Industry leaders and experts attended VICA’s 30th Annual Business Forecast Conference (BFC) on Friday, October 26, for an economic forecast breakfast, panels on a variety of topics impacting businesses, and a luncheon with Bret Lane, President and COO of the Southern California Gas Company and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. The event, presented by the Southern California Gas Company and Wells Fargo, brought business leaders together to discuss critical issues.

Economic Forecast Breakfast
Attendees began their day with an economic forecast breakfast, sponsored by Hilton Universal City and U.S. Bank and moderated by Mark Davis (Hilton Universal City). Sarah House, Director and Senior Economist at Wells Fargo, began the discussion with an overview of where the economy is heading at the national level, discussing a potential economic slowdown as we reach the constraints of the market in 2019/20. Next, Jeffrey Kravetz, Regional Investment Director for the Private Client Reserve of U.S. Bank, spoke about California’s economy, including California’s position as the world’s 5th largest economy and challenges such as rising home prices and congestion. Kent Hymel, Assistant Professor at California State University, Northridge, rounded out the discussion with a look at the Los Angeles economy, and how the outlook in the San Fernando Valley compares regionally.

Keynote Luncheon
Bret Lane, President and COO of the Southern California Gas Company, discussed California’s need for a balanced energy plan for our state’s continued economic success. Lane warned against reliance on a single energy option and stressed the importance of keeping energy affordable for consumers and ratepayers in the state, saying that total electrification is neither an affordable nor practical option.

Mayor Eric Garcetti spoke about homelessness and economic development noting that, the San Fernando Valley is a place of “doers, dreamers and innovators.”
Garcetti outlined the three tenets of his economic development plan: identifying key industries, building up infrastructure and making sure that no resident is left behind. The mayor also detailed his plan to combat homelessness, which he called "the greatest moral and humanitarian crisis that we face."

The luncheon was sponsored by The Walt Disney Company.

**Mission 1 | Panel 1: Never Look Back, It Distracts from the Future**
Moderated by VICA’s Immediate Past Chair Coby King (High Point Strategies), this panel discussed the future of transportation and transit options in the City of Los Angeles. Samantha Bricker (Los Angeles World Airports) spoke about updates coming to LAX and how to best drive the transformation of the airport. Laura Mohr (HNTB) described the need to make transportation a primary issue given the city’s size and sprawling nature. Additionally, Thomas Stone (BYD America) and Joshua Schank (Metro) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of Private-Public Partnerships and how they are advancing their respective goals. The panel was sponsored by BYD America and HNTB and was part of the ‘Transportation and Housing’ track, sponsored by California Lutheran University and Metro.

**Mission 1 | Panel 2: The Clock is Ticking**
California’s growing housing crisis was the main topic of this panel moderated by VICA Board Member Beverly Kenworthy (California Apartment Association of Los Angeles). California State Senator Scott Wiener discussed the importance of local control, saying that "community engagement is key for the expansion of housing." Brian Hanlon (California YIMBY) described the impact of community opposition to development and addressed the consequences of failing to build new housing. Ellia Thompson (Ervin Cohen & Jessup) spoke on the challenges developers face, as well as innovative approaches to moving projects forward. Josh Gertler (Consensus, Inc.) addressed which strategies succeeded and failed to gain community support when attempting to build new housing. The panel was sponsored by Consensus Inc. and Ervin Cohen & Jessup. The ‘Transportation and Housing’ track, sponsored by California Lutheran University and Metro.
Mission 2 | Panel 1:
New Gadgets Changing the Healthcare System
As new technology becomes available in the healthcare industry, our panelists discussed technological innovations and best practices for healthcare delivery. Omkar Kulkarni (Children’s Hospital Los Angeles) described how new technology can help address social determinants of health and mental wellness. Murtaza Sanwari (Kaiser Permanente) discussed how medical education is evolving to ensure proper care with the emergence of new technological innovations. Paula Wilson (Valley Community Healthcare) addressed some of the challenges and benefits of telehealth and telemedicine services, and Jeff Allport (Valley Presbyterian Hospital) rounded out the discussion with an update on cybersecurity threats and their impact on hospitals, healthcare technology and patient care. Moderated by VICA Past Chair David Adelman (Greenberg & Bass), the panel was sponsored by Kaiser Permanente and PhRMA and was part of the ‘Healthcare and Energy’ track sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power and Valley Presbyterian Hospital.

Mission 2 | Panel 2:
The Mission Continues
A lively discussion on how California’s ambitious climate goals, and their impact on businesses and ratepayers, was moderated by VICA Treasurer Alex Kasendorf (Alpert, Barr & Grant). Marne Sussman (Holland & Knight) spoke on the social and economic impacts of California’s climate change policies and Tiffany Roberts (Western States Petroleum Association) addressed the adverse impacts California energy policies have on affordable housing and on low income families. Assemblymember Laura Friedman discussed recent legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by 2030, as well as the potential costs of this transition. Margita Thompson (California Resources Corporation) described options for businesses and organizations to increase their influence both with policy makers and consumers. The panel was sponsored by the California Resource Corporation and Western States Petroleum Association. The ‘Healthcare and Energy’ track was sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power and Valley Presbyterian Hospital.

Mission 3 | Panel 1:
License to Vote
Panelists discussed the upcoming ballot measures for the 2018 election. Raphael Sonenshein (California State University of Los Angeles) discussed how political actors are using ballot initiatives to drive voter turnout, saying, “anything that drives voter turnout is a good thing.” Joel Fox (Fox & Hounds) touched on beneficial reforms for the ballot initiative process such as having the legislative analyst write the title and summary of measures to have an accurate and nonpartisan assessment of the proposed law. Kerry Cavanaugh (Los Angeles Times) addressed split roll and property tax reform qualifying measures to have an accurate and nonpartisan assessment of the proposed law. Marne Sussman (Holland & Knight) spoke on the social and economic impacts of California’s climate change policies and Tiffany Roberts (Western States Petroleum Association) addressed the adverse impacts California energy policies have on affordable housing and on low income families. Assemblymember Laura Friedman discussed recent legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by 2030, as well as the potential costs of this transition. Margita Thompson (California Resources Corporation) described options for businesses and organizations to increase their influence both with policy makers and consumers. The panel was sponsored by the California Resource Corporation and Western States Petroleum Association. The ‘Healthcare and Energy’ track was sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power and Valley Presbyterian Hospital.

Mission 3 | Panel 2:
Rogue Nation
Moderated by VICA Vice Chair Charles Crumpley (San Fernando Valley Business Journal), panelists discussed candidates running in the 2018 election. Matt Klink (Klink Campaigns) described the impact of President Trump on the election. Sherry Bebitch Jeffe (KNBC) discussed California’s competitive congressional races and the success of voter messaging campaigns. John Pitney (Claremont McKenna College) addressed the possible outcomes of this year’s election cycle and what they would mean for the next two years of the Trump Administration. Jennings Imel (U.S. Chamber of Commerce) rounded out the discussion by explaining the Republicans’ struggle to pass meaningful legislation, despite having control of both houses of Congress and the Presidency. The panel was sponsored by California State University, Northridge and was part of the ‘November 2018’ track sponsored by Aerojet Rocketdyne.
Mission 4 | Panel 1:
Vision for LA
As life in Los Angeles continues to change, panelists discussed what the city will look like three decades from now. City of Los Angeles Chief Design Officer Christopher Hawthorne addressed long-term planning decisions and investments in new technology which will improve mobility and livability in the future. Sahar Shirazi (WSP USA) described the importance of new mobility options as a tool to serve historically underserved communities. Somjita Mitra (Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation) discussed the need for jobs that pay a living wage and spoke on the alarming trend of newly generated low-income jobs. When discussing how to create a more positive version of our future city, Robert Grant (Aurora Innovation) suggested that the best way to guide consumer behavior towards a more positive vision is to deliver new technology safely, quickly, and economically. Moderated by VICA Board Member Layne Lawson (Clear Channel Outdoor), the panel was sponsored by Aurora Innovation and was part of the ‘From L.A. With Love’ track sponsored by Clear Channel Outdoor and The Garland.

Mission 4 | Panel 2:
Dial T for Tourism
Moderated by VICA Vice Chair Steve Nissen (Comcast NBCUniversal), the panel discussed Los Angeles’s billion-dollar tourism industry. Ernest Wooden President of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board discussed the growth of the city’s tourism industry and the growing number of tourists visiting yearly, as well as their effect on the economy. John Choi (Airbnb) addressed the growing influence of millennials on the tourism industry and the resulting shift towards experience-based travel. Ronalee Zarate-Bayani (Los Angeles Rams) also described the more experience-based style of travel resonating with younger generations, going on to describe desired experiences as interactive, personal and “digestible.” Mark Davis (Hilton Universal City) spoke about Los Angeles’s unique draw as a tourist attraction and what sets our city apart from other popular places to visit. The panel was sponsored by Airbnb and FilmL.A., Inc. The track was sponsored by Clear Channel Outdoor and The Garland.

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