Jeff Shellebarger’s Remarks
President, Chevron North America Exploration and Production
and 2017 Chair of the Greater Houston Partnership
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Well, what an honor it is to be here today. I’m pleased and proud to serve as the 2017 Chair of the Greater Houston Partnership.

Let me begin by thanking my family. Especially my wife Sidney for her support as I take on this important role.

I’d also like to recognize the Partnership’s President and CEO Bob Harvey, the Partnership’s Board of Directors and the great staff who support the membership and execute the mission of this great organization.

We’re grateful to all of you...for your collective vision and for your leadership, as we work together to make Houston one of the best places to live, to work, and to build a business.

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My friends, I am an oil man. . . . and I say that with pride. I work in a high-tech, innovative industry. . . . and the best part . . . . I live and work in the global capital of the energy industry – Houston, Texas.

I wasn’t born in Texas, but as they say ... I got here as fast as I could.

I was born out west, grew up in Dallas, then finished high school and went to college in Georgia. From there my career in the energy industry has taken me to 7 different cities and 3 countries, including a couple of stops in Houston.

Four years ago I had the good fortune to move back to Texas, and Sydney and I have made Houston our permanent home.

In a bit of irony, it was all those career moves that led me to the Greater Houston Partnership.

You see, the energy business is closely linked to the economic development of cities, states and countries. Over the past 36 years with Chevron, I’ve seen what it takes for cities to thrive.
I’ve seen first-hand what can happen...when a strong business climate... intersects with the power of civic partnership...to create economic growth that lasts. As a businessman, that gets my interest. And as a person, that’s where my passion for this role truly began.

So let’s talk about Houston. It’s our hometown ... but it’s also a global city. A GREAT global city.

You’d be surprised to know how many great cities want to be like Houston. You think we’re competing with them. But in reality? THEY are competing with US. They want to be LIKE us.

Why? It boils down to our quality of life and our ability to get things done.

And our SPIRIT is unrivaled. There’s something inherently Texan about the way we come together, roll-up our sleeves and get the job done. In fact, at my company, we have a slogan for that. We call ourselves “Doers.”

Doers come together, we do our best. We do what we love, and we take pride in doing the job the right way, every time. We ARE DOERS in Houston. The jobs “WE DO” lead to great accomplishments.

We develop the oil and gas that fuels human progress. We create the space technology that shapes the world. We are leaders and innovators, with cutting edge medical institutions, top-tier universities, a world-class port. And today we have a new moonshot mission: the cure for cancer.

Houston is a great global city with lots to offer. And it’s not just me or the rest of us in the room who feel this way. We are also being recognized by some of the world’s leading ORGANIZATIONS.

For example, the Brookings Institution named Houston a “global knowledge capital.” Brookings placed us in the same metro category as Stockholm and Zurich, San Francisco and Seattle ... and our nation’s capital, Washington D.C.

These cities COMPETE. They play to their advantages. They attract people. And they INVEST to STAY COMPETITIVE over the long term.

This is great company to keep! By any measure, our hard work is paying off. We have built a strong foundation to work from and we should give ourselves a round of applause.

So what else differentiates us from these other ‘global cities’? Let’s talk about what we HAVE and how we work TOGETHER to make it HAPPEN in Houston.
FIRST, we are not beholden to any economic sector to drive our success. We have built a strong, diversified business portfolio and a growing innovation economy. It is our economic diversity that helped temper the impact...of the energy industry’s biggest downturn in the last 20 years.

SECOND, we understand the value of collaboration.

We have a new mayor. We have a great city council. We have the leadership of Harris County.

And...we have a strong coalition of municipal governments and county governments...all working together. PLUS terrific leaders in the business and education communities.

We get aligned, we combine our strengths, and we keep moving Houston forward.

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So what’s next? We have a solid foundation for success. Here’s how we plan to build on it.

To begin with, the Partnership is a CEO-led organization. Bob, with guidance and support from the Board, defines our vision and leads the team as we bring value to our members and the greater Houston region.

The primary way we drive that value is by creating jobs and strengthening the foundational qualities that attract investment and development.

Things like transportation. Infrastructure. A strong municipal government. Good schools, and quality of life. These are the different pieces that must come together to make a CITY GREAT. And the Partnership’s role is to continue to support Houston’s progress on all these fronts.

As Chairman, my job is pretty simple that’s what Jamey tells me anyway. I’m here to ensure that we work together, stay focused, and achieve what we set out to do.

So as we look at the year ahead, here’s what we’re working toward...

Our FIRST goal is to support the city of Houston as we execute on our image opportunities.

The Marathon was great. Congratulations if you ran! Up next, The Super Bowl. And in March, the Rodeo.
All eyes will be on Houston over the coming months ... we have a great opportunity to leverage this global attention, build on our brand, and show the world what Houston is all about.

SECOND, we must navigate the legislative session. We will work to maintain education and transportation funding. And we will seek more support for economic development.

We will also work with the Mayor to pass legislation enabling the recently negotiated Pension reforms. A strong City Government is essential to the continued economic development of Houston and the region.

Our legislative priorities are clear...but so are the challenges, including a limited state budget. Together, we will find the path forward. Because we are all advocates for Houston.

The THIRD order of business: We will revisit and update the Partnership’s long-term strategy for economic development. A lot has changed over the past 10 years ...

As we move closer to 2020, we need to reflect on the progress being made in each sector, and look for new opportunities to continue that growth.

That also means aligning our policy objectives with education and workforce initiatives...and growing the environment for an innovative economy.

At the end of the day, the real measure of our success is serving the needs of you, our membership. Put simply: if you are a member, or if you are a stakeholder, then you are a valued customer of the Partnership.

We have a lot on our plate in the year ahead.

I’m ready to roll up my sleeves – harness a little bit of that “Doers” spirit – and work together with all of you --- our business partners, our community partners and our government partners to get the job done and help Houston continue to move forward.

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Before Bob gives his remarks, let me close by circling back to where I began: the journey that led me to the Greater Houston Partnership.

As mentioned, I hail from a company that has sent me around the world several times over. During my travels, I learned the value of community and partnership. I’ve seen what can happen when people come
together, set clear goals and raise a city up.

Houston, we are only beginning to realize our vast potential. We’ve shaken off the notion that we’re just about cowboys or oil.

We’ve proven to the world that we are innovators, we are leaders and we can help SHAPE the direction of the 21st CENTURY.

As I look around the room – I am confident that we are doing something right; we’re part of something special. Just take a look at the person next to you, and you’ll agree...

Maybe it’s someone from the Partnership. Or a government official. Maybe it’s somebody from one of our terrific schools, or the Medical Center. Or one of the thriving businesses in HOUSTON.

No matter who it is, that person believes in our city. That’s why they’re here today. That’s why we are ALL here today. We KNOW that Houston stacks up against the best cities in the world because it’s home to the best PEOPLE in the world.

I know you will join me on this journey, as a proud ambassador for the city of Houston ... and together, we will make our city shine like never before.

Thank you.