



Conclusion

The Upper East Texas region is poised to continue its steady economic growth. The region's beautiful scenery, unique recreational opportunities and small-town family appeal have served it well. But to continue its growth, the region must continue its efforts to maintain and expand its infrastructure, educate its work force and provide quality health care.

The region's economy is expected to grow at a steady rate. Industries such as financial services, professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, construction, and educational and health services should experience 20 to 40 percent job growth by 2012. In addition, employment growth in the region's urban and rural counties will parallel the overall state's growth. The most competitive jobs in the region are centered in the specialty trade contractor, oil and natural gas, mining, general and refrigerated warehousing and storage, civilian federal government and telephone call center industries.

Upper East Texas has abundant natural resources, including 30 lakes and reservoirs, two major and two minor aquifers and some of Texas' largest oil, natural gas and coal reserves, all of which should help it sustain strong economic growth. Economic expansion is also supported by a geography and

infrastructure conducive to interstate trade. The region's transportation system, including two major interstate highways, a proposed trade corridor, hundreds of miles of rail and two commercial airports, should help to support economic activity in the region.

Limited access to health care remains a challenge for Upper East Texas residents. 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.

Upper East Texas has a higher percentage of Academically Acceptable school districts and campuses than the state average. The region also offers 17 higher education institutions and has seen an increase in college enrollment, helping to prepare the region's work force of tomorrow.

The Comptroller's office is ready to help the Upper East Texas region in meeting 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 these future publications, which will highlight each of the state's 12 economic regions (**Exhibit 55**).

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 (www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/highplains) and *Texas in Focus: South Texas* (www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/tif/southtexas), for a look at our previous regional reports in this series.

Exhibit 55

Map of Economic Regions

