



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 9, 2005

CONTACT: Marie Condron, 213.925.9605
mcondron@lachamber.org

**LA AREA CHAMBER ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS,
APPLAUDS RUSSELL J. HAMMER'S EXTRAORDINARY TERM
AS PRESIDENT & CEO**

*Hammer caps four years of Chamber resurgence in growth, influence;
Nichols, Fleming set to chair board of directors in 2006, 2007*

Los Angeles, CA – The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce announced today that Russell J. “Rusty” Hammer, who revitalized the Chamber in 2001 and led the organization through four years of powerful growth, will resign his post as President & CEO upon the selection of his replacement through a national search in coming months.

During Hammer’s tenure, the Chamber has returned to prominence as L.A. County’s top business organization and leading advocate on regional policy issues. Hammer has guided the Chamber to substantial membership and financial growth; refined the Chamber’s strategic direction; and developed coalitions among area businesses, elected officials, and the community with a common mission of improving the L.A. region’s economic prosperity and quality of life.

“Nearly five years ago the Chamber board embarked on a search to recruit a nationally-recognized executive to lead our organization. By any measure, anyone who has watched the Chamber since Rusty Hammer’s arrival agrees that we found the best person for the job,” said Chamber Board Chair Christopher C. Martin, CEO, AC Martin Partners. “Unfortunately, Rusty’s serious illness has resulted in his decision to resign as our president and chief executive officer. Recognizing that the time required for full recovery is uncertain, Rusty has recommended it is in the best interests of the Chamber that he step aside so that a full time successor can be recruited. As much as we regret it, we have accepted his recommendation and are proceeding accordingly.”

Major achievements of Hammer’s administration include:

- **Increased influence in public policy**
- **Growth in membership, diversity, and financial means** – Following a time of uncertainty among the rapidly changing demographics of the region’s business community, Hammer refocused the turned around the Chamber and ization. Growth in budget, numbers, 1150 to 1450

- **Renewed focus on regional transportation solutions –**
- **Programs and policy initiatives to strengthening our region’s workforce –**
Cash for College, LAYAW, UNITE-LA alliance
- **Developing long-term civic leadership in the region**

The Chamber also announced the appointment of David Fleming, Of Counsel, Latham & Watkins LLP, as Second Vice Chair of the Board. David Nichols, Senior Vice President - External Affairs South, SBC, serves as First Vice Chair and will take helm of the board in 2006, with Fleming succeeding him in 2007. Fleming’s ascension to chair will cap off a distinguished record of civic leadership in Los Angeles, including terms as chair of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation and Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley.

Hammer, who at 22 became the youngest elected mayor in U.S. history in Campbell, California, kicked off a career in policymaking, marketing and management that brought him to the LA Area Chamber most recently after serving as President & CEO of the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

For the past two years, Hammer has led the Chamber while battling a rare form of leukemia. Immediate Past Board Chair George Kieffer, Partner, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips LLP, served an extended two-year term as chair during that time, overseeing with Hammer a continued growth of the organization’s membership and increased prominence with influencing policy at local, state, and national levels.

<quote from George>

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said, “Rusty Hammer is nothing less than heroic. He has reinvigorated the LA Area Chamber into a vibrant advocacy force, speaking not just for business, but also for the long-term interests of the Los Angeles region. Rusty is the kind of leader who truly embodies what Los Angeles is all about—dynamic energy, integrity, and talent. And when you consider that he has accomplished this while fighting cancer for the past two years—well, words can’t describe that kind of courage and commitment.”

Hammer’s letter of resignation follows.

--- ### --

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with more than 1,450 members, represents the interests of business in Los Angeles County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the L.A. region. For more information visit www.lachamber.org.