



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2009

CONTACT:

Molly McLaughlin
City Clerk
949.635.1806
Carrie Arneith Miller
Keena•Thomas Communications
949.455.4600

Mayor Thompson and Council Member Blais Selected as Delegates to Local Government Summit on State Governance and Fiscal Reform

Rancho Santa Margarita, CA — The City of Rancho Santa Margarita has selected Mayor Gary Thompson and Council Member Neil Blais to represent the city at a historic summit meeting of city, county and school officials July 17-18 in Sacramento. The Local Government Summit on Governance and Fiscal Reform will be a forum where mayors, council members, county supervisors and school board members from across California will discuss emerging proposals to reform our state governance and fiscal systems will be discussed and debated.

Today in California our state government institutions are increasingly seen as broken. Record state deficits, late and unbalanced budgets, and an inability to address the critical issues of the day – energy, water, education, health services, and more – all point towards the inescapable conclusion that our governmental system at the state level is dysfunctional. The state's governance crisis is due in large measure to the more fundamental problem of over-concentrating decision making at the state level at the expense of true local priority setting and spending decisions.

This summit was called to exchange strategies on how California government at every level can be changed to become more responsive and effective, better reflecting the will of the people.

One example of the dysfunction of state government is that the state has taken upwards of \$10 billion in city property taxes to help meet state budget obligations to schools since 1991, yet state spending on schools is among the lowest if not the lowest in the nation. With the current economic downturn, the state government is facing its day of reckoning, and the results are deeply troubling. The summit will provide a forum for, hundreds of city, county and school leaders to discuss reforms to address these pressing problems and the way in which they can be implemented.

"I am honored to serve as Rancho Santa Margarita's delegate to the Summit," said Mayor Thompson. "There is no more critical issue at the moment than addressing governance and fiscal reform at the state level so our city can efficiently operate and meet our residents' needs."

The two-day summit is sponsored by the Cities Counties School Partnership, a collaboration of the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties and the California School Boards Association.

“The proposals to both seize and borrow money from local government to meet the state’s obligations are an indication of the state’s inability to govern itself,” said Chris McKenzie, League of California Cities Executive Director. “The League of California Cities helped convene this important event because it is imperative that local government leaders have a voice in helping reform our state system of governance to ensure a strong future for our great state and our grandchildren. Our three groups, the cities, counties and schools, are coming together because we understand we must work collaboratively to help restore a greater degree of local control and stability to our state government.”

###