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# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***Transportation investment, education hold the keys to economic recovery in Southern California***

**Los Angeles, CA** – Investment in transportation infrastructure and educating a work force to meet real-world needs are essential for California to fully emerge from the worst economic downturn since the Great Recession, according to economists and regional leaders gathering today for the Southern California Association of Governments’ 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic Recovery & Job Creation Summit.

Co-sponsored by the Southern California Leadership Council, the summit is the largest of its kind this year in Greater Los Angeles, focusing on collaborative solutions to Southern California’s short- and long-term economic challenges.

“Our region continues to feel the impact of the recession. Jobs and incomes have not returned to their pre-2007 levels, and we need to work collectively if we’re going to turn that around,” said Hasan Ikhata, Executive Director of SCAG.

Richard Lambros, Managing Director of the SCLC, said bringing business leaders, policy makers and educators together is essential if the challenges are to be met. “We can’t afford to work from silos,” Lambros said. “We need to have a shared vision and collaborative action plan for how to address the critical economic issues facing our region ... that what today’s Summit is all about.”

Investing in transportation infrastructure is one issue around which many attendees believe consensus can be built. SCAG’s 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy identified \$524 billion in transportation and transit improvements for the six-county region. If fully implemented, those projects would reduce congestion and air quality, directly and indirectly create an average of more than 350,000 jobs a year, and bring a return on investment of \$2.90 for every dollar spent.

“With more than 800,000 people still out of work in our region, we need an economic strategy that prioritizes job creation. Investment in our highways and transit system accomplishes that,” said Greg Pettis, SCAG President and a Cathedral City Council Member.

Connecting education and economic development is another major opportunity. According to numbers being released at the Summit, 3.2 million people in the six counties lived in poverty in 2012, up from 1.9 million in 1990. Developing education and training programs that meet employer needs will result in more jobs and restore a middle class that has gradually eroded during the past 20 years.

In addition to the poverty report, today's Summit will include the formal release of economic outlook reports for Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, and Imperial Counties, and the Inland Empire.

For more information on the Summit, please visit [www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov).

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**SUMMIT DETAILS:**

**When:** December 5, 2013, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Omni Los Angeles Hotel, 2521 S. Olive St., Los Angeles

**PHOTO, VIDEO and INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE.**

***About SCAG***

SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and more than 18 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](http://www.scag.ca.gov).