

San Fernando Valley Business Journal

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Santa Clarita Named Top City for Business by LAEDC

By Linda Coburn - 11/24/2008

San Fernando Valley Business Journal Staff

It's official – the City of Santa Clarita is the Most Business-Friendly City in Los Angeles County.

After two years as a finalist in the category of municipalities serving more than 50,000 residents, the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation gave the nod to Santa Clarita, which edged out Glendale, Pasadena, Long Beach and Cerritos for the Eddy Award this year. Vernon took the honors in the small city category.

"We think that it's an award that is well-deserved," said Larry Mankin, president and CEO of the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce. "We're all very excited because it's now one of those things on our resume as a city."

Santa Clarita was cited specifically for its lack of a utility user tax; discounts to businesses on electric, telephone, water and gas bills, and its recent designation as an Enterprise Zone.

The LAEDC also pointed to the highly-educated workforce that lives in the city; the amount of land available for development; and the city's achievements in assisting companies with site selection and expedited plan reviews and permit processing.

The crystal award will likely share space in the City Hall trophy case with a photograph of Jason Crawford who was recently named "Outstanding New Economic Developer of the Year" by the International Economic Development Council.

"It's been a really big year for us," said Crawford, "We've gotten quite a bit of recognition." That would include an award from the Los Angeles Business Journal naming Santa Clarita the "Best City for Industrial Development," as well as the Helen Putnam award from the League of California Cities.

The Putnam, said Crawford, is the highest honor given by the League and was garnered for his department's film and tourism program, which was also named the "Best Economic Development Program" in the State by the California Association for Local Economic Development.

Corporate awards were presented by the LAEDC to the Walt Disney Company and developer Rick Caruso for the roles they have played in creating jobs in the county.

"Rick Caruso continues to push the bounds of the retail experience," said Bill Allen, LAEDC president and CEO. "His lifestyle centers have played a key role in boosting tourism for L.A. County in addition to creating thousands of jobs for Angelenos."

Accepting the award on behalf of Disney was Anne Sweeney, president of the ABC Television Group, and co-chair of Disney Media Networks.

Disney is the highest-ranking Fortune 500 firm headquartered in Los Angeles County and the company employs more than 10,000 people.

In addition to the more than \$3.6 billion their businesses have contributed to the economy of the region, Allen said, "Disney exemplifies

the best of corporate citizenship and is one of the leading economic engines that fuel our economy."

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