

# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

## ERMICO ENTERPRISES, INC.

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-033  
*Business Name:* Ermico Enterprises, Inc.  
*Business Address:* 120 Mississippi Street  
*District:* District 10  
*Applicant:* Gwynned Vitello  
*Nomination Date:* October 17, 2017  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Malia Cohen  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Ermico Enterprises is a metal casting foundry that manufactures metal trucks and bearings, two key components of skateboards. The business revolutionized the skateboard industry beginning in 1976 when its founders, Fausto Vitello and Eric Swanson, invented a skateboard truck with independent suspension. Ermico Enterprises has since become known for its skateboard products and is considered an international leader in the industry. Through a corporate partnership, the company remains under the ownership of the two original families that founded it. Its mission has also remained the same over the years: "To serve skateboarding by creating the best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out, be active, and roll!"

Located in the Potrero Hill neighborhood, the company has grown to include a skateboarding publication called Thrasher magazine, a media company called High Speed Productions, and a clothing line called Namesake clothing. Today the enterprise employs over 100 people. Its products have been featured in action sport tradeshows and numerous trade publications such as Skateboarder magazine, Transworld Magazine, Concrete Wave Magazine, the Skateboard Mag, and Juice Magazine. Young people make up a significant portion of the company's customer base and constituency. Ermico Enterprises has expressed a commitment to maintaining a widespread presence in brick and mortar stores throughout the United States, which serve as hubs of skater culture in San Francisco and across the nation, particularly for young people. Ermico Enterprises is proud to have contributed to the development of San Francisco as the capital of skateboarding culture in Northern California through its skateboard products, fashion, and popular magazine.

### CRITERION 1: Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1434 Yosemite Street from 1976 to 1978 (2 years).  
Hunter's Point Shipyard from 1978 to 2006 (28 years).  
120 Mississippi Street from 2006 to Present (11 years).





SAN FRANCISCO

## OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS  
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

### **CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?**

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the skateboard culture's history and identity.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- Ermico Enterprises, Inc. is associated with the craft of skateboard truck and bearing manufacturing.
- Ermico Enterprises, Inc. has contributed to the development of skateboard culture in San Francisco, Northern California, and beyond.
- The property in which the business is located has been previously evaluated by the Planning Department for potential historical significance and was found not to be historically significant. It is considered a "Category C" property for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
  - SF Gate, 6/22/2011, "Eric Swenson, skateboard business icon, dies," by Henry K. Lee.
  - SurfKY News, 8/20/2017, "Pro Skaters Perform at Madisonville's Total Eclipse of the Park," by Tammy Holloway.

### **CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, Ermico Enterprises, Inc. is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define its craft of skateboard truck and bearing manufacturing.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Ermico Enterprises, Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Manufacturing of skateboard products.
- Commitment to creating best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out and be active.
- Commitment to maintaining a presence in brick and mortar stores.
- Independently owned and operated business model.
- Presence in San Francisco.

### **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Manufacturing of skateboard products.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Ermico Enterprises, Inc. currently located at 120 Mississippi Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.





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REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

Richard Kurylo, Manager  
Legacy Business Program



# Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

ERMICO ENTERPRISES, INC.

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-033  
*Business Name:* Ermico Enterprises, Inc.  
*Business Address:* 120 Mississippi Street  
*District:* District 10  
*Applicant:* Gwynned Vitello  
*Nomination Date:* October 17, 2017  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Malia Cohen  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

## ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR ERMICO ENTERPRISES, INC. CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 120 MISSISSIPPI STREET.

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 25, 2017, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





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OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Ermico Enterprises, Inc. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Ermico Enterprises, Inc.:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Manufacturing of skateboard products.
Commitment to creating best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out and be active.
Commitment to maintaining a presence in brick and mortar stores.
Independently owned and operated business model.
Presence in San Francisco.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Ermico Enterprises, Inc. on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Manufacturing of skateboard products.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 25, 2017.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

- Ayes -
Nays -
Abstained -
Absent -





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS  
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy  
Business  
Registry**

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2016-17-033  
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*District:* District 10  
*Applicant:* Gwynned Vitello  
*Nomination Date:* October 17, 2017  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Malia Cohen

**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?  Yes  No

1434 Yosemite Street from 1976 to 1978 (2 years).  
Hunter's Point Shipyard from 1978 to 2006 (28 years).  
120 Mississippi Street from 2006 to Present (11 years).

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?  Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?  Yes  No

**NOTES:** NA

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** August 21, 2017

Richard Kurylo  
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors  
District 10



City and County of San Francisco

**MALIA COHEN**  
**馬莉亞郭嫻**

October 17, 2016

Regina Dick-Endrizzi  
Office of Small Business  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Nomination of Ermico Enterprises to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi,

I am writing to nominate Ermico Enterprises to the Legacy Business Registry. Founded in 1976, Ermico Enterprises is metal casting foundry that manufactures the metal trucks and bearings that are key components of skateboards.

Ermico was originally housed at the Bayview Hunters Point Shipyard and in 2006, moved its operation to the Potrero Hill neighborhood at 17<sup>th</sup> and Mississippi Streets. The company currently employs over 100 employees, many of whom live in San Francisco.

Ermico, along with its partner companies Thrasher and Deluxe, is a critical part of skateboarding culture in San Francisco and has drew many skater to our City. This business plays an essential role in the lasting and massive identity and subculture of skateboarding, and it is my honor to nominate Ermico Enterprises to become a part of San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Malia Cohen".

Malia Cohen  
Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

## Section One:

### Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
Ermico Enterprises, Inc.		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</b>		
Gwynned Vitello Rebekah Engel Linda McKay Tony Vitello		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
120 Mississippi Street San Francisco, CA 94107		((415))822-6776
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		gwynn@hsproductions.com
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
		<a href="https://www.yelp.com/biz/ermico-enterprises-san-francisco">https://www.yelp.com/biz/ermico-enterprises-san-francisco</a>

<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>		
Gwynned Vitello	<input type="checkbox"/>	Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>		
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
P.O. Box 885403 San Francisco, CA 94188		(415)671-2427
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		gwynn@hsproductions.com
<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>		<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
0099202		

<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>	
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>	<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>
Supervisor Malia Cohen	October 17, 2016

## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1434 Yosemite Street	94124	1976
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1976-1978	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
Hunters Point Shipyard	94134	Start: 1978
		End: 2006

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
120 Mississippi Street	94107	Start: 2006
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

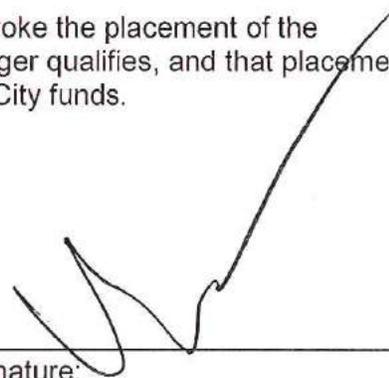
- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Gwynned Vitello

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:



## **ERMICO ENTERPRISES**

### **Section 4: Written Historical Narrative**

#### **CRITERION 1**

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

Ermico Enterprises was established 41 years ago in 1976 by San Franciscans Fausto Vitello and Eric Swanson. Fiercely loyal to San Francisco, Ermico Enterprises is committed to being a positive member of the San Francisco community. Its mission is to serve skateboarding by creating the best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out, be active and roll! Our products are the standard of the industry and, year after year, remain the top performers in all categories. Ermico Enterprises is internationally known and respected as one of the most authentic and genuine skateboarding companies from its beginnings to the present.

Ermico Enterprises traces its origins back to the spring of 1976, when craft unions with the City and County of San Francisco went on strike. My husband Fausto Vitello, who maintained the Police Department motorcycles, suddenly had time to hang out with some of his old high school friends who still started their mornings with surfing at Ocean Beach and breakfast at Seal Rock Inn. Fausto met a kid named Alden Kaiokakau who demonstrated his skill on a skateboard, and surmised that maneuverability could be improved. Fausto called his friend Eric Swenson who had worked with him on professional motorcycles, and together they developed a skateboard truck with independent suspension that revolutionized the industry. By end of the year, after learning about foundries from library books, they had set up Ermico Enterprises as a small machine shop on Yosemite Street where they started the number one truck in the industry, Independent.

When more space was needed, they moved the foundry into a big facility in the Bayview Hunters Point Shipyard; then in 2006 to the current building at 17th and Mississippi, where 103 are currently employed. Facility equipment includes a wet dust collection system, water treatment unit, automated axle nut assembly machines automated baseplate drilling machine, permanent mold tilt casting machines, melting furnaces, cryogenic deflasher, heat treatment pit furnaces, walking-in powder-coating ovens, and 6 station Printex pad print machines.

When the recession hit in the early 1980s, Fausto and Eric decided their products needed a boost. They accomplished that with the 1981 establishment of High Speed Productions and the publication of Thrasher magazine, which came to be known as the Bible of Skateboarding, laying it out at the Shipyard and printing it in Clear Lake. Forty employees now work at the media company at 1303 Underwood Avenue. Namesake clothing is worn by skaters

everywhere, as well as celebrities. Juxtapoz, the bestselling art magazine on the market, is also published in the building. A leased warehouse at 1351 Underwood Ave. ships Thrasher product.

Thrasher and Ermico drew many skaters to San Francisco who considered it the mecca of skateboarding due to the presence of those entities. They had ideas for improvements and enhancements for their sport. Under Fausto and Eric's guidance, they started their own companies in 1987 under the umbrella of Deluxe. Also operating at the 17th Street address, it has 45 employees and distributes Spitfire Wheels, Venture and Thunder trucks, Anti-Hero, Krooked and Real boards, as well as Supercush Bushings. DLXSF retail at 1831 Market Street has three employees.

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

Ermico has never ceased operations in San Francisco.

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

Ermico Enterprises is a family-owned business owned and operated by two families in a corporate partnership. The founders, Fausto Vitello and Eric Swenson opened the business Spring 1976 and together they developed a skateboard truck with independent suspension that revolutionized the industry. By end of the year, after learning about foundries from library books, they had set up Ermico Enterprises as a small machine shop on Yosemite Street where they started the primary truck manufacturer in the industry, Independent. When more space was needed they moved the foundry into a big facility in the Bayview Hunters Point Shipyard; then in 2006 to the current building at 17th and Mississippi, where 103 are currently employed.

Fausto passed in 2006, leaving his shares to me, Gwynned Vitello, later joined later by our son Tony Vitello, who lives in Miraloma Park. Eric died in 2011, leaving his shares to wife Linda McKay whose home is on Potrero Hill and sister Rebekah Engel who lives in the Portola District. All of us, born in San Francisco, want to maintain that legacy of homegrown, which is ingrained and recognized in our products.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

Ermico Enterprises has been a family-owned business since its inception in 1976, currently owned by the widow and son of founder Fausto Vitello, and widow and sister of Eric Swenson.

## **CRITERION 2**

### **a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

We are rooted in San Francisco and are committed to remaining here. The company will do its best to absorb rising rents, wage increases and growing commute times for its many employees in order to remain in the city.

### **b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

As the premier skateboard truck and bearing manufacturer in the United States, Ermico Enterprises products are featured numerous action sport tradeshows including the multi-city national trade show, Agenda, and international trade show, Bright, in Germany.

### **c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

Ermico has been mentioned in numerous media including: the San Francisco Chronicle, the Stanford Daily, and Exploratorium, and its products have been featured in numerous trade publications such as Thrasher Magazine (a major industry publication), Skateboarder Magazine, Transworld Magazine, Concrete Wave Magazine, The Skateboard Mag, and Juice Magazine.

### **d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

Fausto Vitello and Eric Swenson were well-known in the skateboarding industry. When Fausto died in 2006, it was noted in both Time Magazine and Sports Illustrated. Both Fausto and Eric were pioneers who revolutionized product design in skateboarding, considered a cornerstone to this day. One would be hard pressed to find two more significant people in the development and popularization of the sport.

### **e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

For Ermico Enterprises, supporting skateboarding does not stop at making quality products. Ermico (through its distributors Deluxe and NHS) globally sponsor hundreds of skateboarders, from the top professionals in the world to local kids who need a start in the sport. The business helps them achieve their goals and attain the best from their efforts.

Skateboarding is a positive outlet for youth of all abilities and backgrounds. Skateboarding offers a very low barrier of entry, offering comradery and challenges. That core understanding resonates through much of what we do locally and internationally. Through our Give Back initiatives, we have been able to assist with fundraising for local skate parks, nonprofit skate groups and local hospitals. With product support as well as providing equipment to and

sponsoring athletes, we help local after-school skate programs, as well as San Francisco's nonprofit Skate Club.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

At its core, Ermico Enterprises serves our youth. Young people use our products. We don't take that lightly and feel a responsibility to use our platform and what we have built to serve that community. Ermico works to do things to inspire kids to go outdoors and express themselves. Through skateboarding, kids learn that applying oneself and failure are a part of learning. Skateboarding does not discriminate. Any youth of any color, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, physical stature, etc. can step on a skateboard and be part of an accepting culture. We serve that community, and our community is the future.

San Francisco is a known destination for skateboarders. Not only is it the home of our sister-company, Thrasher magazine, the number one media title in skateboarding, it is a destination for those visiting the city. Our doors are open to visitors from around the world, 8:00 until 4:30 Monday through Friday.

Northern California skateboarding is rooted in San Francisco. The natural terrain of the hills has been a beacon for skaters from around the world for generations. Three of the original and, still to this day, industry-leading skateboard suspension systems (known as trucks) were designed by Ermico Enterprises.

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

The warehouse in which Ermico Enterprises is located is not a culturally or historically significant building.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

Surrounded by tech companies, the machines and machinists at Ermico Enterprises persist. As it gets harder and harder for businesses like ours to stay in San Francisco, we wear our address as a badge of honor. From the support of countless grass roots programs to sponsoring skateboarders around the world, a shutdown of our business would be felt at home and around the globe.

San Francisco is currently in the midst of an unprecedented rise in rents for businesses occupying all types of space, including residential, commercial, and industrial or PDR (Production, Distribution, and Repair) space. For many San Franciscans, PDR businesses like Ermico are a main source of jobs in the industrial sector and many have been fighting to stay in the City due to rising rents. Ermico employs 103 people, many of whom are San Franciscans at its Potrero Hill foundry. If the business were to relocate outside of the City, many of these San

Franciscans would be forced to find work elsewhere. Therefore, it is imperative that PDR businesses such as Ermico remain in San Francisco in order to keep a vibrant and diverse local economy.

### **CRITERION 3**

#### **a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

Ermico, established 41 years ago and founded by two San Francisco natives, remains independently owned and operated. Fiercely loyal to San Francisco, Ermico is committed to being a positive member of the San Francisco community. Its mission is to serve skateboarding by creating the best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out and be active. Our products are the standard of the industry, and year after year, remain the top performers in all categories, internationally known and respected as one of the most authentic and genuine skateboarding companies from its beginnings to the present.

We are firmly committed to maintaining a presence in brick and mortar stores in the U.S. and abroad. A key aspect of our business philosophy is that small, local retail stores are the backbones of their communities, but need support to thrive. In skateboarding, these independent stores are the "hubs" for their local skateboard scenes. The benefits these shops have on their local communities are invaluable, and we have diligently worked to help and support these retailers, and the more we can do to support them, the more we help all those communities.

We are also known for treating our employees with respect and enjoy a low turnover rate with most being with us over 10 years.

#### **b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

We have built a history of working hard to make a difference, and that means more than making quality and quantity. We value the platform we have built and believe that skateboarding can change lives. Skateboarding can teach kids that falling is learning, and that what is important is to always get back up and try again. It is a positive outlet when there are no many negative things kids can do with free time.

We are committed to using this powerful platform to be a positive force in the sport; one that believes it can affect change for so many regardless of height, weight, sexual identity - or even age. This qualifies as a tradition worth keeping. Our business model is built around making great products while working to put back into the community. We are rooted in San Francisco, and that is widely recognized in action supports culture. We are committed to remaining here, despite rising rents and growing commute times for some employees.

While many competitors have transitioned to selling only to large chains and big box stores, and while we certainly engage with them, the smaller businesses are our first priority. We strive to hire locally and our employees live in San Francisco and local areas.

San Francisco is a known destination for skateboarders. Not only is it the home of our sister-company, Thrasher magazine, the number one media title in skateboarding, it is a destination for those visiting the City. Our doors are open to visitors from around the world, 8:00 until 4:30 Monday through Friday.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

Ermico Enterprises is committed to maintaining the core physical feature and tradition that defines the business: skateboard truck and bearing manufacturing.

The location at 1111 17th Street is centrally located and easy to access for both employees and visitors. The building may look like a basic warehouse, but inside it is designed to be an open, creative and youthful workspace. Samples of Ermico products, framed art and photos are hung throughout the space. Since we have visitors from all over the world, we have worked to make the interiors of 17th Street a place that inspires and energizes.

The building is in a live/work area of Potrero Hill, and we value and respect our neighbors. The business is diligent about nurturing a positive atmosphere in the neighborhood. We hire a staff that prides itself on keeping the area and building clean and maintained.

## **ERMICO ENTERPRISES**

### **Written Historical Narrative: Supplemental**

#### **Ermico Enterprises Born of a Labor Strike**

Ermico Enterprises owes its existence to a labor strike.

Defying an injunction, municipal craft workers in San Francisco went on strike on March 31, 1976, in an attempt to reverse salary reductions that had been ordered by the Board of Supervisors. The municipal strikers – including gardeners, laborers, plumbers and electricians – were seeking to maintain their pay at the same hourly scales as those paid in the private sector. A pay parity formula was repealed 2 to 1 by the voters in November 1975. With the formula repealed, the Supervisors voted to cut the salaries of about 1,900 craft workers while providing modest raises for other City employees. This led the craft unions to call a strike.

At that time, Fausto Vitello was a municipal worker who maintained the Police Department motorcycles. While on strike, Fausto met Alden Kaiokakau who demonstrated his skill on a skateboard and surmised that maneuverability could be improved. Fausto called his friend, Eric Swenson, who had worked with him on professional motorcycles, and together they developed a skateboard truck with independent suspension that revolutionized the industry. Ermico Enterprises was born.

#### **Labor Strike Affects Ermico Enterprises**

Eleven years later, in 1987, Ermico Enterprises was affected by another strike. This one was a strike by several of their own employees.

Reportedly, some workers complained of low salaries and not enough employee benefits. At the time, Ermico Enterprises was a start-up business that survived on a bare bones budget. The owner himself, Fausto, did not take home a salary for years. The company admittedly offered entry-level manufacturing jobs to folks who often did not have English-language or technical skills. The strikers were mostly young immigrants from El Salvador.

The workers on strike also desired better working conditions and union recognition. In an interview with the San Francisco Chronicle, the workers complained about the lack of hot water and other working conditions, and they felt that management was thwarting their attempt to form a union. At the time, Ermico management was surprised about the accusations that were reported in the media. Hot running water was always available, and there were no employee health or safety issues.

The Ermico strike can trace its origins to Ignacio De La Fuente, a business manager at the time for Molders and Allied Workers Union Local 164. Mr. De La Fuente approached some of the machinists about joining the union. There had been no labor unrest or unhappiness among the

staff, but labor organizers were allowed to present their case to the workers. While it did cause tension and uncertainty, it was easily resolved when the employees held an election and decided not to unionize. Mr. De La Fuente went on to become an Oakland City Councilmember from 1992 until 2012. Today, he serves as an International Vice President for the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics, and Allied Workers International Union, AFL-CIO, where he negotiates for members through the collective bargaining process. He was also appointed to the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Authority board in January 2017.

### **Ermico Enterprises Today**

Since 1987, there has not been an instance of labor unrest at Ermico Enterprises. The company is proud to offer entry level manufacturing jobs to immigrants, and management considers its employees to be family. Ermico Enterprises supports labor unions and is proud of its history with the labor movement – a critical and colorful part of the company’s legacy in San Francisco.

## Legacy Status for Ermico Enterprises

"I feel like **Thrasher**, more than anything I encountered – more than Herb Caen, more than Dashiell Hammett, is the voice of San Francisco" - Sean Wilsey

This is a San Francisco story. In **Spring of 1976** the City and County craft workers went out on strike. My husband Fausto Vitello, who maintained the Police Department motorcycles, suddenly had time to hang out with some of his old friends from Lincoln High School who still started their mornings with surfing at Ocean Beach and breakfast at Seal Rock Inn. Fausto met a kid named Alden Kaiokakau who demonstrated his skill on a skateboard, and surmised that maneuverability could be improved. He called his friend Eric Swenson who had worked with him on professional motorcycles, and together they developed a skateboard truck with independent suspension that revolutionized the industry. By end of the year, after learning about foundries from library books, they had set up Ermico Enterprises as a small machine shop on Yosemite Street where they started the #1 truck in the industry, Independent. When more space was needed they moved the foundry into a big facility in the Bayview Hunters Point Shipyard; then in 2006 to the current building at 17<sup>th</sup> and Mississippi, where **103 are currently employed**. But big equipment like a wet dust collection system, water treatment unit, automated axle nut assembly machines,, automated baseplate drilling machine, permanent mold tilt casting machines, melting furnaces, cryogenic deflasher, heat treatment pit furnaces, walking-in powder-coating ovens, 6 station Printex pad print machines that have been acquired like to stay put.

The recession hit in the early 80's so Fausto and Eric decided their products needed a boost and accomplished that with the 1981 establishment of High Speed Productions and the publication of Thrasher magazine, which came to be known as the Bible of Skateboarding, laying it out at the Shipyard and printing it in Clear Lake. **40 employees** now work at the media company at 1303 Underwood Avenue. Namesake clothing is worn by skaters everywhere, as well as celebrities. Juxtapoz, the best selling art magazine on the market, is also published at the building.

Thrasher and Ermico drew many skaters to San Francisco, who due to the presence, of those entities, considered it the mecca of skateboarding. They had ideas for improvements and enhancements for their sport, and under Fausto and Eric's guidance, started their own companies in 1987 under the umbrella of **Deluxe**. Also operating at the 17<sup>th</sup> St. address, it has **45 employees** and distributes Spitfire Wheels, Venture and Thunder trucks, Anti-Hero, Krooked and Real boards, as well as Supercush Bushings. **DLXSF retail** at 1831 Market has **three employees**.

Fausto passed in 2006, leaving his shares to me, later joined later by our son Tony, who lives in Miraloma Park. Eric died in 2011, leaving his shares to wife Linda whose home is on Potrero Hill and sister Rebekah who lives in the Portola. All of us, born in San Francisco, want to maintain that legacy of homegrown, which is ingrained and recognized in our products. Legacy status for Ermico, the mother company, and

Deluxe, would ensure a proud tradition of items sold and beloved world-wide,  
conceived and made in San Francisco.

← Ermico Enterprises Inc

San Francisco, California  
Google, Inc.  
APR 2017



← Ermico Enterprises Inc

San Francisco, California  
Google, Inc.  
APR 2017



# DELUXE

1111 17TH STREET, SUITE A

SHIPPING  
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→



← Ermico Enterprises Inc

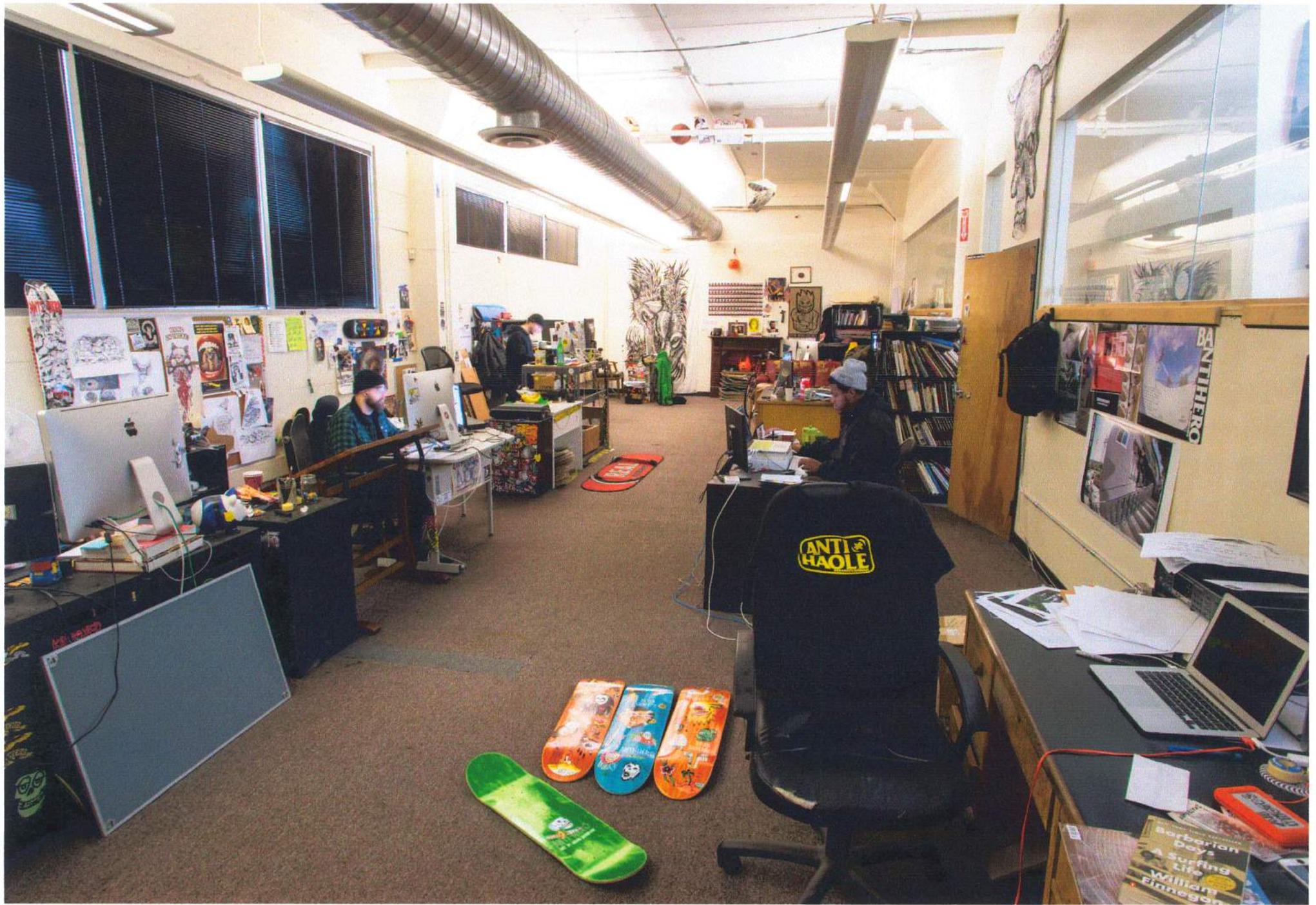
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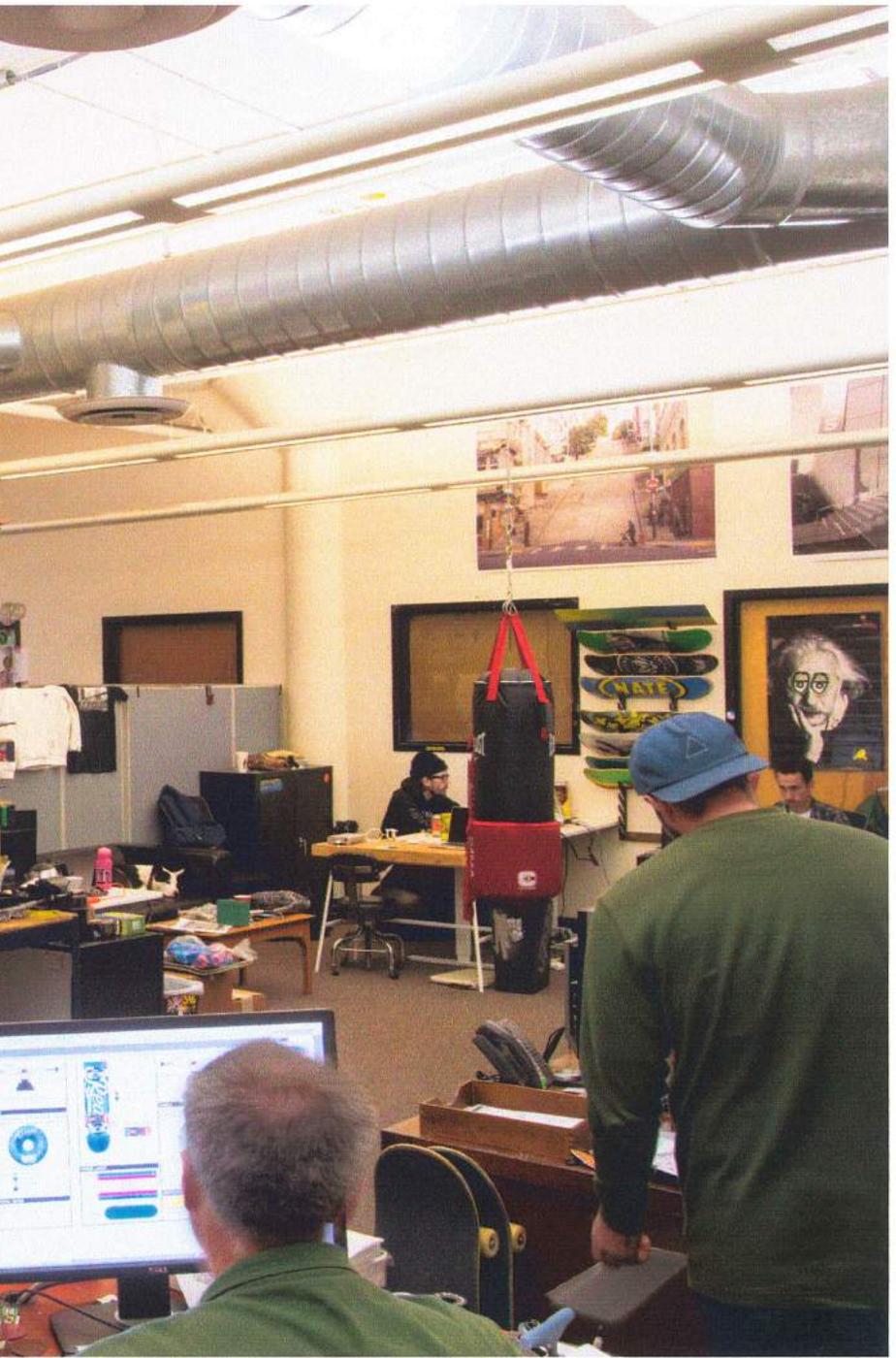


**ERMICO  
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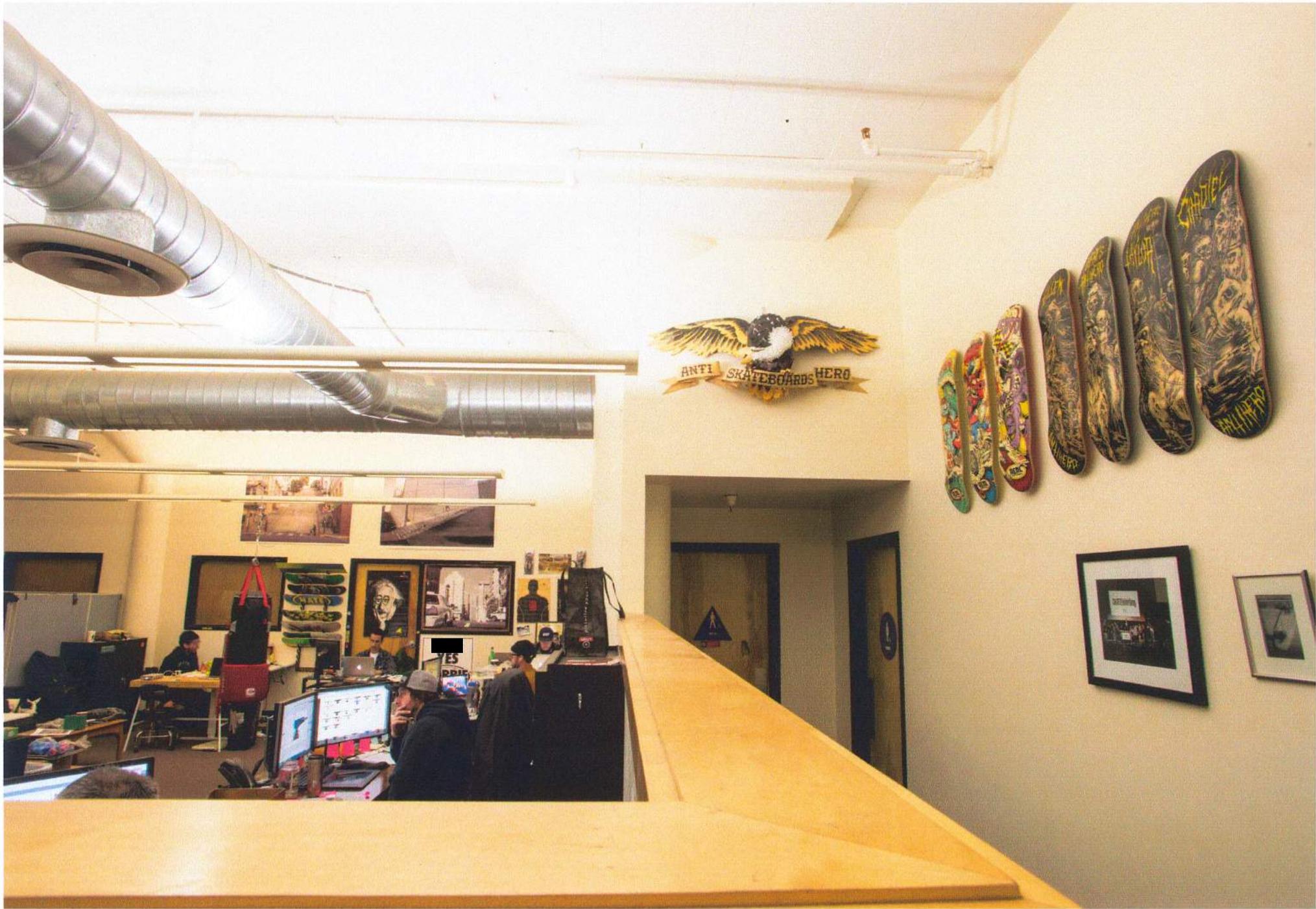
**ERMICO**  
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NOTICE  
NO PHONES  
ALLOWED





## Videos

How are Skateboard Trucks Made:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0KtjlqBOKI>

Exploratorium Video:

Skateboard Design: Making Skateboard Trucks:

[www.exploratorium.edu/skateboarding/skatedesigntruck.html](http://www.exploratorium.edu/skateboarding/skatedesigntruck.html)

**The New York Times** | <https://nyti.ms/1RDTEiW>

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ARCHIVES | 1976

## San Francisco Transit Crippled by Strike

By **LES LEDBETTER** APRIL 1, 1976

SAN FRANCISCO, March 31 — Defying an injunction, municipal craft workers here went on strike today in an attempt to reverse salary reductions that had been ordered Monday by the city's Board of Supervisors.

Tens of thousands of commuters, residents and tourists had to use private cars and taxi cabs or walk because all city buses, trolley cars and cable cars were out of service.

Only the new Bay Area Rapid Transit subway system remained in operation, but this provides only limited service during limited hours and is not widely used.

Schools, hospitals, police and fire services were not struck, however, and supervisory personnel were maintaining sewage and water-treatment plants and other public services.

The immediate effect of the strike seemed to be a sharp decline in school attendance by students who use public transportation; a demand for more cabs by the elderly, and a sharp increase in traffic jams on city streets and the freeways.

“So far it hasn't been too bad.” said Rosemary Logan, a school-playground supervisor who had to walk “a couple of miles” to work and back.

In the afternoon, Mayor George Moscone warned of the possibility of a general strike by all union workers in the city if the pay issue was not resolved soon, and he said he had been assured of state aid to maintain vital city services if such a strike occurred.

At an 8 P.M. news briefing, however, Mayor Moscone said he was encouraged that the city might avoid a general strike because of reports that the majority of the 16,500 city workers had voted to continue observing picket lines but not join the strike and that some of the striking unions were in negotiations with a representative of the supervisors.

“Things look better tonight at 8 than they did at 2 or 4 this afternoon,” said the Mayor, who is living in City Hall until the crisis ends. However, he said city departments would remain alert for any problems and asked parents to make an extra effort to get their children to schools tomorrow because state aid is based on average daily attendance and “the need to show stability in this city.”

But the possibility of a general strike still remained “a very grave possibility” according to John F. Crowley, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Labor Council.

The ability of the striking municipal workers to affect city life outside of government activities was demonstrated early this evening when the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra canceled tonight's performance because union musicians would not cross a picket line in front of the hall where the orchestra regularly performs.

Mr. Crowley said all the unions in the city had agreed to honor the municipal union's picket lines “in a united effort to overcome the anti-union efforts by the Board of Supervisors.”

Calling the board “intransigent,” Mr. Crowley said that the decision on how much to expand the strike tomorrow was being considered but that “as of today, the only way for us to go will be to expand the pressure.”

The municipal strikers, including gardeners, laborers, plumbers and electricians, are seeking to maintain their pay at the same hourly scales as those paid in private industry. A pay parity formula was repealed, 2 to 1 by the voters last fall in

the bitter aftermath of a strike by policemen and firemen that also saw negotiating powers taken away from the Mayor and entrusted to the Supervisors.

Repeal supporters successfully argued that the pay formula was creating unreasonably high salaries, such as \$19,000 a year for street-sweepers, because private-industry scales were established for workers who did not have full employment all year. .

With the formula repealed, the Supervisors voted Monday to cut the salaries of about 1,900 craft workers while providing modest raises for other city employees. This led to the craft unions calling today's strike.

The effect of the strike was not immediate since, in preparation for the strike, the city had mailed out welfare checks on Tuesday, two days early, and many city workers said they had crossed picket lines today to get their paychecks but would not cross the lines tomorrow.

The TimesMachine archive viewer is a subscriber-only feature. This article is also available separately as a high-resolution PDF for \$3.95.

We are continually improving the quality of our text archives. Please send feedback, error reports, and suggestions to [archive\\_feedback@nytimes.com](mailto:archive_feedback@nytimes.com).

A version of this archives appears in print on April 1, 1976, on Page 44 of the New York edition with the headline: San Francisco Transit Crippled by Strike.

# The Stanford Daily

Breaking news from the Farm since 1892

Support the Archives

The Stanford Daily, Volume 169, Issue 47, 28 April 1976 — Root of SF strike [ARTICLE]

## Root of SF strike

*Gene Marine*

*(First of two parts)*

The city workers' strike in San Francisco is rooted in a bitter irony.

The striking "craft workers" are fighting back after having been punished at the polls for something of which they aren't guilty. Their salaries — admittedly well above the average in other cities — were blamed for high property tax bills in 1975.

It isn't true. But the leaders of these unions can't go to the people and explain the error. They can't do it because those same union leaders were a knowing and willing part of what did cause the tax jump.

San Francisco's tax bills are outrageous because the city's top businessmen, with building-trades union leaders as eager collaborators, decided years ago to turn San Francisco into a western New York City — in a sense only dimly related to New York's current fiscal problems. Out here we call it "Manhattanization."

### **Corporate activity**

San Francisco is to become the headquarters for corporate activity in Asia, Australia and the Pacific coast of Latin America. A 1957 Stanford Research Institute study referred to this as the "Pacific Rim strategy." Its advocates are not small-timers: the Bank of America, Bechtel Corp., Standard Oil of California, Wells Fargo and lesser lights in shipping, construction and especially finance.

Locally, this meant a Stonehenge of disproportionate highrise office buildings and a rapid transit system designed to bring white workers from comfortable suburbs and to get them

home again. This meant building-trades jobs, and the elite leaders of those elite unions jumped onto the Pacific Rim strategy early. At the taxpayers' expense.

Highrises meant new water and sewage facilities. The strategy demanded an expanded airport. Inexpensive downtown pensioners' housing was "redeveloped" for a new convention center. Stephen Bechtel, who was as responsible as any one man for thinking up Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), got the people to pay him to build it.

#### **Labor involvement**

And while it was all happening, John Crowley, who heads the San Francisco Labor Council, was on Mayor Joe Alioto's bond screening committee. The Plumbers' Joe Mazzola was on the Airport Commission. The Laborers' George Evankovich was on the Housing Authority. The Machinists' Stan Jensen was on the Redevelopment Agency. Bill Chester of the Longshoremen — a union that since the early 1960s has gone along with Pacific Rim and the building trades despite its integrated membership and radical history — is chairman of the board of BART.

Today this "labor town" is struggling through the least popular strike in its history because its voters believe that Crowley and Mazzola and the others are not "labor" any more — but powerful men who drew their power from an alliance with businessmen and who are now desperate because the businessmen don't need them any more.

San Francisco's longtime romance with its labor leaders was undaunted by all of this downtown collaboration until the 1970s.

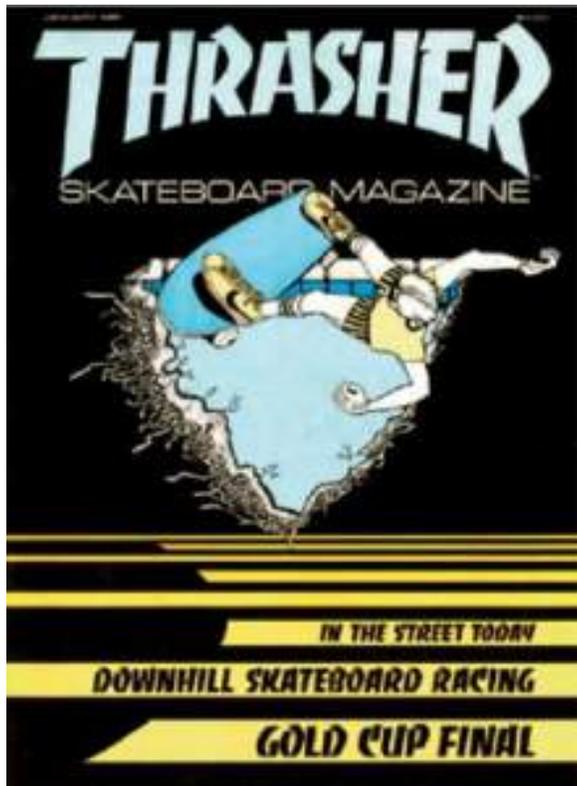
*(Gene Marine is an opinion writer for the Pacific News Service.)*

# 2014 – ICON Fausto Vitello

## — 2014 Inductees

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on August 7, 1946, Fausto Vitello's influence on skateboarding could be deemed critical if only for his entrepreneurial role in co-founding Thrasher Magazine, Independent Trucks, and Deluxe Distribution.





Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on August 7, 1946, Fausto Vitello's influence on skateboarding could be deemed critical if only for his entrepreneurial role in co-founding Thrasher Magazine, Independent Trucks, and Deluxe Distribution. Having fled Argentina and the oppression of the Revolución Libertadora political regime with his family at age nine, Vitello was raised on Frederick Street in Haight-Ashbury and allegedly learned English from listening to San Francisco Giants baseball broadcasts on the radio. After developing an interest in skateboarding hardware during the late '70s, and following their first tests with the Stoker Truck—Eric Swenson and Vitello (who founded their company Ermico Enterprises) ultimately joined forces with Jay Shuirman and Richard Novak at NHS to test and manufacture the Independent Stage 1 truck in '78. Hugely successful and redefining the scope of truck performance, the Independent team of Ermico and NHS then went on to found Thrasher in '81 after Skateboarder Magazine switched to Action Now. Far from finished, Fausto continued to expand his business empire by eventually building High Speed Productions to house Thrasher, then later Slap and Juxtapoz magazines; Deluxe Distribution, which manufactured brands including Thunder Trucks, Spitfire Wheels, Real, Antihero and Krooked skateboards; and also Street Corner Distribution, which was home to Think Skateboards, Hubba Wheels, Venture Trucks, and Lucky Bearings. Vitello died of a cardiac arrest on April 22, 2012, and is survived by his wife, Gwynn; his son, Tony; and his daughter, Sally.

*Filing Date:* August 21, 2017  
*Case No.:* 2017-011508LBR  
*Business Name:* Ermico Enterprises, Inc.  
*Business Address:* 120 Mississippi Street  
*Zoning:* VMU (Urban Mixed-Use)/  
48-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 3986/001  
*Applicant:* Gwynned Vitello, Owner  
P.O. Box 885403  
San Francisco, CA 94188  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Malia Cohen, District 10  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

## BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Ermico Enterprises is a metal casting foundry that manufactures metal trucks and bearings, two key components of skateboards. The business revolutionized the skateboard industry beginning in 1976 when its founders, Fausto Vitello and Eric Swanson, invented a skateboard truck with independent suspension. Ermico Enterprises has since become known for its skateboard products and is considered an international leader in the industry. Through a corporate partnership, the company remains under the ownership of the two original families that founded it. Its mission has also remained the same over the years: “to serve skateboarding by creating the best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out, be active, and roll!”

Located in the Potrero Hill neighborhood, the company has grown to include a skateboarding publication called Thrasher magazine, a media company called High Speed Productions, and a clothing line called Namesake clothing. Today the enterprise employs over 100 people. Its products have been featured in action sport tradeshows and numerous trade publications such as Skateboarder magazine, Transworld Magazine, Concrete Wave Magazine, the Skateboard Mag, and Juice Magazine.

Young people make up a significant portion of the company's customer base and constituency. Ermico Enterprises has expressed a commitment to maintaining a widespread presence in brick and mortar stores throughout the United States, which serve as hubs of skater culture in San Francisco and across the nation, particularly for young people. Ermico Enterprises is proud to have contributed to the development of San Francisco as the capital of skateboarding culture in Northern California through its skateboard products, fashion, and popular magazine.

Located on the west side of Mississippi Street between 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Mariposa Street, Ermico Enterprises is within the UMU (Urban Mixed Use) Zoning District and a 48-X Height and Bulk District. Its building is open to visitors and continues to be a destination for skaters.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### *Review Criteria*

1. *When was business founded?*

1976

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, Ermico Enterprises, Inc. qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Ermico Enterprises, Inc. has operated for 41 years.
- ii. Ermico Enterprises, Inc. has contributed to the development of skater culture in San Francisco, Northern California, and beyond.
- iii. Ermico Enterprises, Inc. is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define its craft of skateboard truck and bearing manufacturing.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

The business is associated with the craft of skateboard truck and bearing manufacturing.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

The property in which the business is located has been previously evaluated by the Planning Department for potential historical significance and was found not to be historically significant. It is considered a "Category C" property for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. SF Gate, 6/22/2011, "Eric Swenson, skateboard business icon, dies," by Henry K. Lee; SurfKY News, 8/20/2017, "Pro Skaters Perform at Madisonville's Total Eclipse of the Park," by Tammy Holloway.

### *Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business*

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

- 120 Mississippi Street

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Manufacturing of skateboard products
- Commitment to creating best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out and be active
- Commitment to maintaining a presence in brick and mortar stores

- Independently owned and operated business model
- Presence in San Francisco

**Additional Recommended by Staff**

No additional recommendations



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

*Case No.:* 2017-011508LBR  
*Business Name:* Ermico Enterprises, Inc.  
*Business Address:* 120 Mississippi Street  
*Zoning:* VMU (Urban Mixed-Use)/  
48-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 3986/001  
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*Nominated By:* Supervisor Malia Cohen, District 10  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093  
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*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
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Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

**ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR ERMICO ENTERPRISES, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 120 MISSISSIPPI STREET (BLOCK/LOT 3986/001).**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the Potrero Hill neighborhood's history and identity, and the identity of San Francisco as a hub of skater culture; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 20, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Ermico Enterprises qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Ermico Enterprises

*Location (if applicable)*

- 120 Mississippi Street

*Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business*

- Manufacturing of skateboard products
- Commitment to creating best products to inspire and encourage kids to get out and be active
- Commitment to maintaining a presence in brick and mortar stores
- Independently owned and operated business model
- Presence in San Francisco

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2017-011508LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was **ADOPTED** by the Historic Preservation Commission on September 20, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: September 20, 2017