

**Opportunity HoustonSM Fundraiser
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Greater Houston Partnership**

“Opportunity HoustonSM: A Report Card”

Back in July, in an interview with the *Houston Chronicle*, Drayton McLane was discussing his role as chair of *Opportunity HoustonSM*. He spoke then, as he has this morning, about how the program was designed to help us understand what direction we should take in the future. Appropriately, a headline that accompanied that interview said, “Drayton McLane looks for winners.”

If *Opportunity HoustonSM*'s accomplishments to date are any indication, he's found one – and so have all of us. And while it would be unwise to declare total victory this early in the effort, I can safely say that we've found our direction, it's the right one, and we're going there with confidence and energy.

When we first announced our 10-year Strategic Plan for economic development, the primary goals, while ambitious, were simple. While you have already heard them described here this morning, I believe they bear repeating:

- To help grow jobs by 600,000;
- To increase capital investment by \$60 billion; and
- To expand foreign trade by \$120 billion by the end of 2015.

2007 has been a banner year, and we're well on our way. Last year, we had more than 60,000 new jobs in the region. We also saw capital investment grow by \$6 billion.

Of that, *Opportunity HoustonSM* was directly responsible for more than 14,000 jobs and over \$500 million in capital investment.

Additionally, through our support of the Port of Houston and the Houston Airport System, foreign trade for the region has increased by an amazing \$15.2 billion. That's more than 125 percent of our annual goal.

But those aren't the only figures that attest to the progress *Opportunity HoustonSM* has fostered. Here's a quick look at some of our other

accomplishments in 2007:

- We increased the number of qualified, open leads by 17 percent, and added 600 potential leads to the recruitment pipeline.
- We met with 67 company decision-makers and location advisors to help attract business to the region.
- We hosted three inbound recruitment events that attracted two location advisors and 21 company decision-makers.
- And we organized our first domestic outbound business recruitment mission to Atlanta, which produced three qualified leads.

It's been said that the beginning of a work stands for the whole. If that's true, and you look at our initial set of results, then the great start of *Opportunity Houston*SM is just a sign of even greater things to come.

There are two other milestones we reached in 2007 that I'd like to discuss. They don't have anything to do with facts and figures – but they have everything to do with how we're perceived in the economic development marketplace.

The first is the successful launch of *Opportunity Houston* magazine. This publication, a joint venture with Texas Monthly Custom Publishing, reflects the Strategic Plan, and its content is directly linked to our mission, vision and objectives.

Strategy aside, *Opportunity Houston* magazine is a celebration of what makes this region a magnet for business, a gateway to global markets and a preferred place to live and work. Readers get an up-close-and-personal view of a world-class city whose leaders – in business as well as in the community – are turning today's potential into tomorrow's reality.

We reached the second milestone at the end of 2007. And I think it demonstrates our commitment to not only serving the Strategic Plan, but also to serving the broader interests of the region.

It's no secret that Houston has had a hit-and-miss record when it comes to developing an umbrella theme and message that reflects who and what we are. The optimist in me says that maybe the diversity of messages over the years reflects the diversity of the opportunities in the region.

On the other hand, we live in a world where it is tough to break through the communications clutter. There's traditional media, the Internet, blogs, podcasts

– all of them competing for our attention. To be heard, you need a strong, consistent, targeted message.

We think we've developed one.

Last year, the Partnership began surveying and interviewing key audiences to get an idea of the region's strengths and challenges, and to see how Greater Houston is perceived. We then used the findings to determine how to leverage the *Opportunity Houston*SM initiative, and create a new "brand" for the area.

The result is *Opportunity Houston: All the World – One Region*, a tagline I believe truly captures our unique marketing proposition. It effectively positions us as the new global gateway – a place that is connected, innovative, and welcoming. Beyond that, it has an advantage that a lot of taglines don't – it happens to be true.

It's important to note that even with these achievements – and they are significant – we're not resting on our laurels. We have every expectation that 2008 will be equally productive.

- We will execute the comprehensive public and media relations program that Len mentioned earlier. It will embrace traditional as well as new media, and includes an upgrade of our current website, houston.org and targeted advertising and direct mail activities.
- We're going to actively participate in trade shows that focus on our targeted industry clusters.
- We will conduct at least six outbound and inbound business recruitment missions aimed at key economic development decision makers.
- We recently completed a very successful mission to South America which results in serious lead cultivation. And in partnership with Harris County and the City of Houston, respectively, we will engage in two more international missions to Pune and Mumbai, India, and stops in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. These missions work to expand our visibility worldwide and reinforce the competitive advantages we offer to the global business community.
- And we will implement the Geographic Information System – or GIS – that will instantly link specific prospects to specific locations, and connect companies with the sites they need to get operational, productive and profitable fast.

The strength of an initiative like *Opportunity Houston*SM is in no small part due to the commitment of those who are willing to invest in its success. In 2007, we saw just how broad and deep the support for this program is:

As Phase 1 ended, campaign commitments topped \$31.9 million – more than 75 percent of our target – from 154 investors. Our achievements in 2007 show clearly that we're already beginning to see a significant return on that investment, too.

A lot of that support has come from the energy industry – great companies like Shell and Halliburton – whose support has been essential to our current success and will continue to drive our future achievements. They recognize the importance of making the Houston region even greater – and they know that our Strategic Plan and *Opportunity Houston*SM are vital to preserving the region's standing as the "Energy Capital of the World."

But they cannot do it alone. They need the support of people like you – people who share our dedication to ensuring that ours remains a region of enduring opportunity for everyone.

In conclusion, let me say this:

The future belongs to those who dare to believe in their aspirations. We are fortunate to live in a place that encourages us to dream – and to dream big – and then provides the resources to achieve greatly. That's why even in the face of an economic development marketplace that grows more competitive by the day, I feel confident about our region. Because I know that while things were good in 2007 and will be even better in 2008, the best really is yet to come.

Thank you.