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CPA Christian Takes the Reigns as Long Beach Chamber Chairman (2008-2009)

The Chamber's 117th Inaugural Gala was held Wednesday, June 25th at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach where Matt Kinley passed the gavel to Blake Christian, CPA as incoming Chairman of the Board at The Chamber's annual formal affair. The evening gala was attended by over 600 fellow chamber members, business and civic leaders.

Christian is a Tax Partner in the Long Beach office of Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt LLP (www.hcvt.com), the largest CPA firm headquartered in Southern California and a third generation Long Beach businessman. Christian is a resident of Cypress and a graduate of CSULB and USC. He specializes in corporate and high-net-worth tax planning and is a nationally recognized expert in incentive tax credits, including state and federal hiring and equipment credits, such as state Enterprise Zone and Federal Empowerment Zone/ Renewal Community Programs. Blake is also Co-Founder of National Tax Credits Group, a Long Beach based software/ technology company specializing in business tax incentives.

Long Beach is the fifth largest city in California and the Long Beach Chamber is one of the largest and most active chambers in the state.

As a testament to the Chamber's advocacy effectiveness, the Long Beach Chamber has been honored as the "Advocacy Partner of the Year" four out of the last six years and five Chamber members, including Blake, Matt Kinley (Immediate Past Chair) and Lori Lofstrom (Chair Elect) have been honored as 2006, 2007 and 2008 "Small Business Advocate of the Year" by CalChamber for their advocacy efforts.

Long Beach has a very diverse business base made up of over 7,000 businesses ranging from Small Home Based Businesses to 100 year-old pillars of the community, such as: Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Farmers and Merchants Bank, Seaside Printing Company to other mega employers such as Boeing, Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College (LBCC) and California State University Long Beach (CSULB).

The primary role of the Long Beach Chamber is to support the local business community in an effective and socially responsible manner.

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- **The Chamber's Mission Statement:** The Chamber is the platform for business to provide leadership, education and advocacy so that the Long Beach area thrives in the 21st century.
- **The Chamber's Vision Statement:** The Chamber will be the acknowledged leader in creating community consensus to support local, regional, and international business.

In his speech as incoming Chairman, Blake Christian highlighted his goals for the coming year which include:

- The Chamber Board and staff will be working with business leaders, City Council, state and federal legislators, educators and not-for-profit partners to ensure that businesses and residents throughout the city (as well as businesses that may want to relocate to our great city) are positioned to take maximum advantage of the numerous resources within our city. The Chamber will continue to focus on balancing the growth of jobs and business operations with positive impact on the community and the environment.
- Develop proactive outreach strategies to **Industry Sectors** (particularly Technology, Environmental, Logistics, Healthcare, Professional Services, Hospitality, Education, Manufacturing and Automotive Aftermarket) to better integrate its advocacy efforts with macro-industry concerns.
- The Chamber wants to encourage businesses and its Chamber partners to put Long Beach first in terms of:
 - Mentoring and Training our Local Workforce
 - Shopping, Dining and Entertaining in Long Beach
 - Long-Term Investing in Facilities and Technology
 - Retaining and Attracting Key Industries
- Continue to focus on its **Advocacy Efforts** and work to improve its relationships with key community leaders to maximize its effectiveness. With the state and city budget challenges, the Chamber is already deeply engaged in discussions with city staff and state representatives to share ideas. The Chamber is also constantly reviewing what the roles and responsibilities are for its Board and Governmental Affairs Committee in light of the changing local, state and federal issues.

For additional information, please contact Blake Christian at blakec@hcv.com or (562) 216-1800.

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