



# Introduction

With its enormous size, vast array of natural resources and large population, Texas plays a significant role in the nation's economy. Our diverse economy helped buffer Texas from the national recession during most of 2008, making it one of the last states to lose jobs.

As other states began shedding jobs during the last half of 2008, Texas gained jobs. It is important to all Texans that the state continues to grow and to discover new opportunities. The role of state government is to create and foster an environment in which this can happen.

The Texas Comptroller analyzes factors affecting the state's economy and uses this information to prepare its biennial forecast of state revenue. The agency's economists keep their fingers on the pulse of the state, detecting changes as they occur and identifying trends that will affect the state's future.

In January 2008, the Comptroller began a series of reports called *Texas in Focus*. The first report, *A Statewide View of Opportunities*, examined issues affecting the state and its economy as a whole. Other reports in the series examine each of the state's 12 economic regions. Previous volumes looked at the High Plains, South Texas, Upper East Texas, Central Texas and Upper Rio Grande regions, providing detailed data and analysis specific to each.

This seventh report in the series, *Texas in Focus: Alamo Region*, examines issues



The Alamo, San Antonio

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affecting an economic region that includes the Alamo Area Council of Governments and the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission. The Alamo region consists of 19 counties in the south-central portion of the state and includes the cities of San Antonio, Seguin, New Braunfels, Kerrville, Fredericksburg and Victoria (**Exhibit 1**).

This report provides information on the forces driving change in the Alamo region, and examines factors that may affect the development of its economy. State leaders, county and city officials, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations and the general public can use this report to stay on top of important issues as they work to keep their local economies thriving. Areas explored in this report include:

### Economic Development

The Alamo region's economic outlook remains favorable, with job growth similar to statewide patterns. Both statewide and regional employment growth are expected to accelerate in 2010 following slow growth in 2009. Alamo regional employment should rise by 23 percent between 2003 and 2013, despite the current national downturn.

Employment in educational and health services should lead all industries in growth at 44 percent through 2013; the construction sector is also expected to add jobs each year, with employment rising by 38 percent from 2003 to 2013. The financial sector, trade, transportation and utilities, the leisure and hospitality industry, agriculture, natural resources and mining also should experience job growth over this period.

### Demographics

Nearly 88 percent of the region's 2 million residents live in or near San Antonio. Between 2008 and 2013, the region's population should increase by 1.7 percent, along with the growth rate for the state. Three counties in the region were among the nation's 100 fastest growing counties from 2000 to 2008 — Comal (40.5 percent), Kendall (38.5 percent) and Guadalupe (31.6 percent).

The Alamo region is majority Hispanic, at 50.5 percent of the population, followed by Anglos at 40.1 percent and African Americans at 5.9 percent. San Antonio has a relatively young population, with 38 percent of its population under 25, compared to about 32 percent in the region's non-metro counties.

### Infrastructure

The Alamo region's roadways account for 16,634 of the state's total lane miles, or 8.6 percent. The region contains two major trade corridors: Interstate Highway 35, between the U.S. and Mexico, and Interstate Highway 10, traveling east to west across eight states. NAFTA-related trade between the U.S. and Mexico makes I-35 a key corridor for north- and south-bound freight traffic.

The Alamo region includes several state and national parks and historic sites that showcase its scenic beauty and cultural heritage. In 2008, the region's state parks hosted 691,319 visitors.

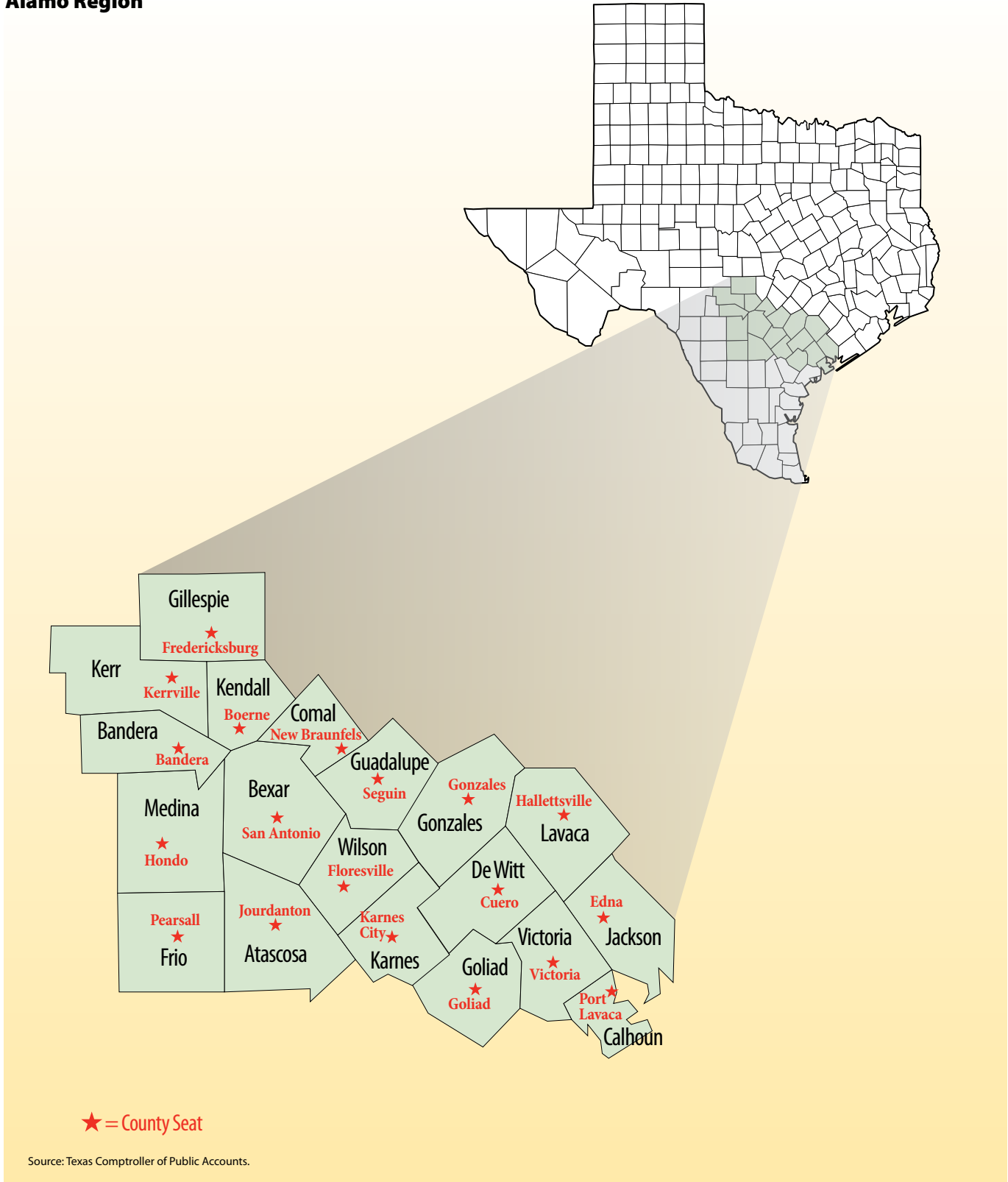
### Health Care

One out of every seven San Antonio workers is employed in the health care and biosciences industry, with 80 percent of these



Exhibit 1

**Alamo Region**





jobs in the health services sector, including hospitals, medical personnel, nursing homes and other specialty providers.

San Antonio is home to the 900-acre South Texas Medical Center, which employs about 25,000 people. Fort Sam Houston's Brooke Army Medical Center, a 1.5 million-square-foot, 450-bed health care facility, provides care to injured military personnel. It also operates the Army Burn Center and the Center for the Intrepid, a rehabilitation facility for severely injured military personnel.

### Education

About 9.4 percent or more than 435,000 of Texas' public elementary and secondary students attend school in the Alamo region. Its school districts vary in size from the Northside ISD in Bexar County, with almost 86,000 students, to the Guardian Angel Performance Arts Academy, also in Bexar County, with just seven students.

The region has seen a slight increase in its number of economically disadvantaged students, from 56 percent in 2001 to 57.3 percent in 2008. Yet 86.2 percent of its campuses are rated Academically Acceptable or better.

In fall 2008, 108,057 students were enrolled in the Alamo region's 16 institutions of higher education. Enrollment in four-year universities and colleges accounted for 45.7 percent of the total. Another 51.5 percent were enrolled in the region's community colleges, while the remaining 2.8 percent attended the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

University of Texas at San Antonio enrollment has risen by 50.9 percent since fall 2000, while enrollment at the University of Houston-Victoria rose by 86.9 percent in that period, both much faster than the statewide enrollment growth of 22.8 percent.