



Conclusion

The Central Texas region is poised to continue steady economic growth. Its central location, quality health care and military community have served it well. But to continue its growth, the region must maintain its efforts to sustain and expand its infrastructure, meet the educational demands of its residents and attract new employment opportunities.

Central Texas prairie lands and rolling hills, crossed by rivers and streams, help support its rural character. The region has water supplies from major aquifers, as well as substantial coal, oil and natural gas deposits that should help it sustain strong economic growth. And the region's transportation system includes one of the nation's major transportation arteries, which helps to support both area and statewide economic activity.

The health care industry is a vibrant part of the regional economy. Hospitals are among its largest private employers, and the region also hosts the nation's fourth-largest VA medical complex. Medical services jobs command high salaries in the Central Texas region in occupations requiring a range of educational levels. On average, the region's physicians and surgeons earn a median salary of more than \$143,000. Medical jobs requiring far less postsecondary education are in high demand as well. Four of the region's

five highest-paying jobs requiring an associate degree are in the medical profession, led by diagnostic medical sonographers with median annual earnings of nearly \$86,000.

Central Texas school districts continue to serve a growing number of students. The region has a higher-than-average percentage of school districts and school campuses rated as Academically Acceptable, providing a strong foundation for future educational opportunities. Its 11 higher education institutions are expanding as well, significantly increasing the number of college graduates in Central Texas, and preparing the region's future work force.

The Comptroller's office is ready to help the Central Texas region meet its challenges with information and analysis. For assistance, please contact the Comptroller's Local Government Assistance and Economic Development Division at www.window.state.tx.us/lga or toll-free at (800) 531-5441, ext. 3-4679.

We will continue to provide local and state leaders with detailed information in this continuing series of reports. We hope you look forward to future publications, as we continue to highlight each of the state's 12 economic regions (**Exhibit 52**).

Please see the Comptroller's *Texas in Focus: A Statewide View of Opportunities* (www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif) for a statewide perspective, as well as *Texas in Focus: High Plains* (www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/highplains), *Texas in Focus: South Texas* (www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/southtexas) and *Texas in Focus: Upper East Texas* (www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/uppereast) for a look at our previous regional reports in this series.



Exhibit 52

Map of Economic Regions

