
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2019

Contact: Jeff Liu, Manager of Communications
(213) 236-1998, liuj@scag.ca.gov



Transportation Technology, Green Economy, Big Data Take Center Stage at SCAG's 2019 Regional Conference Three-Day Gathering – 'Beyond Boundaries' – Opens Today in Palm Desert

Palm Desert, Calif. – More than 500 leaders from throughout Southern California are gathering here for a three-day conference on topics ranging from innovative and emerging transportation technology to harnessing the enormous potential of the green economy to using big data to address local and regional challenges.

The 2019 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Conference and General Assembly is bringing together experts in transportation, technology and economic development under the theme, "Beyond Boundaries." The conference will explore what it means to truly connect a region of 191 cities, identify paths to strengthening leadership and community-building around traffic safety, and provide tangible strategies for harnessing new technologies.

"This is such an incredible time for our region – as the economic hub of California and the global leader in transportation planning and emerging technologies. The decision makers and thought leaders we're convening will have the opportunity to share ideas and help prepare us – as communities and as a region – for an even more promising future," said Alan D. Wapner, an Ontario City Council member whose one-year term as President of SCAG ends this week.

Emerging technology – particularly as it relates to mobility and economic opportunity – will be a major theme of the 2019 conference. During his term as President, Wapner has overseen the launch of *Connect SoCal*, SCAG's 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, identifying how best to address transportation challenges in a region expected to grow by 4 million people over the next quarter century. SCAG also recently released a major research study on congestion pricing, projecting a 21% reduction in vehicle miles traveled and a 24% reduction in vehicle hours traveled if the plan were implemented.

"Innovation, technology and data analysis continue to play a bigger role in how we address congestion and, ultimately, the quality of life of our region. Harnessed the right way, these tools can help us create highly effective and efficient transportation network that connects communities, attracts additional economic and employment opportunities, and reducing the amount of time people spend stuck in traffic," Wapner said.

The conference begins with a session on Wednesday for city manager and elected leaders on ways to improve traffic safety

Breakout sessions scheduled for Thursday include:

- **Boom Goes the Green Economy:** We're ushering in a new era for the green economy. New state-level policies and innovations are spurring market changes. Many new sustainable technologies are proving to be real moneymakers, and the region is seeing supercharged growth in green jobs. Communities of different sizes and locations have the potential to benefit from this boom. A panel of experts will lay out a clear path for Southern California leaders to harness the green economy at home.
- **The New Mobility Revolution:** New mobility technologies are popping up almost faster than we can keep track. What are some of the innovations that stand to change the face of how we get around in Southern California the most, or the soonest?
- **Where Will Our Children Live?:** This panel will discuss the threat the housing crisis poses for the next generation, and zero in on the planning and policy strategies that will allow future generations to realize the dream of homeownership.
- **Is Our Infrastructure Ready for the New Normal?:** Sea level rise, extreme weather and more are becoming "the new normal." Are we ready to meet the challenges climate change poses to the systems we depend on? What can we be doing now to mitigate negative impacts on our infrastructure? This panel will tackle the issues that climate stresses present, and look at what leaders can prioritize in order to address these challenges.
- **Unleashing the Power of Data:** Sharing data and building programming knowledge in local governments leads to greater efficiency and better service for the whole region. Shared data also spurs innovation: If everyone is working from the same information, and the information is shared instead of protected, it fosters ideas. This panel will show how advances in civic tech, and particularly the advent of widespread data-sharing, can change the face of the region for the better.

Sessions scheduled for Friday include:

- **Getting Back on Track:** Between 2000 and 2015, the SCAG region grew by 2.3 million people while adding 2.1 million household vehicles. This increase in vehicle ownership was found to be the major contributor to a decline in per capita transit ridership and worsening road congestion, according to a joint SCAG-UCLA study. Despite our best intentions, transportation emissions have increased since 2013, increasing risks to public health, the environment and the Southern California economy – home to the largest manufacturing center and logistics industry in the nation.
- **Featured Keynote Speaker, Lea Endres, Co-Founder and CEO, NationBuilder:** Lea Endres is an entrepreneur, educator and human rights advocate. A renowned facilitator, she has spent most of her life working to make the tools of leadership available to everyone.

###

About SCAG

SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and nearly 19 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to plan for a livable and sustainable Southern California now and in the future. For more information about SCAG's regional efforts, please visit www.scag.ca.gov.