

June 25, 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As Texas' Comptroller, I am committed to helping our state cultivate a thriving economic climate. As one 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 of the state's 12 economic regions. We have designed this series to provide state and local decision-makers with tools for guiding and assisting regional economic growth.

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

The economic outlook for the Upper Rio Grande region is promising. Its employment growth should continue, and increasing educational opportunities will help prepare the region's work force for tomorrow's workplace. The military, park tourism and the apparel and footwear industry will continue to be important anchors for its economy.

El Paso's new Paul L. Foster School of Medicine and the construction of the Children's Hospital at Thomason General Hospital will assist the region in meeting its health care needs. Interstate Highway 10, the Foreign Trade Zone at El Paso International Airport and the proposed La Entrada al Pacifico highway should help cement the region's position in international trade.

The people, natural resources and infrastructure of the Upper Rio Grande region should ensure long term economic growth in the region. I hope you will find this report helpful.

Sincerely,

Susan Combs

