THE VALLEY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

# OUR REGION | OUR FUTURE

## Summit

**JANUARY 12, 2026**

**THE ORCHARD CONFERENCE CENTER**
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE

*Convene, connect, and collaborate to shape the future of the Valley*

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# A WORD FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 4th Annual Our Region | Our Future Summit, proudly presented by The Valley Economic Alliance. Building on the momentum of our 30-year milestone in 2025, this Summit represents a moment to come together, share ideas, and shape a resilient and thriving future for the San Fernando Valley.

The Summit brings together leaders across government, business, and community sectors to address the region's most pressing challenges and opportunities. This year, we are honored to be joined by voices whose insight and experience exemplify the Summit's reach and significance: LA County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath in a Fireside Chat, California State Controller Malia M. Cohen delivering the Government Keynote, and David Yeom, Chairman and CEO of Evite, offering the Corporate Keynote. Their perspectives will help illuminate pathways for innovation, growth, and collaboration that extend well beyond the Valley.

Since 1995, The Valley Economic Alliance has united stakeholders across public, private, and non-profit sectors to champion sustainable growth, workforce development, and community impact. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit and strategic public-private partnership, the Summit serves as a catalyst for partnerships and initiatives that strengthen our network of more than 170,000 businesses and positively affect over 2 million residents.

The 2026 Summit is an opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved, explore bold strategies for the future, and reaffirm our commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive, and innovative Valley. Together, we continue shaping a legacy of collaboration and impact that will endure for generations.

Thank you for joining us in this important work and for your dedication to a brighter future for our region.

With gratitude and community,



**Armida Colmenares-Stafford**



**Sonya Kay Blake**



**Armida Colmenares-Stafford**

*1st VP / Sr Relationship Manager*
Columbia Bank

*Board Chair*
The Valley Economic Alliance



**Sonya Kay Blake**

*President & CEO*
The Valley Economic Alliance

# AGENDA

## 7:30 A.M. REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST & NETWORKING

## 8:30 A.M. WELCOME REMARKS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Sonya Kay Blake**, President & CEO, The Valley Economic Alliance
- **Armida Colmenares-Stafford**, Board Chair, The Valley Economic Alliance
- **Dr. Chandra Subramaniam**, Dean, David Nazarian College of Business and Economics, California State University Northridge
- **Nicole Stinson**, President, Southland Regional Association of Realtors

## 8:42 A.M. SPECIAL REMARKS:
**Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang**

## 8:45 A.M. STATE OF CORPORATE & BUSINESS LIFE IN THE VALLEY – INDUSTRY CLUSTERS PANEL

*Explore the current landscape of business and industry in the San Fernando Valley with insights from leaders across health care, child care and education, manufacturing, and development. Panelists discuss trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the region's economy.*

- **Stephen Cheung**, President & CEO, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation *(Moderator)*
- **Avi Zaraya**, Chief Operating Officer, Kaiser Permanente *(Panelist)*
- **Dr. Michael Olenick**, President & CEO, Child Care Resource Center *(Panelist)*
- **Mark Louchheim**, President and CEO, Bobrick Washroom Equipment Inc. *(Panelist)*
- **Alberto Vela**, Vice President, Turner-Townsend-Heery *(Panelist)*

## 9:20 A.M. CORPORATE KEYNOTE REMARKS:
**David Yeom, Chairman and CEO, Evite**

*EY Entrepreneur of the Year, David Yeom leads Evite with a focus on innovation and community impact, offering insights on entrepreneurship and business growth.*

- **Pouya Etemadi**, Director of Corporate Finance, BMO Commercial Bank *(Introduction)*

## 9:45 A.M. GOVERNMENT KEYNOTE REMARKS:
**California State Controller Malia Cohen**

*As California's State Controller, Malia Cohen brings a statewide perspective on fiscal leadership, accountability, and strategies that strengthen communities, including those in the San Fernando Valley.*

- **Greg Martayan**, Vice President of External Affairs, The Valley Economic Alliance *(Introduction)*

## 10:05 A.M. FEATURED PRESENTATION:
**Radford Studios**

*Discover how Radford Studio Center in Studio City evolved into a 55-acre hub of stages, offices, and support facilities–one that continues to innovate and drive impact for the community and the region.*

- **Kelly Gonez**, LAUSD School Board Member *(Introduction)*
- **Zach Sokoloff**, Senior Vice President – Asset Management, Hackman Capital Partners *(Presenter)*

# AGENDA

## 10:20 A.M. CITIES PANEL WITH STRATEGIC PARTNER CITIES

*Leaders from Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale and San Fernando share insights on local priorities, initiatives, and collaboration across city departments, highlighting the region's ongoing growth and impact.*

- **Sonya Kay Blake**, President & CEO, The Valley Economic Alliance *(Co-Moderator)*
- **Greg Martayan**, Vice President of External Affairs, The Valley Economic Alliance *(Co-Moderator)*
- **Mayor Tamala Takahashi**, City of Burbank (Panelist)
- **Mayor James Bozajian**, City of Calabasas *(Panelist)*
- **Mayor Ara Najarian**, City of Glendale *(Panelist)*
- **Mayor Joel Fajardo**, City of San Fernando *(Panelist)*

## 11:00 A.M. CSUN PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

**Erika D. Beck, Ph.D., President, California State University, Northridge**

*Dr. Erika Beck underscores CSUN's role as a driver of workforce development, equity, and regional prosperity, highlighting the university's partnership with industry and community central to The Alliance's mission.*

- **Jacob Haik**, Manager, Van Nuys Airport *(Introduction)*
- **Rita El Hage**, Vice President & Branch Manager, Poppy Bank *(Introduction)*

## 11:15 A.M. FIRESIDE CHAT:

**Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath**

*In a moderated conversation with Alliance Board Chair Armida Colmenares-Stafford, Supervisor Lindsey Horvath shares her perspective on regional leadership, tackling complex challenges, and advancing solutions that strengthen communities across Los Angeles County and the San Fernando Valley.*

- **Armida Colmenares-Stafford**, Board Chair, The Valley Economic Alliance *(Moderator)*

## 12:00 P.M. LUNCH KEYNOTE: REGIONAL ACTIVATION OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE WORLD CUP

**Ellen Riotto, Director, Fan & Stakeholder Engagement, Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission**

*Explore how local businesses can connect with the FIFA World Cup, including opportunities for fan engagement, strategic partnerships, and increased visibility during this landmark event.*

- **Sonya Kay Blake**, President & CEO, The Valley Economic Alliance *(Introduction)*

## 12:15 P.M. ALLIANCE ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY ROAD MAP

*Hear how regional leaders and partners collaborated to develop a data-driven roadmap aligning economic growth, climate resilience, and equity for a more competitive San Fernando Valley.*

- **Sonya Kay Blake**, President & CEO, The Valley Economic Alliance *(Introduction)*
- **Mayor Tamala Takahashi**, City of Burbank

## 12:30 P.M. CLOSING REMARKS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & NETWORKING

## 1:00 P.M. SUMMIT CONCLUDES

# Corporate KEYNOTE SPEAKER



## DAVID YEOM

*Chairman and CEO, Evite*

David Yeom is the Chief Executive Officer of Evite, the pioneering digital invitations platform that has been connecting people for more than 25 years. Since acquiring the company in 2020, Yeom has led a significant transformation–revitalizing a legacy brand and guiding Evite to profitability for the first time in its history.

When Yeom purchased Evite at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company was an unprofitable subsidiary of a larger media conglomerate and facing fundamental business challenges. Despite being widely recognized as the first platform to launch online invitations, Evite had experienced frequent ownership changes and relied heavily on advertising revenue that often detracted from the user experience. Yeom recognized both the enduring emotional connection users had with the brand and the opportunity to modernize its business model.

Under his leadership, Evite shifted away from an ad-dependent approach toward a diversified, commerce-driven model. The platform expanded its premium digital invitation offerings and built a robust gifting ecosystem, becoming one of Amazon's largest gift affiliates. These changes allowed Evite to better serve both hosts and guests while creating sustainable revenue streams. Yeom also brought design fully in-house, modernizing the platform's look and feel to appeal to younger audiences while preserving the brand's trusted identity. As a result, Evite achieved profitability for the first time in its 26-year history.

Prior to Evite, Yeom held leadership roles at several prominent consumer and e-commerce companies, including eBay, HauteLook, and The Honest Company, where he developed expertise in scaling digital platforms, strengthening brand relevance, and driving customer-focused innovation.

Yeom's leadership and impact have been widely recognized. During 2024 Glendale Tech Week, Glendale Mayor Elen Asatryan presented him with a commendation recognizing Evite as an innovative technology company based in the city, his contributions to building the local tech ecosystem, and his leadership as a recipient of the EY 2024 Greater Los Angeles Entrepreneur of the Year award.

Today, Yeom continues to guide Evite's growth with a focus on long-term relevance, international expansion, and innovation–demonstrating how a legacy technology platform can evolve to meet the needs of modern users while remaining deeply connected to community and culture.

# Government KEYNOTE SPEAKER



## THE HONORABLE MALIA M. COHEN

*California State Controller*

State Controller Malia M. Cohen was elected in November 2022, following her service on the California State Board of Equalization (BOE), the nation's only elected tax commission responsible for administering California's $100 billion property tax system. She was elected to the BOE in November 2018 and was Chair in 2019 and 2022. As Controller, she continues to serve the Board as its fifth voting member.

As chief fiscal officer of the world's fifth-largest economy, Controller Cohen's primary responsibility is to account for and protect the state's financial resources. Controller Cohen also independently audits government agencies that spend state funds, safeguards many types of property until claimed by the rightful owners, and administers the payroll system for state government employees and California State University employees. She serves on 70 boards and commissions with authority ranging from affordable housing to crime victim compensation to land management. Controller Cohen chairs the Franchise Tax Board and serves on the boards of the nation's two largest public pension funds, the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) and the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) Boards, which have a combined portfolio of $750 billion. The Controller is one of eight statewide constitutional officials who are elected every four years in California.

As the BOE Board Member for District 2, she represented 10 million constituents living in all or parts of 23 counties extending from Del Norte County in the north to Santa Barbara County in the south. As Chair of the BOE, she led the effort to modernize California's property tax system, provide guidance to the 58 county assessors on remote assessment appeals board hearings, and utilize property tax abatements to stimulate affordable housing. Controller Cohen also ensured that the views of all who came before the Board were considered carefully, with respect, civility, and courtesy.

Prior to being elected to the BOE, Controller Cohen served as President of the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco. As a Supervisor, she served as Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee and the Audit and Oversight Committee. During this time, she also served as President of the San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (SFERS), which at the time was a $23 billion pension fund.

Controller Cohen has championed policies and programs that protect public health, foster economic development, promote new affordable housing, and create good jobs through protecting and expanding San Francisco's manufacturing base. She has dedicated her career to public service, focusing on making public dollars work for all Californians.

Controller Cohen was born and raised in San Francisco and attended public schools. She received her bachelor's degree in Political Science from Fisk University and a master's degree in Public Policy and Management from Carnegie Mellon University. She and her husband reside in San Francisco along with their daughter.

# Fireside Chat
# FEATURED SPEAKER



## THE HONORABLE LINDSEY HORVATH

*Los Angeles County Supervisor, Third District*

Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath was sworn into the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on December 5, 2022. One year later, she became the youngest-ever Chair. She is the first millennial, and currently the only renter to serve on the all-women Board, bringing a much-needed perspective to LA County leadership. Before being elected to the Board, she was a City Councilmember and the longest consecutively serving Mayor for the City of West Hollywood.

Upon taking office, Supervisor Horvath authored LA County's homelessness emergency declaration, bringing added urgency and transparency to the region's homelessness response. Supervisor Horvath also appointed herself to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Commission to focus accountability and transparency on the use of resources to address the emergency.

Recognizing that homelessness is the crisis of the moment, and that climate change is the crisis of our time, Supervisor Horvath is also dedicated to environmental action. She authored motions to create a Coastal Resiliency Plan for Los Angeles County and is leading implementation of the County's first-ever Water Plan. She has served on the Clean Power Alliance since its inception, and now serves as Vice Chair, as it has grown to become the largest clean power authority in the country.

A leader on transportation and creating multi-modal communities, Supervisor Horvath sits on the Board of Metro where she is championing transformative projects throughout West Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. Through her leadership, West Hollywood was named "The Most Walkable" city in the state.

A longtime advocate for women's and LGBTQ+ rights, Supervisor Horvath has made access to abortion and reproductive care a top priority, as well as standing with and for the LGBTQ+ community and other vulnerable groups. She is a voice for young people and is focused on bringing young and marginalized voices into the work of government.

To continue her mission to uplift the perspectives of young people, Supervisor Horvath was proud to help launch the global youth initiative Pelota de Trapo in Los Angeles County. Pelotais part of Pope Francis' Scholas Occurrentes Foundation.

Supervisor Horvath's career has been defined by tackling the hardest problems, building diverse coalitions, and delivering results for her community. Her commitment to serving others was shaped by her family and faith, which instilled in her a strong work ethic and made her a tireless advocate in addressing the complex problems facing Angelenos.

Supervisor Horvath has served on a number of regional boards. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Notre Dame and a Certificate in Nonprofit Management & Fundraising from UCLA Extension. She resides in West Hollywood with her dog, Winston, whom you are likely to see out in the District.

# AN EVENING OF PRIDE, PURPOSE, & CONNECTION

Dear Friends,



**Greg Martayan**
*Vice President of External Affairs*
The Valley Economic Alliance

It is with great pride and anticipation that we invite you to join us for the 2026 Alliance 31st Anniversary Gala. The premier event of the year for the San Fernando Valley's business, civic, and community leadership.

For more than three decades, The Valley Economic Alliance has served as a powerful convener of ideas, partnerships, and action. By bringing together leaders who believe in the strength, promise, and shared future of our region, we create better tomorrows for all neighborhoods. Our Annual Gala is the signature moment when we pause to reflect on that legacy, celebrate the progress we have achieved together, and recommit ourselves to the work ahead.

The 31st Anniversary Gala will be a historic evening that honors excellence in leadership, innovation, and service, while showcasing the Alliance's continued impact across economic development, workforce growth, public safety, and regional collaboration. It is a night defined by purpose and pride, where relationships are strengthened, achievements are recognized, and the Valley's collective voice is elevated.

Each year, this event draws the most influential decision-makers from across all sectors, making it a celebration and powerful forum for connection, inspiration, and momentum. Simply put, there is the gathering that so fully captures the spirit, scale, and significance of our region's leadership community.

We would be honored by your presence as we celebrate 31 years of driving opportunity, championing collaboration, and shaping the future of the San Fernando Valley. If you're interested in becoming a sponsor, please email Ashley Mostek at AMostek@EconomicAlliance.org.

Thank you for your continued friendship and commitment to the mission of The Valley Economic Alliance. I, along with the entire Alliance family, look forward to welcoming you to this extraordinary evening.

Sincerely,

**Greg Martayan**



# CITY MAYORS

The Valley Economic Alliance extends its sincere appreciation to our City Mayors for their leadership and participation in The Valley Economic Alliance. As key partners in advancing the San Fernando Valley's economic vitality, their collaboration, vision, and commitment to public service play a vital role in shaping a strong and connected region. We are grateful for their continued partnership and for the perspectives they bring to advancing shared regional priorities.



**Mayor Tamala Takahashi**
City of Burbank
(Panelist)



**Mayor James Bozajian**
City of Calabasas
(Panelist)



**Mayor Ara Najarian**
City of Glendale
(Panelist)



**Mayor Karen Bass**
City of Los Angeles



**Mayor Joel Fajardo**
City of San Fernando
(Panelist)











# SPECIAL GUESTS

The Valley Economic Alliance also thanks our Special Guests for contributing their time, insights, and expertise to this year's Summit. Through their participation across a range of discussions and program elements, they help foster meaningful dialogue and thoughtful exchange. Their engagement reflects a shared commitment to collaboration, leadership, and advancing a vibrant future for the San Fernando Valley.



**Dr. Erika Beck**
President,
California State
University,
Northridge
(Speaker)



**Stephen Cheung**
President & CEO,
LAEDC
(Moderator)



**Rita El Hage**
Vice President &
Branch Manager,
Poppy Bank
(Introduction)



**Pouya Etemadi**
Director of Corporate
Finance, BMO
Commercial Bank
(Introduction)



**Kelly Gonez**
LAUSD School Board
Member
(Introduction)



**Jacob Haik**
Manager,
Van Nuys Airport
(Introduction)



**Mark Louchheim**
President and CEO,
Bobrick Washroom
Equipment Inc.
(Panelist)



**Dr. Michael Olenick**
President & CEO, Child
Care Resource Center
(Panelist)



**The Honorable**
**Jeff Prang**
Los Angeles County
Assessor
(Special Remarks)



**Ellen Riotto**
Director, Fan &
Stakeholder Engagement,
Los Angeles Sports
& Entertainment
Commission
(Speaker)



**Zach Sokoloff**
Senior Vice President –
Asset Management
Hackman
Capital Partners
(Speaker)



**Nicole Stinson**
President,
Southland Regional
Association of Realtors
(Speaker)



**Dr. Chandra**
**Subramaniam**
Dean, David Nazarian
College of Business and
Economics,
California State
University, Northridge
(Speaker)



**Alberto Vela**
Vice President,
Turner Townsend &
Heery
(Panelist)



**Avi Zaraya**
Chief Operating Officer,
Kaiser Permanente
(Panelist)

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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*President & CEO*

**Sonya Kay Blake**

The Valley Economic Alliance

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**Josh Schimmels**, San Fernando Valley Business Journal
**Councilmember David Shapiro**, City of Calabasas
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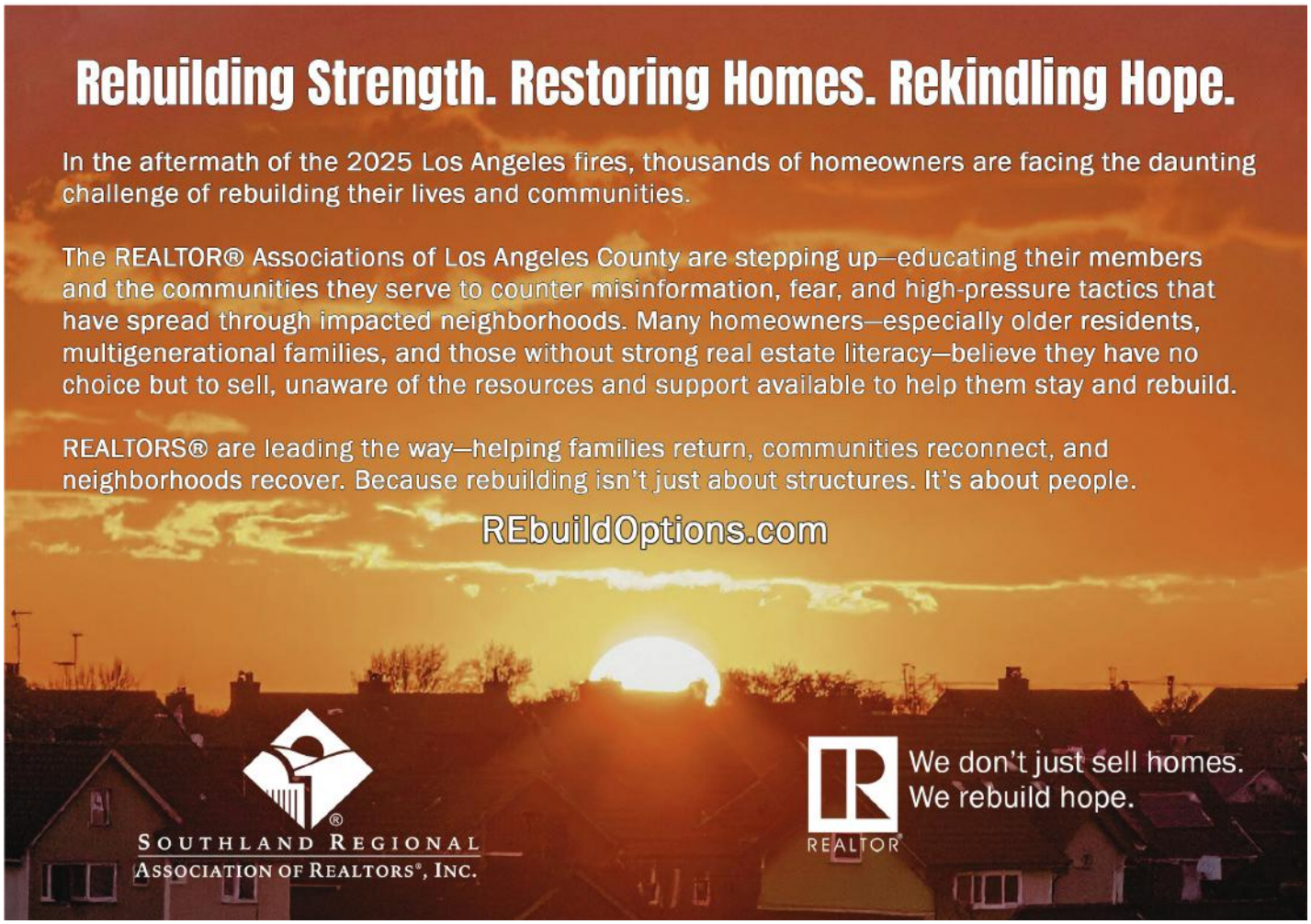
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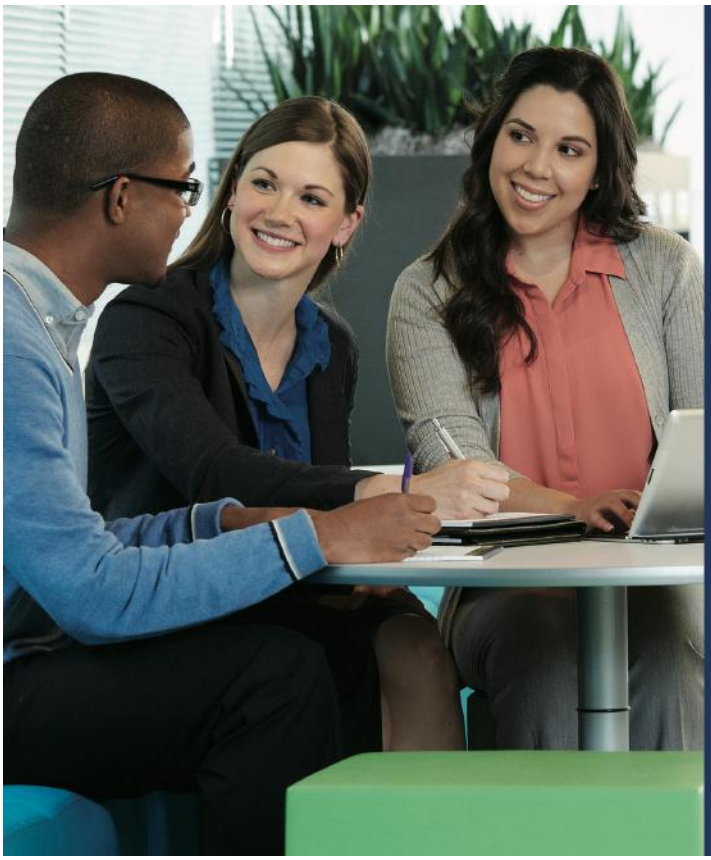

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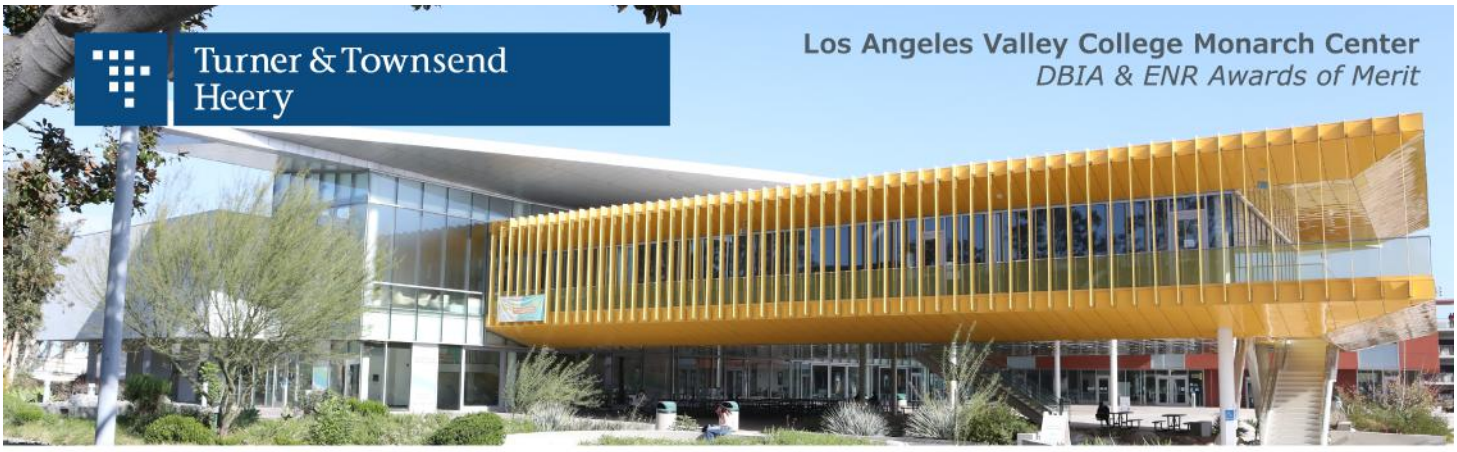


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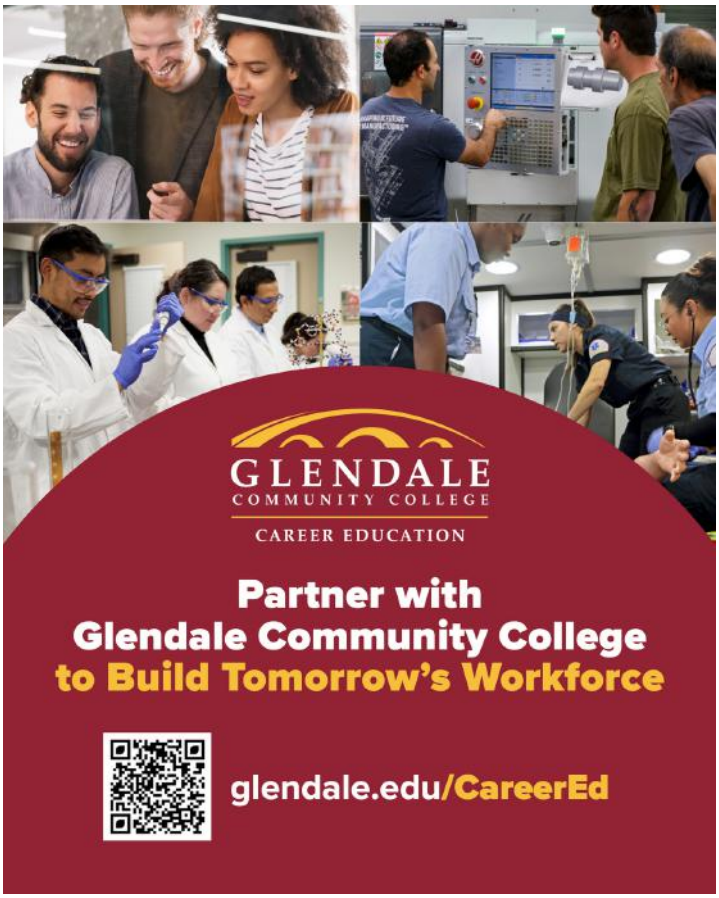


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The Valley Economic Alliance

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026 | 5:30-8:30 PM**
**HILTON LOS ANGELES/UNIVERSAL CITY**

Celebrate the exemplary businesses, people, and organizations who positively impact the economic vitality of the Valley!

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