



SOCAL CONNECTED

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**KCET's Award-Winning Weekly Series 'SOCAL CONNECTED' Begins
May 14 at 8 p.m. with a New Format and Multimedia Production Team**

**Chapman University Joins Ahmanson Foundation and the MaddocksBrown
Foundation in Funding New Season**

BURBANK, CA – April 30, 2014 - KCET's award-winning signature series, [SOCAL CONNECTED](#), returns for a sixth season with a new look, format and group of reporters who will cover eclectic, smart and informative stories about Southern California. This season marks the launch of a dynamic collaboration between digital and television journalists to achieve greater impact and community engagement.

Debuting on May 14, 2014, **SOCAL CONNECTED** will be a weekly half-hour series airing each Wednesday at 8 p.m., (repeated on Fridays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 6:30 p.m.) anchored by 15-time Emmy-award winner, Val Zavala.

The new format marks a major change from the previous seasons by taking **SOCAL CONNECTED** out of the studio and into the community. The series will emphasize coverage of the environment, health, government and local arts and culture. The creation of a multimedia production team with television journalists working in tandem with web producers will maximize the audience experience and develop deeper community connections.

In addition, Chapman University, one of California's oldest and most respected private universities, joins The Ahmanson Foundation and the MaddocksBrown Foundation as a major funder for the new season with a \$200,000 gift. "We are grateful to Chapman University for their generous support of this breakthrough season," said Mary Mazur, Chief Operating Officer, KCETLink. "With a multi-faceted, multimedia team in place, our 6th season of **SOCAL CONNECTED** builds on its history to provide an immersive, interactive community experience, and create a broader dialogue around local issues and ideas. This further extends our ongoing organizational strategy of becoming more platform agnostic while underscoring the issues of greatest importance to the communities we serve."

Val Zavala, the newly named executive producer for the series, said, "I am looking forward to offering our viewers a wider fare that includes not just in-depth hard news stories, but also features on innovative problem-solvers, artists, interesting places, music and food culture. At the end of each program, viewers will have discovered more reasons to love Southern California."

Zach Behrens, KCET's digital Editor-in-Chief and the series multimedia executive producer, added: "This season, viewers will start to experience a full digital integration with **SOCAL CONNECTED**. The ideal story process for new segments will begin online with stories and community engagement, which in turn will shape the on-air reports."

Some of the initial features on **SOCAL CONNECTED** will include:

- "Breathing Uneasy." It is one of the largest infrastructure projects in the nation: the expansion of the 710 Freeway between Long Beach and the 60 Freeway. Why is it needed and how will it impact the health of nearby families?
- "The Lawn Goodbye." With a severe drought upon us Gov. Jerry Brown has issued an executive order urging homeowners to cut down on lawn watering. Brown also said recently, "It may well be that cactus and lizards take the place of rosebushes and lawns." What will happen to our yards? In the future will our kids have grass to play on? **SOCAL CONNECTED** visits one neighborhood where more than 40 families have gotten ahead of the drought by ripping out their lawns.
- "The \$1.00 House." Why would a grown man move back in with his mother in order to rent out his own lovely Spanish home for only a dollar a month?
- "Fishing for the Truth." Do you know what you're getting when you buy fish? One consumer watchdog group found more than half of all fish sold in Southern California is mislabeled. Should we go to the docks where fresh fish is an option? Would you want to eat it?
- "Betting on Plastic." In Riverside County, an entrepreneur has built the largest plastic bottle recycling plant in the country. Bottles are washed, chopped, dried, melted and turned into useable pellets. Find out what happens next
- "Crazy Contraption." This pedal-powered dining table glides down L.A. streets drawing attention everywhere it goes. We meet the creative artist/engineer behind "A Moveable Feast."
- "Art on the Wind." One day a year artists gather on Santa Monica Beach to launch their creations high overhead. We capture the beauty of this gallery in the sky.

On-camera contributors to the new **SOCAL CONNECTED** include science correspondent Cara Santa Maria, reporters Derrick Shore and Jennifer Sabih, documentary filmmaker Nic Cha Kim and writer Nick Hardcastle.

The television broadcast executive producer for **SOICAL CONNECTED** is Val Zavala; digital executive producer, Zach Behrens; and Linda Burns, senior producer.

ABOUT SOICAL CONNECTED

SoCal Connected, winner of a Peabody and two duPont Awards, 20 Emmy® Awards, 24 Golden Mikes, 47 LA Press Club Awards, two Gracie Awards, and three regional Edward R. Murrow Awards, including Best News Documentary and Los Angeles Magazine's "Best New Local TV Program" of 2009, airs exclusively on KCET. For more information, to view episodes online or to leave comments, please visit www.socalconnected.org. *SoCal Connected* is made possible through the generous support of The Ahmanson Foundation, Chapman University and the MaddocksBrown Foundation. KCET, the nation's largest independent public television station serving Southern and Central California,

ABOUT KCET

On-air, online and in the community, KCET plays a vital role in the cultural and educational enrichment of Southern and Central California. KCET offers a wide range of award-winning local programming as well as the finest public television programs from around the world. Throughout its 50-year history, KCET has won hundreds of major awards for its local and regional news and public affairs programming, its national drama and documentary productions, its quality educational family and children's programs, its outreach and community services and its website, kcet.org. KCET is a donor-supported community institution. For additional information about KCET productions, web-exclusive content, programming schedules and community events, please visit kcet.org. KCET is a service of KCETLink.