



Press Release

Office of Economic Development

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Great Cities Speakers Series Presents Playwright, Film
Maker and Educator Luis Valdez Discussing Mayan
Influence on Designing Vibrant Communities**

Former San Jose Mayor Tom McEnery to serve as discussion partner

SAN JOSE, CALIF. (October 28, 2008)— Playwright, film maker and educator Luis Valdez will be featured at the *2008 Great Cities Speakers Series*, 6-7 p.m., Monday, November 3, at the San Jose Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo De San Antonio. A reception will follow at 7 p.m. to encourage further discussion. This presentation and reception are free to the public. However, reservations are strongly recommended and can be made by email to info@1stACT.org

Valdez's talk, titled "The Power of Zero: The Mayan Key to Vibrant Communities," looks at how the Mayan design could provide a provocative map for the multi-cultural communities of the future.

“It was commonplace practice in Mayan cities to link the arts with science and mathematics within spaces encountered in daily life. This provided a powerful impetus that even today unleashes the creative faculties of children, adults and the community at large,” Valdez said.

Born in Delano, Calif., Valdez graduated from James Lick High School in San Jose and went on to earn a degree in English from San Jose State University (SJSU). Valdez worked with Cesar Chavez and founded El Teatro Campesino in 1965 on the picket lines of the Delano Grape Strike. Regarded as the father of Chicano theater and film, Valdez’s work includes *Zoot Suit* and *La Bamba*. One of the founding professors of California State University at Monterey Bay, he launched the Institute for Teledramatic Arts and Technology.

Taking part in the discussion with Valdez is former San Jose Mayor Tom McEnery. McEnery has been a major leader in shaping the growth of San Jose and Santa Clara County, a role that his father and both grandfathers also previously enjoyed. Elected as San Jose's 61st mayor in 1982, McEnery is credited for leading the rebirth of the city's downtown core and elevating San Jose to one of the top large cities in the United States. He continues his interests in the area's political arena while remaining active as a writer, public speaker and an owner and member of the Board of Directors for San Jose Sports & Entertainment Enterprises, which owns the San Jose Sharks, San Jose's McEnery Convention Center is named in his honor.

Produced by San Jose’s Office of Cultural Affairs, 1stACT Silicon Valley and the Commonwealth Club of California, the *Great Cities Speakers Series*

engages residents, business and civic leaders as well as those who will be directly impacted by the evolution of the *Envision San Jose General Plan 2040*—the key planning document that will guide San Jose’s growth, character, and service ambitions over the next 10-30 years. This series of monthly public lectures is designed to provoke thought, discussion and imagination about the city of the future and to bring important outside perspectives to local and regional efforts on civic planning, culture, art and design. The lectures are free.

The *Great Cities Speaker Series* is also supported by the American Institute of Architects-Santa Clara Valley Chapter, the American Planning Association (APA) California Chapter-Northern Section, the Fairmont Hotel San Jose, the San Jose Repertory Theater and the San Jose State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

ABOUT THE SAN JOSE OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Office of Cultural Affairs is part of the City's Office of Economic Development. Together, they foster cultural and economic development as related strategies for building San Jose as the creative center of Silicon Valley. The Office of Cultural Affairs coordinates services for outdoor events and festivals, offers financial support for arts and culture providers, supports arts education, and leads the development of public art works throughout the city. For more information, please visit www.sanjoseculture.org

ABOUT THE CITY OF SAN JOSE

From its founding in 1777 as California's first city, San Jose has been a leader driven by its spirit of innovation. Today, San Jose stands as the largest city in Northern California and the Capital of Silicon Valley—the world's leading center of innovation. The city, the 10th largest in the U.S., is committed to remaining a top-ranked place to do business, work, live, play and learn. For more information, visit www.sanjoseca.gov

ABOUT 1ST ACT SILICON VALLEY

1stACT Silicon Valley is a broad network of regional civic, cultural, and business leaders working to catalyze participation and investment at the intersection of art, creativity, and technology. 1stACT strives to create an authentic sense of place in Silicon Valley that fuels community pride, broad participation, and philanthropic investment. Please visit www.1stact.org

ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

The Commonwealth Club of California is the nation's oldest and largest public affairs forum, bringing together its more than 18,000 members for over 400 annual events on topics ranging across politics, culture, society and the economy. The Club has offices in San Francisco and San Jose, with regular events in both cities, as well as programs in the East and North Bay. Please visit, www.commonwealthclub.org

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