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## Gov. Perry Announces Highly Skilled Ranger Recon Teams as Texas' Latest Efforts to Enhance Border Security

Urges federal government to approve request for National Guard resources along border  
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HOUSTON – In the absence of adequate federal resources to secure the state's southern border, Gov. Rick Perry today announced the state's latest border security enhancement using highly-skilled Ranger Reconnaissance (Ranger Recon) Teams to address the ever evolving threat along the Texas-Mexico border. He also repeated his call for Washington to approve the 1,000 Title 32 National Guard troops he has been requesting since January. Additionally, the governor announced the award of \$2 million in state criminal justice funds to the Border Sheriff's Coalition for

continued utilization of video surveillance technology along the border.

"Texas' proven border security strategy is based on putting boots on the ground and equipping those personnel with the technology, training and funding they need to stem the flow of contraband across our border. Deploying Ranger Recon Teams to high-traffic, high-crime areas along the border will enhance our efforts," Gov. Perry said. "This is the latest in a series of aggressive actions we've taken to fill the gap left by the federal government's ongoing failure to adequately secure our international border."

Comprised of Texas Rangers and Texas National Guard Counterdrug forces, the Ranger Recon Teams are supported by the Operation Border Star Unified Command, including Texas sheriffs, Highway Patrol strike teams and Department of Public Safety aviation resources. This effort was launched in early August to address the increased burglaries of rural homes, ranches and hunting camps in remote areas along the Texas-Mexico border.

With nearly 73 percent of Texas' 1,254 mile border privately owned, landowners along the boundary often face extortion or threats from violent criminal organizations that smuggle drugs, people and weapons across the border. The Ranger Recon Teams will identify high-intensity smuggling routes in remote areas, and conduct operations to reduce border-related crime in these corridors. These activities are also an essential element of a proactive strategy to deter spillover violence.

In addition to drug and human smuggling, increasing violence in northern Mexico poses a significant threat to Texas communities. More than 5,700 homicides occurred in Mexico in 2008, with roughly 1,600 in Juárez alone, which borders El Paso on the southern side of the Rio Grande. Already in 2009, Juárez has seen more than 1,500 brutal homicides.

In order to maintain operational security, the specific number, composition and location of the Ranger Recon Teams will not be disclosed.

Additionally, since January Gov. Perry has repeatedly urged the federal government, through letters to President Barack Obama, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, to approve his request for 1,000 Title 32 National Guardsmen to support civilian law enforcement efforts to enhance border security in Texas.

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A porous border places Texas and the nation at risk from international terrorists, organized crime cartels and transnational gangs. Until the federal government fulfills its responsibility of securing our border, Texas will continue filling in the gaps by putting more boots on the ground, providing increased law enforcement resources and leveraging technology along the border.

These efforts include the Virtual Border Watch program, a system of cameras along the border which creates a virtual online patrol presence, allowing the public to view and report suspicious activity to law enforcement. Members of the public may assist law enforcement by participating in the Virtual Border Watch program online at <http://www.blueservo.net>.

Under the governor's leadership and thanks to action taken by the Legislature, the state has dedicated more than \$110 million to border security efforts in each of the last two legislative sessions.

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