

PRIORITY FOCUS



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LEGISLATIVE ACTION DAYS SET FOR MAY 16-17 IN SACRAMENTO **Make Your Voice Heard at the State Capitol!**

The League of California Cities' annual Legislative Action Days are scheduled for May 16-17, at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel, in Sacramento.

Join your colleagues to learn the latest on League priority issues such as infrastructure, eminent domain reform, climate change and the state budget. In addition, Legislative Action Days are a prime opportunity for your city to meet with legislators and deliver the clear message of preserving local services throughout California. *For more, see Page 2.*

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DENSITY BONUS BILLS GO THE TWO-YEAR ROUTE

Two density bonus bills, AB 1256 (Caballero) and the AB 1449 (Saldana), will be held in the Assembly Local Government Committee until next year. The issues presented in these bills will now become the focus of a Density Bonus Law Working Group, consisting of practitioners and stakeholders. *For more, see Page 2.*

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KEEPING UP: EVA SPIEGEL HIRED AS LEAGUE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

The League of California Cities is pleased to welcome Eva Spiegel as its new communications director. Eva officially started on April 25. She brings a diverse background as a journalist and project manager to the League's Communications Department. *For more, see Page 3.*

'Density Bonus Bills' Continued from Page 1...

The group hopes to come to a consensus on the structure, language and impacts on the state law, and come back next year with a process and design that works for everyone. Assemblywoman Anna Caballero, chair of the Assembly Local Government Committee, will oversee the process.

The League is sponsoring AB 1256, which would exempt local agencies that have inclusionary housing ordinances from meeting specified criteria in the state Density Bonus Law. AB 1449, sponsored by the California Chapter of the American Planning Association, would streamline and clarify the process for granting incentives and bonus under the law.

Specific details on the Density Bonus Law Working Group remain to be worked out, but the meetings could start as soon as June or July. Further updates on the group will be published in *Priority Focus* as they become available.

'Legislative Action Days' Continued from Page 1...

Confirmed general session speakers include:

- Sen. Alex Padilla (former League president), who will discuss SCR 31 and Healthy Communities Month
- Sens. Alan Lowenthal and Bob Dutton, who will speak on SB 286 and infrastructure issues
- Assemblywoman Anna Caballero, chair, Assembly Local Government Committee
- Assemblyman John Laird, chair, Assembly Budget Committee
- Sen. Dick Ackerman, Senate Republican Leader
- Assemblyman Roger Niello, vice chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez; Business, Transportation and Housing Secretary Dale Bonner; and California Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Linda Adams are also invited to give remarks.

In addition, Sen. Christine Kehoe and Assemblyman Dave Jones will be honored with a special presentation.

A Healthy Evening Reception

Wednesday evening, come join a variety of legislators and your city colleagues at a special legislative reception at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento. "Healthy Communities" is among the themes of this reception. The event will highlight the ways California cities are promoting healthy communities through parks and recreation programs, community design and other measures.

Bill Mabie, chief of staff to Sen. Alex Padilla is also scheduled to make a presentation at the reception to acknowledge the 10th anniversary of the Cities, Counties and Schools (CCS) Partnership.

Incorporated in 1997, the CCS Partnership is a nonprofit, nonpartisan collaboration of the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties and the California School Boards Association. The CCS Partnership promotes collaboration among jurisdictions to achieve strong, healthy communities for children and their families.

For more information on Legislative Action Days and a tentative schedule of events, visit www.cacities.org/events.

League African American Caucus to Host Inaugural Breakfast

Majority Leader Karen Bass Will Discuss 'The State of Black California'

The League of California Cities African American Caucus will host its inaugural legislative breakfast during the League's Legislative Action Days on Wednesday, May 16.

California Assembly Majority Leader Karen Bass will discuss "The State of Black California," a report that was commissioned by the Legislature. The goal of the report was to develop a public policy agenda for the California Legislative Black Caucus, local elected and appointed officials

The breakfast will be held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento, from 8 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Attendance is free and breakfast will be provided. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Yvette Harris at (916) 658-8253.

For more information on the League's African American Caucus, visit www.cacities.org/caucus1. Membership forms are available from League Legislative Representative P. Anthony Thomas. Thomas can be reached at (916) 658-8279 or athomas@cacities.org.

Latino Caucus Event Also Planned

From 9 a.m. to noon, the Latino Caucus will have a discussion on the challenges of civic engagement. A continental breakfast will be served at this event. Registration is available on a first-come, first-serve basis by calling (916) 669-1343.

'Eva Spiegel' Continued from Page 1...

Eva comes to the League from the American Communications Foundation (ACF), a nonprofit that had a mission to produce news stories on substantive public policy and social issues for commercial broadcast news outlets.

Eva began her tenure at ACF in 1995, when she was hired to produce a series for *The Osgood File* (CBS Radio Network) on democracy, citizenship and community. She also covered other subjects, including religion and American society, rural America, environment, and science and technology.

A firm believer that people are most engaged politically at the local level, Eva is excited to combine her interest in the political process with her journalism roots. League Executive Director Chris McKenzie is equally as enthusiastic to add Eva's talents to the League's management staff.

"We're delighted to have Eva onboard here at the League," said League Executive Director Chris McKenzie. "Her wide range of experience as a journalist, particularly on community and civic engagement issues, will help strengthen the League's ability to communicate its mission."

Eva graduated with a master's degree in broadcast & electronic communications arts from San Francisco State University. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Davis.

To contact Eva, e-mail her at espiegel@cacities.org.

U.S. Communities Celebrates 10 Years – And Saves Cities Millions

The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance marked its 10-year anniversary recently, celebrating with a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington D.C.

At the conference, Rick Grimm, chief executive officer of the National Institute of Government Purchasing and chair of the U.S. Communities board of directors, gave the program high marks. He revealed that U.S. Communities has saved its 20,000 participants more than \$735 million, with \$150 million of that amount in 2006 alone. In 2006, the program generated more than \$1 billion in total sales.

One of the powerful effects of tapping into the collective purchasing power of public agencies nationwide is that municipalities separated by vast geography can collaborate. For example, Gerry Hyland, supervisor of Fairfax County, Va., reports that his county has saved millions using Los Angeles County's contract.

Hyland cited the office and school supply program as a prime example.

"By using the Los Angeles County contract, Fairfax County saved over \$1.6 million in fiscal year 2006 [on just] one contract," he said.

Program History

Originally part of California Communities, the program was created by the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). It became a national program in 1997 and was renamed to reflect its national scope. The program is co-sponsored by the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Association of School Business Officials and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing.

U.S. Communities provides increasing value for growing number of participating California public agencies. Large cities and counties are the greatest users of U.S. Communities, but small cities have the largest percentage of savings, as they cannot secure the level of discounts on their own.

Here are some of the primary advantages of the U.S. Communities Purchasing Alliance:

- Competitive solicited contracts by a lead public agency
- Most favorable public agency pricing
- No cost to participate, each contract is optional and non-exclusive
- Broad range of high quality products
- Thousands of environmentally certified products and services
- Nationally sponsored by leading associations and purchasing organizations
- Effectively aggregates purchasing power of public agencies nationwide
- Managed by public purchasing professionals

For more information on the program, visit www.uscommunities.org or contact Dan Harrison at dharrison@cacities.org.

CMTA Celebrates Municipal Treasurers Day and Week

The California Municipal Treasurers Association (CMTA), an affiliate organization of the League of California Cities, celebrated Municipal Treasurers Day and Week during its Annual Conference in Long Beach.

CMTA sponsored a special measure, Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 33, in the State Legislature to highlight the many accomplishments of municipal treasurers in California. ACR 33 commemorated May 2 as Municipal Treasurers Day and the week of April 30 - May 6 as Municipal Treasurers Week.

Authored by Assemblywoman Anna Caballero (D-Salinas), chair of the Assembly Local Government Committee, the measure flew through both the Assembly and Senate. It was recently chaptered by the Secretary of State, with additional support from the League, State Treasurer Bill Lockyer, and the California Special Districts Association.

Lockyer was on-hand to help kick-off the CMTA conference, delivering the keynote address on Municipal Treasurers Day. CMTA President Vikki Beatley recognized and thanked Lockyer and Caballero for their work on ACR 33, saying that the association looks forward to making it an annual celebration.

For more information about ACR 33, look up the bill at www.cacities.org/billsearch.

Have a Housing Success Story? Tell Us About It!

Focus on Housing, the League of California Cities' electronic monthly housing newsletter, is seeking new housing success stories to profile for its upcoming issues.

Has your city redeveloped a blighted or underused site with new affordable housing in the past two years? If so, we want to know about it. Typical housing success stories published in *Focus on Housing* range between 250-400 words, and include "before and after" photos to illustrate the property's change.

For an example of one of the newsletter's success stories, visit www.imakenews.com/focusonhousing and read "[Las Brisas Helps Revitalize South Los Angeles](#)."

Questions and submissions should be sent to League Communications Specialist Brian Heaton at bheaton@cacities.org.

Find a Bill, Legislators, Leg Committee – or Ask League Leg Staff

Visit (and bookmark!) the League's [Legislative Resources](http://www.cacities.org/legresources) Web page (www.cacities.org/legresources). You'll find a roster and contact information for the League's legislative staff; the online Bill Search program, background materials on lobbying your legislators, and more.

Legislative Bill Summaries

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

AB 1496 (Swanson) Local Government: Cities and Counties: Civil Service. AB 1496 would mandate restrictive changes to all city and county civil service and merit systems by March 1, 2008. Specifically, it would require inclusion of all employees within the civil service or merit system except:

- 1) apprentices or technical experts employed temporarily for a specific project, or
- 2) substitute or short term employees paid for less than 50 percent of work days in a fiscal year, where the employment is not needed on a continuing basis. Substitute employees would be restricted to a person(s) collectively employed no longer than 60 days.

In addition to significant staffing restrictions imposed on local agencies, this bill would be very costly when it forces replacement of temporary personnel with permanent personnel on regular or overtime payment. It would impact city's summer program staff, reserve police officers, snow removal personnel, lifeguards hired annually, and peak work-load staff hired by planning and building departments.

Please send in letters of opposition and let your legislators know how this would impact your city.

Staff: Anthony Thomas; **Status:** AsmFlr, Third Reading; **Position:** Oppose.

AB 553 (Hernandez) Public Employment Relations Board. AB 553 would eliminate local government's ability to seek injunctive relief for a potential strike, by providing the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) with exclusive authorization to seek court injunctive relief.

Cities and counties have a long history, statutory authority and common law over issues of public health and safety, while PERB. This bill would add an unnecessary delay and additional step to a process designed to protect the public health and safety, and would usurp existing city and county authority. **Staff:** Anthony Thomas; **Status:** AsmPER&SS, Hrg May 2; **Position:** Oppose.

Want to Send a Letter in Support of a League Position? Here's Who to call:

ASSEMBLY PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, RETIREMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY (6)—Hernandez (Chair), Jeffries (Vice Chair), Anderson, Mullin, Soto, and Torrico. Chief Consultant: Karon Green. 1020 N Street, Room 153. (916) 319-3957.
