harbor is thriving, with 60% more species of plants and animals than a decade ago.