

INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE PLAN REVIEW AND STREAMLINING PERMIT PROCESS

American Institute of Architects (AIA)

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Presented by

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**City of Los Angeles
Department of Building and Safety (LADBS)**

INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE PLAN REVIEW AND STREAMLINING PERMIT PROCESS

- I. What does L.A. Dept. of Bldg. and Safety (LADBS) do?
- II. Comparison of Performance (Before vs. After)
- III. Innovative Management Techniques
- IV. Technology and Automation Improvements
- V. Awards & Public Outreach (Time Allowing - LADBS Video)
- VI. Questions & Answers

I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

Mission

The mission of the Department of Building and Safety is to protect the lives and safety of the residents and visitors of Los Angeles, preserve the City's quality of life, and contribute to the City's economic development. This is accomplished through implementation of the Zoning, Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical Codes, as well as Engineering, Energy, and Disabled Access regulations, and local and State laws for construction and maintenance of commercial, industrial, and residential buildings.

I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

New Construction Projects

- Single Family Dwellings
- Multi-Family Dwellings (Apartments & Condominiums)
- Commercial & Industrial Buildings
- Private Schools
- New Construction
- Additions, Alterations, and Repairs
- Tenant Improvement (Commercial & Industrial Buildings)
- Building, Structural, Seismic, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, Disabled Access, and Zoning among others

Code Enforcement

- Single Family & 2 Family Dwellings
- Condominiums (Owner Occupied)
- Commercial & Industrial Buildings
- Zoning

I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

A FEW FACTS ABOUT LADBS

- Provides services to Los Angeles residents through **16 different offices** located throughout the city
- Serves over **400,000 walk-in customers** annually (over 1,600 customers every working day)
- Serves over **750,000 phone customers** annually (over 3,000 customers every working day)
- Issues over **145,000 permits** with an estimated **valuation of over \$3.0 billion** annually (over 580 permits issued with a valuation of over \$12 million every working day)
- Issues over 30,000 E-Permits over the Internet annually (over 120 E-Permits over the Internet each day)
- Reviews and approves plan for almost **40,000 projects** annually (approximately 160 plans every working day)

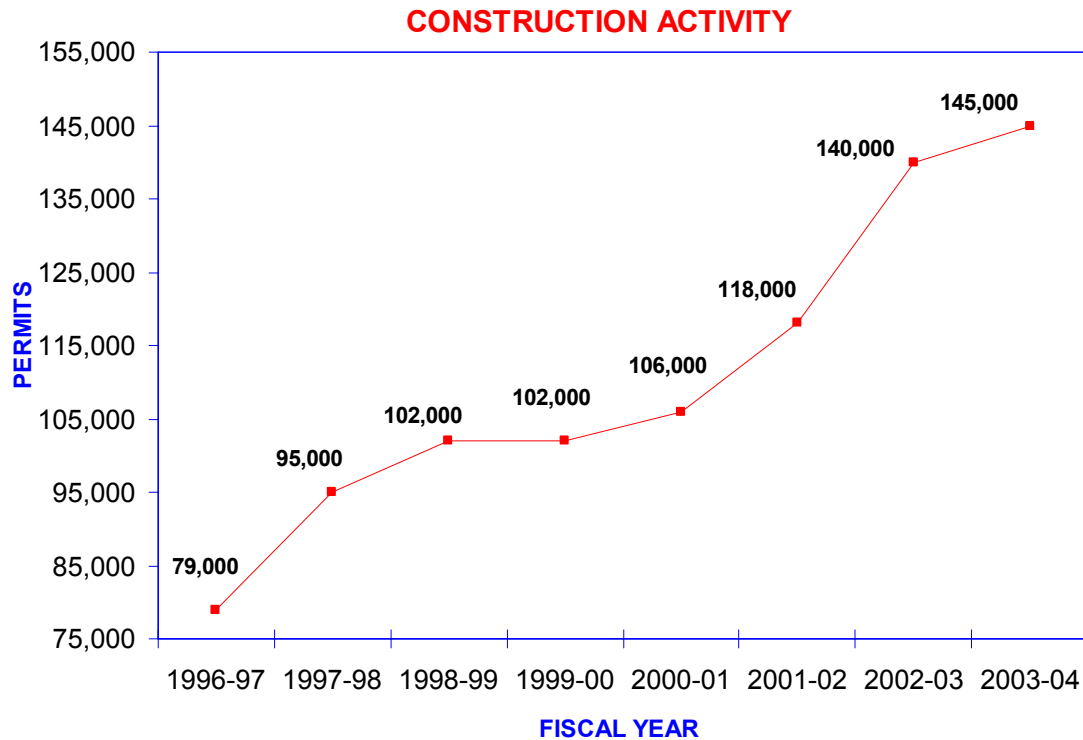
I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

A FEW FACTS ABOUT LADBS (Cont'd)

- Conducts over **630,000 inspections** annually
(over 2,500 inspections made every working day)
- Completes and closes over **48,600 code enforcement** cases annually (over 190 requests for service every working day)
- Brings back over **36,000 properties** to compliance annually
- Abated over **3,400 nuisance and abandoned buildings** in the last three years
- Issues over **17,000 trade licenses** for **22 different occupations** annually
- Provides information regarding over **95,000 addresses** for our customers

I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

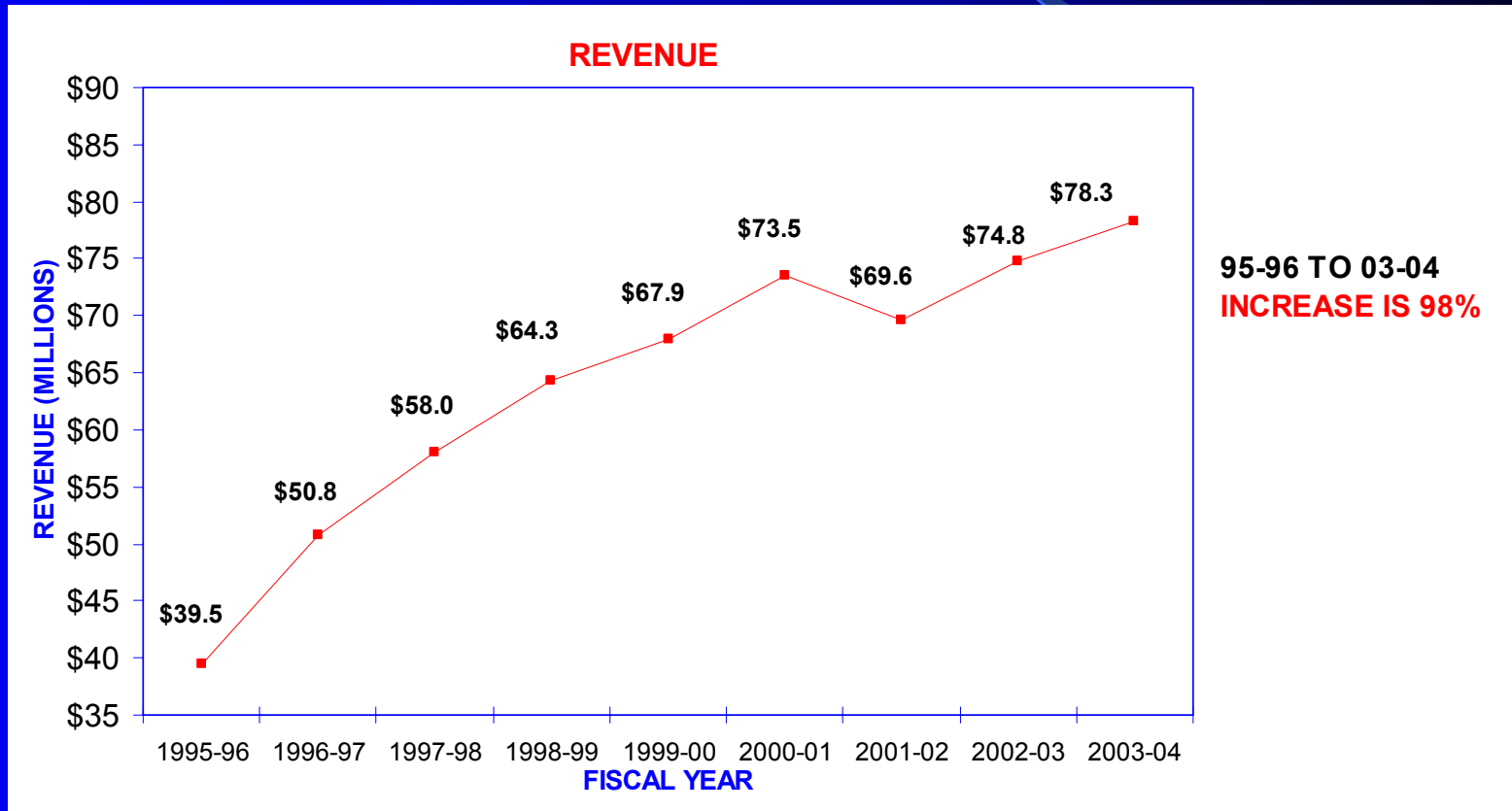
LADBS CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY



**96-97 TO 03-04
INCREASE IS 84%**

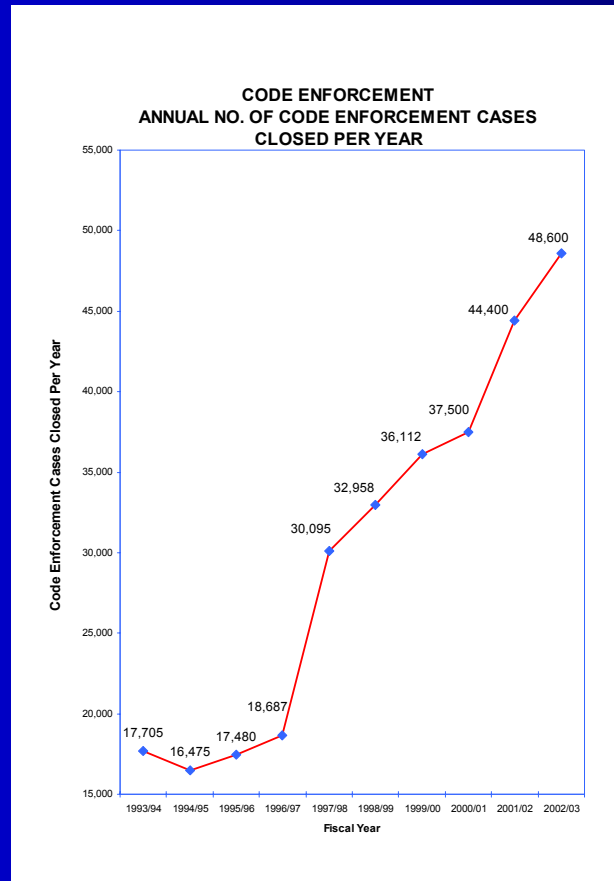
I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

LADBS REVENUE



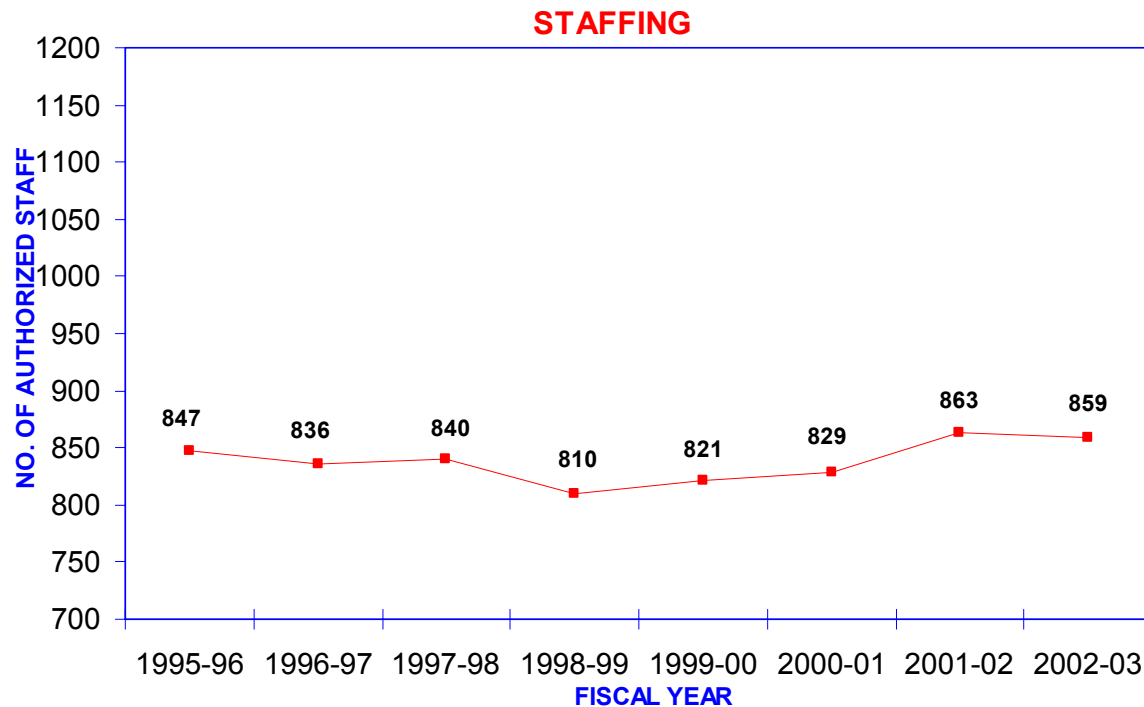
I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

LADBS CODE ENFORCEMENT CASES CLOSED PER YEAR



I. WHAT DOES LADBS DO?

LADBS STAFFING



**95-96 TO 02-03
INCREASE IS 1.4%**

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY WORKLOAD INDICATORS

Construction Activity (75% of Dept.)

Before

- \$1.7 Billion/Year
- 79,000 Permits/Year

After

- \$3.0 Billion/Year
- 145,000 Permits/Year
(84% increase)

Code Enforcement (25% of Dept.)

Before

- No measurement
- 17,000 cases resolved per year

After

- New Code Enforcement Bureau
- 48,600 cases resolved per year
(over 185% increase)

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY

WORKLOAD INDICATORS (Cont'd)

Walk-in Customers

(over 400,000/yr)

Before

- Uncomfortable space
- Long stand-up lines
- Long 2-3 hour wait time
- Unfriendly atmosphere
- Many unhappy customers
- “Regulator” attitude

After

- One-Stop Service Centers
(Downtown, Van Nuys,
San Pedro, S.L.A., & W.L.A.)
- Median wait time of only
8 minutes
- 84% of customers served within
15 minutes
- 97% of customers served within
30 minutes
- Established Express Permits and
e-Permits
- Comfortable sit down counters
- “Can do”, “Facilitator” attitude

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY WORKLOAD INDICATORS (Cont'd)

Permit Issuance (over 145,000/yr)

Before

- Long 2-3 hour wait time
- Several return trips
- Many unhappy customers

After

- One-Stop Service Center
- Established Express Permits and e-Permits
- Established Money Back Guaranteed Permit
- Most permits issued within 30-60 minutes
- Customer Cold Calls

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY (Cont'd) (1996-1997 vs. 2003-2004)

Plan Check (over \$3.0 Billion/yr)

Before

- 50% within 6 weeks
- Up to 10 weeks wait time
- Several return trips

After

- Avg. 10 min. wait for express plan check
- Avg. 3 day wait for appointment plan check
- Avg. 10 day wait for most projects
- Customer Cold Calls

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY (Cont'd) (1996-1997 vs. 2003-2004)

Inspections (over 630,000/yr)

Before

- Up to 4-5 days wait time
- Several return trips

After

- 99.9% within 24 hours
- 100% within 48 hours
- Customer Cold Calls

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY (Cont'd) (1996-1997 vs. 2003-2004)

Code Enforcement (over 48,600 cases/yr)

Before

- No measurements
- Only 17,000 cases closed
- Many unhappy customers

After

- New Code Enforcement Bureau
- More than doubled number of cases closed annually
- 95% of inspections within 72 hours
- 82% of cases closed within 60 days
- Over 3,400 abandoned/nuisance buildings abated
- Over 1,200 “worst of the worst” buildings abated
- Neighborhood Focused, Regional Based

II. COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE OF LA DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY (Cont'd) (1996-1997 vs. 2003-2004)

Phone Customers (over 750,000/yr)

Before

- Over 100 phone numbers
- Long wait times, many transfers
- Many customers disconnected
- Many unhappy customers

After

- One toll-free number
(1-888- LA4BUILD)
- Avg. wait time of only 10 seconds
- 99% of calls answered within 2 minutes
- Quality Control Calls

III. INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

- Improved customer service, efficiency, and responsiveness
- Changed attitude from “Regulator” to “Facilitator”
- Created workload indicators and performance targets
- Monitored performance and hold staff accountable
- Created much improved Construction Services Center in the Metro, Van Nuys, San Pedro, South Los Angeles, and West Los Angeles Offices

III. INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (Cont'd)

- Created an award winning Customer Call Center with Toll Free number (888) LA4BUILD for all Department services
- Established better internal and external coordination and consistency
- Improved plan check and inspection turn-around
- Created a Code Enforcement Bureau to improve quality in life in neighborhoods
- Established uniformity of codes and interpretations in the region

III. INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (Cont'd)

- Monitored and improved customer service through cold calls, quality calls, and customer satisfaction surveys
- Increased number of code enforcement cases closed from 17,000 to over 48,600 annually
- Utilized technology and automation to enhance Department's performance

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS

Customer Call Center (CCC)

- Fully implemented CCC with toll-free number 888-LA4-BUILD or 311 (land line within the City limits)
- Replaces hundreds of individual phone numbers
- LADBS handles over 750,000 phone calls annually
- Customer calls are answered in an average of 10 seconds

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Automated Customer Queuing System (Q-Matic)

- LADBS serves over 400,000 walk-in customers annually
- Average wait time is less than 10 minutes
- PC-Based customer queuing system now installed at all four Construction Services Centers
- Reduces waiting time and customer anxiety
- Provides key statistical information for staffing/operational decisions

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Automated Inspection Request System (AIRS)

- LADBS performs over 630,000 inspections per year
- AIRS allows customers to request all construction inspections by phone 24/7
- Customers do not need to speak to live operators to request an inspection
- Reduces peak volume of calls to LADBS Customer Call Center
- Inspectors route sheet is automated so that requests for inspections are scheduled for the next business day for each inspector

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Inspection Callback Sub-system (ICBS)

- Automatically telephones customers who have requested “called” inspections
- The customer is given a “2 hour window” and other inspection confirmation information
- More inspection field time available for inspectors

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Plan Check and Inspection System (PCIS) Upgrades

- Now PCIS automates inspection route assignments, status and inspection results
- Electronic validation of data (parcel info, contractor and business licenses)
- Electronic clearance and fee calculation

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

e-Permits (Internet and fax)

- LADBS customers can now apply, pay for and obtain simple permits from their home or office by Internet or fax, allows LADBS customers to be on-line instead of in line
- Currently over 30,000 permits per year are being issued over the Internet
- Over 95,000 of our permits per year do not require plans (which potentially could qualify for e-Permit)
- This service can eliminate thousands of car trips and thousands of hours of customer time

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Internet Document Imaging System (IDIS)

- Project has started digital scanning of building records
- Will create Internet-ready access to index of records
- Will eliminate the need for thousands of customer trips
- Will perform back file (historical records) conversion as funds are available
- Provides access to Department documents through the Internet

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Code Enforcement Information System (CEIS)

- Combines computer hardware, software, and databases designed to track and report the Department's activities
- Gathers data on properties where the Department has received complaints and referrals on Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, and Zoning Code violations
- Generates reports on Code Enforcement activities and provides quick access to relevant information for inspectors and supervisors
- Automates the code enforcement complaint tracking process

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Residential Property Reports Automation (AUTORES)

- Web based application that allows the public and real estate companies to request and pay for a report showing legal use and easement via the Internet
- Used by LADBS and Public Works Engineering for research
- Automates the application, processing, and distribution of approximately 50,000 Residential Property Reports each year

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Equipment Upgrades

- Increased number of PC's in the Department from 300 to over 1125
- Issued over 550 cell phones to all Department inspectors and supervisors
- Upgraded over 900 PC's to Pentium II and higher

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

Information Bulletins Online

- LADBS consolidated and streamlined over 30 years worth of code interpretations, Rules of General Application, and technical bulletins into one easy to read format
- Information Bulletins are available on LADBS Internet (www.ladbs.org)

IV. TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION IMPROVEMENTS (Cont'd)

New LADBS Web Page

- Completely redesigned LADBS web page (www.ladbs.org)
- Allows simpler access to new e-services (e-Permit, zoning, forms, parcel profile reports)
- Can eliminate thousands of customer trips to our Zoning Counter
- Research reports are downloadable and a permit fee calculator is available

V. AWARDS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

RECENT AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS

- “BUILDING DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR” from California Building Officials (CALBO), March 1999
- Top 100, “INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AWARD” from Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2002-2003
- “BUILDING OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR” from California Building Officials (CALBO), March 2000
- “GRAND PRIZE FOR PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY” from Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, September 1999
- “TREASURE OF CENTRAL CITY ASSOCIATION” from Los Angeles Central City Association, January 2000
- “LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR – WEST REGION” from Building Industry Association, February 2000

V. AWARDS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

RECENT AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS (Cont'd)

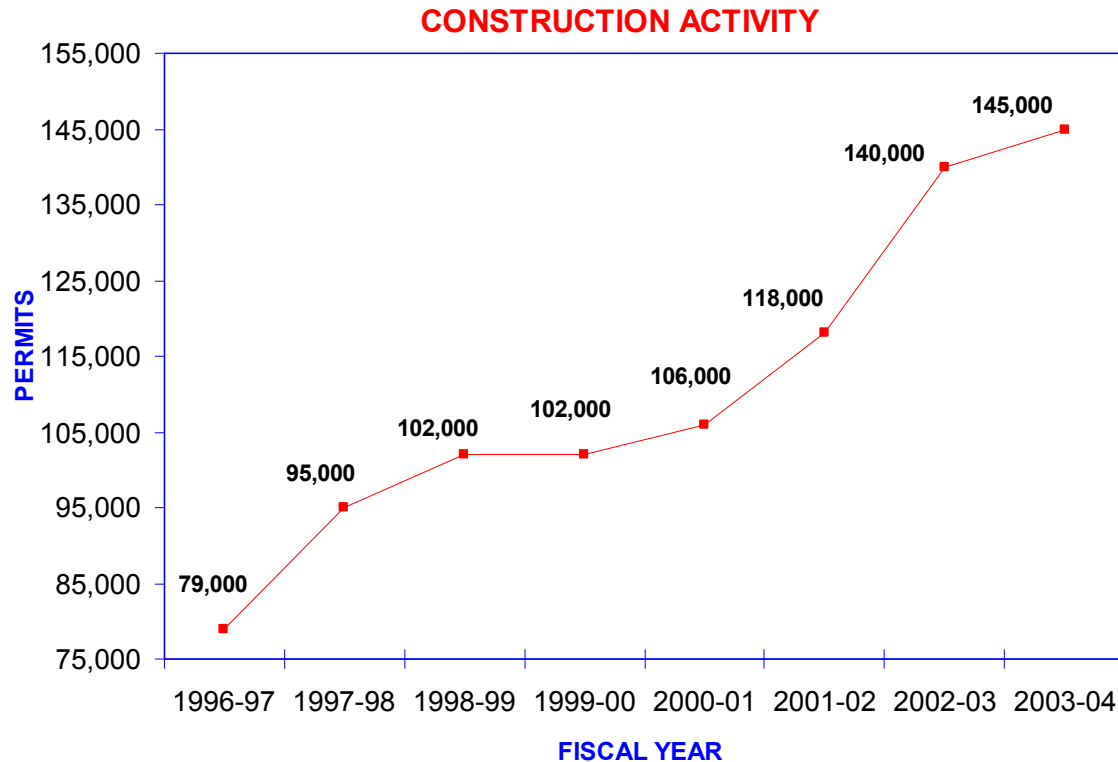
- “SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD” from Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and Construction Industry Awards Committee, October 2001
- “NATIONAL STREAMLINING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD” from National Conference of States on Building Codes & Standards, May 1999
- “ROSE AWARD” from Los Angeles Downtown Breakfast Club, April 1999
- “THE WESTSIDE PRIZE 2000” AND “THE WESTSIDE PRIZE 2002” from the Westside Urban Forum, June 2000 and June 2002
- “PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD” from Structural Engineers Association of Southern California, June 2000
- “AWARD FOR DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE LOS ANGELES REGIONAL UNIFORM CODE PROGRAM (LARUCP)” from Structural Engineers Association of Southern California, June 2003

V. AWARDS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

RECENT AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS (Cont'd)

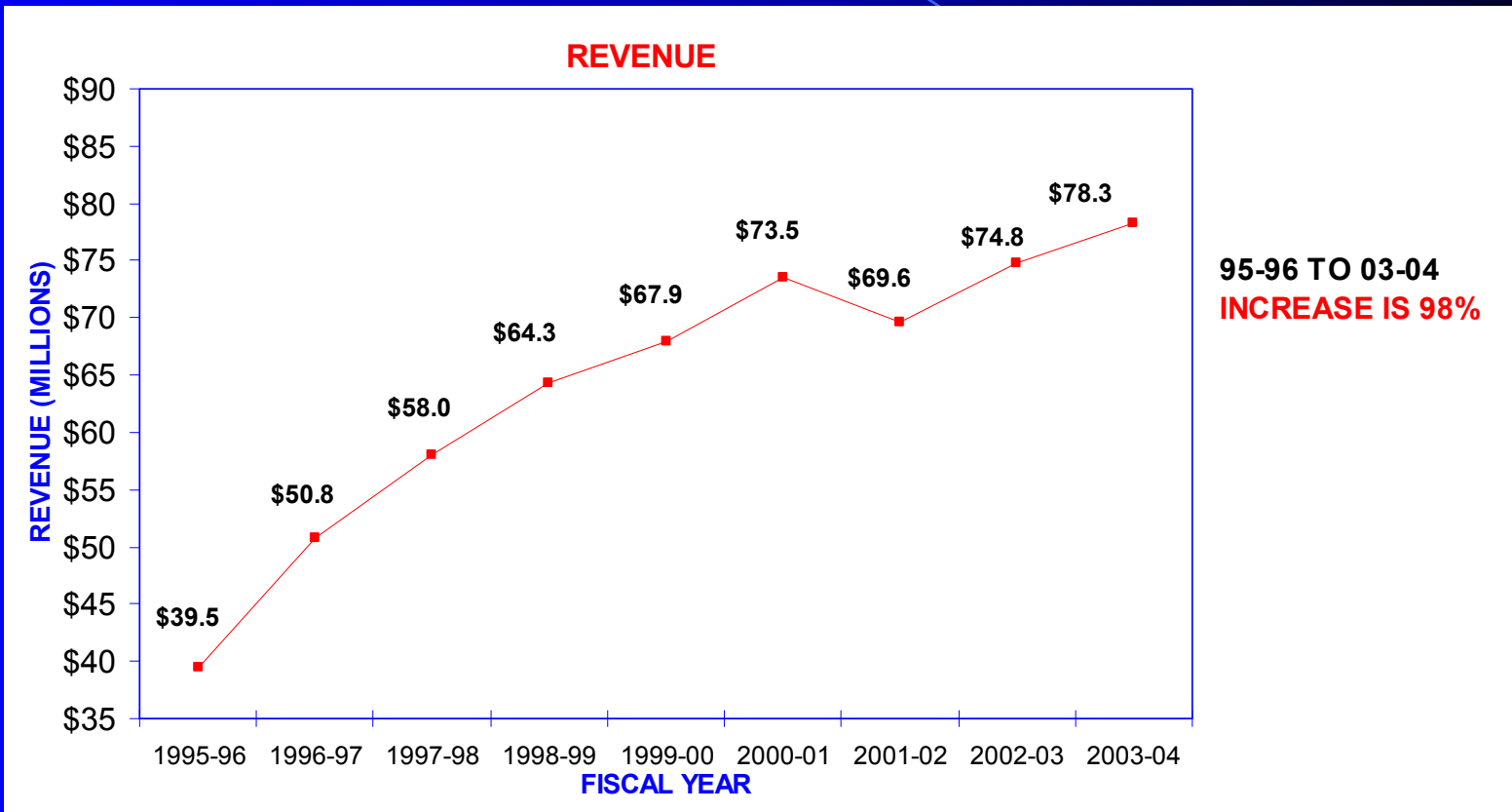
- “LEADERSHIP IN ENGINEERING FOR REVITALIZING KEY MUNICIPAL SERVICES” from Institute for Advancement of Engineering, February 2000
- “PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT AWARD” from City of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, & 2003, 13 Awards for: Customer Call Center, e-Permits, Streamlining Over-the-Counter Building Permit Process, Q-Matic Customer Queuing System, Code Enforcement Bureau, Proactive Code Enforcement Program, Los Angeles Regional Uniform Code Program, LADBS Information Bulletins Program, Automated Inspection Request System, Centralized Request for Inspections, Vacant Building Abatement Program, Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program, and Guaranteed & Responsive Customer Service

LADBS CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

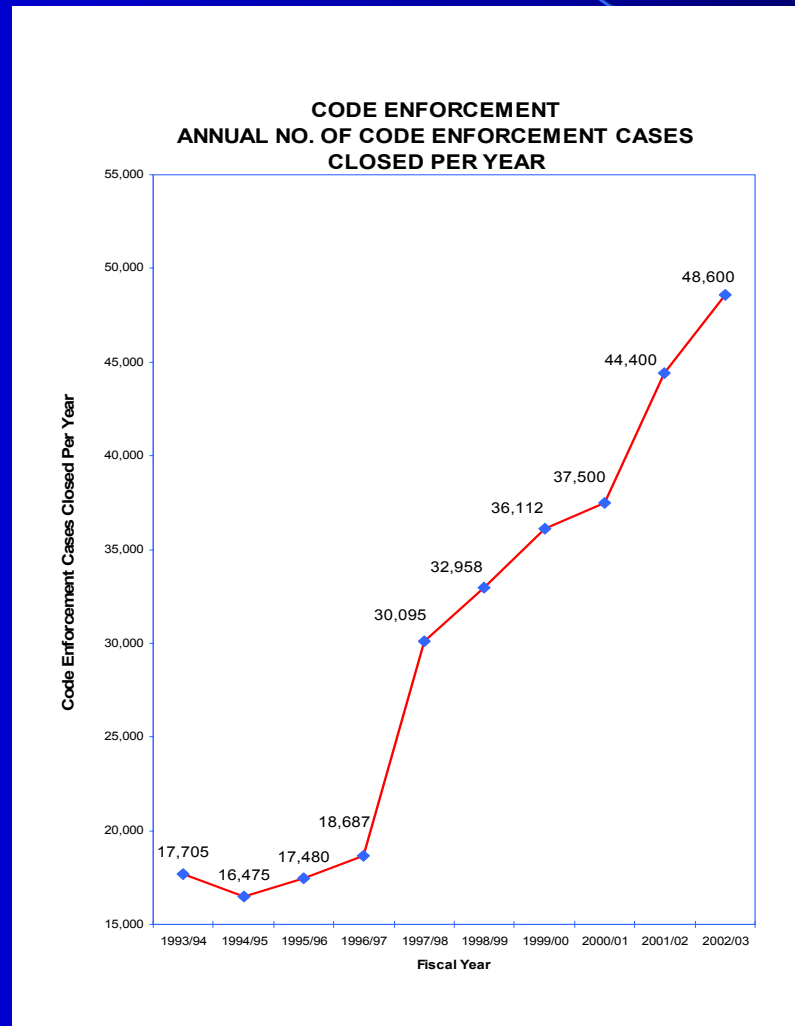


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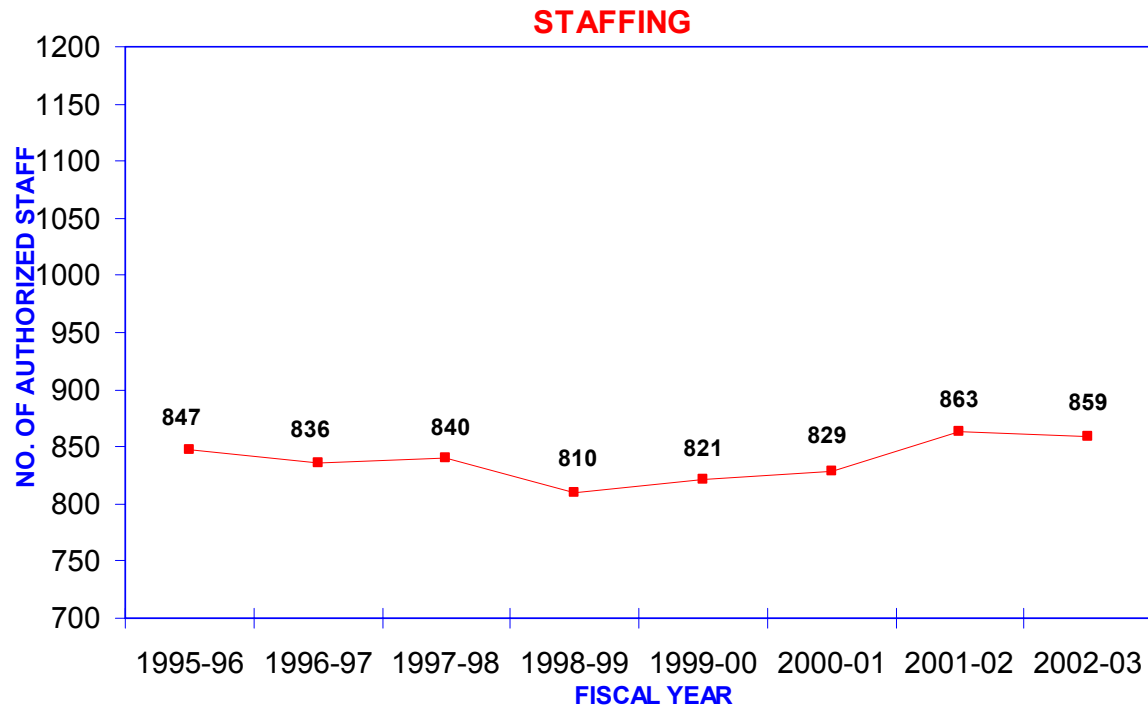
LADBS REVENUE



LADBS CODE ENFORCEMENT CASES CLOSED PER YEAR



LADBS STAFFING



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LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY



- **ALL SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE BY CALLING:**

311 (from a land line within the City of Los Angeles Limits)

Or

1-888-LA4BUILD (from within City or County of Los Angeles limits)

Or

1-213-482-0000 (from anywhere)