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Annual January Training and Education for Newly Elected Mayors and Council Members Brings 450 New City Officials to Sacramento

Each year the League offers a comprehensive listing of educational programs for city officials starting in January with its Mayors and Council Members Academy. This year more than 450 city officials traveled to Sacramento to attend the three-day event designed to give newly elected city officials the information and skills they need to successfully lead their cities.

For more, see Page 2.



California City Solutions: West Hollywood Launches First Comprehensive Innovations Program

This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2016 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). WeHoX Innovations Annual Report was submitted in 2016 for the League Partners Award for Excellence in City-Business Relations award category.

For more, see Page 3.

The conference covers a wide range of policy topics and city council procedures as well as the state-required AB 1234 ethics training. Other sessions focused on:

- Land use planning;
- Legal powers and obligations;
- City council/city manager form of city government;
- Effective meeting running techniques;
- Communications and the new media; and
- Local government finance.

League President and Lodi Council Member JoAnne Mounce addressed the mayors and council members Wednesday morning. She made the connection between the League's founders in 1898 and city officials today. "The League's motto is simple. 'Cities working together' because collaboration and common effort are our strengths. I am so grateful to you newly elected officials for engaging in the League and helping continue that tradition."

She encouraged members to become engaged in the League to keep local governments strong when addressing the strategic priorities for the year. "I would first like to applaud you for your commitment to your community and hope you will consider getting more involved with the League to help advocate for funding and resources that are important to your city. It is your dedication that helps keep cities strong."

League Executive Director Carolyn Coleman welcomed city officials to Sacramento, thanked them for their dedication to public service and explained how League services can help them more effectively serve their communities.

Each of the League's lobbyists provided a brief overview of their areas, emphasizing the key issues the League sees as priorities for 2017.

Wednesday afternoon started with a [Fix Our Roads](#) coalition news conference. The Fix Our Roads coalition, of which the League is a founding member, held the event in the Sacramento Convention Center near the Capitol to once again talk with reporters about the urgent need to pass a transportation funding plan. It comes down to "Pave me now or pay more later."

President Mounce, an accountant by profession, spoke on behalf of the League and called for Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature to uphold the promise they made to tackle the tough issue of funding California's crumbling transportation infrastructure. "With 30 years of accounting experience, I know the importance of fiscal responsibility. And I strongly believe that protecting the investments of our taxpayers have already made should be a priority," Mounce stressed.

Sessions continued on Thursday with presentations on city council-city manager relations, communications and the new media and more. One of the most popular sessions features a mock city council skit. Led by expert city attorneys and featuring experienced city officials, the session called session called "City of Dysfunction Junction — How to Conduct an Effective and Respectful City Council Meeting," brings humor to the very serious and important topic of city council meeting process and transparency.

The conference closed Friday with AB 1234 ethics training. Newly elected and appointed city officials are required to receive this training within a year of being elected and then they must go through it every two years following.

League Policy Committees Hold First Meetings of 2017

Also this week in Sacramento, the League's [seven standing policy committees](#) held their first meetings of the year. League policy committees meet at least three times annually, with some committees meeting during Annual Conference to review proposed resolutions for the General Assembly.

Both days began with joint legislative briefings before the individual committees took up their business.

The briefings also included a legislative and state budget update by the League's Deputy Director and Director of Legislative Affairs Dan Carrigg and Michael Coleman, the League's fiscal advisor.

Actions taken by policy committees this week will next go to the League board of directors for review and action. Agendas are available on the [League website](#).

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Cities with vibrant innovative industries benefit from economic opportunity, civic inclusion, and public engagement. The city of West Hollywood's economy and its local businesses are essential to its health and ability to provide excellent services. As the Southern California economy evolves, the city's core principles direct its operations to support sustainable, high-quality jobs and businesses. In 2014 the city launched [WeHoX](#), the city's first comprehensive civic innovations program, to explore the merging of technology and the innovation economy with civic purposes for government and business conversion.

While there were many technology networking and community events across the Los Angeles region, its promising civic technology movement was just developing. The surrounding cities of Santa Monica, Los Angeles and Long Beach had begun to make progress, however West Hollywood still had the opportunity to establish itself as the center of the innovation economy in the Los Angeles region. The city's unique characteristics — size, density, walkability, population, demographics — make it an ideal laboratory to explore new civic technology innovations and public-private partnerships.

The West Hollywood City Council and staff recognized that planning for a strong innovation and technology component to the city's economy was a smart long-term investment for the economic well-being of community. WeHoX is an initiative designed to engage diverse and talented members of the West Hollywood business community with city staff to improve the city's capacity for innovation.

The city's Innovation and Strategic Initiatives Division engaged New Economy Campaigns to assemble the city's first-ever WeHoX Innovation and Technology Task Force: an external team of local businesses and tech leaders. The 31-member task force comprises private sector and nonprofit advisors to the city of West Hollywood and several city staff members.

The city held four innovation salons with the WeHoX Task Force, which included small group discussions, exercises, and brainstorming sessions. The success of the Innovation Salons have attracted other tech companies in the city to participate in the program and have offered their time to sit on innovation advisory boards and/or decision making process on technology, information, architecture, and urban design.

The first, held during Los Angeles County's first ever Innovation Week in October 2014, launched the WeHoX program with the newly assembled team. Just a month later, the second salon brought a panel of industry leaders and community activists together around "Civic Engagement Strategies — Lessons Learned from Private and Public Sectors." The task force discussed voting, volunteering, and participating in the civic life of West Hollywood.

The third salon, in December, focused on the theme of "Supporting the Innovation Economy," an interactive salon discussing innovative strategies to attract, support, and retain innovative and technology businesses. Bringing together diverse industry leaders, this WeHoX salon kicked off with an exercise in business building in West Hollywood, identifying the unique challenges and advantages of the local economic landscape. Panelists provided a thought-provoking discussion on potential city innovations that could make West Hollywood more business and technology friendly. The fourth salon, centered on "Efficiency and Transparency in Local Government" in February 2015 and served as a participatory planning session on the future of civic and tech innovation initiatives in the city.

These salons allowed West Hollywood a means to engage the private sector economy to influence the direction of innovation and technology initiatives for years to come.

The Innovations Salons culminated in the inaugural [City of West Hollywood Innovations Annual Report](#). The report proposes a broad range of programs and projects and sets goals for the city's innovation initiatives. It is collaboration between city staff, local agencies, private sector technology and innovation businesses, consultants, and residents who want to enhance West Hollywood's creative approach to delivering city services.

This report examines the city's recent civic innovation programs and introduces new initiatives to enhance citizen satisfaction and engagement, increase government efficiency and transparency, and promote the city's innovation economy. The solutions propose a series of innovative recommendations inspired by best practices from other cities, the private sector, and the WeHoX brain trust, including infrastructure upgrades and new technologies that will help to attract digital, media, and technology businesses to the city.

With more than 40 proposed initiatives and nearly 100 ideas in five key areas (Transportation, Pedestrian Safety, and Parking; Recreation, Health and Wellness; Civic Engagement and Public Participation; Partnerships, Efficiency and Transparency in Government; and Supporting the Innovation Economy), the recommendations offer a multi-year roadmap for civic innovation. The initiatives have been incorporated into departmental work plans in conjunction with the city's two-year budget cycle.

The following recommendations, many already in implementation stage, are moving the city towards improving outcomes on these important goals:

- Build a West Hollywood Fiber utility to attract and retain tech and media companies;
- Create a "Launched in West Hollywood" initiative to celebrate our small businesses;
- Develop a "Start up in A Day" online toolkit for new West Hollywood businesses;
- Introduce a "Business Concierge" service at City Hall to assist with planning and development processes; and
- Promote and celebrate West Hollywood's innovation economy through events and awards.

The innovation process is a continuous cycle of investigation, discovery, implementation, and adaptation. Therefore, as the emergence and adoption of new technologies and changes in citywide priorities occurs, the innovation plan can evolve to best support our local innovation economy.
