



**For Immediate Release**  
**Thursday, August 21, 2014**

## **10 Finalists Announced For LAEDC's 2014 Most Business-Friendly City Award**

*L.A. County's "Most Business-Friendly City" to be named at Eddy Awards on November 13th*

**LOS ANGELES, CA** - The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) today announced the finalists for its 2014 *Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County Award*. The cities of Bellflower, Glendale, Lakewood, Palmdale and Santa Clarita are finalists for the population 65,000 and over category, and the cities of Artesia, El Segundo, Glendora, Pico Rivera and Vernon are finalists in the population under 65,000 category.

One winner from each category will be announced live at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Eddy Awards<sup>®</sup> on Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Beverly Hilton. Inaugurated in 1996, the Eddy Awards<sup>®</sup> gala presents the State's only "business-friendly city" award, recognizing cities within L.A. County that are proactively promoting business-friendly programs and services, a key factor in job-creation.

The finalists were selected based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated priority commitment to economic development
- Excellence in programs and services designed to facilitate business entry, expansion, and retention
- Competitive business tax rates and fee structures
- Availability of economic incentives
- Effective communication with and about business clients

### **CITIES with POPULATIONS of 65,000 and OVER**

#### **Bellflower**

With a newly-established Economic Development Department, Bellflower has created incentive-based zoning and streamlined the entitlement process. Bellflower has low business, utility, and property taxes, and numerous incentives programs including forgivable sales tax loans, marketing and promotional agreements, and a restaurant expansion program. The City's regular business outreach, open staff channels and satisfaction surveys highlight its commitment to identifying problems and supporting its business community. This is Bellflower's first year as a finalist for the Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County Award.

#### **Glendale**

For major business projects, the City of Glendale deploys its concierge service team which includes Economic Development, Planning, Building and Safety, Fire and Traffic departments. Economic Development is integrated in the City's General Plan, focusing on a diverse, sustainable and growing business base. Customer service includes ombudsman services, streamlined permitting, a successful and

innovative film permit concierge service, and surveys to gauge business satisfaction. The City's commitment to cost reduction includes no utility user tax, no business tax, low property taxes, flexible zoning, community benefit districts, and business energy solutions. Glendale was a "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" finalist in 2008, 2011 and 2012.

### **Lakewood**

Unique to Lakewood, an independent firm surveys businesses, and business license fees are waived for qualifying veterans and disabled persons. The City also assists businesses via low utility user and property taxes, business loans for small and medium sized businesses - including a creative forgivable sales tax loan program - and a film friendly ordinance. With an Economic Development Element in its General Plan, Lakewood is committed to expediting development by cutting through red tape and fast-tracking the development process with over-the-counter approvals. Lakewood was a "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" finalist in 2009.

### **Palmdale**

In Palmdale, customer satisfaction surveys and regular business visits with the Mayor provide open channels for input and resolution of challenges. The City helps businesses via low business taxes, utility user and property taxes, a streamlined permitting process, 24/7 online project status tracking, and an ombudsman to provide one-on-one assistance. Creative sales tax sharing agreements and tenant subsidies give money back to businesses and drive growth. Additional incentives include Industrial Development Bonds, Foreign Trade Zone, Recycling Market Development Zone, business license fee reduction or waiver, and business loans or financing. Palmdale was a "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" finalist in 2007.

### **Santa Clarita**

Santa Clarita has no business licenses, no gross receipt or payroll tax, and no utility user fee. The City has an expedited development process, a "purchase-local" incentive, permit subsidization, Recycling Market Development Zone, and was an early adopter of film production incentives. During the recession, the City approved the 21-Point Plan to spur the local economy and improve infrastructure. Santa Clarita recognizes the importance of addressing employee workforce skills gaps through a partnership with College of the Canyons. Santa Clarita was "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" Award winner in 2008 and Finalist in 2006 and 2007.

## **CITIES with POPULATIONS UNDER 65,000**

### **Artesia**

One of the smallest cities in L.A. County, Artesia is home to approximately 17,000 residents and 1,300 businesses. Artesia's motto: "service builds tomorrow's progress" sets the tone for city departments providing business support services. An open door policy of two-way communication and over the counter permitting allows businesses a way to voice concerns and expedite business-oriented transactions. The City's restaurant incentive program attracts more restaurants to the City, which provide jobs, tax revenues and attracts more customers to the City. Artesia was a "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" finalist in 2013.

## **El Segundo**

With a significant online portal, El Segundo recognizes that "time is money" and sets a one-day goal for turn-around on business licenses, expedites permits, and offers after-hours approvals. Home to 16,000 residents, El Segundo boasts two dozen Fortune 500 companies with either a headquarters or significant presence; second only to San Francisco in the state. El Segundo maintains some of the lowest taxes in L.A. County and City staff work closely with businesses on projects, from initial inquiry through certificate of occupancy. El Segundo was the first "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" Award winner in 2006 and a Finalist in 2012 and 2013.

## **Glendora**

Glendora's Small Business Assistance Program funds business loans and reduces repayment obligations when job creation is documented. The City offers an online permit system available 24/7, competitive fees and lease rates, and a film friendly ordinance. Glendora's Economic Development staff has visited more than 300 businesses since 2012 to better understand issues and offer solutions. The City ranks among the least expensive cities in L.A. County to conduct business, and Glendora was voted Best Friendly City and Best Downtown for two years running by San Gabriel Newspaper Group. Glendora was a "Most Business Friendly City" finalist in 2012 and 2013.

## **Pico Rivera**

Pico Rivera embraces practices to promote economic growth, including conducting regular business visits, and outreach to manufacturers regarding export opportunities. The City continuously reviews and revise regulatory and entitlement processes for economic development and job creation. Pico Rivera's Business Assistance Program includes outreach, workshops, façade improvements, and the City surveys businesses to improve the City's business-facing practices. Pico Rivera endeavors to provide counter approvals and responses to applicants within 24 hours, and the City is adopting a film-friendly ordinance. Pico Rivera was a "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" finalist in 2012 and 2013.

## **Vernon**

Vernon is home to major manufacturers, processors and distributors. Vernon's 1,800 businesses include logistics companies, and manufacturers of apparel, furniture, glass, electronics, and paper products, supporting 50,000 jobs. Goods are easily transported via the 710, 110, 10, 60 and 5 freeways as well as the largest network of heavy rail lines west of the Mississippi. The City offers a streamlined 'one-stop' process for managing public works, building permits, fire code compliance, and city planning. An Economic Development Manager serves as a liaison ensuring the needs of the businesses are met. Vernon was the "Most Business Friendly City in L.A. County" Award winner in 2008.

## **About the Eddy Awards®** [www.laedc.org/eddy](http://www.laedc.org/eddy)

The Eddy Awards® were introduced by LAEDC in 1996 to celebrate individuals and organizations that demonstrate exceptional contributions to positive economic development in the region. The Awards are presented at the annual Eddy Awards gala dinner, where leaders come together to share ideas, to be held this year on November 13, 2014 at the Beverly Hilton. For sponsorship and event information, please contact Marilyn McPoland at (213) 236-4812 or [marilyn.mcpoland@laedc.org](mailto:marilyn.mcpoland@laedc.org).

**About the LAEDC** [www.laedc.org](http://www.laedc.org)

The LAEDC provides collaborative and strategic economic development leadership to promote a globally competitive, prosperous and growing L.A. County economy to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities and enable those residents to meet their basic human need for a job. We achieve this through objective economic research and analysis, strategic assistance to government and business, and targeted public policy. Our efforts are guided and supported by the expertise and counsel of our business, government and education members and partners. The LAEDC is a private, non-profit organization established in 1981 under section 501(c)(3).

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