

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

County Judge Nelson Wolff

State of the County address

4 March 2009

THANK CHAMBER. THANK JIM GOUDGE. THANK CARRIE BAKER WELLS.

I WANT TO GIVE A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR MAYOR AND MY GREAT FRIEND MAYOR PHIL HARDBERGER. WE HAVE HAD SUCH FUN OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS WORKING TOGETHER. WE HAVE KIDDED EACH OTHER, DEBATED ISSUES, TRAVELED TOGETHER, TALKED DAILY, MET AT LEAST WEEKLY AND WORKED ON SEVERAL JOINT PROJECTS. WE WERE JUST TWO OLD GUYS RUNNING HARD TO KEEP UP WITH EACH OTHER. AND WE HOPE WE HAVE DONE SOME GOOD. PLEASE STAND PHIL, SO WE CAN CONGRATULATE ONE OF SAN ANTONIO'S GREAT MAYORS.

WE ARE NOW IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAYOR AND COUNCIL RACE AND WILL ONCE AGAIN BE LOOKING FOR THE NEXT SET OF ELECTED LEADERS.

WE HAVE SOME VERY GOOD CANDIDATES RUNNING. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH OUR NEXT MAYOR AS SHE OR HE BRINGS NEW LEADERSHIP TO THE CITY. THE COUNTY AND CITY HAVE AN EXCELLENT RECORD OF WORKING TOGETHER AND WE WILL CONTINUE THAT TRADITION.

ANOTHER TRADITION THAT THE COUNTY AND CITY SHARE IS INVOLVING OUR CITIZENS IN OUR DECISION MAKING. THE COUNTY AND CITY BOTH CAPITALIZED ON CITIZEN INPUT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR '07 and '08 BOND PACKAGES.

IN FACT ONE OF THE HALLMARKS OF A TRUE DEMOCRACY IS ITS ABILITY TO DRAW UPON CITIZEN WISDOM. IN A DEMOCRACY PEOPLE CAN AND MUST WORK DIRECTLY WITH THEIR GOVERNMENT TO PLAN A BETTER FUTURE AND REALIZE THEIR HIGHEST ASPIRATIONS.

WORKING TOGETHER IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT NOW AS MUCH OF AMERICA AND THE WORLD ARE EXPERIENCING TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES.

THE DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE IS WORTH LESS THAN HALF OF WHAT IT WAS 18 MONTHS AGO.

ALMOST 80% OF AMERICANS THINK THE ECONOMY IS GETTING WORSE, NOT BETTER.

CONSUMERS LACK CONFIDENCE.

WE FACE GREAT ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY AND ARE NOW SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF THE FEAR SUCH UNCERTAINTY GENERATES.

THE LOCAL ECONOMY IS NOT IMMUNE FROM THESE EFFECTS BUT WE HAVE SO FAR KEPT THE BEAR FROM THE DOOR BUT HE IS STARTING TO GET HIS PAW THROUGH.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY LOOKS ABOUT AS BAD AS I DID LAST NOVEMBER AFTER I LOST A SPLIT DECISION THREE-ROUND BOXING MATCH TO A FORMER GOLDEN GLOVES CONTENDER.

I MAY HAVE ENDED UP ON THE MAT A COUPLE OF TIMES BUT IT WAS BECAUSE OF A **SLIP** AND **NOT A FALL**. THAT DISTINCTION IS IMPORTANT.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY MAY HAVE SLIPPED ON ITS BACK, BUT IT WILL GET BACK UP JUST AS I DID. NEVER, EVER BET AGAINST THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S ECONOMY BECAUSE WE AMERICANS ARE A RESILIENT INDUSTRIOUS AND IMAGINATIVE PEOPLE WHO WILL THRIVE.

BEXAR COUNTY WILL DO ITS PART TO STIMULATE OUR ECONOMY BY INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY.

OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS BEXAR COUNTY WILL INVEST NEARLY \$900 MILLION DOLLARS IN HEALTHCARE, \$500 MILLION DOLLARS IN FLOOD CONTROL INFRASTRUCTURE, AND MORE THAN \$400 MILLION DOLLARS IN THE ARTS, AMATEUR ATHLETIC FACILITIES, THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER, AND THE COMMUNITY'S ARENAS.

BEXAR COUNTY WILL INVEST ALMOST 2 BILLION DOLLARS — AND EVEN BY TODAY'S STANDARDS, 2 BILLION IS STILL REAL MONEY.

LET ME UPDATE YOU ON THESE BEXAR COUNTY INVESTMENTS.

LET'S START WITH THE REAL SUCCESS STORY FROM LAST YEAR WHEN VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY PASSED ALL FOUR VISITOR TAX PROPOSITIONS SUBMITTED BY BEXAR COUNTY'S COMMISSIONERS COURT. CITIZEN COMMITTEES COMPOSED OF SOME 100 VOLUNTEERS SELECTED THE \$400 MILLION DOLLARS IN PROJECTS. BEXAR COUNTY IS THE FIRST COMMUNITY IN THE STATE TO USE A VISITOR TAX TO FUND SUCH A BROAD VARIETY OF PROJECTS.

ENHANCEMENTS TO THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER FUNDED BY VISITOR TAXES ARE UNDERWAY. COMMISSIONERS COURT LAST WEEK APPROVED THE FINAL CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS FOR \$125 MILLION DOLLARS IN PROJECTS WITHIN THE MUSEUM REACH AND EAGLELAND AND MISSION SEGMENTS OF THE RIVER PROJECT.

WHEN COMPLETED THESE BEXAR COUNTY PROJECTS WILL PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS 13-MILE CONNECTION BETWEEN BRACKENRIDGE PARK IN THE NORTH TO MISSION ESPADA TO THE SOUTH. VISITOR TAX-FUNDED IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE UPGRADED TRAILS, PUBLIC ART ENHANCEMENTS AND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION.

THE \$125 MILLION DOLLARS IN COUNTY VISITOR TAX FUNDING FOR THE RIVER PROJECT SUPPLEMENTS FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE COUNTY'S FLOOD CONTROL TAX AND OTHER MONIES PROVIDED BY OUR PROJECT PARTNERS: THE CITY, SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY, THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE RIVER FOUNDATION. THIS NEW FUNDING WILL ALLOW WORK TO MOVE FORWARD BOTH ON THE SOUTH AND NORTH ENDS OF THE RIVER.

TO THE SOUTH CONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN ON 1 ½ MILE STRETCH OF THE RIVER SOUTH OF DOWNTOWN, AND COMPLETED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR. AN ADDITIONAL 1 ½ MILES OF THE MISSION REACH WILL BE UNDER CONSTRUCTION LATER THIS YEAR AND WILL BE COMPLETED IN 2010. THE REMAINING 5 MILES IS TARGETED FOR COMPLETION IN 2014.

TO THE NORTH A 1 ½ MILE SEGMENT NORTH OF DOWNTOWN WILL BE COMPLETED AND OPENED THIS MAY. THE REMAINING 2 ½ MILES FROM LEXINGTON STREET TO HILDEBRAND WILL BE FINISHED IN 2012.

VISITOR TAXES ALSO PROVIDE 110 MILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDS FOR A PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AND CULTURAL FACILITIES. PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURAL WORK FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER IS UNDERWAY FUNDED BY 20 MILLION DOLLARS APPROVED BY COMMISSIONERS COURT. THE PERFORMING ARTS FOUNDATION, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF BRUCE BUGG AND ITS DIRECTOR RODNEY SMITH, WILL RAISE 32 MILLION DOLLARS TO MATCH THE COUNTY'S 100 MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILD THIS FACILITY IN A REDEVELOPED MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM.

CONSTRUCTION ON THE 1850-SEAT PERFORMANCE HALL, A 250-SEAT STUDIO THEATER, BANQUET FACILITES AND A REHEARSAL HALL SHOULD BEGIN IN ABOUT A YEAR.

IN ADDITION TO THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, BEXAR COUNTY IS PROVIDING 4 MILLION DOLLARS TO THE BRISCOE WESTERN ART MUSEUM, SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN LATE 2010, AND 6 MILLION DOLLARS TO THE ALAMEDA THEATER.

I WANT TO THANK DEBBIE MONTFORD WHO CHAIRED THE INITIAL PERFORMING ARTS TASK FORCE. SHE IS CURRENTLY CHAIR OF THE SAN ANTONIO SYMPHONY AND CONTINUES TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER. THANK MY WIFE TRACY FOR SERVING ON THE TASK FORCE THAT DEVELOPED THE PLAN.

VOTERS APPROVED 85 MILLION DOLLARS IN VISITOR TAXES TO FUND CONSTRUCTION OF 13 ATHLETIC FACILITIES. FOUR OUT OF THE 13 ARE UNDER CONTRACT AND WILL BE COMPLETED BY YEAR END. GORDON HARTMAN'S PARK, INCLUDING COUNTY-FUNDED SOCCER FIELDS, WILL BE COMPLETED THIS SUMMER AND THREE OTHER FACILITIES WILL BE UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THREE MORE OF THE ATHLETIC FIELDS WILL BE UNDER CONTRACT WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. THANK MIKE SCULLEY.

AS PROMISED TO THE VOTERS, IMPROVEMENTS TO THE AT&T CENTER WILL NOT BE MADE UNTIL THE FACILITY IS AT LEAST 10 YEARS OLD.

THE 415 MILLION DOLLARS IN BEXAR COUNTY VISITOR TAX FUNDS WILL LEVERAGE ANOTHER 300 MILLION DOLLARS FROM OUR PARTNERS IN THESE VISITOR TAX PROJECTS.

THE 500 MILLION DOLLAR, TEN-YEAR REGIONAL FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM CONTINUES IN ITS SECOND YEAR. CITIZENS REPRESENTING EACH OF THE MAJOR WATERSHEDS PARTICIPATED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROGRAM THROUGH THE WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE. 24 PROJECTS ARE UNDER DESIGN AND WILL GENERATE 85 MILLION DOLLARS IN CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS IN THE NEXT 2 YEARS. THANK YOU COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ FOR YOUR WORK ON THIS ISSUE.

IN ADDITION TO INVESTING IN PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH OUR FLOOD CONTROL PROGRAM, THE COUNTY, THROUGH UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, IS INVESTING IN A 900 MILLION DOLLAR PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM CALLED "TARGET 2012".

THE FUNDING WILL DELIVER A STATE-OF-THE-ART EMERGENCY CENTER AND TRAUMA FACILITY TO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AT THE MEDICAL CENTER AND A NEW ACUTE CARE AND CRISIS CARE FACILITY AT THE DOWNTOWN BRADY GREEN CENTER. THIS IS THE FIRST MAJOR INVESTMENT IN OUR HOSPITAL SYSTEM SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1968 AND WILL COMPLEMENT THE MILITARY'S 2 BILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT IN THE CENTER FOR MILITARY MEDICINE. THANK PRESIDENT GEORGE HERNANDEZ AND CHAIR DR. JIMENEZ. THANK YOU COMMISSIONER ELIZONDO FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP ON DEVELOPING THE FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THIS COUNTY INVESTMENT.

TALKING ABOUT INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE, THE WISEST INVESTMENT WE CAN MAKE IS IN OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION. BEXAR COUNTY THROUGH ITS HOSPITAL DISTRICT AND OUR PARTNER, THE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER, WILL SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A MEDICAL CAREERS HIGH SCHOOL IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BRADY GREEN CENTER.

THIS SCHOOL WILL ADOPT THE EARLY COLLEGE MODEL GIVING STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE AND AT THE SAME TIME EARN UP TO 60 HOURS OF COLLEGE CREDIT. YESTERDAY I MET WITH DENVER MCCLENDON, CHAIR OF THE ACCD BOARD; BRUCE LESLIE, ACCD CHANCELLOR; JAMES HOWARD, CHAIR OF THE SAISD BOARD; AND ROBERT DURON, SAISD SUPERINTENDENT; TO PLEDGE MY SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF THIS NEW PROGRAM WHICH WILL BEGIN AT THE CAMPUS OF THE FORMER TRAVIS ELEMENTARY AND EXPAND TO THE FOX TECH HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS.

WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE THE COUNTY'S CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMS BY CAREFULLY MANAGING YOUR TAX DOLLARS AND BY RESTRICTING INCREASES TO OUR OPERATING BUDGETS. THIS FISCAL YEAR WE HAVE EVEN GONE FURTHER BY IMPOSING A HIRING FREEZE AND ASKING MANAGERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS TO LOOK FOR OTHER SAVINGS.

WE HAVE CREATED DRUG COURTS, DEVELOPED A MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION PROGRAM, BUILT A DETOX CENTER, AND HAVE INVESTED \$10 MILLION IN HAVEN FOR HOPE IN ORDER TO TREAT PEOPLE RATHER THAN THROW THEM IN JAIL. THE DISTRICT JUDGES HAVE A PLAN TO CLEAR THEIR FELONY CASE BACKLOG. DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, JUDGES WILL GIVE DEFENDANTS A LAST CHANCE TO SETTLE CASES THAT HAVE BEEN PENDING FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. THOSE CASES THAT AREN'T SETTLED WILL IMMEDIATELY GO TO TRIAL. THIS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MOVE MORE THAN 3,000 CASES AND LOWER OUR JAIL POPULATION. WE DO NOT WANT TO BUILD ANYMORE EXPENSIVE JAILS.

WE WILL BE LOOKING FOR OTHER COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS TO BRING FORWARD THEIR IDEAS TO REDUCE SPENDING BECAUSE IN THE UPCOMING BUDGET WE WILL DO AS YOU DO AT HOME, LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS AND NOT INCREASE THE PROPERTY TAX RATE.

BECAUSE OF BUDGET CONSTRAINTS POSED BY THE CURRENT ECONOMY IT IS VITAL THAT OUR PUBLIC INVESTMENTS BE EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND STIMULATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

I SEE TRANSPORTATION AS AN ELEMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. A JOINTLY APPOINTED CITY COUNTY COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED OUR COMMUNITY INCREASE SPENDING ON OUR PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM. WE ARE FAR BEHIND DALLAS, HOUSTON, AUSTIN AND ALL OTHER MAJOR AMERICAN CITIES. A MORE ROBUST PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WILL HELP PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND COULD LEAD TO MORE COMPACT DEVELOPMENT. WE NEED A TRANSIT SYSTEM THAT WILL GIVE RIDERS A CHOICE: BUS, COMMUTER RAIL, LIGHT RAIL, STREET CARS, AND BUS RAPID TRANSIT. REPRESENTATIVE MIKE VILLARREAL AND SENATORS JEFF WENTWORTH AND JOHN CARONA HAVE FILED BILLS TO GIVE OUR COMMUNITY FUNDING OPTIONS TO INVEST IN TRANSIT IF VOTERS CHOOSE TO DO SO.

RAIL RELOCATION IS CRITICAL TO DEVELOPING A COMMUTER RAIL SYSTEM ALONG THE AUSTIN-SAN ANTONIO CORRIDOR. I WILL BE MEETING WITH UNION PACIFIC OFFICIALS LATER THIS WEEK TO CONTINUE TO PUSH RAIL RELOCATION. THE LEGISLATURE NEEDS TO FUND THE RAIL RELOCATION EFFORT.

WHILE WE KNOW WE CAN'T RELY SOLELY ON FEDERAL FUNDING, WE NONETHELESS ARE WORKING TO BRING STIMULUS DOLLARS TO SAN ANTONIO. THE TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION WILL VOTE TOMORROW ON HOW FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION STIMULUS DOLLARS WILL BE ALLOCATED ACROSS THE STATE. WE ARE ASKING FOR FUNDS TO ADDRESS THE 281-1604 EXCHANGE AS WELL AS FOR OTHER PROJECTS.

I WANT TO THANK COMMISSIONER ADKISSON. FOR HIS LEADERSHIP ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HIS TAKING ON CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND COMBINING THE MPO AND ALAMO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS.

COMMISSIONER ADKISSON WAS GREEN BEFORE BEING GREEN WAS COOL. HE WAS A LEADER IN CREATING THE METROPOLITAN PARTNERSHIP FOR ENERGY IN 2002 WHICH HAS FOCUSED IN RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES. CPS ENERGY HAS ALSO TAKEN THE LEAD IN DEVELOPING WIND GENERATED ELECTRICITY WHILE AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING OUR ELECTRIAL RATES VERY COMPETITIVE.

THANK MAYOR HARDBERGER FOR HIS LEADERSHIP IN THE GREEN MOVEMENT.

WE MUST WORK SMARTER AND USE OUR ECONOMIC DELVEOPMENT RESOURCES MORE EFFECTIVELY. ACCORDING TO SA INC.'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT "CENSUS" THERE ARE 84 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS. THESE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE A COMBINED OPERATIONAL BUDGET OF MORE THAN 150 MILLION DOLLARS, 350 EMPLOYEES AND HAVE MORE THAN 10-THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS. WITH SO MANY NONPROFIT, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES INVOLVED WE ARE DUPLICATING EFFORTS AND WASTING RESOURCES. IT IS TOO EASY TO GET OUR WIRES TANGLED AND NOT REALIZE THAT THESE DISJOINTED EFFORTS WORK AT CROSS PURPOSES.

WE NEED TO EVALUATE, CONSOLIDATE, AND REALIGN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. THE GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP, THE NORTH TEXAS COMMISSION, AND THE GREATER PHOENIX ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP PROVIDE GOOD EXAMPLES OF HOW OTHER COMMUNITIES HAVE CONSOLIDATED AND COMBINED RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY GROW THEIR LOCAL ECONOMIES. WE NEED TO BEGIN THESE CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS TODAY IN ORDER TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL TOMORROW.

OUR NEWEST COURT MEMBER, COMMISSIONER WOLFF, IS THE COURT LIAISON TO OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. HE JUST RETURNED FROM L.A. WHERE HE WAS PART OF A DELEGATION VISITING A MAJOR COMPANY WHICH IS LOOKING TO LOCATE PART OF ITS OPERATION HERE.

WE HAVE MUCH TO OFFER WITH OUR STRONG BIO-MED INDUSTRY, THE EXPANDING MILITARY MEDICAL MISSION, GREAT QUALITY OF LIFE AND RELIABLE LOW-COST ENERGY. LUKIN GILLILAND'S \$50 MILLION TARGETED TECHNOLOGY FUND, AND UTSA'S TRANSFER TECHNOLOGY EFFORT, BIO MED, AND SATAI WILL ENTREPRENEURIAL EFFORTS TO GROW OUR BIO-MED INDUSTRY.

TODAY I'M CALLING UPON YOU ALL TO DO AS BEXAR COUNTY CONTINUES TO DO: PURSUE NEW ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES; INVEST IN YOUR COMPANIES AND IN THIS COMMUNITY AND ITS FUTURE. MY WIFE TRACY IS CLOSE TO STARTING A NEW COMPANY. WE WILL INVEST ALMOST EVERY NICKLE THAT WE HAVE. THAT'S HOW MUCH CONFIENCE WE HAVE IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY AND OUR COMMUNITY.

THIS IS NOT JUST AN OPPORTUNITY; IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT DEMOCRACY.

I WANT TO THANK EACH OF YOU IN THIS ROOM FOR FULFILLING YOUR CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGE YOU TO CONTINUE TO DO SO.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THIS COMMUNITY IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES FOR THESE LAST EIGHT YEARS AS YOUR BEXAR COUNTY JUDGE. BECAUSE I WISH TO CONTINUE TO USE MY TIME AND MY EXPERIENCE TO ADVANCE THIS COMMUNITY, I WILL BE ASKING YOU TO ELECT ME TO ONE MORE TERM.

MANY PEOPLE ARE LOOKING TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SOLVE OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. BUT THE ANSWER IS NOT IN WASHINGTON — IT IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US. YOU IN THIS ROOM ARE SMART AND CAPABLE. YOU RUN BUSINESSES. YOU MANAGE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES. YOU HAVE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT.

BY INVESTING OUR OWN DOLLARS IN OUR OWN LOCAL PROJECTS WE WILL NOT ONLY STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY BUT ALSO POSITION THIS COMMUNITY TO THRIVE IN THE FUTURE.

AND WHEN THE REST OF THE NATION STARTS TO PICK
ITSELF UP OFF THE MAT AFTER THIS ECONOMIC SLIP, BEXAR
COUNTY AND SAN ANTONIO WILL BE A MUCH MORE
DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE, RAISE A FAMILY AND OPERATE A
BUSINESS.

THANK YOU