

# What's New in Government Affairs

December 11, 2008

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## LOCAL

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**WATCH THE ROAD, Take 2:** Text messaging while driving will be banned starting January 1. Police will stop and cite drivers for texting the same way that they currently issue citations for talking on the phone while driving. There will be no grace period or warning period for the new phone law.

**HAWTHORNE:** The City Council discontinued its ECHO (Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity) housing program, which was to involve placing a small modular house onto an existing home site in order to enhance the care of older or disabled family members.

**CARSON:** The City Council has stopped its first-time homebuyer program, accord to the Daily Breeze. The program had recently raised its loan limits to \$150,000, however its popularity helped push the program \$6 million over budget. The City allocated an additional \$3.7 million for committed loans, while subsequent loan applications were suspended. For more information, contact the City of Carson at (310)830-7600.

**SAN PEDRO:** The Los Angeles Planning Department's ongoing review of the proposed Ponte Vista project in San Pedro has been postponed. The December 11 Planning Commission hearing was carried over to February 12, while the developer considers how and whether to adjust the project proposal, currently for 1,950 units along Western Avenue.

## STATE

**Budget Crisis far from over:** In a joint session of the Legislature this week, state budget leaders asked for a new budget package quickly in order to prevent fiscal meltdown. How does the budget impasse affect us locally? Among other things, the Sacramento Bee reports that State Treasurer Bill Lockyer said in less than two weeks he will stop all infrastructure spending, including planned expenditures for highways, schools, and flood control.

## FEDERAL

**NAR-Supported Candidates' Successes:** Candidates supported by RPAC prevailed in 95% of elections, leaving the REALTOR® Party well positioned to work with the leadership in Congress. Unlike some groups who rely on a single political party, the REALTOR® community reaches out to Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike.

Our public policy issues – promoting homeownership, fostering a vibrant commercial real estate sector, expanding small business health insurance, and congressional oversight of federal regulatory decisions – cut across party lines and geographic regions.

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