

2.1.4 Houston (Southwestern U.S.A.)

The Southwestern States - Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and New Mexico - represent approximately ten % of the U.S. population and total employment is estimated in excess of seven million jobs. Almost one-half of the jobs available are within the Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) and the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

The major industries - energy (68%), financial services, manufacturing (trade) and real estate - suffered from the 1980's oil slump. Defence-related manufacturing growth has slowed due to budget cuts. Some cities with strong economic anchors unrelated to oil and gas managed to escape the worst effects of the recession. Improvement is evident. Houston's energy industry has shifted its emphasis from exploration and production to refining and petrochemical manufacturing. And, the area economy has diversified and become less dependent on oil and gas, in general. Most major cities in the area have experienced job expansion in the last twelve month period. Employment growth in Texas is expected to average approximately 2.5% for the next two years. A broadening of the economy has left the area poised for steady growth and less prone to the boom and bust cycles characteristic of the past.

Canadian exports to the state of Texas total approximately US\$ 1 billion and over US\$ 450 million to the remaining five states.

TECHNOLOGY TRENDS AND STRENGTHS

Growing industrial diversity in the 1990's will be characterized by health care, biotechnology, computer, software, aerospace and telecommunications.

- *Health Care - The Texas Medical Center (TMC) (Houston), a strong confederation of 41 institutions, is one of the largest in the world, employing 55,000 and is Houston's biggest employer, renown for its cardiological and cancer research.*
- *The Dallas Medical Action Group, nine institutions to date, is aggressively raising its visibility in the area and internationally. A 7.1% gain in new jobs was experienced by the health service sector last year. More than US\$ 1.3 billion in construction projects are in progress at TMC and, upon completion, will add another 6,500 permanent jobs there.*
- *Biotechnology - A significant number of biotechnology companies are emerging in Texas and New Mexico producing products and services including drugs, artificial joints and gene mapping and gene splicing techniques. Medical schools and research centers in both states encourage more technology transfer and commercialization and are receiving worldwide attention. The industry is moving from a science-oriented business to a product-oriented business. Biotech and related companies number close to 200 in Houston alone.*

KEY ORGANIZATIONS

Major areas of research and development are conducted by the following institutions:

- Baylor College of Medicine & Center for Biotechnology (Houston, Dallas) - Molecular Genetics/Human Genome Research participation; Cardiology/DeBakey, Parkinson's Disease/Deprenyl Study; Other Neurological Disorders.