



## ONE YEAR LATER By Councilman Greig Smith

**A**s the anniversary of my first full year in office approaches, I will be releasing a “Year-in-Review” that will detail over 120 motions I've introduced, statistics on street improvements, sidewalk repairs and other successes throughout the district. I wanted to use this space to share with you some of the highlights, including the safety and protections for your family and community that my staff and I are proud to have accomplished over the past year.

**PUBLIC SAFETY** is the most important concern in any community and goes beyond the officers that serve us on the streets each day. I am proud to have authored the toughest DUI legislation in the nation; it will make our streets safer by confiscating the vehicle of anyone caught driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. I've authored seismic legislation to increase our safety in commercial buildings and parking structures in the event of an earthquake. The protections that I have won for our community from the Sunshine Canyon Landfill will greatly increase the safety of our residents by protecting their drinking and groundwater for generations to come. I forced BFI to double line their landfill and will continue to fight for testing beyond state and federal requirements to ensure that toxins are not finding their way into our water supply.

**COMMUNITY PROTECTIONS** that reduce blight are the first and best defense against crime and contribute greatly to the neighborhood quality of life. With that in mind, I passed a new rack ordinance that will significantly reduce the visual blight and overabundance of these unsightly racks, by reducing the number that can be sited in any location, and requiring conformity in their appearance. I've also introduced legislation to increase fines for illegally posted signs, and legislation to force supermarkets and stores to take responsibility for removing abandoned shopping carts from our streets.

**RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, PARKS AND LIBRARIES** provide more than a place to gather or exercise, they are often the very heart of a community; a source of beauty, open space and neighborhood pride. The Twelfth District is truly blessed in this respect, and the past year has seen incredible additions and improvements. Last month I secured the funding to build the Northridge Pool, which will become the premiere aquatic facility in the San Fernando Valley. We've seen a beautiful addition to Bee Canyon Park, including an outdoor classroom and amphitheater. We've dedicated new, and improved existing, equestrian trails. Pedlow Skate Park is being improved and Parthenia Park will reopen with security lights and new fencing. We will soon see Bull Creek restored to its former native glory as it becomes a nature walk and all non-native vegetation is removed, to be replaced by native plants and trees. In December we cut the ribbon on the new Northridge Library. Chatsworth Library is now completed and will be opened as soon as all the books and equipment are in.

**SMALLAND LOCAL BUSINESSES** are an important part of any thriving neighborhood and retaining them while attracting new business is essential to our success as a community. Los Angeles must be more business friendly. I have authored legislation that will allow businesses to write-off their bad debt, excluding it from the City's gross receipts tax. I've also hosted Business Roundtables to help inform local businesses of available services and contracting opportunities.

**MAKING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACCESSIBLE** to all citizens is crucial. By writing legislation to provide video conferencing for City Council meetings and by bringing Council, committee and commission meetings to my district, I've made this goal a reality. In the past year alone, the Public Works Committee, Board of Public Works, Police Commission, Library Commission and the entire City Council have held public meetings in the Twelfth District; the most in the history of the northwest Valley. The offsite City Council meeting that I hosted in Northridge boasted the highest attendance of any offsite Council meeting in the history of Los Angeles.

**NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT** is our first and best step toward keeping government truly local. It has always been my belief that no one knows the needs of a community better than those who live, work and attend school there. I am proud that our district is home to dedicated and hard working neighborhood volunteers, who are working to see that the Valley gets its fair share of services from the City. It has been my pleasure to work closely with our Neighborhood Councils. I have hosted Neighborhood Council Presidents' breakfasts, planned and hosted training sessions for our Councils on planning, land use and the City's budget process. I've worked with the Councils to help them identify parks within their boundaries where they might wish to contribute surplus funds. My staff and I have worked hand in hand with them on neighborhood clean-ups, and we've worked to keep them informed of development projects that will affect their areas. When neighborhood Councils city-wide rallied against the proposed 18% DWP rate increase, I authored the legislation that will require an independent analysis to justify the need for any future DWP rate increases and will require the notification and input of Neighborhood Councils. Most importantly, the new system of financial assessments *prior* to any rate increase will forever eliminate the “behind-closed-door” deals that have marked the past 100 years.

All in all it's been a rewarding and productive year. I am pleased and grateful to have had such participation, cooperation and involvement by my constituents and such a terrific partnership with community-based organizations, Neighborhood Councils and City staff. It has been my honor to work for you this past year and I look forward to you again with even greater anticipation.