

THIS WEEK WITH



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This Week with VICA

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Bob Scott and Michael Tou from Cong. Brad Sherman's office celebrate the Census Bureau's decision!

Looking Ahead...

Environment, Infrastructure & Water, Federal Issues & Land Use Joint Committee

Monday, December 5 @ Noon
Courtyard by Marriott

Education Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 6 @ 8:30 am
The HELP Group

State Issues Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 6 @ Noon
Tarzana Hospital

VICA's 56th ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, December 8 @ 11:15 am
Universal Hilton

ANNUAL COMMITTEE FAIR

Thursdav. Januarv 19 @ 5:30 pm



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Hats off to Bob!

The announcement of the official recognition of the San Fernando Valley as a separate geographic statistical area was heralded on the front page of the *Los Angeles Daily News* on Friday, November 18; however, a very important part of the story was "left on the cutting room floor."

The following is the "rest of the story."

VICA Chair-Elect, and San Fernando Valley native, Bob Scott has fought for nearly 30 years urging that the Valley have its own separate identity, and "sense of place" as he calls it. This issue came to a head in the early 1990's as the Valley and VICA struggled with the lack of local data, impacting such public policy issues as LAUSD and City Council reapportionment, L.A. City business tax reform, area code splits, non-profit grant programs, planning and the Valley cityhood debate.

The problem at all levels seemed to be that there was no official place known as the San Fernando Valley. Nearly eighty percent of the Valley is made up of a minor share of the City of Los Angeles . . . meaning that in most cases the data would be aggregated with far flung places like San Pedro and South Los Angeles.

Working with statistics for the Valley's Economic Alliance, Scott discovered census geographies known as *Census County Divisions*, or CCDs, which allowed tabulation of data based upon designated regions within a county. Scott formulated a plan for turning the San Fernando Valley Statistical District, first described in a 1970s bill by then State Senator Alan Robbins, into a CCD . . . creating a district that would mandate the collection of data on all levels: local, state and federal.

This was a daunting challenge as it would require consensus at all levels, including buy-in from the City of Los Angeles. Scott, who prides himself in being a boundary-crosser passionately pursued this concept through the Alliance and VICA; and in October 1998, VICA first took a position in support of securing a separate statistical district for the San Fernando Valley.

Scott started by working with City officials urging them to embrace the notion of a stand-alone district for the San Fernando Valley with its own statistical data. "Without the work of Wendy Greuel and the rest of the L.A. City family, this idea would have been a non-starter," Scott admits. He worked diligently to build consensus, gathering endorsements from dozens of influential quarters: VICA, the *Los Angeles Daily News*, the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*, the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley, Southland Regional Association of Realtors, Valley VOTE, Small Manufacturers' Association of California, the United Chambers of Commerce, Neighborhood Councils, LA Mission and Pierce Colleges, along with numerous private businesses, non-profits and elected officials.

Mayor James Hahn signed the enabling ordinance, by Councilmembers Greuel, Zine and Cardenas, in November 2003. With this in hand, Scott was able to partner with Assembly Member Lloyd Levine to write VICA-sponsored AB 2207 amending Government Code Section 11093 to mandate collection of state data at the Valley level. The Governor signed this legislation in October of 2004.

While the legislative process was evolving, VICA and the Alliance began to convene stakeholder meetings with representatives from city, county, state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau. Working with Daniel Blake, PhD, the soft-spoken genius behind the Cal State Northridge's San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center, the group assembled the necessary technical data to describe the district and the CCD.

Still, in order to become part of the Census, we needed the support of the County of Los Angeles, making a formal request for the establishment of the CCD. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky's office came to the rescue, and the rest is history. On September 6, 2005, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors took its final vote to support and embrace a separate statistical district for the San Fernando Valley.

It was almost perfect; but, not quite. Scott and Blake wanted the data to begin to flow in 2006, based upon the *American Community Survey* program. It was the intervention of U.S. Rep. Brad Sherman that secured a commitment from the Bureau to provide interim data beginning in 2006, well prior to the 2010 decennial Census.

After thirteen years of persistent engagement, the last few hurdles were overcome in the fall of 2005. Without Bob Scott's personal involvement and strong commitment to the San Fernando Valley, this information would not be available to us. We are grateful to his vision and perseverance. He made this happen, and we wanted you to know what a difference one individual can make. Thank you, Bob.