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Lubbock County in Ranked as one of the Top 10 Mid-Sized Counties for 2012

(LUBBOCK) – Lubbock County ranks ninth on the “Fourth Economy Index Listing” which lists the nation’s top 10 mid-sized counties for 2012. The Fourth Economy Index highlights communities ideally positioned to attract modern investment and managed economic growth within the fourth economy.

The “fourth economy” is meant to characterize the nation’s current economic condition, reflecting a combination of the previous three to include agrarian, industrial and technological. This new index is intended to serve as a dashboard for community stakeholders to gauge their capacity to attract and retain modern investment.

The Fourth Economy Community Index (FEC) considers several county-level measures within five areas: 1) Investment, 2) Talent, 3) Sustainability, 4) Place, and 5) Diversity. These five areas serve as a foundation for future economic success to include wage and employment growth, education levels, drive times, home values, minority business ownership, agricultural capacity and population density. Each measure is weighted based on the level of influence each have on both internal and external investment decisions.

The Top Mid-Sized Communities for 2012:

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| 1. Fayette County, Kentucky | 6. Greene County, Ohio |
| 2. New Hanover County, North Carolina | 7. Brazos County, Texas |
| 3. Sarpy County, Nebraska | 8. Lancaster County, Nebraska |
| 4. Brown County, Wisconsin | 9. Lubbock County, Texas |
| 5. Greene County, Missouri | 10. Pitt County, North Carolina |

The FEC Index scores for this listing ranged from 0 to 4.5. They included only mid-sized counties (population of 150,000 to 300,000) with education attainment above 25% and average travel times less than 20 minutes. Beyond the initial FEC Index measures, the analysis also considers the capacity for a community to support innovation. The FEC Index expresses an innovation capacity score as a letter grade, determined by the online source Stats-America. This grade considers factors such as human

capital, state policy context and productivity. Fourth Economy Consulting will periodically produce additional Index listings for micro, small and large counties.

Lubbock County, with a population of 279,000, has achieved an educational attainment status of 78.8 percent of the population over 25 years of age having received at least a high school diploma and 29.1 percent with at least an associates degree. In addition, the average commute time for the local workforce is a mere 16 minutes. Together, these statistics helped to Lubbock County to rank number nine on the list with a FEC Index Score of 1.8, and an innovation capacity grade of a B-.

“It is not surprising to see the leading fourth economy counties blend both rural and urban character, offering their residents diverse living and working options,” Stephen McKnight, Fourth Economy Consulting Vice President of Community and Market Assessments, said. “Another common attribute is a geographic association with institutions of higher education, which are the modern engine in the fourth economy. As a result, these communities can provide the talent and place-based strategies that address housing, recreation and amenities for smaller, high-value businesses to thrive,” McKnight added.

More information about the Fourth Economy can be found on the organization’s website, fourtheconomy.com. To learn more about LEDA and its economic role within the community, visit www.LubbockEDA.org or contact Holly Givens, Director of Marketing and Communications, at holly.givens@lubbockeda.org or 806. 723.8236.

The Lubbock Economic Development Alliance is a not-for-profit company that promotes economic progress through the development or expansion of commercial activity in the area. Since its inception in 2004, the organization has assisted 97 companies, directly resulting in 4,133 jobs and more than \$5.8 billion in combined economic impact to the Lubbock area.

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