

## IN BRIEF

### Celebrating 50 years

Over the next year, NASA will celebrate 50 years of scientific and technological excellence. NASA has powered us into the 21st century through signature accomplishments that are enduring icons of human achievement.

Among those accomplishments are technological innovations and scientific discoveries that have improved and shaped our lives on Earth in a myriad of ways. Please join us as we celebrate the past and look forward to a promising new era of inspiration, innovation, and discovery.

### The 17th annual Washington, D.C., trip

Mark your calendars... Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's Citizens for Space Exploration's annual trip to Washington D.C., will take place May 19 - 22, 2008. This is the 17th year that the grass roots organization will visit our lawmakers in D.C. to advocate for NASA and a robust space exploration program.

For more information on the trip contact David Braun 281-486-5535.

### Recruitment highlight

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership recently published its 2007 Annual Report and 2008 Goals, which highlights economic development at its best. Through the organizations efforts, 2,575 new jobs were created in the region with a payroll impact of \$93 million. A copy of this report can be viewed by visiting [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com).

### Regional development

Barbara Cutsinger, marketing manager for Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, worked with the city of La Porte on the retention of Mustang Engineering. The company will be the primary tenant of a new office building that is being built along 146 and Export Drive. They will initially occupy 40,000 square feet with an option to take an additional 20,000.

Currently, Mustang has about 75 employees with plans to expand up to 150 employees.

The single story building will be approximately 100,000 square feet. Building should be completed by end of 2008.

Also, ground has broken for Fort Worth-based Bimbo Bakeries USA on a 14,950-square-foot distribution center, which will be constructed at 3351 W. Hughes Lane in Dickinson.

The Dickinson location was chosen because it provides good access to the various freeways and is a centralized location for the region. This represents \$750,000 in construction investment. The company anticipates hiring between five and 10 employees. Bimbo Bakeries owns the Mrs Baird's, Oroweat, and Tia Rosa brands.

### Annual report

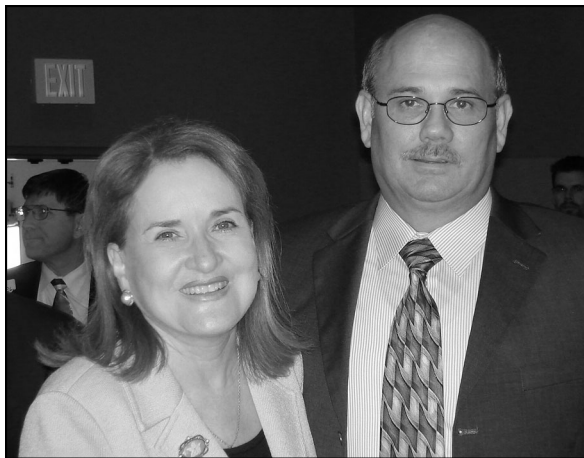
Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership recently released its 2007 annual report and 2008 goals. The organization closed the year with 266 investors, which is the highest level in the history of the organization.

The report can be viewed online at [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com)

### Solutions for small businesses

The Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program is administered through Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It provides technical assistance to small businesses at no charge, and is funded by NASA and the State of Texas.

SATOP is currently assisting a company to refine a device that would permanently anchor mobile homes to prevent excess damage in the case of hurricane force winds. For information on SATOP contact Nick Gardner at 281-486-5535.



Harris County Commissioner Precinct 2 Sylvia R. Garcia discusses economic trends in the region with Bob Mitchell, president of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. Additional special attendees included: Galveston County Commissioner Precinct 4 Ken Clark, and representatives for U.S. Rep Ron Paul, State Rep Larry Taylor and Harris County Judge Ed Emmett.

## The region is expected to fare better than others

With all the recent discussions about the sub prime markets and the possibility of a recession, it was refreshing to hear nationally recognized economists report that the region is faring well considering the slow down in the national economy.

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's Small Business Committee hosted the Annual State of the Economy meeting Thursday evening at the NASA-Johnson Space Center's Gilruth Center. The event was attended by more than 250 citizens, elected officials and community leaders seeking insight



Robert Hodgkin, Ph.D.

in the region's economic trends.

Robert Hodgkin, Ph.D., associate professor of Economics for the University of Houston-Clear Lake, discussed how the national economy could trend downward in 2008, but that Houston's economy should progress on a steadier path due in large part to the weakened dollar increasing export traffic.

Hodgkin also pointed to Houston's strong energy sector, more than 10 times the concentration than the U.S. as a whole, should buoy the local economy. In addition, the Houston's net population growth of about 2 percent per year helps poise the region.

Data provided by Hodgkin indicates that the region's unemployment rate is trending downward and remains relatively low in comparison to the United States' rate of 5 percent. The highest unemployment rate in the region is at 3.7 percent and the lowest at 2.9 percent.

Economist Ray Perryman, Ph.D., founder and president of the Perryman Group, said he also felt the region was positioned well and that the

slow down in the national economy would not be significant enough to affect the long term growth in the region. He also pointed out the resiliency of the national economy and how historically it has overcome more challenges than it is currently facing.

"We are going to see a slow down in Texas and here in the Houston, but a slowing down of a very fast pace," Perryman said. "Were not slowing down all that much. For example, Houston gained over a 1,000 jobs a week for the past couple of years. What do we think is going to happen next year? We are going to get a little bit less than 1,000 jobs a week, all within 900 or so."

Both economists discussed how the Bayport Cruise Terminal, scheduled to open this fall, will add significantly to the local economy. The Bayport Container Terminal forecasts a steady increase in volume and value, adding an estimated 750 jobs annually in the region.



Ray Perryman, Ph.D.

"Our view of the regional economy concurs with both Perryman and Hodgkin," said Bob Mitchell, president of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. "Indicators from the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas note that Houston's economy is decelerating, but still outperforming the nation due to a strong economic base. The organization will continue to focus on attracting, retaining and creating primary jobs for our target sectors while seeking new opportunities in supporting industries."

## Bastion joins regional quest Newest investor in Economic Partnership

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, a distinguished regional organization, recently welcomed Bastion Technologies, Inc. as their newest investors.

"We continue to see the number of companies investing in the organization increase as partners discover the benefits of joining," said Bob Mitchell, president of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. "This investment represents a synergy among companies, municipal partners and our organization to create, retain and expand jobs in the region."

Jorge Hernandez, founder and president of Bastion, recognized the opportunity to provide both

government and industry customers quality and cost-effective engineering, design and analysis products.

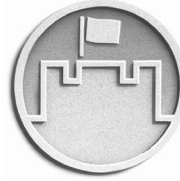
Bastion Technologies works with several industries within the region including the aero-

manufacturing, and fabrication of major International Space Station segments, to creating designs for small robotic components.

Bastion Technologies was honored as one of the Fastest Growing Small Business in the Houston Area.

In addition, the company was recognized as NASA Minority Subcontractor of the Year in 2005 and The Boeing Company Exceptional Performance Award.

"We are proud to partner with Bastion Technologies and look forward to working with them for years to come as we strive to make Bay Area Houston a better place to work, live and prosper." Mitchell said.



**BASTION  
TECHNOLOGIES**

space, petrochemical, manufacturing and technology.

Bastion Technologies provides solutions to structural, mechanical, and electrical engineering challenges. The company's projects range from supporting engineering, operations,

## Healthcare Committee highlight Committee pulls together to address regional concerns



The organization recently launched a section on its Web site that is dedicated to the healthcare industry. [www.bayareahouston.com/Home/TargetIndustries/HealthCare2/](http://www.bayareahouston.com/Home/TargetIndustries/HealthCare2/)

When you or someone you love needs medical care, you expect the best. But what some are unaware of is, excellent medical care is already right here in the Bay Area region.

Understanding the needs of its investors, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership created the Healthcare Committee to address regional health issues and improve the economic vitality in the region.

The committee's objective is to encourage collaboration among partnership healthcare providers and bring awareness to the community of existing healthcare services offered in the region.

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's healthcare partners offer a wide spectrum of world-class healthcare services. From oncology and cardiac care to neonatal services and organ transplantation, the region has some of the most cutting-edge healthcare technology available.

Currently, there are five full-service hospital partners in the organization that represent four dis-

tinctive hospital systems. The medical staff at each facility ranges from 350 to 750, representing virtually every medical and surgical specialty. Other partners of the organization include schools of medicine, nursing, allied health sciences, chiropractic and biomedical research.

"The Healthcare industry is one

**"The healthcare industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the region."**

**Bob Mitchell  
President  
Bay Area Houston  
Economic Partnership**

nificant portion of the Bay Area Houston economy. Awareness of the resources for patients along with an available and a skilled workforce are the keys to growing the industry.

"Over the next couple of years we are going to see an increase in the demand for medical care services in the region," said Barbara Cutsinger, marketing manager for Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

"There are two noticeable trends that are fueling the growth of the healthcare industry. One is the rising median household income in the region and the second is the increase in the number of retirees making their home in the Bay Area."

Economic trends forecast that by 2012, the region's population of 55 and older will account for 21 percent of the population, based on projections from the 2000 U.S. Census.

### UTMB research facility, \$90 million in investment

The University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston has just approved a \$90 million research facility to be built on the island at 6th Street and Harborside Drive.

Construction on this 140,000-square-foot building will begin early 2010 and is expected to be completed by 2012. Approximately half of the building's space will be dedicated to research.

In addition, UTMB-Galveston just received a \$3.4 million grant to develop what may become the first effective drug to help conquer cocaine addiction.

### ON THE WEB

**A copy of this article and more can be found in the news room at [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com)**

of the fastest growing industries in the region," said Bob Mitchell, president of Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

The industry accounts for a sig-

## Friendswood, serious about economic development, approves third economic incentive

Based on the city of Friendswood's Community Economic Development Committee's recommendation, City Council unanimously approved an economic incentive grant for the development of a 21,600 square foot, three-story office and retail development named The Design Center.

This is the third grant of its kind to be awarded by the City. In this case, the grant will reimburse Crystal Creek Developers, LLC up to \$30,000 for fees paid to the City relating to the construction and development of the project.

The Design Center will be constructed on Friendswood Drive

across the street from Friendswood City Hall. Upon completion of the building, three Friendswood businesses, Crystal Creek Developers, P.E. Square Engineering Consultants, and Everest Design Group will relocate their offices to the building. Approximately 15,600 square feet will be available for lease in the building.

The \$2.2 million project will provide a positive economic impact to the city, including increasing property tax revenues to the City, Friendswood Independent School District, and Galveston County by more than \$600,000 over a 10-year period. In addi-

tion, at least 14 jobs will be retained through the expansion of the development and engineering companies. Groundbreaking is expected in April of this year.

Mayor David Smith said "We are excited to see that Friendswood residents are reinvesting in our community, particularly with such high quality businesses that are compatible with the city."

The City offers continuous assistance to business owners to help them expand or relocate their businesses to the city through a variety of economic development incentives, such as property tax abatement, municipal grant incentives and tax increment financing.



Artist rendering of The Design Center in Friendswood