Every year Californians ask the question, “Which way is the economy headed?” It seems that while we’ve been cautiously optimistic for a while, there’s still uncertainty around the corner. Nonetheless, it’s an exciting time at the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA), and we’ve seen progress on some of our top priorities, such as our Valley on Track transportation priorities which led to Measure M, and helping to bring the 2024 Olympics to Los Angeles. Each has the potential to transform our region, and to position the San Fernando Valley extremely well for the growth we’re expecting.

ECONOMIC FORECAST BREAKFAST

Economists & Experts Discuss ‘Going for Gold’

Industry leaders and experts joined VICA’s 28th Annual Business Forecast Conference (BFC) on Friday for an economic forecast breakfast, panels on a variety of topics impacting business and luncheon with keynote speaker CEO of the LA 2024 Candidature Committee Gene Sykes. The event, presented by the Hilton Universal City and Wells Fargo, brought business leaders together to discuss important issues.

The opening breakfast forecast, sponsored by California State University, Northridge (CSUN) and US Bank, was moderated by Patrick Nygren (Wells Fargo). William Roberts (CSUN) started the discussion by outlining the local economy and noted that LA’s housing market is sluggish but stable. Next, Jeffrey Kravetz (US Bank) discussed California, including job growth by industry sector. Gary Schlossberg (Wells Fargo) rounded out the discussion with his views of the national economy and how the ‘new normal’ looks in a post-recession world.

*Patrick Nygren (Wells Fargo), Danna Buonarti (Hilton Universal City), Jeffrey Kravetz (US Bank), Gary Schlossberg (Wells Capital Management), William Roberts (CSUN) with VICA President Stuart Waldman – our Breakfast Forecast Panel.*

*Gary Schlossberg (Wells Capital Management) gives his national report during the breakfast forecast.*
Sykes discusses 2024 Olympic Bid; Unique Advantages of Los Angeles

Keynote speaker Gene Sykes, Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles 2024 Candidature Committee, discussed how Los Angeles serves as a world-class destination and potential host city for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Sykes noted that unlike the previous LA Games, events will be held in the San Fernando Valley. He also noted that LA would use existing infrastructure such as the Rams Stadium, due to be completed by the Super Bowl in 2021. The luncheon was sponsored by Albertsons, Vons & Pavilions and The Walt Disney Co.

Transportation: The Final Lap?

Panelists on ‘Transportation: The Final Lap?’ discussed key transportation issues in Los Angeles, which was especially relevant less than a month before the Measure M vote. Panelists covered topics including reinventing how we use streets and public-private-partnerships to build new public transportation systems. The discussion was moderated by David Warner (Parsons), and included participants Deborah Murphy (Los Angeles Walks), Seleta Reynolds (Los Angeles Department of Transportation), Dr. Michael Manville (UCLA), and Pauletta Tonilas (Metro). The panel was sponsored by Parsons and the Western States Petroleum Association. This panel was part of Track One: Track & Field: How do we build a city and get where we need to go?, sponsored by Metro.

Building LA: Hurdles or the Long Jump?

This panel discussed how to build more homes in Los Angeles and the current density myths. The group talked about tension between the vision from City Hall and the reality on the ground. Panelists discussed how LA needs to change its planning process and the disastrous effects of the expected building moratorium ballot measure next March. Joseph Bernstein (Sapphire Construction) moderated the panel, which included speakers Dr. Henrik P. Minassians (CSUN), Jack Rubens (Sheppard, Mullin) and Kevin Keller (City of Los Angeles). The panel was sponsored by Sapphire Construction and Sheppard Mullin and was part of was part of Track One: Track & Field: How do we build a city and get where we need to go?, sponsored by Metro.
**TRACK TWO, PANEL ONE:**

**En Garde! Fencing for the Future**

The elections panel made predictions and discussed analysis of the 2016 election, including open seats and ballot measures, just as early voting opens and weeks away from Election Day. The panel seemed to be in agreement that it will be an uphill battle for Trump to take the Presidency. While the Presidential race may be leaning towards the Democratic nominee, the panel discussed the impact of too many Democrats running for congressional seats in California may result in favoring Republicans. First Vice Chair of VICA Lisa Gritzner (*Cerrell Associates*) moderated a panel of observers and analysts, which included Joel Fox (*Fox & Hounds*), John J. Pitney, Jr. (*Claremont McKenna College*), John Myers (*Los Angeles Times*), and Elisha Krauss (*KRLA & KTIE*). ‘En Garde! Fencing for the Future’ was sponsored by Clear Channel Outdoor and Comcast NBCUniversal. The panel was part of the ‘Swords & Arrows’ track, sponsored by Aerojet Rocketdyne.

**TRACK TWO, PANEL TWO:**

**Hitting the Bullseye on Public Safety**

Panelists on the public safety panel discussed how to keep LA safe in uncertain times. The panel debated reconnecting public safety within communities and noted that Los Angeles continues to lead in many areas. The panel was sponsored by the Los Angeles Police Protective League and moderated by VICA Chairman Kevin Tamaki (*AT&T*). Panelists included Craig Lally (*Los Angeles Police Protective League*), Jeff Gorell (Deputy Mayor of the City of Los Angeles for Homeland Security and Public Safety), Dr. Brian Fitch (*The Thomas & Means Law Firm*) and Commander Kris E. Pitcher (*Los Angeles Police Department*). This panel was part of the ‘Swords and Arrows’ track, sponsored by Aerojet Rocketdyne.

**TRACK THREE, PANEL ONE:**

**Contorting to a Culture of Millennials**

A lively discussion on how millennials are re-shaping the business world was moderated by Brian Calle (*Southern California News Group*). The panel noted that millennials are a generation seeking to make an impact on this world. It is important for employer’s to translate how their industry and jobs affect the wellbeing of others. Although money is an incentive for any generation, millennials are especially motivated by working for an identifiable cause. The panel was sponsored by Bank of America and included panelists Dr. Veronica Guerrero (*California Lutheran University*), Cooper Harris (*Klickly*), Rebekah Lee (*infoQuest Consulting*) and Elias Khoury (*Bank of America*). This panel was part of ‘The New Contenders’ track, which was sponsored by AT&T and California Lutheran University.

**TRACK THREE, PANEL TWO:**

**The Technology Triathlon**

Panelists from the technology world predicted what the next big thing to transform business would be and how business leaders can harness these new tools. The panel remarked that mobile devices have been and continue to be the most important platform for human interaction over the past five years. Businesses’ first impressions are often seen online, not in person. It is essential for businesses to adapt to the evolving tech of today. Russel Buetow (*Cisco Systems*) moderated an animated conversation with Chris Rico (*Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation*), Leonard M. Lanzi (*Los Angeles Venture Association*), and Sean MacNeill (*MobileCause*). ‘The Technology Triathlon was sponsored by Cisco Systems. This panel was part of the ‘New Contenders’ track, sponsored by AT&T and California Lutheran University.
TRACK FOUR, PANEL ONE:

Balancing on the Beam

As energy and the environment become bigger issues in California and the nation, our panelists discussed what initiatives are economically feasible. The panel discussed what types of energy will be necessary in the future, what steps are being taken to move towards renewable energy and how mandates have impacted manufacturing, jobs and the economy. Moderator Jeff Wilson (Chevron) led a discussion with panelists Dorothy Rothrock (California Manufacturers and Technology Association), Dr Mark Gold (UCLA), Nancy Sutley (LADWP), and George Minter (SoCalGas). ‘Balancing on the Beam’ was sponsored by Chevron Products Co. and Walmart. This panel was part of the track ‘How to Stick the Landing,’ sponsored by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Southern California Gas Company.

TRACK FOUR, PANEL TWO:

Point Deduction for Lawsuits

This panel discussed employment and consumer litigation and what it means for business. The conversation encompassed a wide range of issues including arbitration, class action, punitive damages, protecting businesses from ADA lawsuits and future issues for businesses to be aware of. ‘Point Deduction for Lawsuits’ was sponsored by Roxborough, Pomerance, Nye & Adreani, LLP, and moderated by Charles Crumpley (San Fernando Valley Business Journal). Our panelists were Kim Stone (Civil Justice Association of California), Christopher Ardalan (Ardalan & Associates, PLC), Craig Renetzky (CSUN), and Charles Crumpley (San Fernando Valley Business Journal). This panel was part of the ‘How to Stick the Landing’ track, sponsored by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Southern California Gas Company.