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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Weatherford receives \$11.5 million for Heritage Square Project

WEATHERFORD (CITY OF WEATHERFORD), Texas - Weatherford will receive \$11,552,000 from the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to begin initial steps toward developing Heritage Square; an authentic livable downtown that offers entertainment, restaurants and pedestrian friendly walkways.

The partnership will address traffic concerns and is designed to bring back Weatherford's original historic downtown square. Weatherford is working with TXDOT to gain control of US Highway 180, FM Highway 51 and FM Highway 2552. This control will allow Weatherford to redirect truck traffic away from the central core of the community.

"Weatherford provided existing traffic numbers, land use projections and growth trends to NCTCOG, which ran travel forecast modeling to the year 2035," said Director of Capital Improvements Terry Hughes. "The 20-year projections indicated traffic numbers could be as high as 24,000 vehicles per day along US Highway 180 near downtown. Even with the outer loop, traffic will continue to be a problem for the downtown Weatherford area based on the projections."

The projected numbers would place the traffic conditions on the square at an unmanageable level that could undermine the communities desire for a strong and vibrant downtown. As a result, Weatherford proposed a Highway 180 bypass as the first step in a three-step program to address the existing and future traffic conditions to NCTCOG. The second step includes a southern connection with the last step culminating in the recapture of the historic downtown heritage square. NCTCOG's funding alleviates financial burden on taxpayers and allows Weatherford to efficiently save the downtown historical district.

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of, by and for local governments, and was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

"NCTCOG recognized that HWY 180 and historical downtown district has a major problem regarding transportation needs and the \$11,552,000 will be the first step in addressing the problem," said City Manager Sharon Hayes. "It is very exciting because NCTCOG serves a



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16-county region and they have chosen Weatherford to offer funding. To say the least, this is an opportunity that our community is very fortunate to receive.”

This project is another visionary approach by Weatherford toward modern growth that supports economic benefits for the community. Developments and updates regarding the downtown transportation project will be released as they become available. For questions, please contact Director of Capital Improvements Terry Hughes at 817-598-4244.

Editor's note: A high-res rendering of the overall project is attached.

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****City of Weatherford****

Weatherford, Texas is a service oriented, yet still “small town” community that upgrades its infrastructure, celebrates and shares its rich history, and fosters quality economic growth – in a fiscally-responsible, even revenue-generating fashion.