



# LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY NEWS



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Clifton's Cafeteria in downtown Los Angeles will officially reopen on September 21, 2015, after a multi-year, multi-million-dollar rehabilitation by owner Andrew Meieran. Photo by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.

## Clifton's Cafeteria Reopens September 21 with Conservancy Fundraiser

by Conservancy staff

It's the moment we've been waiting for: On **Monday, September 21**, Clifton's Cafeteria will officially reopen with a celebration to benefit the Los Angeles Conservancy. Guests will be among the first to visit the iconic downtown restaurant after its multi-year, multi-million-dollar renovation by owner Andrew Meieran.

"We're thrilled and incredibly grateful to be part of this historic moment," said Conservancy President and CEO Linda Dishman. "Clifton's is a downtown institution, and its reopening exemplifies how historic buildings can evolve and continue to inspire new generations."

Meieran and his team have been working nonstop for nearly four years to restore and reimagine the beloved eatery. "It's the imagination, the spirit of invention and innovation, and the spirit of giving and kindness that have transformed this space into a fantasy and a wonderland that's a refuge for people," said Meieran at a press conference in September 2010, when members of the Clinton family (founders of Clifton's) handed him the reins.

### A Good Time for a Good Cause

A board member and longtime supporter of the Conservancy, Meieran chose to make the most of the historic reopening by making it a fundraiser for the organization. The September 21 event will run from 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. For \$125, guests will explore the iconic first-floor cafeteria and the new Monarch Bar on the second floor. They'll enjoy passed hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and entertainment, plus full dinner and dessert—by going through the cafeteria line, of course. Tickets are available at [laconservancy.org/cliftons-2015](http://laconservancy.org/cliftons-2015).

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## Fall Tour Returns to Former Hughes Aircraft Company

by Jessica Hodgdon

On **Saturday, October 24**, the Conservancy will return to the former Hughes Aircraft Company (HAC) campus for an updated version of our spring 2011 tour. The first time we toured this historic campus, new owners The Ratkovich Company had just begun a preservation project to adapt the buildings to new uses. Now we're invited back for the big "reveal," and you will not be disappointed.

Renamed the Hercules Campus, the site's transformed historic buildings are now thriving and in use by technology and creative firms such as YouTube.



The Conservancy will tour the recently restored former Hughes Aircraft Company, now the Hercules Campus. Photo courtesy The Ratkovich Company.

This site, in what is now Playa Vista, was one of the epicenters of Los Angeles' aviation history. In 1940, aviator, inventor, and movie producer Howard Hughes began to purchase farmland between Culver City and Playa del Rey to build an aviation campus.

The first building opened in 1941, and construction continued through the early

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The Los Angeles Conservancy is a nonprofit membership organization that works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County.

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Major funding for the Los Angeles Conservancy's programs is provided by the LaFetra Foundation.

## Free Walking Tours for Members in September

It's Member September! As a member of the Conservancy, you help support preservation efforts across Los Angeles County. To thank you for your generosity, we're offering members the chance to register for free walking tours the entire month of September.

Members at every level can reserve spaces for up to two people on any and all of our regularly scheduled walking tours. There is no restriction on the number of walking tours you can take, so you can take all eight! And the best part is, you don't even have to take your tours in September. As long as you make your reservations between September 1 and September 30, you can explore L.A. history and architecture on any walking tour through November 2015.

With no charge for members, and our Walking Tour Program celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary, it's the perfect time to register for that walking tour you've been meaning to take. You can explore L.A.'s original financial district on our Downtown Renaissance tour, discover the recent past on our Modern Skyline tour, and more!

To register for your free walking tours and learn more about all of the tours we offer, visit [laconservancy.org/tours](http://laconservancy.org/tours).

## Thank You, Summer Interns

This summer, we once again had the benefit of two fantastic interns from the Getty Multicultural Internship Program.

**Jacqueline Lee** served as our education intern. Her main research project focused on the history and architecture of Los Angeles' Chinatown for a special tour planned for 2016 (date to be determined). She also helped out at Last Remaining Seats, as well as with our youth summer program in architecture at HOLA (Heart of Los Angeles). Jacqueline is a studio art major at UC Riverside, entering her sophomore year. In the future, she plans to attend graduate school and become an arts special educator.

Our advocacy intern, **Arielle N'Diaye**, researched and developed online content about places throughout Los Angeles County that tell important stories about the region's diverse LGBTQ communities. Arielle recently received her bachelor's degree in sociology from Occidental College; she plans to work and travel abroad before attending graduate school in the future.

Many thanks to Jacqueline and Arielle for their hard work and lasting contributions to the Conservancy.



Interns Arielle N'Diaye (left) and Jacqueline Lee (right).

## Sarah Weber Leaves Conservancy Staff

After three-and-a-half years as the Conservancy's director of education, Sarah Weber left the staff in July to accept the position of director of education with the Petersen Automotive Museum.

As the head of the Conservancy's education department, Sarah oversaw our efforts to raise awareness of historic places and build support for their preservation. She says she is most proud of her work to advance the Conservancy's youth programming and bring attention to important advocacy efforts, including our We Heart Garden Apartments! tour last fall and our panel discussion in March on preserving Parker Center.

We miss Sarah but wish her well in her new position, where she is hard at work preparing for the Petersen's reopening later this year.

## Preservation Issues

by *Laura Dominguez, Adrian Scott Fine, Manuel A. Huerta, and Marcello Vavala*

For more information about these and other preservation issues, please visit [laconservancy.org/important-issues](http://laconservancy.org/important-issues).

### Beverly Hills Preservation Ordinance

On July 21, 2015, the Beverly Hills City Council made its amended Historic Preservation Ordinance official. The 3-1 vote represented a significant backslide in the City's preservation efforts, with far-reaching changes that fundamentally seek to limit the number and type of places that qualify for historic designation and protection. The vote followed lengthy deliberations and discussions at a June 16 hearing, which ended with an initial 3-2 vote by the City Council to approve the amended ordinance.

In late 2013, members of the City's Planning Commission launched efforts to review and suggest amendments to the Beverly Hills Historic Preservation Ordinance. Despite opposition and suggestions by the Conservancy and Beverly Hills Heritage to address some of the most egregious amendments, the City Council ultimately voted on the latest draft ordinance with no meaningful revisions.

Once fully implemented in the fall, the ordinance will undo much of the great progress that earned the City a grade of A+ on our 2014 Preservation Report Card. We are now revising the City's grade in light of the amended ordinance. We will also introduce a new system for holding communities accountable if they weaken local preservation-planning tools.

### Singleton Estate, Holmby Hills

In another deeply disappointing decision, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) voted in July not to recommend to the City Council the Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) designation of the 1970 Singleton Estate. Designed by master architect Wallace Neff in collaboration with master landscape architects Thomas Church and Phillip Shipley, the property was sold in April 2015 without any safeguards to ensure its protection or preservation.

Believing that the French Revival-style residence and designed landscape could be at risk, the Conservancy nominated the Singleton Estate for HCM designation in March. During times of transition and changes of ownership, large properties are often threatened with demolition, land subdivision, and unsympathetic alterations.

The Singleton Estate is Neff's largest and last great estate. Neff is credited with developing the distinctive regional architectural identity known as the "California Style." He designed the house for Dr. Henry E. Singleton, who co-founded Teledyne, Inc., at one point one of the nation's largest conglomerates.

The recommendation of the Office of Historic Resources staff supported the Conservancy's position that the property met three of the four criteria for local landmark designation. In their vote, however, the CHC cited a lack of information due to the fact that the property owner would not permit the members to tour the site.

The Conservancy disagrees with the Commission's decision, as well as statements that contradict the record and research regarding the significance of the Singleton Estate. We are conducting additional research and hope to resubmit the HCM nomination soon.

### 710 Freeway Project

Since the 1960s, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has proposed extending the 710 Freeway in order to close a 4.5-mile gap between Alhambra and Pasadena. In response to strong community opposition, Caltrans, in partnership with Metro, has abandoned its plans to build a surface-level route between the two cities. The partnership now proposes the construction of an eight-lane underground tunnel.

In March 2015, Caltrans released the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the SR 710 North Study. The Draft EIR/EIS studies the potential impacts of four "build" alternatives, including the Freeway Tunnel



This Craftsman bungalow in El Sereno is one of approximately 450 properties Caltrans owns for the 710 Freeway Extension project. This house is set to be sold by Caltrans in the near future. Photo by Adrian Scott Fine/L.A. Conservancy.

Alternative and a Light Rail Transit Alternative. The Conservancy submitted comments on the document in early August.

Along with partners including Pasadena Heritage and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Conservancy has long advocated for smarter, multimodal transportation alternatives that avoid significant impacts to historic neighborhoods throughout the region.

As currently proposed, the tunnel project could irreparably disrupt or harm thriving communities and historic resources in El Sereno, Pasadena, South Pasadena, and elsewhere in the San Gabriel Valley. We are also concerned that other project alternatives, such as the proposed light rail option, could have adverse impacts on historic places in communities such as East Los Angeles.

The Conservancy does not believe that the Draft EIR/EIS adequately analyzes the long-term effects of vibration, ground subsidence, pollution, and other negative impacts in the region's historic neighborhoods. As part of a growing coalition, we will continue to press for a forward-thinking transportation system that preserves healthy and livable communities.

## Thank You to Our 2015 Last Remaining Seats Volunteers!

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## Last Remaining Seats Delivers Once Again

by Bruce Scottow



Fans filled the historic Million Dollar Theatre (1918) for our opening-night screening of *Psycho* (1960). Photo by Larry Underhill.

Last Remaining Seats, our annual series of classic films in historic theatres, greeted over 10,000 guests in June. Highlights included Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* at the Los Angeles Theatre, where the film premiered in 1931 (on the theatre's opening night). We heard personal stories from the set of *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* from director Mel Stuart's children, Madeline and Peter Stuart. Each of our screenings had something special to offer, and it all added up to another memorable season.

Many thanks to our screening hosts, John Bengtson, Leonard Maltin, David Newman, John Rabe, Howard Sherman, and Kelly Weiss; our display providers, NBCUniversal Archives & Collections and Annamarie von Firley/reVamp; the many volunteers listed at left; and everyone else who helped make this season a success.

Special thanks to our 2015 sponsors: Series Star Sponsor, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Series Supporting Sponsors: Shangri-La Construction/Webcor Builders and The Walter J. & Holly O. Thomson Foundation; Series Sponsors: The Edison/Clifton's Brookdale, JPMorgan Chase, NBCUniversal, Paramount Pictures, Trina Turk/Mr Turk; Evening Sponsors: Cathy and Steve Needleman, Cole's, Grand Central Market, Hugh Hefner, Linda and Jerry

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Movie fans at the always-popular Selfie Spot before *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* at the Orpheum Theatre. Photo by Larry Underhill.

## October 17 Benefit at Spectacular Waverly Mansion in Beverly Hills

by Liz Leshin

The Conservancy is thrilled to hold our 2015 fall benefit on **Saturday, October 17** at the spectacular Waverly Mansion in Beverly Hills. This locally designated landmark was built in 1926 by silent film moguls Al and Charles Christie. The brothers produced many silent comedies at the dawn of Hollywood filmmaking, and they founded the first Hollywood movie studio (on the site of the current Sunset-Gower Studios).

Other notable occupants include silent screen actor Richard Barthelmess and composer Cole Porter, who wrote his timeless classic “Night and Day” while living there.

Designed by architect Leland F. Fuller, the lavish Tudor Revival mansion features an asymmetrical layout with a steeply pitched roof, brick and timber exterior, and a huge entryway with decorative stone details. Interior rooms, though large, are intimate. Highlights include hand-carved woodwork, an original fireplace and tile floors, and fascinating collections of various art and objects.

The estate has been lovingly rehabilitated and reimagined by its current owner. Nearly four acres of rolling landscaped grounds incorporate mature trees that predate the home, as well as beautifully manicured lawns, fountains, and a bridge-covered natural stream. The property features a Tudor-style garage, former servants’ quarters, and a large pool. The grandeur of the space, both inside and out, can be fully appreciated only in person.



The Conservancy is thrilled to hold our 2015 benefit at the 1926 Tudor Revival Waverly Mansion on Saturday, October 17. Photo by Larry Underhill.

The Conservancy is featuring this location, in part, to raise awareness of current preservation challenges in Beverly Hills. On June 16, the Beverly Hills City Council voted to approve an amended Historic Preservation Ordinance that represents a significant backslide in the City’s preservation efforts (see page 3).

Tickets for the benefit start at \$350 for a three-hour cocktail party; donors at higher levels also enjoy an *al fresco* dinner on the lush grounds. Don’t miss this special opportunity to spend an evening at this rarely seen private estate.

For details and tickets or sponsorships for this extraordinary event, visit [laconservancy.org/benefit](http://laconservancy.org/benefit).



Waverly Mansion in Beverly Hills. Photo by Larry Underhill.

## HOLA'S LATEST ADVENTURES IN ARCHITECTURE



The 2015 Adventures in Architecture group at the American Cement Building Lofts. Photo by David Thompson.

by Bruce Scottow

This summer marked the seventh year of our partnership with the HOLA (Heart of Los Angeles) summer youth program, which provides outreach to underserved youth in the Westlake/Lafayette Park neighborhood.

Rich in historic architecture and cultural landscapes, their neighborhood offers dozens of potential sites worthy of a visit. The Conservancy chose five.

Over three weeks in July, twelve students (ages 11-13) visited Bull-ocks Wilshire-Southwestern Law School, MacArthur Park, the American Cement Building Lofts, the Park Plaza Hotel, and the Felipe de Neve Branch Library with its former Shakespeare Garden.

Each tour included a hands-on activity designed to deepen the students’ knowledge of each site. During the visit to the American Cement Building Lofts, the students constructed and named their own building, armed with a foam core base, fifty colorful pipe cleaners, plastic “floors,” and various flags and banners.

The program culminated in a field trip to downtown Los Angeles for a walking tour.

Many thanks to Conservancy volunteers Mary Alice Wollam and David Thompson, and summer intern Jacqueline Lee, who provided invaluable assistance.

**FALL TOUR****continued from page 1**

1950s. The campus ultimately spanned over a thousand acres, employed over 30,000 workers, and housed the longest private runway in the world. Everything was painted a particular shade of light green that came to be known as “Hughes Green.” It was here that Hughes and his team designed and constructed planes, helicopters, satellites, lasers, and most famously, the H-4 Hercules heavy transport craft, more commonly known as the “Spruce Goose.” Over two hundred feet long, with a wingspan of 320 feet, the H-4 still holds the record as the largest airplane ever to fly.

After Howard Hughes’ death in 1976, HAC was sold and operations gradually moved away from the Culver City location. Most of the historic buildings stood empty and decaying, and some were demolished.

The Ratkovich Company’s rehabilitation project first stabilized the buildings that were collapsing. They adapted all the buildings for new uses while preserving their industrial character, earning the project a Conservancy Preservation Award in 2014.

The Conservancy is thrilled to again offer this historic campus tour, this time with many of the buildings restored and in use. We hope to see you there!

Tickets are \$25 for Conservancy members, \$35 for the general public, \$15 for students, and \$10 for children twelve and under. Visit [laconservancy.org/hercules](http://laconservancy.org/hercules) to reserve your space for this very special event.



Our 2011 tour explored the former Hughes Aircraft Company campus before restoration began. See the recently preserved and adaptively reused buildings on our October 24 tour. Photo by Greg Szimonisz.

**CLIFTON’S** continued from page 1

A limited number of VIP tickets were available at press time. For \$250, VIP guests will also enjoy a behind-the-scenes talk with Meieran and a tour of the third and fourth floors, which won’t open until later this year.

**A Legacy of Fantasy**

Clifton’s Brookdale is the last remaining of ten Clifton’s Cafeterias, once one of the region’s largest cafeteria chain. Founder Clifford E. Clinton grew up working in his father’s Clinton Cafeteria chain in San Francisco. He came to Los Angeles in 1931 to start his own business, merging his first and last names into “Clifton’s.”

With the nation in the throes of the Great Depression, Clinton nearly went bankrupt honoring his principle of never turning away the hungry, even if they couldn’t pay. He opened his first cafeteria on Olive Street (it later became Pacific Seas) and his second, Clifton’s Brookdale, in 1935.

The building at 648 South Broadway was designed by Robert Brown Young and constructed in 1904; it is now one of the oldest buildings remaining on Broadway. It originally housed a music company and a purveyor of furniture and carpets. A Boos Brothers cafeteria opened on the site in 1913, operating until Clinton purchased the lease in 1935.

Clinton transformed the space into a fantasy forest inspired by the Santa Cruz mountains where he’d spent childhood summers, not far from the famous Brookdale Lodge. The renowned firm of Plummer, Wurdeman, and Becket redesigned the building’s entire façade, with the lower portion evoking a rustic lodge, and turned the interior into the mountain setting that has greeted Clifton’s patrons for generations.

That setting remains today—cleaned, restored to its 1930s aesthetic, and re-envisioned for new generations. Meieran and his team removed later additions, such as the 1960s entrance and the large aluminum grille covering the exterior. They uncovered original features that were hidden for decades, including murals and a tiny grotto near the front entrance. Meieran even discovered an original—and still glowing—piece of neon in the basement. (It’s still glowing, just moved to a new location so everyone can see it.)



A crowd stands in front of Clifton’s Brookdale Cafeteria during a V-J Day celebration on August 14, 1945. Photo courtesy Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

Meieran intends to have Clifton’s designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

**Back to the Future**

With the historic cafeteria well preserved, Meieran let his imagination run loose in the rest of the building. Ultimately, it will house two restaurants and five bars, including a tiki-themed bar (a nod to Clifton’s Pacific Seas) featuring items from the now-closed Bahooka restaurant in Rosemead.

The most stunning innovation is a three-story atrium and its centerpiece, a massive replica of a redwood tree. Yet historic discoveries and new surprises await in every room, around every corner.

Countless Angelenos have waited eagerly for the return of this beloved restaurant. We think you’ll find it worth the wait.

Many thanks to Andrew Meieran, Barbara Jacobs, and the entire Clifton’s team for their stewardship of this beloved landmark and their generosity to the Conservancy upon its reopening.

For details and tickets to the September 21 fundraiser, please visit [laconservancy.org/cliftons-2015](http://laconservancy.org/cliftons-2015).

We hope to see you there!

# JUNE 12 / AUGUST 5 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Los Angeles Conservancy would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of our new Supporting members, and the new and renewing members of our Sustaining, Benefactor, and Cornerstone groups.

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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### WHY I JOINED: MICHELLE POST

by Jessica Ro

This year, a record 600 people joined the Conservancy as part of our popular Last Remaining Seats film series. One of them, Michelle Post, came for



a date night with a Conservancy member to see *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. "When Paul (her boyfriend) told me about the Orpheum, I was excited to see a classic movie on a big screen inside a beautiful historic theatre," says Michelle.

They also went to see *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which was Michelle's first time at the Theatre at Ace Hotel. "It's such beautiful Gothic architecture, which is one of my favorite styles," she says.

Michelle attributes her interest in film and architecture to her days as an undergraduate at UCLA. "I loved watching movies near campus in (historic) theatres like the Regency (Fox) Village and the Crest Westwood."

Michelle was so inspired by the presentations at Last Remaining Seats that she joined the Conservancy at the final screening. "I wanted to support the Conservancy, know about Conservancy events ahead of time, and help preserve beautiful buildings in and around the city."

Thank you, Michelle! And thanks to all of the members who make our work possible every day.

### Support the Conservancy Every Time You Shop

Through the Ralphs/Food 4 Less Community Contribution program, each time you use your Ralphs or Food 4 Less Rewards Card, a portion of your total purchase is donated to the Conservancy. In the past seven years, supporters have contributed thousands of dollars simply by buying groceries.

Each year at this time, participants in the Ralphs program (not Food 4 Less) must renew their registration for the current term (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016). New participants may sign up at any time. Registering for the Ralphs program is quick and easy:

1. Visit [ralphs.com](http://ralphs.com) and click "Sign in" if you have registered your account previously, or "Register" if it is your first time
2. After signing in or registering, click on your name to view your account summary
3. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to find the "Community Rewards" section and click "Enroll"
4. Search for the Los Angeles Conservancy by name or NPO number (80379)
5. Select our organization from the search results and confirm your enrollment.

If you participate through Food 4 Less, you do not need to renew. If you have a Food 4 Less Rewards Card and have not registered it, you can register online at [Food4Less.com](http://Food4Less.com). Thank you!

## CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

Tours are \$5 for Conservancy members and children twelve and under; \$10 for the general public. Walk-ins accepted on Art Deco, Downtown Renaissance, Historic Downtown, and Modern Skyline. All others require reservations.

For details and reservations, visit [laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org). Questions? Call the Conservancy office at (213) 623-2489.

### CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS

#### Angelino Heights

First Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.

#### Art Deco

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

#### Biltmore Hotel

Every Sunday, 2 p.m.

#### Broadway Historic Theatre & Commercial District

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

#### Downtown Renaissance

Additional offerings: Every Saturday,  
10 a.m., through September 26

#### Historic Downtown

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

#### Modern Skyline

Additional offerings: Every Saturday,  
2 p.m., through September 26

#### Union Station

Every Saturday, 10 a.m.

Youth, family, and group tours by arrangement; call (213) 623-2489 for information.



### Los Angeles Conservancy

523 West Sixth Street, Suite 826

Los Angeles, California 90014

[laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org)

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**It's Member September! See page 2 for details.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

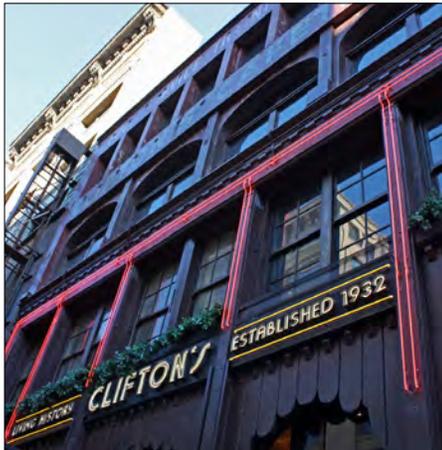


Photo by Jessica Hodgdon/L.A. Conservancy.

### CLIFTON'S CAFETERIA OFFICIAL OPENING

Monday, September 21

Be part of history at the official reopening of Clifton's Cafeteria! All proceeds from this very special event benefit the Conservancy. See page 1 for details.



Photo by Larry Underhill.

### BEVERLY HILLS REVIVAL: AN EVENING AT WAVERLY MANSION

Saturday, October 17

Join us for an elegant evening at the 1926 Tudor Revival Waverly Mansion in Beverly Hills. Proceeds support the Conservancy. See page 5 for details.



Photo courtesy The Ratkovich Company.

### TOUR OF HERCULES CAMPUS

Saturday, October 24

The last time we toured the former Hughes Aircraft Company campus, preservation work had just begun. See the restored buildings now in use by YouTube and other creative firms. See page 1 for details.