STRENGTHENING OUR PROSPERITY

March 2010

Fellow Public Servants:

Since the last exercise in strategic planning began in March 2008, much has changed in the national economic picture. States across the nation have struggled with severe budget shortfalls and the national economy has yet to rebound as many hoped and predicted. Texas, however, has weathered the economic downturn better than other states and been recognized as an example for other states to follow.

Our position relative to other states is not by accident. Texas has demonstrated the importance of fiscal discipline, setting priorities, and demanding accountability and efficiency in state government. We have built important reserves in our state’s “Rainy Day Fund,” cut taxes on small businesses, and emphasized a stable and predictable regulatory climate in an effort to show that the Lone Star State is a great place to build a business and raise a family.

Over the last year, families across this state and nation have tightened their belts in response to the economic challenges. Government should be no exception. As we begin this next round in our strategic planning process, we must critically reexamine the role of state government by identifying the core programs and activities necessary for the long-term economic health of our state, while eliminating outdated and inefficient functions. We must set clear priorities that will help maintain our position as a national leader now and in the future by:

   Ensuring the economic competitiveness of our state by adhering to principles of fiscal discipline, setting clear budget priorities, living within our means, and limiting the growth of government;

   Investing in critical water, energy, and transportation infrastructure needs to meet the demands of our rapidly growing state;

   Ensuring excellence and accountability in public schools and institutions of higher education as we invest in the future of this state and ensure Texans are prepared to compete in the global marketplace;

   Defending Texans by safeguarding our neighborhoods and protecting our international border; and

   Increasing transparency and efficiency at all levels of government to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse, ensuring that Texas taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money to keep our economy and our families strong.
I am confident we can address the priorities of our citizens with the limited government principles and responsible governance they demand. I know you share my commitment to ensuring that this state continues to shine as a bright star for opportunity and prosperity for all Texans. I appreciate your dedication to excellence in public service and look forward to working with all of you as we continue charting a strong course for our great state.

Rick Perry