



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY | January 17, 2006

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Imagine L.A.'s Future



Coming up at the Chamber

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

WED | Jan. 18

Taste of the Chamber Mixer
[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 19

Export Seminar Series
Session #1: Fundamentals of Export
[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 19

Land Use, Construction and Housing Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

SAT | Jan. 21

L.A. Cash for College Day
[more info](#)

TUE | Jan. 24

Education and Workforce Development Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Jan. 24

Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

WED | Jan. 25

Transportation and Goods Movement Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 26

Environmental Quality Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 26

117th Inaugural Dinner
[more info](#)

MON - WED | Jan. 30 - Feb. 1

Faster Freight, Cleaner Air 2006
[more info](#)

FRI | Feb. 10

Health Care Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Feb. 14

Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

WED | Feb. 15

Technology Industry Council
[more info](#)

THU | Feb. 16

Land Use, Construction and Housing Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

FRI | Feb. 17

Accenture Pancakes and Politics
with L.A. City Council President Eric Garcetti
[more info](#)

This past weekend the *Los Angeles Times* ran a piece that asked local leaders to envision a big dream for Los Angeles. You may have seen the article, "[Letting Imaginations Run Wild About a Future L.A.](#)," in which I was quoted. Such articles, and the discussions they evoke, are important for people to engage in, because only by dreaming about the future can we map it and achieve it.

Many of the comments imagined a city with fewer strip malls, better schools and more public transportation. My comments focused on my vision of our harbors, the lifeblood of our economy. "I imagine a Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex that is recognized as the world's cleanest and most efficient harbor. Ships would run on low-sulfur diesel and plug into zero-emission electric power supplies when they are docked. I imagine containers being loaded around the clock into clean-fuel trucks before being transferred onto clean-fuel trains."

But that is not all I envision.

I imagine an urban plan that prioritizes mixed-use housing and encourages developers to build near public transportation centers. So much of our gridlock is a result of affordable homes being so far away from job centers. Workforce housing does not need billions of dollars of bonds, as much as it needs visionary city planners and officeholders with some backbone to counter the usual chorus of homeowner associations who block development with NIMBYism.

I imagine more use of alternative energy sources through public and private financing as well as individual choices to conserve energy, thereby reducing consumer costs. One of the most exciting—and environmentally friendly—prospects on the energy front is that of liquefied natural gas (LNG). There are several proposals on the table today, and we need officeholders with backbone to select the best option based on sound policy, not just what is politically expedient.

I imagine that the billions of dollars in school construction bonds we have passed in recent years will be supplemented by equal gains in student achievement. I imagine more children being able to walk to nearby schools that have become the centers of their neighborhoods, with those children, parents, and teachers becoming partners in these small learning communities.

I imagine that the barriers to Angelenos moving around the city be eliminated by new transportation solutions—some of which have been talked about for years. I imagine a Red Line subway extended to the beach so tourists can cool off in the ocean after a day of sightseeing in our fabulous Miracle Mile museums. I also envision USC fans boarding the Expo Line in Culver City to be dropped off at the refurbished Coliseum to cheer their Trojans (and returning on Sundays to cheer L.A.'s NFL team). Lastly, I envision thousands of Eastsiders using the Gold Line to get to work in Downtown L.A. and Pasadena.

As we repair our infrastructure to clean up our water runoff systems, I imagine beaches that receive straight A's on the annual Heal the Bay report card for clean water. I imagine continuing trends of cleaner air as cleaner fuels are made available for the types of cars we like to drive. I imagine an urban forest of drought-tolerant and smog-resistant trees—not just in our city, but in our open spaces as well.

I imagine a greater emphasis on incentives for more of L.A.'s signature industries that provide great jobs—biomedical, aerospace, world trade and entertainment, to name a few. I imagine that some of today's most depressed economic areas will one day be vibrant economic centers through economic incentives and dynamic leadership of our elected officials and urban planners.

I imagine a health care system and social services safety net in Los Angeles that leaves no residents behind and lifts all people to economic self-sufficiency, finding jobs and homes for their families.

Los Angeles has so much innovation, talent and capital that there's no reason why some of my imaginings (and yours) cannot become reality in a generation. I would love to know what you imagine about L.A.'s future, so [please e-mail your thoughts](#), too.

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, L.A. Area Chamber

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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