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NEWS RELEASE

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TONY CHASE OUTLINES PRIORITIES AS NEW GHP CHAIRMAN DURING ORGANIZATION'S 'ANNUAL MEETING'

HOUSTON – The Greater Houston Partnership introduced Tony Chase as its new chairman to more than 1,200 attendees at the organization's "Annual Meeting," today. Chase is a successful entrepreneur and small businessman, as well as a local attorney and tenured professor at the University of Houston Law Center.

"Houston is a great region by almost any yardstick that you care to apply. We are an economic powerhouse, a cultural center and a national and global trend-setter," Chase said in his address.

Chase will focus his efforts towards the areas of education, transportation, making Houston the natural gas capital of the world, and promoting small business.

"These are the four policy areas to which I plan to devote special attention this year," Chase said. "They are going to make our global and growing city even greater."

Regarding education, Chase explained that the Houston region must have an educated work force if it is to sustain its economic growth.

"We simply cannot deny that success is directly related to obtaining a superior education. Choose any metric," Chase said. "The consequences of having a poorly educated workforce are increasingly dire.

Transportation, as it relates to infrastructure such as roads and waterways, will also be an area of focus for the new chairman.

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“In 2012, we will support local bond issues for transportation improvements to help ease traffic congestion. On a federal level, I want to ensure Houston gets its fair share of federal funding for highway improvement and light rail expansion,” Chase said.

In addition to working on ground transportation needs, Chase emphasized the need for federal funding for the region’s ports via the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund – or HMTF – in preparation for the opening of the third set of locks of the Panama Canal. The new locks will increase the canal’s capacity and allow for much larger container cargo ships to transverse it creating a potential boon for the Port of Houston.

Chase would also like Houston to expand on its nickname as “Energy Capital of the World,” to “Natural Gas Capital of the World,” thanks in part to new technologies, which facilitate its collection.

“The Greater Houston Partnership recognizes that promotion of the oil and natural gas industry in a safe and environmentally-responsible manner is critical for statewide economic and employment growth,” Chase said. “GHP’s most recent legislative agenda strongly supports measures that promote the expanded use of natural gas in Texas.”

As a small businessman himself, Chase fully understands the importance of small business to the region and is making it a point of his chairmanship to find ways to help small businesses grow.

“Small business is the mainspring of our free enterprise system. It is the component that keeps our economic system ticking. It is also a major source of new jobs and new ideas” Chase said. “In 2012, GHP will launch the Small Business Resource Center, an online hub filled with unique resources, discounts and program assistance to address the needs of small businesses and help them grow.”

In addition to highlighting his agenda as chairman, Chase also spoke about the region’s “crown jewels” – the Texas Medical Center, the petrochemical industry, the Port of Houston and Houston Airport System, the NASA Johnson Space Center, local universities, and more.

GHP also used the occasion to make some exciting announcements about upcoming events and services including a March 22 debate between the major candidates running for U.S. Senate in Texas; a first-ever tour to Cuba as part of the organization’s World Discovery Tours; and the announcement of the GHP Store, a one-stop shopping location online for GHP related goods.

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Executive Partners for GHP's Annual Meeting included: AT&T; BP; CenterPoint Energy; Chevron; ConocoPhillips; ExxonMobil; JPMorgan Chase; Reliant and Shell.

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The Greater Houston Partnership is the primary advocate of Houston's business community and is dedicated to building regional economic prosperity. It represents 10 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller. With more than 2,100 Member organizations, GHP represents approximately one-fifth of the region's work force. Visit GHP at houston.org.

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