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County of El Paso
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE

December 12, 2008

Ray Stafford
President and Publisher
El Paso Times
300 N. Campbell
El Paso, Texas 79901

Dear Mr. Stafford:

In light of the continued bad faith exhibited by you and your editorial board, I challenge you to a public debate at a public venue regarding the County's policies so the public can know our policy differences.

Such a debate is necessary given your incessant attacks on my office. Taxpayers and voters demand journalistic integrity and they should know what each of us stands for. By listening to our differences, the public can better judge whether your reporting meets minimal standards of journalistic integrity.

Sincerely,

Anthony Cobos
El Paso County Judge

Thank you for being here today.

After yesterday's editorial in the opinion section, I am compelled to respond.

What can possibly justify and motivate a sarcastic, arrogant and contemptuous editorial by a group of people including Ray Stafford, Joe Muench and Charlie Edgren who do not reflect the socio-economic demographics of this community.

In my opinion, Ray Stafford disagrees with me most of the time because my policy initiatives help our entire community not just the rich and influential.

I want to make the public aware of the many initiatives of Commissioners Court, many of which have tremendous support from the community as evidenced by published letters.

Under my watch, the County has:

- Held the line on taxes for two years;
- Saved a \$9 million dollar children's mental health grant;
- Established a children's collaborative department;
- Established a one-stop shop for passports;
- Enhanced a community and planning department;
- Dedicated Miguel Teran Park with services to low income residents;

- Undertook two nationally recognized Solar Summits
- Adopted a Renewable Energy Policy;
- Issued rules for Sexually Oriented Businesses;
- Issued a state legislative agenda for 2009;
- Established credit card capacity for County business;
- Completed renovation of the MDR building;
- Began renovation of the 4th floor courtrooms;
- Broke ground on the Ysleta Annex Facility;
- Will break ground on the Guadalupe Tornillo International Bridge;
- Expanded services for drug and family courts;
- Supported the creation of a Children's Hospital; and
- Created oversight for county vehicles.

But who is the El Paso Times? They are just people, like you and me.

In my opinion, the harsh reality is Ray Stafford, Joe Muench and Charlie Edgren are in a cowardly fashion hiding behind the skirt of a city newspaper to continue their personal attacks and promote their political agendas.

In my opinion, Stafford, Muench and Edgren are attempting to brainwash the public with malicious propaganda tactics. The Times continues to spin and feed divisive propaganda to the public.

For the past two years, the El Paso Times – Stafford, Muench and Edgren- has worked to intimidate me in an extremely hostile manner in an effort to break my will and

control my actions. I say to my constituents, the disadvantaged and to those who are living paycheck to paycheck who don't feel represented, I will never bow to the rich and powerful in this community who wield tremendous influence over this propaganda tabloid newspaper.

It is time our community stand up to these bullies (Stafford-Edgren-Muench) and self-proclaimed know-it-alls.

There are two groups of El Pasoans.

The politically influential group who are 5 percent of the people and control 95 percent of the wealth in this community; and

The group I am proud to represent -- the remaining 95 percent of the community who only own 5 percent of the wealth.

Even though Hispanics are 85 percent of the population, the majority have little say in public policy decisions. Many in our community are losing their jobs while others are struggling to make ends meet.

But, I was not hired by the financial powers that be. I do not represent them. I was hired by the community as a whole.

Mr. Stafford: I will not waiver and I will not be bullied.

After this press conference, I am taking a letter of challenge to Ray Stafford, President and Publisher of the El Paso Times and making a copy of it available to you.

The Times dishes it out, let's see if they can take it and accept my challenge.

I am now available to take your questions.

While I have you here, I want to make one clarification. After long discussion with my Chief of Staff, I have decided not to accept Mr. Perez's resignation. He is a valued asset to my office. I will have no further comment on this matter.