Gov. Perry Announces Natura World Opening Wichita Falls Manufacturing Facility
*Texas Enterprise Fund Investment to Create More Than 400 New Jobs*

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

Friday, February 26, 2010

Thank you Tim [Chase, President of Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce] for that introduction and thank you all for being here today. It's always a pleasure to be in Wichita Falls, the City that Faith Built.

Before we begin, I'd like to pause and reflect on the life of Charlye Farris…an important member of this community, who lost her valiant battle with cancer last week. Charlye was a trailblazer in the true Texas spirit, who wouldn't take "no" for an answer as she pursued her dreams, and became the first African-American woman ever admitted to the Texas State Bar.

I had the honor of appointing Charlye to the Board of Regents here at Midwestern State in 2006, where she served with distinction and grace. My thoughts are with her family, including her 104-year-old mother, Roberta and her son, Troy. Charlye was such a supporter of Wichita Falls that she would have rejoiced at today’s news…that 400 jobs are coming to North Texas.

This is important news because there are still too many Texas families dealing with the challenges of joblessness, although Texas has done well during the global economic crisis. Our work is not done until every Texan who wants a job has a job. That’s why we work so hard to preserve an economic climate, where innovation is rewarded, and employers have the best chance to succeed.

I believe those efforts contributed to a recent declaration from a well-known economist who described Texas as "last in and first out", of this current economic crisis. He justified that by citing our job growth at the end of 2009, and an unemployment rate that has stayed nearly two points below the national average.

According to the Workforce Commission, our unemployment rate is the lowest among the nation’s ten largest states, and we produced more private sector jobs than any other state in the nation over the past ten years. Forbes Magazine says our debt level the lowest of the ten largest states.

Texas was recently named the top exporting state in the country…for the eighth straight year…and we’re still home to more Fortune 500 companies than any other state.

These remarkable numbers indicate an economy with a strong core, and a state government with leaders like Senator Craig Estes, committed to strong fiscal discipline, and willing to stick to the basics.
The success of our state is built primarily on the efforts of hardworking Texans, undertaken in a climate shaped by a simple set of rules. First, we don't spend all the money, so we have a balanced budget and billions of dollars set aside for a rainy day. Second, we have established a regulatory climate that is predictable, so that employers know what to expect when they're risking their capital.

Third, we reformed our legal system to cut down on over-suing which has improved access to healthcare all across our state. Fourth, we have worked to create an accountable school system that is better preparing our children to compete in the workforce.

Those principles apply in the state capitol, just like they apply in small towns, in businesses, and in family finances. Combined with the legendary Texas work ethic, those principles continue to attract employers, who know that they'll get the chance to succeed in Texas.

The latest employer to take advantage of our state’s favorable business climate is Natura World, Inc., which is ready to expand from its base in Canada, after 15 years of success. I’m here to announce that Texas is investing $1.5 million from the Texas Enterprise Fund, to help Natura World establish its U.S. headquarters right here in Wichita Falls.

This new facility will enable Natura World to ramp up production of its organic mattresses and bedding products, with a local workforce that has established “Made in Texas” as a symbol for quality the world over.

This new facility will create over 400 new jobs for Texans, and bring in almost $25 million in capital investment. The Enterprise Fund was created for this very purpose, to close deals that bring jobs to our state.

Natura World’s expansion here in Wichita Falls is the culmination of a collaborative effort between the Texas Enterprise Fund, civic and business leaders in Wichita Falls and Wichita County, as well as the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce. I’m especially grateful to Tim Chase for his tireless efforts.

Over the past 7 years, this collaborative approach with the Enterprise Fund has occurred all across Texas, in towns big and small, securing nearly 52,000 new Texas jobs, and more than $14.3 billion in capital investment, that could have gone elsewhere.

Efforts like this to keep jobs in Texas, along with the paychecks that go with them, are entirely worth the investment. On behalf of more than 24 million Texans, I congratulate Natura World on this expansion, and wish you success in your efforts.