Gov. Rick Perry’s Remarks Regarding Tyson Foods and the Texas Enterprise Fund

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

Monday, January 31, 2005

Thank you. Mayor Star, local elected officials and business and community leaders, thank you for joining us today and for your work in making this announcement possible. And let me say a very special thank you to John Tyson, Gene Leman and the entire Tyson Foods family for their commitment to creating jobs for the people of Texas.

I am honored to be joined today by two friends and partners in state government, Senator Estes and Representative Phillips, whose leadership in the 2003 legislative session was instrumental in establishing the $295 million Texas Enterprise Fund, the job creation tool that brings us here to Sherman today. Because of the Enterprise Fund, Texas has shattered all kinds of economic development records. We landed the largest capital investment in the nation for 2003, a $3 billion Texas Instruments semiconductor plant. Last year, we persuaded Vought Aircraft to bring 3,000 new jobs to North Texas, which stood out as the largest job expansion nationwide for 2004 until we beat our own record by securing an expansion by Countrywide Financial. With 7,500 new jobs, it was the largest job creation project announced in the last four years. Austin will gain 500 Home Depot corporate jobs. Citgo is bringing 700 jobs to its new headquarters in Houston and even smaller towns like Ennis, New Braunfels and Nacogdoches will experience job growth thanks to the Texas Enterprise Fund. It’s no wonder that Site Selection Magazine called the Enterprise Fund the state’s “not-so-secret weapon” in the battle to create jobs when it named Texas the number one state in America to do business.

Today we are building upon the Enterprise Fund’s tremendous record of success, but more importantly, we are announcing an expansion that will help hundreds of Sherman families build a brighter future. I am proud to announce that the state of Texas is investing $7 million from the Texas Enterprise Fund to help Tyson Foods bring 1,600 additional jobs to Sherman. This is the largest job creation announcement in the United States so far for 2005 and further proof that the Enterprise Fund is a key reason Texas is leading the nation to economic recovery. Tyson will establish their largest case-ready meat packing plant in the nation right here in Sherman, employing as many as 500 construction workers during the build out process and up to 1,600 regular employees by 2008. And to make sure these new workers have the skills needed to safely and efficiently package more than six million pounds of beef and pork each week, the state of Texas is also committing an additional $3 million in workforce training funds from the Texas Workforce Commission.

In total, Tyson will make a $100 million capital investment in the Texas economy, an amazing ten-fold return on the state’s $10 million investment. That investment means more money circulating in our economy and more revenue
generated for critical priorities like healthcare and education, in addition to more folks in Sherman having the opportunity to work hard and provide for their families. The competition for this project was tough. Tyson has more than 300 facilities and offices across the globe and could have taken this project elsewhere. But because of our cooperative efforts and the incentives we were able to provide from the Enterprise Fund, Sherman and the entire state of Texas will reap tremendous benefits.

Since we created the Texas Enterprise Fund some 18 months ago, we have allocated more than $200 million to bring nearly 24,000 new jobs to Texas and pump more than $6 billion into our economy. I have asked the legislature to authorize $300 million to replenish the Enterprise Fund so we can continue to let the world know that Texas is wide open for opportunity. With continued investments in the Texas Enterprise Fund, we can build a solid foundation for future prosperity, one job at a time.

Let me close by saying how grateful Texas is for the Tyson commitment. We appreciate the investment they have made in our people and our future, and we look forward to growing our partnership for many years to come. Thank you. At this time please join me in welcoming John Tyson, Chairman and CEO of Tyson Foods.