



Date: March 10, 2010
Contact: Joe Stinebaker
Communications Director
O) 713-755-4027
C) 713-503-2610
Joe.Stinebaker@cjo.hctx.net

NEWS RELEASE

HARRIS COUNTY WINS SECOND MAJOR AWARD OF WEEK FOR FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY ON WEB SITE

*National Organization Awards County Perfect Score of A+
For Ensuring Public Access to Wealth of Financial, Political Information*

Harris County is one of only 13 local governments nationwide to be awarded a perfect score on government transparency by Sunshine Review, a national non-profit that recently evaluated the Web sites of every state and more than 5,000 local governments.

Sunshine Review granted Harris County a "Sunny Award" after an evaluation of the county's Web site, www.hctx.net, showed the county provided the necessary public information in all 10 categories evaluated. No other local government in Texas earned a perfect score.

"Sunny Award winners deserve recognition for making information available to citizens and for setting a transparency standard that all governments can, and should, meet," said Mike Barnhart, the president of Sunshine Review.

The award is the second of its kind given to Harris County in the past week. The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts announced March 4 that the county had won the "Gold Leadership Circle Award" for its efforts to make its finances open and accessible to all county residents on its Web site. The county achieved a perfect score in that evaluation as well.

Both organizations evaluated the county's Web site for information on budgets, meetings, check registers, county officials, audits, contracts, lobbying, public records and taxes.

County Judge Ed Emmett said he was proud of the hundreds of county officials and employees who ensure that county residents continue to have all the information needed to take an active and well-informed role in running the nation's third-largest county. The county's Web site is maintained by its Information Technology Center in partnership with all county departments and agencies.

"The awards are no real surprise to me," said Emmett. "Every day, I see county employees meeting with and talking with county residents, happily answering any and all questions. I think there is a genuine, strong sense among county officials and employees that we work for the public, and that our residents should have access to all of the information they need."

More information about the Sunny Award can be obtained by visiting Sunshine Review's Web site at http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/Sunny_Awards.