July 13, 2009

Honorable Mayor and City Representatives
City of El Paso, Texas
#2 Civic Center Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901

Dear Mayor and Representatives:

As you may know, during my tenure as El Paso Chief of Police, in 2007 I was presented the opportunity to testify before the Texas Department of Transportation regarding digital billboards. At that time, I had been working with Clear Channel Outdoor to display Amber Alert and similar messages in El Paso on the digital billboards that were in place. I saw this as an opportunity to bring to El Paso a dynamic method of informing the traveling public about items of critical interest to our community.

I testified to the Texas Transportation Commission that I had no concerns whatsoever that digital billboards presented a safety hazard to El Paso residents. My duty as Chief of Police would prevent me from allowing, much less enthusiastically endorsing, anything that I believed would place our citizenry at risk. In addition to my own, I brought Mayor Cook’s endorsement of the digital billboards to the Commission.

I had, and to this day still have, no indication that digital billboards pose any safety threat to the traveling public. With the number of digital signs that are currently in El Paso, both of the business and billboard type, and the long time in which they have been present in our City, any safety issues surely would have surfaced by now. Those in El Paso who claim there are safety problems with the digital billboards are ignoring the evidence.

In closing, when operated as Clear Channel is currently, digital billboards are an asset to El Paso. I endorse their use and respectfully request the City Council to prudently allow more to be erected.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Wiles
Sheriff