

## Excerpts from remarks at the Dairy Center Ground Breaking – February 27, 2009

Today I first want to offer thanks to Dr. Cawthon and Dr. Lambert for demonstrating the leadership and vision required to recognize the need for a regional dairy center, assemble all of the appropriate supporters and carry the project to this ground breaking today. And I want to offer special thanks to State Representative Sid Miller, whose passion, enthusiasm and leadership have made funding possible. Sid is a Tarleton graduate, and we are proud of all his accomplishments.

I arrived in Stephenville from Ohio a few months ago. Both in view of this special occasion and of the freezing temperatures reported this morning in Ohio, I definitely believe this a great day to be Texan! I say that both as a Tarleton Texan and proud citizen of Texas.

In my short time at Tarleton, I have discovered incredible spirit and pride in our traditions. You may not know how much of the



university's tradition is rooted in Agriculture. Tarleton was founded in 1899 as the John Tarleton Agricultural College, and our university newspaper is called the "JTAC." Our athletic teams formerly were called the "Plowboys," and we still have a Plowboy spirit organization. As I discovered during the first graduation ceremony, members of the Purple Poo spirit organization reveal themselves by handing me a purple pig as they cross the stage. (You should see my collection of purple pigs!) The oldest remaining university building is the mule barn at the Agricultural Center. Tarleton has the largest agricultural teacher-preparation program in the nation – larger even than my alma mater The Ohio State University. And the Tarleton campus hosts the nation's largest gathering of FFA students (about 10,000) each March.

Today is both another highlight of the great history of Ag tradition at Tarleton and a celebration of the beginning of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and research facility that will:

- Support the second largest livestock industry in Texas and the largest industry in Erath County;
- Be a model for integrating environmental protection with energy recovery;
- Demonstrate Best Management Practices in the dairy industry;
- Support economic development in our community; and
- Provide an opportunity for Tarleton to partner with other colleges and universities.

Thanks to everyone who has brought us to this day. And thank you all for demonstrating your support by being here.