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**The President's American Recovery & Reinvestment Act:
What We Don't Know, Can Hurt Us
Between The Lines**

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One of the first things President Barack Obama did as Chief Executive of our nation was to urge Congress to pass, than sign, the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA), better known as the nation's "economic stimulus" package. The \$787 billion dollar bill, the largest taxpayer footed bill ever passed, was viewed as the primary vehicle to stop the free fall of the economy.

What many people don't know is this money is already on the street as states and local communities line up to be the first to stimulate their state and local economies. Budget shortfalls for state and local governments are real and most are looking to the federal government in ways that they never have before. California and Los Angeles has already received the first hits (installments) of stimulus money for what are called "shovel ready" projects.

However, if you don't know how to access these projects, you will be waiting for a shovel that never comes your way. Like Reaganomics' and its "trickle down" theory, the folks most in need of economic stimulation may never taste the trickle. Same case here. There's a saying what you don't know, can't hurt you. That's just not the case when it comes to emergency economic relief and economic stimulus projects. Don't sleep this.

Shovel ready projects are building, highways and other infra-structure systems that are ready to break ground and start immediately. Construction projects tend to have to jump under this shovel ready definition. But what people don't know, is because of the urgency in getting people back to work and getting the money in the economy - most of the contracts for projects built from stimulus money will be "no-bid" contracts and short bid contracts, meaning selection will be quick and limited. As a point reference, just think "Haliburton" and you get the picture. Haliburton, the company Dick Cheney ran and held significant stock in, before and during his Vice Presidency, got almost all

of the infra-structure security and rebuilding contracts for the Iraqi war, estimated in the hundreds of *billions* of dollars.

Barack Obama serves in five simultaneous roles as President of the United States, each with a distinctly powerful influence on how government operates. Of course, we're most familiar with "Commander in Chief," which heads our armed forces but also determinates where we deploy troops and resources. As Chief Diplomat, he determines what countries we recognize (diplomatic recognition gives Americans rights to travel abroad with diplomatic immunity protection and establishes trade policies with countries given recognition).

As Head of State, President Obama is the face of the nation in times of accomplishment and tragedy as the country looks to the President for direction.

As Chief Legislator, the President influences what legislation is of priority to his administration, and Mr. Obama has proven effective in his power of presidential persuasion. But as Chief Executive, he runs the government on a day to day basis, he appoints people to oversee his executive priorities, he issues executive orders (laws and policies that take effect in the absence of Congressional legislation) that make things happen immediately - one of which is getting this stimulus money on the streets and into the pockets of Main Street (not Wall Street). Next thing you know, buildings are going up, highways are being fixed, bridges are being repaired and you're sitting by the television asking the question, "why am I not working."

It's because those who know are working and those who are not either don't know or are waiting for economic stimulus package to knock on their door, and as the late comedian Robin Harris once shout, "JOB." Those looking to be stimulated by the economy will have to get out and look for it. It will not come looking for you. There are town hall meetings taking place all around the country, helping people plug in to the ARRA stimulus activity. In Los Angeles, one is being held on Saturday, May 9th, 2009 at 10 a.m. at the City of Refuge, 14527 S. San Pedro Street in Gardena, California. Folk really need to get out and find out the whats, wheres and hows as it relates to the stimulus package. What you don't know can, and will, hurt you in this economy.

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