

Sent to: 'huell@calgold.com'

Subject: More blog entries

[Huell Howser, enemy of historic preservation](#)

Tuesday, July 22nd, 2008 by Steven Greenhut

One would think that Huell Howser, the renowned TV host of California Gold, would be an advocate for preserving the state's historic treasures. Unfortunately, in agreeing to do a 14-part PR series for government redevelopment agencies, Howser is supporting those who actively bulldoze California's history. Check out downtown Anaheim. That's a trick question. There really isn't much of a downtown Anaheim after the city's redevelopment agency bulldozed in in the 1970s. Go to that joke of a "downtown" called Brea, where the city bulldozed the old downtown to make way for a ridiculous outdoor shopping mall funded by hundreds of millions of dollars of redevelopment debt. Go to Santa Ana, where the city's redevelopment agency wants to replace historic single-family neighborhoods and cool old buildings with cookie-cutter condos and chain stores. Go to Placentia, where the city has tried to destroy its old downtown. Fullerton has a nice historic downtown because the redevelopment agency had a hands-off approach. In Yorba Linda, the city tried to destroy its Old Town and hand development rights to an LA developer. It's still there because the city was stopped in its plans.

Urban author Jane Jacobs wrote that "new ideas need old buildings." But redevelopment agencies — in their zeal for more tax dollars to fund bigger city bureaucracies — are so quick to knock down anything old that such ideas never get going. Yet Howser will be touring the urban renewal sites and telling the public how wonderful these government-subsidized projects are. If Howser really cares about the average Californian or about the state's precious architectural history, he needs to talk to victims of redevelopment and show pictures of the state's lost history ... not do PR for those who use government power to destroy things and subsidize politically well-connected developers.

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[Huell Howser sells out](#)

Tuesday, July 22nd, 2008 by Steven Greenhut

I've always admired public TV host Huell Howser for his ability to capture the aw-shucks wonder of this beautiful state as he takes viewers on tours of backwater spots in his [California Gold](#) series. He doesn't seem to have an agenda, and Howser takes on a certain "little guy" approach to the world. But now Howser has agreed to host a 14-part series that is nothing short of hard-core propaganda for one of the most nefarious organizations in the state — the California Redevelopment Association.

According to a CRA statement, "The series presents an opportunity for us to tell the redevelopment story in a compelling and intimate way. Huell and his crew will be visiting redevelopment projects in cities and counties throughout California that demonstrate inspiring, positive elements of redevelopment efforts."

How outrageous, especially since this will be on taxpayer-funded TV and the program is funded by a group that gets its funds from government agencies.

CRA is the state's biggest proponent of eminent-domain abuse and regulatory takings, and its agencies actively drive people off their property so that the land can be handed over for pennies on the dollar to big developers. Howser will be shilling for these corporate-welfare projects but will ignore the people whose lives have been disrupted or even destroyed by them.

Howser will be doing PR for those who drive poor, minorities, small business owners and others out of their homes and businesses at the behest of government bureaucracies working in tandem with Armani-suit-wearing developers who like the freebies.

What's next now that Howser is in the PR business for bad guys?

Howser is a fraud.

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As you may know, CRA is launching an exciting new public television series in the fall, *California's Communities*, to be hosted and produced by Huell Howser of Huell Howser Productions and KCET Television in Los Angeles. Shooting for the 14-segment series will begin in July and will continue throughout the year, with the first episodes scheduled to be broadcast in September.

This series presents an opportunity for us to tell the redevelopment story in a compelling and intimate way. Huell and his crew will be visiting redevelopment projects in cities and counties throughout California that demonstrate inspiring, positive elements of redevelopment efforts.

CRA's Marketing and Publications Committee worked with Huell to identify the following themes for the first several episodes: town centers, housing the homeless, historic preservation, brownfield redevelopment, and sustainable development. Art & culture and affordable housing will be the themes for two one-hour long segments.

The stars of the show are going to be the projects and programs that you have brought to your community through redevelopment. If you have excellent examples in one or more of these

themes, please submit them to us by Friday, June 27. We will be requesting proposals for other themes of future episodes in the next several months.

To be considered, you need to provide a brief description of the completed project, contact person information, and two photographs – a before and an after photo of the project.

To understand how your project exemplifies the value of redevelopment, there are a few questions to answer as follows:

- How did the project contribute to reversal of the community's decay?
- What part did the project play in the revitalization of the community?
- How has the community changed and benefited because of the project?

You are welcome to submit more than one project.

A form for members to submit redevelopment examples can be downloaded by clicking [here](#), or it can be downloaded from our website at www.calredevelop.org by clicking on *California's Communities with Huell Howser*. Completed forms can be emailed to Tom Hart at thart@calredevelop.org or by fax at (916) 448-9397.

Keep in mind this is television--your examples need to be visually compelling. Huell will need to be able to talk to people who are responsible for the programs or projects as well as community partners and/or the project's beneficiaries. (No acting experience is needed!)

Don't wait; send us your redevelopment stories and ideas that exemplify redevelopment in California today! For further information, contact Tom Hart by email at thart@calredevelop.org or by telephone at (916) 448-8760.

We look forward to hearing from you!