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## **Mark Parkinson Becomes Kansas' 45<sup>th</sup> Governor**

*Remarks as prepared for delivery by Governor Mark Parkinson:*

“At the outset, I want to congratulate Governor Sebelius: first, for her 23 years of outstanding public service to the State and second, for her confirmation as Secretary of Health and Human Services. She has served the state well and will serve both the state and country well in her new position.

“I am humbled and honored to serve as Governor of Kansas. I love this state and am excited to have the opportunity to serve during a time of real need.

“Kansas and the country face the most challenging economic struggle that we have encountered for many decades. Our economy is not growing, state revenues have plummeted and most discouraging is the real pain that Kansans have suffered. Tens of thousands of Kansans have lost their jobs, retirees have seen their accounts decline and fear is rampant.

“I am an optimist. As challenging as these times are, I want to assure all Kansans of this. We will come out of these difficult times. Kansans have been challenged throughout history and in each occasion we have not only survived, we have prospered.

“We overcame the depression, the Dust Bowls and the challenges of two World Wars. In each case, we prevailed. It is not a matter of whether we will come out of this recession; it is a matter of when. This administration will do everything we can to accelerate the inevitable turn.

“State government has a central role in turning our economy around and here are two things we will do to make this happen. First, we will balance our budget in a responsible way.

“Our immediate problem is that we have a \$328 million budget shortfall. Some would suggest that we balance this budget with \$328 million in budget cuts. Others would say that we should balance it with tax increases. I reject both positions. This budget hole is too deep to fill with budget cuts or revenue enhancements alone. There must be shared sacrifice. We will make responsible and modest budget cuts that will protect our investments in education and our infrastructure.

“But we need modest revenue enhancements as well. We must delay state tax cuts and protect our state from the negative impact that changes in the federal tax code will have on already plummeting revenues. The result will be a responsible and balanced state budget and no Kansan will have a tax increase.

“Second, we will unify this state. The time for typical party politics is over. The challenges are too daunting and the stakes are too high. It’s time for all of us, Republicans and Democrats, to forget about party politics. It’s time for us to do what our ancestors have done when faced with great adversity. It is time to roll up our sleeves, work hard, make the tough decisions and move forward, not as Republicans or Democrats, but as Kansans, to solve the problems we face.

“I am blessed to have a talented legislative team in President Steve Morris, Leader Anthony Hensley, Speaker of the House Mike O’Neal and Leader Paul Davis. These are four outstanding Kansans and I am confident that we will work in a bi-partisan way to turn this state around.

“When we unify, we will overcome all the challenges we face. We will get to the stars through these difficulties. There are better days ahead and we will reach that brighter tomorrow, achieving a destiny that no temporary setback can derail.

“It is with enthusiasm that I assume the position of Governor during what will be a refreshing time of astonishing renewal.”

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