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# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE ED EMMETT HIGHLIGHTS COUNTY'S CRITICAL PARTNERSHIP WITH STATE LEGISLATURE, STATE OFFICIALS**

*Emmett's Fourth State of the County Address  
Assures Public That County Will Remain 'Strong and Efficient'*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett praised Harris County's legislative delegation Friday afternoon, saying that the experience and expertise of the area's state representatives and senators will help ensure that Harris County weathers the recent economic challenges.

Emmett spoke to approximately 1,000 attendees of the Greater Houston Partnership's annual "State of the County Address" at the Hilton Americas-Houston Hotel. It was Emmett's fourth State of the County address since he became county judge in March of 2007. He was introduced by Texas Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst.

"Harris County is going to have big changes," Emmett said. "Whether those changes are positive or negative depend upon the vision and courage shown by policymakers at all levels. Transportation, health care - particularly mental health - and criminal justice are those areas which will require special attention."

Emmett also spoke about the changing face of Harris County, as pointed out with the recent release of the results of the 2010 U.S. Census, which showed the county's population surpassing 4 million for the first time.

"Unfortunately, too many analysts and pundits are focusing on the wrong thing. They are trying to divide us into groups of competitors, instead of uniting us as friends and neighbors with shared interests," Emmett said. "Harris County still has some racial divides, but overall, we are now an integrated community and becoming more so. That will be a curse for those who want to draw election districts to produce their particular desired result, but I think it is a blessing for the long-term strength of our society."

Emmett concluded by noting that the county's status is "financially challenging," but noted that "from the experienced eye of El Franco Lee - the senior member of the court - to the bright, fresh look given by Commissioner Jack Morman, the newest member, Commissioners Court will ensure that county government remains strong and efficient."