



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY | Sept. 6, 2005

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Putting Things In 'Perspective'



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

WED | Sept. 7
Health Care Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Sept. 13
Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 14
Member Orientation
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 14
New Member Reception
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 15
Environmental Quality Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

FRI | Sept. 16
Accenture Pancakes & Politics
[more info](#)

FRI | Sept. 16
Education and Workforce Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Sept. 20
Transportation & Goods Movement Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Sept. 20
Trade Briefing: Doing Business with Israel
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 21
Business After Hours: Radisson Wilshire Plaza Hotel
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 22
Technology Industry Council
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 22
Economic Development & Land Use Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Sept. 27
Referral Network
a Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

WED | Sept. 28
Entertainment Industry Business Council
[more info](#)

THU | Sept. 29
Access L.A. City Hall
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with more than 1,400 members, is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

Every week in this column I focus on a political issue that is important to the future of our city, region, state, or country. This week, as we continue to see the horrific images from the Gulf states, it is very difficult to think of anything other than the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. There can be no more important issue, and it is not at all political--and never should be.

It's an emotional roller coaster watching the news on television. Anger at the looters, frustration at the emergency response lapses and joy at the selfless acts of kindness and heroism as hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced, their lives, homes and businesses changed forever.

Natural disaster is no stranger to California, and comes in many forms. We have had quite a variety in recent years, whether the disasters were earthquakes, fires or floods.

But nothing like Hurricane Katrina. Not even close. Not yet, anyway.

It is hard to imagine losing everything from such a disaster. But that risk is with our state everyday. For example, we in Los Angeles know all too well that we are one big shake away from massive destruction the likes of Katrina. Folks in the northern part of the state near Sacramento know that an overflow of the Folsom Dam would bring floodwaters to Sacramento--an area the size of New Orleans--that would own that city and the State Capitol for months, with up to 10-15 feet of water in some areas.

So none of us are safe forever. But while many of us live today in the comfort of our own lives, we must make sure that our hearts go out to the thousands of victims who have literally lost everything.

The way we can do that is to connect with organizations that are making people and money available to assist those in need. To support the exemplary relief efforts of the American Red Cross, visit www.redcrossla.org or call 1-800-HELP NOW.

Meanwhile, 2,000 evacuees will be arriving in the L.A. region shortly. Let's all work together to make sure they get the support they need (more info below). And I commend Mayor Villaraigosa for his decision to send 1,000 city workers to assist with relief efforts in impacted areas.

Americans are generous in responding with money and other donations. But so, too, is the rest of the world. Those who have long questioned our foreign aid programs should now look at countries like Bangladesh. The poorest of the poor are sending millions to help Americans in need.

Beyond the human tragedies there are economic ones as well. Billions of dollars in agriculture is annually delivered down the Mississippi River and transferred to container ships for distribution throughout the world. This vital corridor is not functioning now, and will take considerable time to rebuild. Plus, if goods cannot be delivered, they lose their value and the growers across America will lose as well.

A large portion of the nation's domestic petroleum resources, roughly 25 percent, originates from the Gulf Coast. We have seen the rising gasoline prices that have been the result of Katrina.

With every disaster there are lessons to be learned. City planners are surely evaluating their own cities' susceptibilities to disasters, and emergency response teams will improve on their existing methods.

Here in Los Angeles we have made great strides. From sprinklers in high rises, to stricter designs for seismic safety, to flood control in the San Fernando Valley, we are continuing to focus on making our region safe.

We must continue to be vigilant about protecting our region, while reaching out to support our neighboring regions in times like these.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.

Russell J. Hammer
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

The Business Perspective is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, LA Area Chamber

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

View the latest issue of the Chamber's [weekly email newsletter](#). [Contact us](#) to subscribe.

RESOURCES NEEDED FOR EVACUEES COMING TO L.A.
*L.A. County Board of Supervisors Chair Gloria Molina and L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa have created a joint city-county Katrina Evacuees Task Force to coordinate assistance to the estimated 2,000 evacuees that will be arriving the Los Angeles region shortly. Evacuees will need assistance with housing, personal effects, clothing and other items, and businesses will be critical to meeting the needs of these families. **Hotel operators, apartment owners and others that can provide housing to transition the Katrina evacuees are encouraged to call the "211" information line to offer their housing services.** The Chamber will work in coordination with the task force to keep you posted on what is needed and how to donate.*

TALK BACK TO THE CHAMBER

Please tell us your thoughts on this issue. Include your name, company and email address and your response may appear in next week's *Business Perspective*.

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