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Now, the hard part Gov.-elect Arnold faces economy, job issues



BRUCE CHAMBERS • KRT CAMPUS

Newly elected California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and his wife Maria Shriver celebrate his win early Wednesday morning in Century City, Calif.

By Erica Werner
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger said Wednesday that he was promised "a very smooth transition" by ousted Gov. Gray Davis and vowed that he and his advisers would "open up the books" as they begin to tackle California's ailing economy.

In his first news conference since being elected governor, Schwarzenegger reiterated several themes from the campaign trail, insisting that he will not raise taxes and pledging to be a governor of the people. But he provided few specifics and said his transition team will develop a plan in the coming weeks about how to close a deficit of at least \$8 billion.

"What we have to do is, open up the books ... do the audit and find what the waste is," the action hero-turned-politician said.

Schwarzenegger said he had spoken with an array of leaders including Nelson Mandela of South Africa and President Bush, who he said promised to do "whatever is possible to help California." Schwarzenegger said he intended to ask Bush for "a lot of favors."

Schwarzenegger also said he was encouraged by conversations with Davis and other state leaders about the transition process. Schwarzenegger's transition team is being headed by Republican Rep. David Dreier.

"I am very optimistic about working together with the Democratic leaders in Sacramento," Schwarzenegger said.

The Republican actor will be sworn into the office by mid-November, becoming California's 38th governor.

Schwarzenegger has promised to fix California's ailing economy without raising taxes and while preserving education funding, which accounts for 40 percent of the state budget.

But his proposals will have to go through a Legislature controlled by Democrats angry over what some of them consider a hostile takeover of the

state's top political job. And he will have to quickly deliver a budget that can close the giant deficit.

It is an unusually fast transition, particularly for a political neophyte who declared his candidacy just two months ago.

"The last 60 days has been pretty difficult as well, but I would say there's probably never been a governor elect who's stepped into a situation with the challenges he'll be confronting here in California. But that's why he wanted the job," spokesman Rob Stutzman said.

Schwarzenegger takes office as the Republican Party's lone statewide officeholder in a state where the congressional delegation and both houses of the Legislature are heavily Democratic.

And while the voters gave Schwarzenegger a resounding victory, they lean Democratic, too — 44 percent to 35 percent Republican.

"I think he's in for a rude awakening to the fact that he won't be able to get done all the things he has said because politics just doesn't work that way," said Fresno resident Don Leshner, 71, a registered Democrat who voted yes on the recall and for Republican Tom McClintock. "Unfortunately, everybody is voting along party lines, rather than what's best for the state."

Still, more voters supported Schwarzenegger, 3.5 million, than voted against recalling Davis, 3.5 million — an outcome Schwarzenegger aides touted as a mandate after weeks of predictions from Democrats that the winner might triumph with a small percentage of the vote.

"The fact that he got more votes than Gray Davis puts him in a position of strength," said Allan Hoffenblum, a GOP consultant. "There's going to be some Democrats up there who are going to want to play ball reasonably with Arnold Schwarzenegger."

With 99 percent of precincts reporting, Schwarzenegger had 3,675,317 votes, compared with 2,415,098 for Democratic Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante. On the recall question, 4,332,808 voters, or 55.1 percent, were in favor of ousting Davis, while 3,531,091, or 44.9 percent were opposed.

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