

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Texas Workforce Commission Awards Regional Planning Grant

Sherman – More than 30 local leaders representing both the Texas and Oklahoma portions of the Texoma region were on hand this morning when Ms Diane Rath, Commissioner Representing the Public and Chair of the Texas Workforce Commission, presented a check for \$200,000 to help fund a regional Workforce and Economic Development Plan. “This represents the first Interstate project of its kind, and I believe this will be a national model”, Chair Rath said in expressing her excitement over the proposed project.

The process began when several local economic developers, led by Tony Kaai of the Denison Development Alliance, met to begin discussing the advantages of taking a more regional approach to developing projects. The scope of the project is to develop a regional strategic plan for workforce and economic development for the counties and communities within the Texoma Workforce Development and Southern Oklahoma Workforce Investment Areas. These areas include Cooke, Fannin and Grayson Counties in Texas, and Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Coal, Garvin, Johnston, Love, Marshall, Murray, and Pontotoc Counties in Oklahoma.

The Durant Industrial Authority was asked to help make this a reality by partnering with the Denison Development Alliance, and Sherman Economic Development Corporation to participate in this regional Workforce and Economic Development Plan. This is a regional 2 year partnership centered on there being more influence of jobs in Sherman, Denison, and Durant than there is from the Dallas and North Texas metroplex. Tommy Kramer, Executive Director for the Durant Industrial Authority shared his excitement in saying “I am very excited to be able to partner from an economic development standpoint with our friends in Denison and Sherman to promote the Texoma region. This partnership will enable us to work together to create new jobs and improve the quality of life for the area. This is the first regional economic strategic plan where Oklahoma and another state has developed this regional partnership concept.”

Mr. Terry Watson, Associate Director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Office of Workforce Development was also in attendance, and shared Commissioner Rath’s excitement, by saying “We have begun to look at Targeted Industry Clusters in Oklahoma, and we are looking forward to this opportunity to work together to make this region stronger”.

Representatives from both the Texoma Workforce Development and Southern Oklahoma Workforce Investment Boards were on hand for the announcement along with officials from Denison Development Alliance, Sherman Economic Development Corporation, Bonham Economic Development Corporation, and the Durant Industrial Authority.

For more information about the planning process, interested parties should contact Bob Rhoden, Business Services Manager, Workforce Texoma at (903) 957-7408, or bob.rhoden@twc.state.tx.us.