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NEWS RELEASE

HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE ED EMMETT UNVEILS HIS TOP 10 PRIORITIES FOR 2008

*Emmett Proclaims County In "Excellent" Condition
In His First State Of The County Address*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett outlined numerous county objectives and several of his top initiatives for this year in delivering his 2008 State of the County Address to a gathering of top community leaders this afternoon.

Emmett, who took office in March 2007, used the address to highlight several priorities for county leadership in 2008 – including continued fiscal responsibility, ethics reform, mobility improvement and raising the county's international business profile.

Emmett also praised the county's approximately 16,000 employees, playing a video tribute that highlighted six of them, including deputies Gerald Barnes and Pete Cupial, both of whom were wounded in shootings last year.

"As long as we have dedicated employees like these, the state of the county is excellent," Emmett said.

Emmett's speech also featured a look back at some of the county's accomplishments in 2007, including Commissioners Court's passage of the county's largest-ever property tax cut in October and the maintenance of the county's strong bond ratings.

Ethics reform also figured prominently in Emmett's speech, with the judge informing the gathering of approximately 1,100 that he has already begun a process to make county government "open and transparent" by beginning discussions with the Texas Ethics Commission, county officials and others to develop improvements in public disclosure requirements.

"We must always act to assure the public that government officials and employees are good stewards of their trust," he said. "We must have a commitment to a process that allows all businesses, small and large, to have full access to county work. Open, transparent government is a necessity, so the public will have confidence."