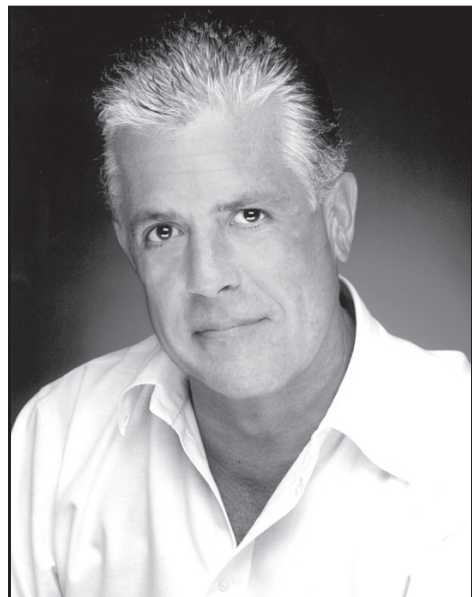


Cityscape

Our City's Budget: It's Time To Tell Us What Matters Most

By Mayor Kelly McDowell



income and outgo at the state level. That's one reason our state has the worst credit rating in the country.

Another advantage to a late-starting fiscal year is that we get to see what most other cities are doing before making our spending decisions and we have a chance to analyze their forecasts of revenues and expenses for their own communities and compare them to our own.

I am sure that none of you are surprised by the fact that most cities in California, big and little, are significantly cutting back their spending right now and lowering their revenue estimates, at least in the short term. Agencies are cutting programs and services all over the state. The city of Vallejo, up north, has filed for bankruptcy.

It's worth remembering that several months ago some economists were predicting that the U.S. economy would be on the rebound by now. Well, it's not. And California is doing worse than most other places by almost any measure.

Where am I going with all this talk of economic gloom and doom? Back to our city's budget is where. On July 8 the city council will hold its second strategic planning meeting to plan the city's spending for the fiscal year starting October 1.

The meeting will start at 8:00 a.m. in the Friends room downstairs in the main library. If you can make it--and I realize it will take place during business hours for most folks--

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El Segundo's fiscal year, the one that the city budget follows, is different from most cities in California because it starts October 1 and ends September 30, like the federal government. Our state's budget and those of most cities run from July 1 through June 30.

There are advantages to having a financial cycle that begins later in the calendar year. One is that usually we get to see what the state's budget looks like before having to make our own financial decisions.

This was not the case last year--and might not hold true again this year. Our representatives in Sacramento, just like in 2008, have so far been unable to find a way to agree on how to close the ever-widening gap between

Political Penguin

By Duane Plank

First off, to everyone and all, please enjoy the Fourth of July holiday. Think about what the day entails as you parade around with your red cups and throw fireworks at each other. Hope to see some of you out and about, as I practice my observance of a safe and sane holiday. Sure will. Safe and sane.

Was initially going to lead with the Governor Mark Sanford story. You are familiar with it, right? Don't waste all your time Tweeting, do you? The Republican South Carolina chief executive hooked up with some lady who was not his wife. Or so it seemed when he came out and said: "The bottom line is this: I have been unfaithful to my wife." Pretty straightforward. Like I have always said, you get caught with your mitt in the ringer, or mitt caught somewhere, don't deny, deny, deny.

Get out in front of the upcoming media maelstrom. Take ownership of your screw-up, plead for forgiveness, say, "My bad," or whatever, and let the chips fall. Where did this "my bad" saying enter our lexicon, by the way? Anyway, coming out and taking responsibility usually works better than what President Richard Milhouse Nixon did a quarter-century ago when a two-bit burglary ended up costing the always-proud Californian a pretty good job.

Do you remember the Watergate deal? Criminy, it happened a lot longer than a quarter of a century ago. Time flies, as they say. The break-in happened in June of 1972. Five dimwits were caught burglarizing the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate Hotel. Why? Cuz stupid/paranoid people do stupid things.

What possible reason would the Republicans have had to worry about what the Demos and their 1972 nominee, one George McGovern, were planning? Nixon was ahead in the polls

by a ton and was bulletproof in the upcoming election, which was just a few months away.

McGovern, at the time the South Dakota governor, was a fringe candidate at best, and had no shot at winning a seat in the Oval Office. In fact, he was routed by the Nixon team 520 to 17 in the all-important electoral college in the '72 election. You guys know what the electoral college is, so help me Thomas Jefferson? Don't need to waste valuable space educating you, right? Except for you, SW, but as I've said many times, you are a different bird.

Anyway, the paranoid people surrounding Tricky Dick Nixon felt it was necessary to burglarize the DNC, and uncover some of the wonderful McGovern strategy. Which seemed to be to oppose the Vietnam War. End of strategy.

Boy, that was a different era, wasn't it? Now when a conflict breaks out, anywhere, anytime, CNN and the other fantastic news-gathering outfits are planted on the scene in what seems a few minutes, beaming back live pictures, giving their own slanted views on whatever is taking place.

Remember the Vietnam era, old folks? We would all wait until the end of the week when the venerable Walter Cronkite, who, sadly, may not be with us much longer, would look into the camera as we watched the CBS Evening News, and tell us of the number of American casualties that had occurred in Vietnam that week?

Rambling here, but back to my point. Which was that Mr. Nixon cost himself the presidency because he allowed a small screw-up to mushroom into a cataclysmic imbroglio that forced the guy to resign the highest office in the land.

After backtracking, backpedaling and backstabbing, Nixon finally resigned the

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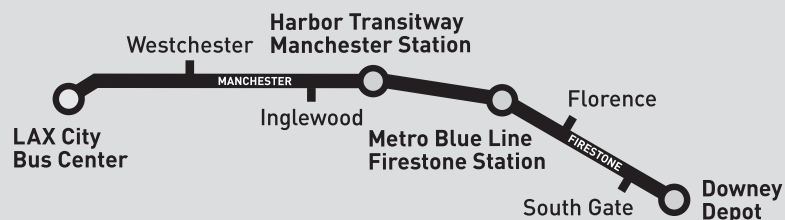


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