Gov. Perry Promotes Recruitment of NBAF to San Antonio

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

Thursday, October 09, 2008

Thank you, Madame Secretary [Andrade] and thank you for the remarkable work you’re doing for our state. During your years as a business and community leader in San Antonio, there was no more enthusiastic salesperson for this city. We’re fortunate you’re now applying that same energy and enthusiasm to telling the story of Texas.

I’m pleased to stand here today with a group of state and local leaders, from the public and private sector, who share my passion for recruiting the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility to Texas.

Yesterday, Lt. Gov. Dewhurst, Speaker Craddick and I sent a joint letter to Secretary Cohen of the Department of Homeland Security, reiterating our shared commitment to doing what it takes to get this facility placed in Texas.

Working with the organizations represented here, Texas has committed more than $100 million to the effort, including $56 million that the Speaker, the Lt. Governor and I have pledged to secure through the legislative appropriations process.

To echo the leaders who spoke before me, I am certain that the folks at the Department of Homeland Security, who are figuring out where to put this facility, won’t need to see any other sites once they get a look at what Texas has to offer.

As a border state with more than 23 million citizens, Texas understands the crucial need to preserve homeland security. As a state with an innovative business culture and robust biotechnology industry, Texas is uniquely suited to host this facility. In fact, biotechnology is one of six main industry clusters that we have identified as essential to our future economic success.

Just a few months ago, I accepted a report from my Competitiveness Council, a group I had challenged to identify the issues affecting our state’s ability to compete in an increasingly global economy. Their findings show a state with a strong foundation, including low taxes, a sensible legal system and a reasonable regulatory climate, and their recommendations chart a course into a prosperous future for Texas.

I am eager to move the Council’s recommendations from the conversation stage into the action phase, so that we can focus even more resources on industries of the highest potential, and open the doors of opportunity for all Texans.
Some of those resources include the Texas Enterprise Fund and our Emerging Technology Fund, two funding sources that help us close deals, commercialize technology, and create jobs for Texans.

When it comes to creating jobs and drawing investment, this facility would have a major impact on this region and our state. This facility will put San Antonio – and Texas – on the map as a major player in biotechnology and national defense.

As we have partnered with the local leaders you see here today, and forged a consensus with the leaders of our state legislature, I hope that our Congressional delegation will join us in our push to bring this project to San Antonio.

There are those who might wonder why we would press forward with an effort like this, considering the turmoil on the national financial scene, but investments like this that create jobs and draw investment are an essential part of a viable economic strategy.

Recruiting the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility to San Antonio will have a tremendously positive impact on the local and state economy. San Antonio, with its skilled workforce and robust biotechnology industry, will provide the Facility the resources it needs to fulfill its vital role in our national defense.

Texas is well-known as the nation’s leader in energy production, job creation and exports. I firmly believe we can also become the leader in biotechnology, yielding advances that will save lives and protect our nation.

Thank you all for being here. Texas is truly indebted to you for your hard work on its behalf. May God bless you all and may He continue to bless the great state of Texas.