

County Judge Nelson W. Wolff  
Annual Agenda for Commissioners Court  
January 13, 2004

Once again, I'd like to take time to reflect on last year's accomplishments and to consider the challenges facing us in 2004. 2003 was a very good year. Toyota announced they were locating in San Antonio. We led all major Texas cities in job creation, with nearly 9,000 net new jobs. We passed the first ever coordinated City and County bonds. Crime was down and the murder rate was the lowest in many years. The San Antonio Spurs won the National NBA Championship.

I believe it was our ability to build and sustain partnerships -- internally and externally -- that led to our success last year. Partnerships were the key to our success in economic development, transportation, the environment, inter-governmental relations, and general county government. And so it's the various partnerships we formed in those areas that I want to talk about this morning.

Economic Development Partnerships

It was Bexar County's successful partnership with the State, the City of San Antonio, and local business and community groups that led to last year's most significant economic development news ... TOYOTA. The new Toyota plant will bring 2,000 direct new jobs, 2,100 construction jobs, and \$800 million of direct capital investment to our community.

Our challenge this year will be to continue to work with our partners to fulfill the commitments we made to Toyota. We currently are working with Toyota to create its first on-premise supplier park to bring an additional 1000 jobs. I hope that we will be able to accomplish this objective early this year. The new plant will be located in Commissioner Tejeda's district, and I want to thank him for his leadership.

Working with many of the same partners that landed Toyota, we succeeded last fall in attracting Maxim Integrated Products to take over the semiconductor facility formerly run by Philips.

Maxim will make a \$100 million capital investment in this facility and will likely create up to 600 new jobs over the next three or four years. The State's \$1.5 million commitment from the newly created Texas Enterprise Fund, along with the City's \$1.5 million match, and the County's pledge of a tax phase-in was critical to this success.

Last September, US Army South completed its relocation to Fort Sam Houston – another community partnership success. US Army South brings a \$25 million annual payroll, and 500 additional good and stable jobs to our community.

While we were successful with US Army South, we must make preparations for BRAC 2005 one of our highest priorities. We must work closely with Dr. John Jernigan, who has been chosen to lead this effort, along with our business and government partners to protect our local military bases.

Related to this, I would like to thank City and County voters for approving bond propositions totaling \$24 million for a new, joint Emergency Operations Center that is likely to be located at Brooks City-Base. Besides being necessary for our own safety and security, early implementation of this project will help secure the future of Brooks City-Base. It is partnerships like this that will help us maintain our status as "Military City USA."

Last year, the Spurs won a world championship. We are partners in the county-owned SBC Center. This year we will continue our efforts to win an economic championship for the surrounding neighborhood. We should receive updates next month on the joint economic development study that we have sponsored along with the City and the Spurs, and on the east side Inner City Tax Increment Financing District.

Next month we should meet with the Coliseum Advisory Board to discuss the development of a comprehensive on-site plan that would accommodate future economic expansion. Commissioner Tejeda and I visited the Orange County Fair Grounds to study their weekend market.

Commissioner Elizondo visited a similar one in Tennessee. We need to explore the possibility of building some additional convention facilities and to develop a plan for the renovation of

Freeman Coliseum. We need to determine what capital improvements are necessary and how we can finance them.

Today, San Antonio is a one major sports franchise city. Within the next 10 to 15 years, I believe we will be ready for another sports franchise, either football or baseball. Naturally I prefer baseball. I suggest that we work with the City to develop a relationship with both Major League Baseball and the National Football League to position our city for one or the other. We need to begin to identify private investors. We also need to develop a workable financing plan for a major league facility. We will have the bonds for the SBC Center paid off in 15 years. At that time I will be 78 and Paul will be 81, just the right spring chicken age to lead this effort. In the meantime, I want to support Mayor Garza's efforts to bring a Major League Soccer franchise to play in the Alamodome.

In addition to these projects, here are a just a few other economic development partnerships we will be working on.

In cooperation with the City, we will:

- o finalize a coordinated strategy to attract new business to the community, using the recently adopted joint City/County tax phase-in guidelines;
- o name the members of the Defense Adjustment Management Authority, to implement the Mayor's South Side Initiative;
- o support Mayor Garza's effort to bring a Culinary Institute to San Antonio; and
- o fulfill our commitments to make the PGA Resort a reality.

In cooperation with other partners, we will:

- o determine what role the County should play, along with SATAI, in developing a stronger technology base;
- o resolve remaining financial issues and move forward with the improvements to the North and South reaches of the San Antonio River; and

- structure an effective mechanism to return properties that have been acquired through tax liens to the tax rolls and to productive economic use.

### Transportation Partnerships

Building needed transportation infrastructure is a major challenge to our community. Improving mobility is vital both to our economy and to our quality of life.

Clearly, our biggest transportation challenge is to resolve the mismatch between identified transportation needs and available funds. Our metropolitan area has an estimated \$5.3 billion shortfall for needed transportation improvements. Of that amount, \$1 billion is required to address our immediate needs.

The San Antonio Mobility Coalition -- a partnership comprised of the County, the City of San Antonio, VIA Metropolitan Transit, local chambers of commerce and business groups -- has quickly become a respected and effective transportation advocate. This year we must continue to work with them, and with our state and federal legislative delegations, to help find the resources to address our transportation needs. I'd like to thank Commissioner Larson for his hard work on this tough issue.

Tomorrow at our work session, we will accept the Texas Transportation Commission's minute order allowing the creation of a Regional Mobility Authority. Through toll roads, RMA's could provide an important source of new funding for local transportation projects. RMA's will also provide drivers a choice in how they deal with growing traffic congestion. We should quickly make our appointments to this board to allow the RMA to get up and running. We also must commit staff and other resources necessary to ensure its success. This includes advancing initial funding to this agency to be reimbursed later, as we did with the Rail District.

I believe we must also re-emphasize a broader regional approach to transportation issues across Central and South Texas. Our partnership with the members of the Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail District is already working to improve mobility in Central Texas. I want to take

a similar approach to address the needs of South Texas by calling a meeting to re-establish the Association of South Texas Communities, to work on regional transportation-related legislative issues. The ASTC should also work to ensure that the US-VISIT program to screen international visitors does not have a discriminatory impact, and that it does not impede trade through inland ports. Commissioner Larson will take the lead in this effort.

Regionalism also has become the focus of the Texas Transportation Commission. In the past few years we have worked on building a stronger relationship with TxDOT, our most significant transportation partner. The most important development last year in that relationship was Hope Andrade's appointment to serve as a Transportation Commissioner. This year, we look forward to working with her and all our other transportation partners to improve community mobility.

### Environmental Partnerships

Last year, working again with various partners, we made advances on several environmental issues related to air, water, and energy.

Working through our partners on air quality at AACOG, we "dodged a bullet" when it was shown that automobile emissions testing was ineffective and unnecessary to meet federally mandated air quality standards. However, we still have work to do to maintain our air quality "attainment" status. We will soon vote on less intrusive and more cost-effective measures, such as restrictions on the use of solvents and gasoline vapor recovery.

I was very pleased to learn of Congressman Charlie Gonzalez's appointment to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has oversight of air quality standards, and I look forward to working with him on this issue. I also am grateful for Commissioner Adkisson's leadership in working with public and private fleet owners to encourage the use of cleaner burning fuels that will help us meet Clean Air Act requirements.

Securing and maintaining a reliable source of quality drinking water remains a priority. Last Session, we worked with our local partners in the Legislature to pass a law allowing the County

to manage stormwater runoff. This year, we must determine what agency we can best partner with to collect the required fees, and we must conclude the agreements necessary to fully implement the stormwater program.

As Mayor, I worked to create the extraordinary partnership with the County and State that produced the Government Canyon state park. Protection of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and wildlife was a large part of the reason for this park's creation. We must be aggressive in protecting this park from development or structures, such as power lines, that threaten this goal.

Environmental stewardship also requires the County to do more in the area of energy conservation. We have taken significant steps in this area. The Metropolitan Energy Partnership, sponsored by the County and the City of San Antonio, produced a Green Building program which has been recognized nationally for producing energy savings that offset traditional calculations in qualifying for a mortgage. We must expand community awareness and use of environmentally friendly design. This includes continuing to support the programs of Solar San Antonio – another of our energy partners.

Later this morning we will take another step toward improving energy efficiency with the creation of an energy manager's position. This position's responsibilities will include ensuring the County complies with all the provisions of SB 5, auditing of energy bills, and researching and implementing cost-effective energy improvements. Again, let me thank Commissioner Adkisson for his leadership in this area.

### External Governmental Partnerships

In today's world, partnering with other governments is more important than ever. And our strong partnership with the City of San Antonio continues to bring results. The joint magistration system that we launched last September has already had a significant impact in controlling our jail population. Last year we also eliminated duplication in subdivision plat reviews, we developed joint tax phase-in guidelines, we approved the creation of several

emergency service districts, and we coordinated on the successful November City and County bond elections.

The County and the City also jointly created the Citizens Commission on City-County Service Integration, headed by Chairman Glen Hartman. He will give us an initial progress report at our next meeting. I expect this Commission to produce bold recommendations to streamline our basic structure of overlying city and county governments, and to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, equity and accountability of both governments. We will receive their recommendations in time for both governing bodies to begin implementing them in our fiscal year 2005 budgets and in our respective legislative programs for 2005. I will make it a personal priority to work with our legislative delegation to ensure the passage of any legislation that is needed to implement the Commission's recommendations.

Another new partnership created in 2003 is the Bexar County Arts and Culture Fund. The Fund, to be headed by Bruce Flohr, has been incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization. This year, we will be expanding the board and asking the County to support employee-based giving programs for arts and culture.

This year will also see the continuation of another joint City/County commission's work to develop the concept of a Bexar County History Center. This was another project that was also supported by our coordinated City/County bond program. The Commission will work with consultants to develop the "programs" for the center in greater detail. And, before the end of the year, it will recommend a proposed partnership structure to fund and manage these facilities.

We need to continue to explore the potential for decentralized service centers and to consider the conversion and reuse of existing buildings for this purpose. We should approach this in cooperation with other local governments and agencies besides the City, such as AACOG.

Let me mention one other thing about our most important partner. This spring the City of San Antonio will submit charter changes to the voters that, with their approval, would allow mayor and city council terms to be lengthened and pay increased. This will be the most important

governmental issue facing our City in over a decade. I will be supporting Mayor Garza's efforts. I hope you will join me in that effort.

### Internal Partnerships

Working with our external governmental partners is crucial. But because of the divided nature of county government, building internal partnerships among our own Bexar County elected officials is also critical to the County's overall success. And last year, we strengthened these internal relationships in a number of ways that will continue into this New Year.

Compliance with the edicts of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards is one of the challenges that remain before us. However, we are making significant progress toward full compliance precisely because so many of us are involved in this effort. This week, District Attorney Susan Reed will begin a "rocket-docket" designed to efficiently and appropriately dispose of drug cases. Judges Al Alonso, Mary Roman and Sid Harle have begun drug court programs designed to end the cycle of abuse and jail time that is associated with drug use. Commissioner Adkisson, Sheriff Lopez, Chief Amadeo Ortiz, District Clerk Montemayor, County Clerk Rickhoff, and all the District and County Court at Law Judges have played significant roles in jail population management. Commissioners Court appreciates their efforts. I want to thank Commissioner Adkisson in particular for his leadership.

Countywide capital improvement projects also will require working closely with our internal county partners. Now that the citizens have approved our \$99.2 million bond program, we need to keep the implementation of these projects on track. We need to complete the Children's Court and Judge John Spears District Court by the end of the year.

Last year we completed most of the exterior restoration of this courthouse – in a partnership with the Hidalgo Foundation. We still need to re clad the 1972 Goendeck addition, to restore the architectural integrity of that part of the building. We should approve preliminary plans before the end of this year.

Last year, several internal county working partnerships completed major projects to improve our general government operations. The County's Human Resources Information System will help all county offices and departments to better understand and manage our workforce. We reformed our self-insured health benefits program, to contain rapidly rising costs while protecting employee benefits and providing more plan options to our employees. We completed a comprehensive performance review of the County's purchasing functions, to streamline the County's procurement process and make purchasing more user-friendly for all. We also successfully transitioned our citizens to electronic voting, and we had two successful elections with 98 percent of the returns counted by 9 p.m. Now we are in partnership with both political parties to ensure that their primaries are equally successful. I want to thank Commissioner Elizondo for his leadership in implementing our new election system.

Last year's budget presented one of the toughest fiscal challenges ever. The Long Range Financial Forecast projected a shortfall of \$14.5 million for this budget year, which could have led to the elimination of over 100 filled positions. We overcame that challenge through teamwork and creativity from all offices and departments, and in the end we adopted a balanced budget without layoffs.

In light of last year's challenges, I am asking Planning and Resource Management to initiate the budget process earlier this year, so that we can have more time to react to financial challenges before the end of the fiscal year. In addition, we need to start planning for a new financial management system. The current system is cumbersome and does not produce financial management information in a useful or timely manner. If we are going to hold County managers accountable, then we must give them the tools they need to manage effectively.

Perhaps one of our most significant accomplishments in working with our internal county partners was our adoption of a Countywide Strategic Plan. The support for this plan from so many of our elected county officials is unprecedented, and it makes me optimistic about the prospect for successful implementation.

The time has now come to strengthen the Strategic Management Team and provide for greater management accountability, as set out in that plan. To this end, I will present to Commissioners

Court a proposal to fix responsibility for implementation of Commissioners Court initiatives through a newly created office of Chief Administrative Officer. I have passed out a proposed job description for that office.

As I said at the beginning, Bexar County had a wonderfully successful year in 2003. Our building and sustaining of external and internal partnerships was critical to that success. Our ability to continue to be as successful in 2004 will be determined by our ability and willingness to focus on continued growth of these partnerships.

I am committed to this course. I ask for Commissioners to support it, and for our staff to embrace it, because our organization's ultimate performance depends on it.

Thank you.

Now let's get to work.