

2015 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

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## BUSINESS

### El Segundo cheers business 'champions'

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Kevin Demoff speaks at the El Segundo “Champions of Business” banquet, Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016 at Vistamar School in El Segundo. Demoff is in his fifth year as executive vice president of football operations and chief operating officer of the National Football League’s Los Angeles Rams. Demoff, who helped oversee the team’s return to ...



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*Participants in the El Segundo Champions of Business event pose for photos at Vistamar School, Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016. From left: El Segundo City Council members Michael Dugan, Drew Boyles and Don Brann, Mayor Suzanne Fuentes, keynote speaker and Los Angeles Rams Chief Operating Officer Kevin Demoff, City Councilwoman Carol Pirsztuk, economic development manager Barbara Voss, EDAC chair Al Keahi, honoree and president of Continental Development Richard Lundquist, master of ceremonies and Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe and West Basin Municipal Water District board member Scott Houston. Photo by Tom Bray/Torrance Daily Breeze/SCNG*

A developer who's championed projects both commercial and philanthropic, a medical innovator that has championed new cancer treatments and a pro football executive who aims to see his team become champions again all topped the bill.

Yes, "champions" was the word of the evening Thursday night at Vistamar School as El Segundo honored key players in the community's ambitious recent efforts at economic development.

The Champions of Business Celebration also gave the city's Economic Development Advisory Council the chance to announce it had attained its "100@100" goal, wooing 100 new businesses to El Segundo before its 100th birthday next year.

In the spirit of the championship evening, keynote speaker Kevin Demoff of the newly returned Los Angeles Rams vowed to snag a Super Bowl win for the team's rekindled Southern California fan base.

The team's chief operating officer and vice president of football operations shared stories of its return to the area. Demoff said the team's hurriedly assembled relocation, which meant temporary homes all over the region from Los Angeles to Irvine to Oxnard to Thousand Oaks, resulted in hectic times for him and the team, which will eventually land in a state-of-art pro-football palace in Inglewood in 2019.

But seeing spontaneous public high-fives and bear-hugs on Metro trains made it all worth the rigors of returning, Demoff said. He also teased the crowd of 200-plus by promising to pursue for the Rams' new stadium such events as the NCAA college football championship, high-profile concerts and entertainment activities and a key role should Los Angeles land the 2024 Summer Olympics.

Among the evening's honorees:

- Richard Lundquist, president of Continental Development Corp., was selected 2016 Champion of Business. Lundquist's company has developed more 5 million square feet of commercial property, according to a statement from the city, and has supported such nonprofit groups as California Science Center, Torrance Memorial Medical Center, Pancreatic Cancer Action Network and Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute.

As he accepted the award, Lundquist couldn't resist a pitch for his latest philanthropic endeavor, a state-of-the-art swim center in El Segundo.

- Longtime Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe served as master of ceremonies — and also appeared surprised to receive the ceremonial key to the city and a lifetime achievement award from El Segundo Mayor Suzanne Fuentes. Knabe, who is retiring from his post this year, was specifically cited for his efforts to boost business, helping to create the Dominguez Gap Wetlands project and for bolstering L.A. County's application of the state's "Safely Surrendered Baby Law," allowing parents to hand over newborns at any hospital or fire station.

- Officials of Chevron's El Segundo refinery were applauded for their support of educators and charities, donating more than \$8 million to area schools, according to a city statement.

- Kite Pharma was honored with the Big Idea Award for its innovations in cancer therapy.

Full article: <http://www.dailybreeze.com/business/20161003/el-segundo-cheers-business-champions>