



Conclusion

With a young and rapidly growing population, the South Texas region is poised to continue its economic growth. Maintaining the region's infrastructure, educating its work force and providing an expansive health care system will ensure that the economy continues to grow.

The region's economy should continue its recent success, with job growth expected to outpace the state as a whole over the next four years. Health care and transportation are expected to be among the most competitive industries. The region's young population will be poised to enter these new jobs.

The region also has abundant natural resources, including two rivers, three major aquifers, natural gas reserves and uranium deposits, all of which should help the region sustain strong economic growth. Economic expansion is also supported by a geography and infrastructure conducive to international trade. The acceleration of economic activity in the region, much of it related to international trade, has placed some strains on the region's transportation infrastructure, but plans for improvement should help the region continue to attract new businesses.

The region's rapid population growth has contributed, along with other factors, to a

high growth rate in health care employment. Still, limited access to health care remains a challenge in South Texas. But recent innovations, including an increase in research programs, professional training and new service sites, should improve the quality and accessibility of care in the area.

The South Texas region is also home to school districts that outperform the state in several areas. To educate the region's young population, the area offers more than two dozen higher education campuses that have seen a rapid growth in enrollment, helping to prepare the region's work force of tomorrow.

The Comptroller's office is ready to help the South Texas region meet 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 look forward to providing you with these future publications, which will highlight each of the state's 12 economic regions (**Exhibit 70**).

Please see the Comptroller's *Texas in Focus: A Statewide View of Opportunities* at www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif, for a statewide perspective, and *Texas in Focus: High Plains* at www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/highplains, for a look at the first regional report.



Exhibit 70

Map of Economic Regions

