

May 5, 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As Comptroller, I am committed to creating an environment that encourages the Texas economy to thrive. As part of this effort, my office conducts an ongoing study of factors affecting the state economy. One result of this work is our *Texas in Focus* series of reports, which provides unique data and analysis on the state's 12 distinct economic regions. We have designed this series to provide state and local decision-makers with valuable tools for guiding and assisting economic growth.

Today, I am pleased to present our latest regional report, *Texas in Focus: Central Texas*, which examines trends and issues affecting the 20 counties comprising this region, and highlights its challenges and successes.

The Central Texas region's economic outlook remains encouraging. Government and the military, both relatively sheltered from recession, continue to play a prominent role in the Central Texas economy. For example, estimates indicate Fort Hood contributed \$10.9 billion to the Texas economy in 2007. Hospitals and health care providers are expanding to meet the region's needs. Central Texas' public school enrollment is on the rise and its institutions of higher education are increasing their number of graduates, generating a future work force suitable for high-paying jobs in the area.

I hope you will find this report helpful.

Sincerely,

Susan Combs

