



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 6, 2011

CONTACT: Sean Rossall/April Popescu
(323) 466-3445
sean@cerrell.com or april@cerrell.com

2013 Los Angeles Mayoral Candidates to Participate in Talking About Los Angeles Conversation Series *Innovative Series Brings Together Mayoral Candidates to Discuss Topics Impacting the Future of Los Angeles*

LOS ANGELES—Los Angeles's top business, community and civic leaders today announced **Talking About Los Angeles** (TALA), a dialogue with the next mayor of LA. The TALA series of six events will allow students, opinion leaders and the LA community to engage in conversations about the future of our City with the 2013 Los Angeles mayoral candidates, challenge the strength of each candidate's vision and leadership and cast an educated vote for the candidate who will best meet their needs in the 2013 mayoral race.

Issue experts and opinion leaders will moderate each of the six conversations focusing on important topics vital to the future of LA—transportation, environment, quality of life issues, economic growth and job creation, education and workforce development. These conversations will be held across LA on various college campuses, including USC, UCLA, Loyola Marymount, California State Northridge and Harbor College.

"We want to thank the candidates in advance for their willingness to take part in this conversation series," said Hal Dash, CEO of Cerrell Associates. "Our company's founder, Joe Cerrell, believed that an educated citizenry is essential to making lasting change in our community, and we hope that Talking About Los Angeles will provide that education to Angelenos as they consider the 2013 mayoral candidates and the issues."

Cerrell Associates, which has been a public affairs leaders in LA for more than 45 years, teamed up with the Southwest Voter Education Project (SVREP) to make TALA a reality. Cerrell Associates has a long-standing history of creating opportunities to educate and empower voters, including hosting lecture series at USC about local and state politics and helping to found the Unruh Institute of Politics at USC. The goal of these latest events is to engage the community, especially groups that do not traditionally participate in city elections, in the 2013 mayoral race and invest them with the knowledge to help improve the future of LA.

Since 1974, SVREP has helped to register and engage minority voters throughout the Southwest. TALA is a natural extension of the organization's mission, which is to empower Latino voters in the political process and to ensure that their voices are heard.

"Our mission at the Southwest Voters Registration Project is to find innovative ways to engage underrepresented communities in the civic process," said Antonio Gonzalez, president of the SVREP. "We are proud to be a part of Talking About Los Angeles. It is a truly unique approach to engaging all parts of our city and its diverse communities on the critical municipal governance issues that will define our city's future."

A broad coalition of advisors, including business, labor, education, community and civic leaders are working with Cerrell Associates and SVREP to expand the reach and impact of the TALA series. Microsoft, which has taken a pioneering role in creating technology to engage voters, is the title sponsor for the series. Additional support is being provided by La Opinion, Time Warner Cable and FAST: Fixing Angelenos Stuck in Traffic.

“Microsoft is proud to be the presenting sponsor of Talking About Los Angeles,” said Russel Buetow, Southern California director of state and local government for Microsoft. “As a company and a committed community partner, we believe that empowering our community is critical to the effective governance of our city. We are confident that Talking About Los Angeles will become an indispensable part of educating voters on the most pressing issues facing our city in 2013 and beyond.”

The six mayoral conversations will take place over the course of the next 18 months, starting in early 2012. As part of the effort, a website, www.talkingaboutla.com, is also launching today. The site will include video of the conversations and an interactive forum for Angelenos to discuss important topics directly with the candidates.

“We know what truly makes our city great—and that is the diverse culture and ideas of Angelenos,” said Lisa Gritzner, president of Cerrell Associates. “We think that Talking About Los Angeles, which will engage different communities and cultures through traditional channels and new media, will provide a critical and honest exploration of how our city’s next mayor will address the multitude of problems facing our city.”

For more information, please visit www.talkingaboutla.com.

###

Talking About Los Angeles is a series of six conversations designed to explore the most pressing issues facing LA. Each conversation will be moderated by a recognized issue expert/opinion leader and candidates will be given the opportunity to express their ideas and discuss their vision for Los Angeles in 2013 and beyond. More than sound bites or clever debate tactics, this series is designed to be an honest exploration of the issues and will help shape the future of Los Angeles.