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## **Gulf Coast Workforce Board Releases First Annual Report Card On Status of Region's Labor Force**

HOUSTON — With an emphasis on determining success by measuring competitiveness, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board held a rollout event on Thursday for the first Annual Report Card on the State of the Region's Labor Force.

The Workforce Report Card compares the Gulf Coast's labor market and the effect it has on the local economy against those of comparable metropolitan regions in the United States. Each region has been compared and graded by a variety of indicators, and the report card presents what the Board believes employers, educators and community leaders in the Gulf Coast region must do to remain competitive.

San Antonio, Dallas, Denver, Atlanta, Miami and San Diego are the metropolitan areas viewed as the Gulf Coast region's competitors. The report card employs six separate measures of workforce and economic competitiveness: industries and employers; labor force and knowledge jobs; market alignment; education; income, wealth and poverty; and places to be.

Workforce Board members spoke about several promising factors documented in the report card. Among them:

- The Houston-Gulf Coast region competes well with similar U.S. metro areas when measuring key elements of its workforce. For example, more than a third of the Gulf Coast's jobs are considered "knowledge jobs." The Gulf Coast also has the most diverse workforce of all the regions studied, and a relatively low unemployment rate.
- In addition, the Gulf Coast region's cost of living is quite competitive compared to other Sunbelt cities. Population growth and the percentage of the population moving into the region both reflect the Gulf Coast's region's general attractiveness as a place to live and work.
- During the past two decades, the region has greatly reduced its reliance on a single economic sector, and has a strong infrastructure in the Port of Houston and the presence of a major international airport.

- The region has a critical mass of financial, health care and corporate resources.

Although the Gulf Coast region clearly competes well with similar U.S. metropolitan areas, Board members emphasized a need to do better in four key areas: gaining more competitive employers; grooming a better-educated workforce; producing more and better jobs; and generating higher incomes.

Board members voiced their vision of the Gulf Coast as ranking “among the top 10 economic regions in the world.” This status, they said, shapes their two-fold mission: helping employers solve their workforce problems and helping residents build careers, so both can compete in the global economy.

The full report card is available and can be viewed online at **[theworksource.org](http://theworksource.org)**.