

FOCUS

Analysis, Commentary and Updates on Legislative and Policy Issues that Affect California Cities

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The Legislature is
in recess until
January 4.

STATE CONTROLLER RELEASES VLF ADJUSTMENT AMOUNT REPORT

The State Controller's office (SCO) has just released the schedule of true-up amounts for the 2004-05 fiscal year vehicle license fees (VLF Adjustment Amount), as well as amount of the actual 2005-06 VLF Adjustment Amount payments. *For more, see Page 4.*

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ICMA TO HOST EMINENT DOMAIN WEBCAST

On November 15, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) will host a 90-minute webcast entitled "Eminent Domain: Implications from the Kelo v. City of New London case." *For more, see Page 3.*

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LEAGUE LEGISLATIVE BRIEFINGS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER

The League of California Cities is hosting two legislative briefings in both Northern and Southern California next month. The Northern California meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 16, at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento. The same program will be repeated on Thursday, November 17, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Ontario. Both programs begin at 9:30 a.m. *For more, see Page 4.*

**WANT MORE DETAILS
ON BILLS?**

Visit the League of
California Cities
website at
[www.cacities.org/
billsearch](http://www.cacities.org/billsearch).

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ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARD APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Applications for the 2006 All-America City Award are now available! Presented by the National Civic League, the All-America City Award is the oldest community recognition program in the country.

Started in 1949, the award recognizes communities that are overcoming challenges through innovative leadership and collaborative problem solving. In total, more than 500 communities of all sizes – cities, towns, counties, neighborhoods and regions - have received the prestigious award.

Applications are available online at www.ncl.org. All applications must be received by March 9, 2006. The National Civic League will announce the 30 finalists on April 14, 2006. Finalists advance to the 57th annual All-America City Awards competition on June 9-12, 2006, in Anaheim, Calif.

For more information, contact Gary Chandler at (303) 571-4343, or write to aleksh@ncl.org.

Leaving City Office? Retiring?

The League wants to stay in touch! Just because you are leaving your position with the city doesn't mean you stop caring about or wanting to be involved in city issues. Keep abreast of developments affecting cities and the League by becoming part of the League's alumni group. Members will receive periodic updates on city issues and League activities. This is the League's way of saying "thank you" for your public service—there is no fee for this service.

To join, go to www.cacities.org/alumni or send your contact information to dharrison@cacities.org.

28 GRADUATE FROM THE MAYORS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS ACADEMY

A recognition ceremony for the 28 city officials graduating from the League of California Cities Mayors and Council Members Academy (MCA) was held at the League's annual conference in San Francisco earlier this month. 19 individuals graduated from Advanced Leadership and nine from Leadership in Action.

During the Mayors and Council Members annual business meeting, Second Vice President Ben Wong, council member, West Covina, recognized the group. The graduates participated in educational programs and community activities that enhanced their knowledge, skills, and abilities to better serve the public.

Combined with years of service as a city elected official, the graduates met all requirements of the Academy for their respective level and received a framed certificate of completion. Advanced Leadership graduates also received a two-torch lapel pin while the Leadership in Action graduates received a three-torch pin. The number of torches signifies the level, and the torch itself is symbolic of their learning experience.

A complete list of the 28 MCA graduates can be found on the League website at www.cacities.org, by clicking on "About the League" followed by "Municipal Departments."

Created by the League in 1995, the Mayors and Council Members Academy consists of educational programs and community activities that allow the mayor or council member to increase competence, gain greater respect among peers, and enhance the public's trust in his or her work. MCA is a voluntary program with three levels: Leadership, Advanced Leadership, and Leadership in Action.

For more information, please visit www.cacities.org and go the Mayors and Council Members Municipal Department page.

CITY ATTORNEYS ADOPT ETHICAL STANDARDS

City managers have theirs, as do planners, clerks, and finance officials. Although city attorneys in California have always had the State Bar's Rules of Professional Conduct, they now have taken their commitment to ethics in the practice of municipal law one step further in identifying a series of ethical principles particularly relevant for city attorneys.

At their department business meeting at the League's annual conference, city attorneys adopted a document designed to:

- Serve as an aspirational guide to city attorneys in making decisions in difficult situations
- Provide guidance to clients and the public on the ethical standards to which city attorneys aspire
- Promote integrity of the city and city attorney office

The document addresses issues such as:

- Promoting, defending and exemplifying the rule of law
- Earning client trust through quality legal advice
- Avoiding politicization of the city attorney's position

Each ethical principle is followed by a series of examples that explain how the principle applies in specific situation. For example, under the "no politicization" principle, an example reads as follows:

The city attorney or persons seeking to become city attorney should not make campaign contributions to or participate in the campaigns of that city's officials, including candidates running for that city's offices or city officers running for other offices. For private law firms serving as city attorney or seeking to become city attorney, this restriction should apply to the law firm's attorneys.

The full document can be viewed at www.cacities.org/cityattorneysethicalprinciples. It will be the subject of ongoing discussion and refinement over the course of the coming year.

The development and adoption of ethical principles for city attorneys comes on the heels of last year's groundbreaking publication of *Practicing Ethics: A Handbook for Municipal Lawyers*. This publication analyzes city attorneys' responsibilities under the State Bar's Rules of Professional Conduct and other state ethics laws.

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EMINENT DOMAIN from page 1

The webcast will review the major implications the Supreme Court decision will have on local governments, highlight how local governments have successfully used eminent domain in the past, and will look at what Congress and the state legislatures are likely to do to curb local government powers in the future.

Featured speakers for this event include:

- Joe Schilling, professor in practice, Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech
- Israel Small, assistant city manager, Savannah, Ga.
- Peter Byrne, law professor, Georgetown University
- Susan Frederick, senior committee director – Law and Criminal Justice Committee, National Conference of State Legislatures

Those that will benefit by attending this webcast include city and county managers, planning and economic development directors, and other local government officials. The cost of the webcast is \$95 per site. Participants may take part as a group, but must have a computer with Internet access (56K modem or higher) and a separate telephone line for the audio portion of the webcast.

To register, visit www.lgean.org/html/training/icmaindex.cfm. Registration can also be done over the phone at (877) 865-4326.

VLF from page 1

The 2004-05 state budget included a one-time "swap" of property tax in lieu of vehicle license fees. This VLF Adjustment Amount reflects the difference between what cities and counties would have received in 2004-05 under the old 2 percent VLF rate and what cities and counties actually received in 2004-05 under the adjusted .65 percent VLF rate.

In the 2004-05 fiscal year, cities received **estimated** VLF Adjustment Amount payments - these were distributed in January and May of this year. The newly released true-up amounts are a **one-time** settle-up payment.

Cities and counties **will not** see a similar settle-up payment in future years. In subsequent years, each agency's VLF Adjustment Amount will increase in proportion to the change in Assessed Valuation in the jurisdiction from the prior year. The law required the state to provide the VLF Adjustment amounts for the 2005-06 fiscal year. However, in the future county auditors will make those calculations.

The SCO report and corresponding cover letter can be viewed on the League website at: www.cacities.org.

Michael Coleman, fiscal policy advisor for the League, has provided a memo that further explains items on the SCO report. That memo can also be accessed on the League website at www.cacities.org.

Any questions on the State Controller documents can be referred to David Smart at dsmart@sco.ca.gov. If you have further questions please contact Jean Korinke by e-mail at jkorinke@cacities.org, or via phone at (916) 658-8245.

LEG BRIEFINGS from page 1

Featured luncheon speakers are Greg Lucas, bureau chief, *San Francisco Chronicle* (Northern California), and Michelle De Armond, political reporter, *The Riverside Press-Enterprise* (Southern California). Both speakers will be providing a commentary on the 2005 Special Election and prospects for 2006.

Please register online by Monday, November 7, at www.cacities.org/events. The cost for attending is only \$140. Early registration is advisable because space is limited. Only advance registration is available for this workshop.

THE 2005 CITY HALL DIRECTORY IS NOW AVAILABLE

Don't miss this opportunity to get the League's most useful reference tool. This comprehensive California directory provides important contact information for mayors, council members and city department heads. The directory also features the League's staff directory, League partners, affiliate organizations and a wide variety of advertisers.

INFORMATION YOU NEED, RIGHT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

Purchase this publication online at www.cacities.org/store or call (916) 658-8257 for an order form. City officials price \$30, non-city official price \$65, plus shipping & handling.