Gov. Perry: TETF Investments Have a Strong Impact on Our State

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

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Thank you, Dr. [Robert] Nelsen, [President, UT-PA], for that introduction, and congratulations to you and the folks here at UT-Pan American for the investment you’re making in the local economy.

In the business world, competition is king with companies battling for supremacy in a particular area but this is one of those unique cases where teamwork creates a positive situation for all involved.

I am here today to announce a number of Emerging Technology Fund investments which will help fund significant collaboration between the public and private sectors along with researchers from local universities.

These efforts, in which new ideas forged in university laboratories are accelerated into the marketplace are an essential part of our strategy to keep the Texas economy strong during the current global economic troubles.

This facility is a prime example of that approach. The Rapid Response Manufacturing Center is the kind of place where new ideas take shape.

As you know, one of the biggest challenges facing any business is to stay ahead of the competition in the race to move a product from the great idea phase onto design, testing, manufacturing and distribution.

Often times, those phases are conducted in different locations, with different personnel, and sometimes different standards which, together, can delay a product’s development and limit its chances for success.

Thanks to a group of visionary leaders like Dr. Charles Sorber, this facility accelerates and streamlines that process giving partner companies an edge on their competition around the world.

This area has no shortage of manufacturing facilities, with maquiladoras across the border and factories all across the Valley so the addition of this center will enhance their effectiveness. Because that enhanced effectiveness will lead to new jobs, new investment and potentially life-saving products the state of Texas is happy to direct an investment from the Emerging Technology Fund in the amount of approximately $3.4 million.

It is our sincere hope that this investment will be the tipping point accelerating the important work done at this facility and putting the Valley and our state on the radar of even more employers around the world who are looking for a place with resources to help them succeed.
This investment is intended to help the culture of innovation in this area and across our state reach critical mass and exert an even greater magnetic pull on the high-tech jobs, private investment and hard working entrepreneurs that are the building blocks of our economy.

This is an example of the Texas approach to a strong economy one characterized by incentives and innovation instead of Washington-style mandates and red tape. As our state and nation begin a new year, we find ourselves still dealing with the impact of a global economic crisis and discovering that Washington's approach to economic stimulus is creating debt instead of jobs.

I much prefer the Texas model where we don't spend all the money we keep our regulations predictable ensure a fair legal system and demand an accountable public school system.

I credit those key priorities, combined with a whole lot of effort by hardworking Texans for our state’s current national lead in certain key categories.

For example, in November, Texas recorded the largest over-the-month increase in employment of any state in the country for the second straight month.

As of the latest report, we still have the lowest unemployment rate of the nation's ten largest states. In fact, Texas is the only Top 10 state with more jobs today than it had before things started heading south about three years ago.

For the bean counters in the audience, that means we’re up more than 187,000 jobs since 2006.

That could be why CEO Magazine considers Texas the best place to do business why Moody’s Economy lists seven Texas metropolitan areas among their “first cities to emerge from recession” and the Small Business and Entrepreneurial Council ranked Texas in the top three states for small business and entrepreneurship.

Employers understand that Texas “gets it” when it comes to jobs.

They understand that we want them here and that we’re doing what we can to attract them including investments like the ones we’re discussing today.

I am confident that this center will rev this area’s economic engine. Now to discuss the vision that led to its creation, I would like to introduce Dr. Miguel Gonzalez, Associate Dean, College of Science and Engineering, here at UT-Pan American.

Dr. Gonzales?

Thank you, Miguel, and congratulations to the whole team here at UT Pan-American for achieving this milestone.

Now, this Rapid Response Manufacturing Center isn’t the only ETF investment we’re here to announce.

I am also glad to announce another ETF investment in the energy sector, which flows out of our state’s proud history as the nation’s leading energy provider.

Many people know that Texas leads the nation in oil production and refining but that’s not the only sector where we have an advantage.

Some folks are surprised to learn that we also lead the nation with a wind generation capacity that exceeds all but four other countries.

In order to meet the energy needs of our growing population and robust economy, we have pursued an all-of-the-above approach mixing in oil and gas along with solar, wind and biofuels.
Our second grant is intended to spur innovation in biofuels in a way that does not compete with our food supplies by providing a “pre-seed commercialization grant” for a company called Photon 8.

Their research focuses on ways to grow algae on arid land then convert it to biofuel.

This $250,000 grant will allow Photon8 to expand their current facilities and refine their extraction technology as they work to create yet another energy source for our state.

Here to discuss it with you is the Chief Executive Officer of Photon 8, Mr. Brad Bartilson. Brad?

Thank you, Brad and good luck with your project as you continue your innovative approaches to meeting our nation's energy needs.

Our third ETF investment is intended to spur the development of new technologies that will enhance the safety of our food supply.

It seems barely a week goes by without news of a food-borne illness somewhere across the nation and the accompanying stories of lost school days, work days and even lives.

I am especially encouraged by the progress being made by a company called ScanTech which is pioneering new “cold pasteurization” approaches to ensuring our food supply is cleaner and safer while eliminating a number of health concerns that have been raised about some traditional chemical treatments.

I am proud to announce that the state of Texas has made an Emerging Technology Fund investment of $2 million for ScanTech to move its headquarters from Georgia to Texas and continue their potentially lifesaving work here.

Now, to discuss the groundbreaking work being done by ScanTech, I would like to introduce their Director of Operations, Mr. Chip Starns. Chip?

Thank you, Chip and welcome to Texas.

There is no question that these three essential investments will have a strong impact across our state but they will definitely make a difference here in the Valley.

To discuss that difference, I would like to introduce to you the man who goes to bat for you in Austin Senator Chuy Hinojosa. Senator?

Thank you, Chuy and thank you for having us down here today.

Another son of the Valley who is not only well-known, but also well-respected in your state capitol is Representative Eddie Lucio, III.

Eddie, can you share your thoughts as well?

Thank you, Eddie.

The investments we’re announcing here today are an essential part of our ongoing strategy to establish Texas as the go-to place for innovation and sensible incentives.

Since its founding, we have used this fund to accelerate 98 companies investing $126 million in commercialization efforts and devoting another $153 million to grant matching and research superiority efforts.

This program has caught the attention of the private sector as well. Just today, National Instruments announced a new “NI Texas Emerging Technology Grant Program” which provides software and training services to companies that receive ETF investments.
Their LabView software will be an essential tool for those young companies that are making the transition from the university lab to the marketplace.

NI's program is just another example of the critical mass that is building in Texas and the team approach we're taking to breeding success into our high tech companies.

The benefits of those investments will have a global impact and will be felt in this state for a long time to come in the form of jobs for our citizens increased private sector investment and a better quality of life across the board.

I'd be happy to take questions from our friends in the working press here with us today.