



## A LETTER FROM EDC'S PRESIDENT/CEO

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

By now most of us have learned of the heartbreaking news of the passing of Tony Skinner. Tony long served as the head of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 952 and Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the Tri-Counties Building and Construction Trades Council. He was the founder, energy and vision behind the launch and success of ACE Charter High School in Camarillo, a groundbreaking contribution to the region's educational offerings, focusing on applied learning through immersion in architecture, construction and engineering. Tony was the pre-eminent labor leader whose quiet but commanding presence permeated and influenced regional politics, job creation, education and investments of all manner in youth and skills development.

Tony joined our EDC Board of Directors in 2009. To share a bit of personal and organizational experience, his agreement to join our board was a formative moment with lasting implications and value. I recall precisely the moment Tony agreed to join our Board. Chatting in a parking lot after another group's meeting on job opportunities, I knew we needed to have his presence and voice in our room. But for most economic development organizations, to their enduring detriment, Labor is not an invited partner. So, proceeding a bit intimidated and uncertain, I pitched him.

Those that know Tony know how this went. I wasn't half way in when he casually cut me off and said, 'yes, where can I send the check, when's the next meeting, what can we do?' With labor and business at our table, I'd never been prouder and more optimistic for our organization and County.

Tony cared none at all about boundaries. What mattered, what he was committed to with boundless passion and energy, was jobs for his workers and community, pathways for education and training, and partnerships of all kinds that would deliver on those passions. Tony was a committed family man and we are all blessed that his family mindset included our larger community. I want to say that Tony was one of a kind, and in his way truly he was. But also he's not, in that by his influence and mentoring and leadership in education, surely he has left us a legacy in his image. For that we are grateful.

Our hearts go out to Tony's family, friends and colleagues. He is missed.

Bruce