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LEAD SAN DIEGO AND CHAMBER COMBINE ORGANIZATIONS, PROGRAMMING

Partnership aims to inspire, engage, mobilize region's next leaders

SAN DIEGO (June 21, 2017) – LEAD San Diego and the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce are combining organizations and leadership programming to provide the region's emerging leaders with the skills, knowledge, and network to make a lasting, positive impact on our growing region.

The combination agreement was signed late last Friday after the LEAD Board of Directors voted in support of joining the two organizations. The executive committee of the Chamber's Board of Directors also approved the combination last week. The two organizations bring a combined 180 years of engagement and leadership on business and civic issues in the San Diego community.

"So much is happening across San Diego County, we need the right leaders now more than ever to take advantage of the opportunities ahead," said Jerry Sanders, President and CEO of the Chamber. "Many of the people doing important work in San Diego have LEAD to thank for giving them the perspective – and push – they needed to determine how they could make a difference. We at the Chamber are honored to join with such a well-respected organization that has contributed so much to our community."

“We’re fortunate in San Diego County to have created an environment of collaboration, of partnerships, and intelligent and constructive discourse,” said Carisa Wisniewski, Chair of LEAD San Diego. “San Diego is at the epicenter of national issues – veterans, cross-border commerce, biotech. And, we have the highest percentage of millennials in our workforce, compared to competing metro areas. We have an opportunity and an obligation to take our region’s leadership development to the next level.”

LEAD San Diego will retain its status as a 501c3, and join the Chamber as an affiliate organization, similar to the Chamber Foundation, also a 501c3. The Chamber is a nonprofit, 501c6 membership organization. A board of representatives from both organizations will be established to guide and advise LEAD for the future.

LEAD will continue to focus on leadership development, and absorb the Chamber’s current leadership offerings, including Chamber Young Leaders, Public Leadership Institute, and Advance, currently offered through the Chamber Foundation. The Chamber Foundation will now narrow its focus to economic and quality of life research.

In its nearly 35 years, LEAD has graduated 2,400 civically engaged leaders from its programs.

Idara Ogunsaju is a 2017 graduate of LEAD’s prestigious, nine-month IMPACT program.

“I first learned about the LEAD IMPACT program in 2010 when I attended the LEAD Visionary awards that year. My interest in the organization, and IMPACT, was piqued by the extraordinary accomplishments of the honorees that night,” said Ogunsaju, a department administrator at Kaiser Permanente.

“Known as a Master’s Degree on San Diego, IMPACT goes beyond education, providing graduates with the region-specific information, insights, tools, and connections to put that new knowledge into immediate action,” Ogunsaju said.

LEAD is currently accepting applications for its IMPACT Class of 2018, with sessions beginning in September. To learn more about LEAD programs and to apply, visit leadsandiego.org/programs.

About the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce

The San Diego Regional Chamber is the hub for connections and collaboration among the regional business community, and uses that clout to advocate for public policies and candidates that support economic growth and the creation of jobs for all businesses. As the largest local Chamber on the West Coast, representing approximately 2,500 businesses and an estimated 300,000 jobs, the San Diego Regional Chamber is fighting to make San Diego the most business-friendly region in California. For more information, please visit SDChamber.org or call 619-544-1300.

About LEAD San Diego

For 35 years, LEAD San Diego has provided balanced education and dialogue, equipping individuals with an understanding of our region, the personal skills and the right network of contacts to accomplish great things as civic and community leaders. LEAD's programs are designed to engage, develop and mobilize diverse groups of emerging and current leaders, ensuring that the San Diego/Northern Baja California region's leadership pipeline remains filled. For more information, go to leadsandiego.org.

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