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NEWS RELEASE

HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE ED EMMETT MEASURES STATE OF COUNTY "IN HUMAN TERMS"

*Emmett Calls For Greater Attention to Infrastructure,
Increased Cooperation Among County, State and Local Officials*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett said Thursday afternoon that Harris County remains among the nation's strongest and most stable local economies despite numerous financial challenges resulting from a global economic slowdown. But Emmett called on those gathered at his third annual State of the County Address to reject complacency and to help focus the county's attention on growing social and infrastructure needs.

"Yes, Harris County is in better shape than almost anywhere else in the country, if not the world," said Emmett. "But more and more in the coming years, the final analysis will be that the state of the county is measured in human terms. If we are shortsighted now, future costs associated with health care, criminal justice and other issues will spiral out of control, leaving us unable to meet either social or infrastructure needs."

Emmett asked the approximately 600 attendees at the Greater Houston Partnership's annual "State of the County Address" to envision the state of Harris County from the viewpoint of many of their neighbors – the mentally ill, the poor, those coping with daily traffic congestion or those still struggling to recover from Hurricane Ike.

"That is why it is so important today to recognize the state of the county from so many different viewpoints," Emmett said. "For my state of the county is a snapshot. Others provide the lens that allows us to look into the future. We are well-positioned to bring that future into focus. It will take all of us in the public, private and non-profit sectors working together to do it, but we have a strong foundation from which to start."

In thanking Houston Mayor Annise Parker for agreeing to provide his introduction, Emmett pointed out that the current economic challenges also provide the city, county and state an opportunity for greater cooperation.

"Our constituents rightly expect Harris County and the City of Houston to work together whenever possible to eliminate duplication and to provide higher levels of efficiency," Emmett said. "For Harris County, that spirit of cooperation goes beyond the City of Houston. It extends to the other 33 incorporated municipalities and even to surrounding counties, because so many of the needs and issues transcend city limits and county boundaries."