



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 15, 2005

CONTACT: Marie Condron, 213.925.9605
mcondron@lachamber.org

LA AREA CHAMBER TO BEGIN NATIONAL SEARCH FOR PRESIDENT & CEO; ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

*Russell J. Hammer to resign for health reasons;
Nichols, Fleming set to chair board of directors in 2006, 2007*

Los Angeles, CA – Acting upon the recommendations of Russell J. “Rusty” Hammer, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber announced today it will begin a national search for its next President & CEO. Hammer decided to resign, effective upon selection of his successor, due to health reasons. He recommended that it was in the best interests of the Chamber to assure the Chamber has full-time executive leadership over the long term. Christopher C. Martin, CEO, AC Martin Partners, and Chair of the Board of the Chamber, also announced the election of David Fleming, of counsel to Latham & Watkins LLP, as Second Vice Chair of the Board. David Nichols, Senior Vice President-South, SBC, who currently serves as First Vice Chair, will take helm of the Board in 2006, with Fleming succeeding him in 2007.

Hammer, who has led the Chamber during four years of unprecedented growth, has battled leukemia for the past two years. During his tenure, Hammer worked closely with the Board to refocus the Chamber’s primary mission as a trustee for the long-term economic welfare of the region and prominently influence public policy at local, state, and national levels.

“Rusty came to Los Angeles with a deep understanding that a chamber of commerce, while responsible for representing business interests, must be a trustee of the region’s general welfare. He understands that we must look at issues through a private sector lens, while promoting both economic prosperity and quality of life for all,” said George Kieffer, Immediate Past Board Chair and Partner, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP. “We have been in complete agreement on this, and the Chamber’s accomplishments during his tenure clearly show the Chamber’s movement in this direction.”

In announcing his decision to resign, Hammer pledged to continue to serve as chief executive until his successor joins the Chamber, to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. He noted that the Chamber will unveil new initiatives and programs in coming months that will continue to demonstrate the organization’s growing position of influence in Los Angeles.

“Rusty Hammer is a phenomenal leader and an invaluable asset to the Los Angeles business community. He made an immediate impact on our organization and our region,” said Martin. “We all are so fond of Rusty, his wife Pamela, and their children Gerald and Jennifer. From the day they arrived five years ago, they have become an important and influential family in L.A. Unfortunately, due to his health condition, Rusty has decided that it is in the best interest of the Chamber that he transition his post. As much as we regret it, we respect Rusty’s decision and look forward to working with him to select a replacement of his caliber to be the executive leader of this great organization. ”

--- ### ---

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.