Gov. Rick Perry’s Remarks Regarding the Chihuahua Partnership

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Wednesday, October 20, 2004

Thank you Mayor Wardy. Senator Shapleigh, thank you for welcoming us to the great city of El Paso. As this is the last time we all will be together this year as governors, I want to take the opportunity to recognize the contributions of Governor Tomás Yarrington of Tamaulipas, an honorable leader, a good friend, and a great neighbor. It has truly been my honor to work alongside you over the past four years, and I can say with confidence that the people of Tamaulipas and Texas have brighter futures because of your service. Thank you, Governor.

I also want to congratulate Governor Reyes Baeza on his recent election, and I extend my deepest gratitude for all that he, Governor Gonzalez and Governor Martinez are doing to improve the lives of citizens on both sides of the border. The friendships we are cultivating are helping create greater opportunity and improve the quality of life for our respective citizens, and I thank you for your leadership.

The United States and Mexico have a special bond. Not only are we connected by a common border, but in many respects a common way of life. We live and work in a virtually borderless marketplace, we celebrate a blended culture, and millions of our people trace their family roots to common ancestors. Our nations share hundreds of years of history, but more importantly, we share a common future. And I can envision no scenario in which we can succeed if we pursue separate paths to that future. That is why earlier this year, Texas, Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and Nuevo León took the historic step of entering into a Regional Partnership for Progress. This broad agreement joined our states together in the cause to improve healthcare, provide cross-border educational opportunities, protect our water and air, and expand trade and job creation on both sides of our shared border.

Today, we are strengthening our cooperative relationship by welcoming the state of Chihuahua into the Regional Partnership for Progress. Governor Reyes Baeza, I want to thank you for your commitment to creating greater opportunity, security and prosperity for our peoples. And I look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming years to improve the lives of our citizens.

There is much that we must do as partners and neighbors, and much that can be accomplished when we work together to promote our common interests in a spirit of cooperation, as the past four years prove. Together, we have worked to tear down barriers to trade and economic progress.

Today, there are 12 separate industries in Texas that export more than $1 billion in goods and products to Mexico
each year, and our exports to Mexico were up 22 percent during the first quarter of 2004. And increased trade with Texas is benefiting workers on the southern side of the border too, with more than half of the new jobs created in Mexico linked to the export industry. Together, we have made progress on the issue of the water treaty. This year Texas farmers received a full year’s supply of water in time for the planting season, and we are continuing to search for a long term solution to treaty issues. And together, we have taken steps to coordinate transportation efforts to ease the movement of people and goods between our nations, and to better link Mexican land ports to opportunity in the United States and Canada. Today, we are renewing our commitment to always seek common ground, to maintain an open dialogue, and to work with one another to build a better tomorrow for all the people of Texas and Mexico, because the future we share depends on our ability to do so.

May this agreement represent just the beginning of a lasting relationship that brings greater opportunity and progress for our people. Thank you. At this time, it is my distinct honor to introduce an outstanding leader and good friend, the Governor of Nuevo Leon, José Natividad González Parás.