



# El Paso Spotlight

The Voice for El Paso Business

A Membership Publication of The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce

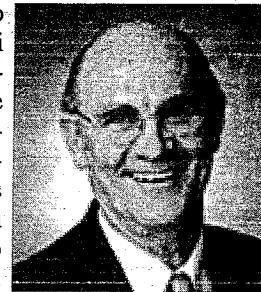
April 2006

## Chamber hosts ninth State of the City address

The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce hosted the Ninth Annual State of the City Address March 30 at the Judson William's Convention Center. More than 700 guests attended to hear Mayor John F. Cook's message of where the city is headed and what has been achieved since he took office.

Richard Dayoub, President of the Chamber, welcomed everyone to the event. After the presentation of the colors and the singing of the National Anthem by city employees Shirley Kaiser, of the El Paso International Airport, and Sergeant Ray

Menchaca, of the El Paso Police Department, Rabbi Larry Bach gave the invocation. The Chairman of the Board, Steve Helbing, introduced the Mayor, after mentioning some of El Paso's acknowledged successes, such as being the 40th best place to live, the 2nd safest large city, the 3rd best city for traffic, the 4th best city for weather, and the 7th most attractive city for retirement.



Mayor John Cook

Mayor Cook began his address by

acknowledging his colleagues on the City Council, and complimented the 6,200 civil servants on the great work they do day in and day out providing all of the city's services. Next, he focused on the economic summit that the Mayor's office hosted late last summer, stating that the end of the summit marked the commencement of this region's journey to eco-

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## City

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conomic prosperity and the establishment of the Mayor's cabinets and the lyceum. More than 25 Chamber volunteers currently serve on the Mayor's cabinets and lyceum.

These cabinets and the lyceum focus on and develop recommendations for Council in the following areas: manufacturing, medical, military, next generation economy, tourism and transportation. These areas are intended to be stimulators for economic development. The Mayor also commented that he hopes to soon develop an education/workforce development cabinet to create a collaborative environment with the area school districts, universities, colleges, and technical training centers, which would enhance economic development opportunities.

The Mayor then outlined the city's strategic goals for the future. In terms of fiscal policy, the Mayor hopes to ensure long-term financial stability and sustainability of the City government. The main strategic goals of the city include: to ensure long-term financial stability and sustainability of the City government; to become the city with the lowest unemployment rate and highest per capita wages in the U.S.; to establish a comprehensive transportation system; to become the most livable city in the U.S. and be recognized as an International City; to become a high performing, customer-focused organization; and lastly, to facilitate opportunities for citizens to be involved in local government.

Other important issues that were address by Mayor Cook included the regional relationships the City has strengthened, such as the one with our sister-city, Ciudad Juarez, and the working relationship with General Lennox, Colonel Burns, Colonel Marquardt and other partners at Fort Bliss.

Finally, the Mayor touched upon accessibility, accountability and focus on community. In this portion of his speech, Mayor Cook highlighted his monthly program "Meet the Mayor Days," feeding the homeless, Thanksgiving meals that were distributed in 2005, and the City's disaster relief efforts in aiding the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Hurricane Katrina evacuees, Fred Brooks, Lionel Johnson and Tommy

Taylor joined Mayor Cook in singing a song that was written about El Paso by one of the evacuees. At the end of the performance, the Mayor and his ensemble received a standing ovation.

The State of the City Address ended on a positive note, with Chamber leadership asking questions of the Mayor that are important to the mission and strategic goals of the Chamber. Thanks to the following individuals for their participation in this portion of the event: Ron Munden, Joe De La Paz, Judy Wendt, Bram Watkins, Miguel Gamino and Rafael Caraveo, Jr.

The success of the Ninth Annual State of the City Address is due, in part, to the sponsorships that were provided by the business community. The Chamber wishes to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of this event: **Star Sponsors:** Bank of the West, Bowling Industries, the El Paso Electric Company, the El Paso Times, Hunt Building Corporation, JDW Insurance, Kemp Smith, LLP, Las Palmas Del Sol Regional Healthcare, Sierra Providence, State National Bank, Stewart Title of El Paso, Texas Gas Service Co., Wells Fargo and Western Refining. **Gold Sponsors:** Access Health Source, Inc., Bear Stearns, Delgado Acosta Spencer Linebarger & Perez, LLP, First Southwest Company, Inter National Bank, Moore Nordell & Kroeger Architects, Scott Hulse Marshall Feuille Finger & Thurmond, PC, and the University of Texas at El Paso; **Silver Sponsors:** CB Richard Ellis, EPT Management, El Paso Housing Authority, El Paso MHMR, Karam Co., Lone Star Title of El Paso, and 3DI/Perspectiva; **Corporate Sponsors:** Charlotte's Furniture, Chase Bank, El Paso Community Foundation, El Paso Empowerment Zone, Greater El Paso Association of Relators, KPMG, LLP, Parkhill Smith & Cooper, Raba-Kistner Consultants, Inc., Ruben E. Guerra Company, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Time Warner, the Upper Rio Grande Workforce Development Board, Western Technical Institute and Wright & Dalbin Architects.

The Chamber's leadership would like to extend its warm appreciation to its staff for the hard work and effort in planning, coordinating and executing this successful event.