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Contact: Joe Stinebaker
Communications Director
O) 713-755-4027
C) 713-503-2610
Joe.Stinebaker@cjo.hctx.net

NEWS RELEASE

WITH IKE AND HARVEY BEHIND HARRIS COUNTY, JUDGE EMMETT SHOWCASES PROGRESS, OPTIMISM *Partnerships Forged in Disasters Result In Greater Public Trust, More Efficient Responses To Challenges, Emmett Says*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett presented his 11th annual State of the County Address today – on the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Ike’s devastating arrival – by noting that county residents have emerged from recent natural disasters better prepared, better educated and more determined to take the steps needed to combat such challenges in the future.

Emmett focused on partnerships and sounded an optimistic tone, addressing a sold-out event of more than 1,000 attendees at the annual speech at the county-owned NRG Center. The event is sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership.

He noted that a recent series of nearly two dozen “community engagement meetings” focusing on the county’s recent \$2.5 billion flood bond issue resulted not only in an overwhelming margin of victory, but further strengthened the ties between Harris County residents and their employees and officials.

“It was an amazing sight to behold,” Emmett said. “At every meeting, county residents of all types met face-to-face with county employees, many of whom spend most of their time behind desks. Suddenly, a human element came into focus instead of abstract numbers and plans. County employees were energized, and the public believed and trusted them. On Aug. 25th, the one-year anniversary of Harvey, Harris County voters approved the flood mitigation bond with 86% voting yes. On that day, Harris County became truly Harris County Strong.”

Emmett noted that the county’s experience with a series of recent floods and national events also has strengthened its experiences with the federal and state government, as well as local governments, private business and not-for-profits throughout the region.

“So, on the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Ike, a storm we thought was one for the ages, Harris County has now endured a worse storm, but we have emerged with unshakeable partnerships and a belief in each other that we can, and must, carry forward into all of our endeavors,” Emmett said. “Harris County is not just strong. Harris County is together and ready to face the future.”

Emmett was introduced at this afternoon’s event by state Rep. Garnet Coleman, the chairman of the House County Affairs Committee.