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## Mayor Gonzales Announces Program to Cut Red Tape for Small Business in San José



***San José*** ---- San José Mayor Ron Gonzales announced a new program to help small businesses navigate the city’s development review and permitting process.

“Each small business going through the development process will now have a single point of contact at City Hall – an ambassador who can remove the guesswork and reduce the surprises that small businesses can encounter,” said Gonzales.

The Small Business Ambassador Program is the result of feedback from business owners who have requested that the city simplify its process and reduce the time needed for planning review and permits.

“We hope this will both reduce the cost of development and the time it takes for getting permits for our small businesses,” he said. “We’ve heard our businesses say very clearly that ‘time is money,’ and we intend to help them save both.”

Gonzales also announced that the third annual city council study sessions for “Getting Families Back to Work” to be held in October will focus on improving the city’s development process. This effort will be done with help from a new “Counter to Council” task force of business representatives who will review the process and make recommendations over the next several months.

The mayor noted that ongoing feedback from the business community has already led to improvements that have made a difference for businesses.

“We are expanding this effort to help small business owners because they often don’t have their own specialists to help them.”

The San José Building Division will manage the program with the help from a cross-trained team from the city’s many departments dealing with building, economic development, environmental, finance, fire, planning, public works, and redevelopment agency services.

“When we move into the new downtown city hall this summer, we’ll be able to take a big step forward because we will finally have a convenient central location with enough room for our Small Business Assistance Center and the Customer Service Center,” he said.

“We will be able integrate our new services and ideas, and that will make it easier to do business with City Hall and easier to run your business in San José.”

In August 2003 and 2004, Mayor Gonzales invited a wide range of business representatives and community stakeholders to a series of City Council study sessions aimed at helping the city develop effective strategies to create jobs, attract and retain businesses, and restore economic opportunity for residents and businesses in the face of the prolonged Silicon Valley recession.

“At this year’s session, we will focus on ways to simplify and improve the development process for businesses of all sizes,” said the mayor. “We must cut red tape and improve customer service to help our businesses stay competitive and keep San José a great place to do business.”

Gonzales proposed enlisting people from businesses that have experience and insight about the development process to help accomplish this goal.

As the “Counter to Council” task force, they will make recommendations to the mayor to simplify the city’s development process that he will bring to the council study session in October. Gonzales expects to name the task force in June.

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