

October 2, 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As Comptroller, I am committed to creating an environment that encourages the Texas economy to continue to grow. My office stands ready to assist communities and businesses in their efforts to seek out new opportunities and create new jobs. Together we can improve the quality of life of all Texans.

One of our responsibilities at this office is to analyze factors affecting the state's economy. To fulfill part of this responsibility, our office is releasing a series of reports highlighting economic development issues unique to the various regions of this state. *Texas in Focus: South Texas* was released in July 2008 as the second of these regional reports.

Now, I am pleased to present the third in the series, *Texas in Focus: Upper East Texas*. It provides information on the issues that affect this area's 23 counties and highlights many of the region's successes. The region's decision makers will be able to use this report as a tool to drive economic growth.

The Upper East Texas region's economic outlook is good, growing at a strong steady rate paralleling the state's economic outlook. In addition, the region is blessed with abundant natural resources and a comprehensive infrastructure system to help attract business and facilitate future economic growth. The region also is developing the skilled work force needed to continue its economic progress, with a larger share of public schools rated Academically Acceptable or higher than the statewide the average, and with 17 higher education institutions providing needed post-secondary education and training. I hope you will find this report helpful.

Sincerely,

Susan Combs

