Thank you, Dr. John Whitmore. It is an honor to be here on the campus of a great university, and with the leaders who are making it even better through a new and innovative public-private partnership.

Texas Tech has long been recognized as an international leader in agricultural science. Graduates and researchers at this university have helped Texas remain one of the strongest agriculture states in America, and stay on the cutting edge of agriculture technology research and development.

With the global marketplace steadily marching towards a technology-based future, it is more important than ever before that Texas do all it can to attract top-notch researchers and technology employers that will form the backbone of tomorrow’s economy.

That is why I proposed and signed into law the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, a $200 million tool dedicated to improving research at our universities, helping start-up technology firms get off the ground sooner, and speeding the process of moving new inventions out of the lab and into the hands of consumers.

Today I am proud to announce that the very first Emerging Technology Fund award of nearly $2 million is coming here to Lubbock to help make Texas Tech the international leader in agricultural genomics research and development, and help make this region of Texas the fiber capital of the world.

I want to thank the leadership of Texas Tech, as well as Bayer CropScience, local leaders and members of the private sector, for making this opportunity possible by joining together to establish the new International Center of Excellence in Agriculture Genomics and Biotechnology.

Dr. Whitmore, Mike Gilbert, thank you for your leadership.

When I proposed the Emerging Technology Fund, it was exactly this type of investment opportunity that I had in mind. Local leaders had already done much of the groundwork to create the International Center.

And like an expansion team in the NFL, all they needed now was to draft a star quarterback to build a championship
That's where the Emerging Technology Fund came in.

With the state’s $2 million investment, we are bringing one of the world’s premiere cotton geneticists to Texas Tech, Doctor Thea Wilkins.

Doctor Wilkins, thank you for accepting this important assignment, and welcome to Texas.

After serving as the director of the Cotton Functional Genomics Center at the University of California-Davis for the past three years, Doctor Wilkins will become the new director of genomics at the International Center here at Texas Tech.

She is, without a doubt, the ideal candidate for this position.

Doctor Wilkins has generated over 75 professional journal publications, is a regular featured speaker at genomics seminars and international symposiums, and has helped secure more than $6.5 million in competitive grants for her various research projects.

For six years, she has worked under contract with Bayer CropScience, and is in the final stages of testing several new patented products that should enter the marketplace in less than two years.

With her leadership, and the work of her research team, the International Center will use cutting edge genomics and biotechnology to develop new agriculture products that will serve as the foundation for new business ventures.

If you think about how companies like Bayer have already grown in recent years, from four employees to 70 here in Lubbock in just 6 years, and contributing more than $250 million to statewide economy, and then consider the growth that will undoubtedly occur as a result of the International Center, it's easy to see how the innovations that occur as a result of Doctor Wilkins’ work will lead to the creation of hundreds or even thousands of new Texas jobs as employers like Bayer take these new products to the marketplace.

And Texas will also see millions of dollars in new farm-related income as growers increase production to meet higher demand.

Doctor Wilkins’ technology advancements will also help farmers improve crop production quality, meaning Texas producers will be able to compete at a higher level in the global marketplace.

To be perfectly honest, there were a number of other states and universities that were aggressively competing with Texas to lure Doctor Wilkins and her research team.

But because of the Emerging Technology Fund, Texas Tech, the Texas agricultural industry, and the entire state will reap benefits far greater than our $2 million investment.

I am proud that the Emerging Technology Fund could help make this partnership possible.

Thank you. And now it is my honor to introduce the new Director of Genomics at the International Center of Excellence in Agriculture Genomics & Biotechnology... Doctor Thea Wilkins.