

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media Contact:

Randy Witt, randy@randywittproductions.com

818-800-8656

The Valley Economic Alliance Selects Sonya Blake as New President & CEO

Sherman Oaks, California – The Valley Economic Alliance (“Alliance”) is extremely pleased to announce that Sonya Blake has been selected as its new President and CEO. She will start her new role on April 30, 2020. Blake has been serving as Director of Community Business in Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's Office of Economic Development. A vital resource for the San Fernando Valley, the Alliance offers business assistance services that are critical during the COVID-19 crisis.

Randy Witt, Chairman of the Alliance, enthusiastically welcomed Blake, stating “Sonya is driven to make a difference. Her passion, intelligence, eloquence, leadership, and strong background in economic development make her the right person to lead the Alliance.” He added, “Sonya’s experience in the public and private sectors, in business, in state and local government, in higher education, and nonprofits will be a tremendous asset to the Alliance as the organization implements its plans for the future.”

“I’m excited and looking forward to this next chapter of recovery and growth in the Valley,” said Blake. “The Alliance has an important role to play in revitalizing Valley businesses and the local economy.” Blake continued, “we need immediate short-term disaster recovery and plans for long-term economic development that will lift all parts of the Valley towards prosperity and a better quality of life.”

Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation CEO Bill Allen, who was the first full-time CEO of the Alliance, stated “Sonya is an articulate, visionary leader and under her guidance I expect the Alliance will have an increasingly powerful impact, creating opportunities across the region and enabling our diverse community to recover and thrive.”

During the current crisis, Blake participated in the City's establishment of an \$11,000,000 Small Business Emergency Microloan program. Prior to that she assisted Mayor Garcetti in launching innovative entrepreneurship training programs. She was a primary facilitator of the economic development package of the City's Community Development Block Grant and City-wide community revitalization efforts as well.

A graduate of Yale University with an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management, Blake has also served as CEO of the National Association of Women Business Owners – Los Angeles, Small Business Advocate in the Office of former Governor Gray Davis, Assistant Dean for the USC Roski School of Fine Arts, and as Director of Corporate Giving for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

About The Valley Economic Alliance

The Valley Economic Alliance (“Alliance”) is a 501(c)3, tax-exempt non-profit organized in 1994. Consisting of an unprecedented coalition of partnerships, the Alliance helps address issues impacting the San Fernando Valley through its strong alliance of business, education, government, and community partners.

A highly effective organization, the Alliance was instrumental in bringing the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Orange Line and Project Grad to the Valley and has saved thousands of jobs through its business assistance programs. The Alliance continues to work with its partners to facilitate economic development in the Valley. For more information about the Alliance, visit www.thevalley.net.

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