

# Economic stability a new challenge for Brown

By Chris Megerian, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – Soon after Jerry Brown was elected governor in 2010, he invited the state's top budget official, Ana Matosantos, to lunch at his office. He had just two months to prepare his first plan for tackling California's \$26 billion deficit.

He asked his assistant to fetch the budget director a sandwich. Then, Matosantos said, the incoming governor of one of the world's largest economies ate a single hard-boiled egg, sprinkled with salt.

Brown's dietary discipline was a hint of the regimented approach he would take to California's staggering financial problems, which he had promised to fix by pushing the state back into the black.

"I don't go to the theater. I don't golf. This is what I do," Brown told Matosantos.

For previous governors, California's budget was quicksand. Gray Davis, a fellow Democrat, was recalled by voters as state finances imploded following an energy crisis. Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger limped out of office with rock-bottom poll numbers, leaving a pile of debt.

But on Brown's watch, deficits have become surpluses, helped along by tax hikes the governor persuaded voters to approve. More money is being pumped into schools.

**Read the whole story**