

## **The Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce 2009 Position Statement**

### **Economic Development**

#### **POSITION**

The Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce recognizes that competitively positioning Texas for business relocations and expansions is essential to Fort Worth's economic growth. We encourage the state legislature to take the following actions:

- Continued funding to the Texas Enterprise Fund, continued funding of the Emerging Technology Fund; both at the current level or above, and continued funding of the Skills Development Fund for workforce training at the current level or above; and
- The chamber recommends that the Economic Development Act be extended until December 31, 2013. This would allow the eligibility of any capital investment project of \$100 million or greater, regardless of research and development status, and all eligible HB1200 projects meeting or exceeding the average weekly wages for Texas.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The 78<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature created the Texas Enterprise Fund with a one-time appropriation for FY 2004-2005 of \$295 million. The fund was designed to allow the state to respond quickly and aggressively to opportunities to attract jobs and capital investment to Texas. Recognizing that the state plays an important role in attracting business investment, encouraging business growth, and supporting local economic development recruitment and retention projects, we believe the Texas Enterprise Fund has demonstrated its effectiveness. In its first year, the program invested \$172 million, attracted \$6 billion in new capital investment to Texas and created 15,000 jobs.

The Emerging Technology Fund was created in 2005 to support commercialization of advanced technologies, as well as medical and scientific breakthroughs. The success of the fund has helped the DFW region's university and corporate research effort. The Fort Worth Chamber expects the support of the Legislature to insure that this positive effect will be ongoing.

Local governments and taxing entities are authorized by the state to offer economic development incentives in the form of property tax abatements, tax increment financing programs for infrastructure improvements, local option economic development sales taxes and Freeport tax exemptions for goods in transit. The successful use of these local economic development tools has resulted in significant business development in Fort Worth and communities throughout Texas. The Texas Economic Development Act enacted in 2001 provides another valuable local economic development incentive tool that is projected to create an estimated 200,000 jobs and increase state general revenue by \$4 billion.

Adopted by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Executive on this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2008.

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Ben Loughry  
Chairman of the Board

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William J. Thornton  
President & CEO