ADJOURNMENT IN THE MEMORY OF
GEORGE P. HEIDLER JR.

-OCTOBER 18, 2011-

Colleagues, I ask that we adjourn today’s meeting in memory George P. Heidler, Jr., of Villa Park, California, passed away on October 7, 2011.

George was CEO of Tom’s Truck Center, Inc.; Carmenita Truck Center; Suzuki & KIA Depots; and Reindeer Corporation.

George was born in Oak Park, Illinois on October 15, 1941. He grew up on a farm in Naperville, Illinois. After graduating from high school, he attended the University of Arizona in Tucson where he graduated with a degree in Business in 1964. While attending the University of Arizona, he met his wife, Shirlee.

George started out as a salesman for two major corporations, Exxon Company and General Telephone Directory Co. He watched and learned from those around him. For three years running he won the President’s Sales Award.

In 1972, George opened a Shell Service Station in the city of Orange, California. He expanded his business into a towing company, an auto center, and additional service stations. As the business grew, George continued to expand – this time into auto wrecking and truck repair.

Tom’s Truck Center, named for the tow and truck repair company George acquired in 1974, was launched in 1986. In 1993, the Isuzu and Nissan
Diesel Truck franchises were added to the business and in 1994, the GMC line. Over the next 16 years, Tom’s Truck Center would go on to win award after award for excellence in sales, parts, and service and eventually become Isuzu’s number one dealer in the U.S. and an Isuzu ‘Ichiban’ Award winner for 22 consecutive years. In 1995, the Mitsubishi franchise was added and he proudly participated in the Mitsubishi Dealer Council. The Hino line of commercial trucks was added in 2004.

In 2001, George acquired a Suzuki car dealership, adding Suzuki’s complete line of automobiles to the Santa Ana location as Suzuki Depot and in 2007, the Kia franchise was opened as Kia Depot. George was always open to opportunity and when the opportunity arose to purchase Carmenita Ford Truck Sales, who had once been a major competitor to Tom’s, George worked hard on the acquisition.

Along the way, George never stopped learning and giving back to the community. He stepped forward to lend his voice, support, and counsel when it came to organizing business and industry contributions to the community and local schools. George was active in various truck and automotive dealer councils and served on the Board of Directors of the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce and the Orange County Automobile Dealers Association.

George was a founding member of High School, Inc. which consists of 7 academies and is a school program that helps prepare students to enter the labor force with the skills to succeed. George believed in work force development for the students of Santa Ana and with this vision helped found High School Inc. For his work in the community and with the Chamber of
Commerce, George was named Large Businessman of the Year in Santa Ana for 2010. In 2011, The Automotive Transportation and Logistics Academy was renamed in George’s honor.

In addition to his pursuits in business, George loved to travel with friends and enjoyed working in his garden, growing vegetables to supply his family and friends. There were always chickens and a menagerie of animals on his ‘farm’. He derived great pleasure from taking groups of friends and family to Lake Havasu where it was always a challenge for him to keep all of the toys running. George and Shirlee had great times entertaining. Little did he know he would become better known for his annual Christmas Hayride than for being a businessman!

George was so proud of his businesses, his great employees and his family. He liked people and wanted them to succeed so he was always willing to share his experiences.

He will be greatly missed but we know his spirit will live on in our memories and the accomplishments he left behind.

He leaves behind his wife of 48 years, Shirlee, and children Jeff, Hayley, K.C., Doug, daughters-in-law Liz and Rosa and grandchildren Austin, Hayden, Tyson, Leah, Drake, Kiran and Vaughn and sister, Stephanie Loer.

I ask that you please keep George, Shirlee, and the entire Heidler family in your thoughts and prayers.

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