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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Gilbert A. Partida

This is San Diego's most exciting time: a time of *change*, of *hope*, and of forging *new leadership* to guide us into the next century as an international community.

This is also the waning of San Diego's most trying time. The economy has left our city reeling and the business climate suffering, with a resulting loss of jobs. If there is a lesson to remember in the face of darkness, it is that difficulty often compels us to seek new solutions. And in those new solutions is a brighter future.

Nothing could be more exciting to me than to be president of the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce at the confluence of these times. For me — and for all Chamber members — it is a time of great hope. We have renewed the vision of a bi-national region with the promise of the North American Free Trade Agreement and an international TwinPorts airport at Otay Mesa. We have a new mayor, and a change in national leadership. And we have the potential of our industries of tomorrow, such as biotechnology, high technology and international trade.

To move forward, we need to move together. We need you as Chamber members to approach this organization with new vitality, ideas and spirit. We will wel-come more members into the fold, and our dedicated board and talented staff must work together as a family as never before.

In the coming months, we will develop a business plan for the Chamber of the future. Our mission: to create a business-friendly community where quality of life begins with jobs and regulation is not an onerous burden. We will act as an advocate for small business, which comprises 90 percent of San Diego businesses and generates two of every three jobs.

The Chamber will forge ahead, sup-porting long-standing issues such as TwinPorts and taking new stands to attract international trade and to develop international markets for our products.

You will see new coalitions, joint ventures and collaborations — led by the Chamber — to achieve what seems impossible. We must begin by building bridges and reaching out to each person and every organization aspiring to a brighter future.

We need your help. And we also need the help of all the businesses in San Diego.

The tools are there, in you as members, in the Chamber's eight divisions, in San Diego as a region and in the many contributors to the Chamber and the community. With those tools, we will build the vessel of our future and sail ahead.