

# EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## Regional Report

### Winter 2008

3800 Stone Road • Kilgore, Texas 75662 • (903)984-8641 • (903)983-1440 fax • www.etcog.org

#### 2008 - 2009 Executive Committee

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Mayor Terry Tolar  
*1st Vice-Chairman*

Comm. Jerry Lomax  
*2nd Vice-Chairman*

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Mayor Walter Derrick

Councilmem. Robert Nelson

## “UNDER CONSTRUCTION...PLEASE PARDON OUR MESS”

### MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DAVID CLEVELAND

Signs like the one captioned in the title above are observed regularly, especially during robust economic times. While the U.S. economy has certainly chilled in recent months, for those of us that consistently travel, it is not uncommon to encounter construction or remodeling activities at those hotels that are trying to keep pace with the latest luxuries that are important to keeping customers coming back.

Honestly, I can think of no better summary phrase to capture the current state of affairs at the East Texas Council of Governments. Consider the following examples: Our transportation programs are undergoing an extreme makeover, moving from a singular Para-transit focus to an expanded multi-modal focus. We are moving as

rapidly as possible to strengthen, diversify and most importantly build a strong contingency plan for the meals on wheels program. “Finishing touches” are being applied to business plan for expansion of our housing programs. ETCOG has contracted with Texas’ Manufacturing Extension Partnership to conduct an organization-wide LEAN assessment with the objective of identifying and eliminating waste and inefficiency. These are just a few of many examples I could provide of the simultaneous wave of positive, customer driven change that is sweeping over our organization.

Within this context, I want to draw your attention to an issue we are seeking to address with our Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) systems. As you may know, included within the ICT systems are telephones, internet,

computers, printers, cell phones, and copiers. I have received a number of calls over the last few months from internal staff and external customers indicating that it is sometimes difficult to access outside telephone lines or to navigate through busy signals to speak to the ETCOG staff member of choice. Clearly, this is a problem, and I want you to know we are taking steps to resolve it. ETCOG recently competitively procured the services of a top-notch ICT services firm. In the coming months and as resources



“CLEARLY, THIS IS A PROBLEM, AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW WE ARE TAKING STEPS TO RESOLVE IT.”

allow, our newest strategic partner will be helping us replace old and unstable ICT infrastructure with a modern, reliable system that is dependable and cost efficient. We are starting with our computer systems which are most at risk, and then our telephone systems will be addressed next. As you might imagine, this is a costly process and we will most likely have to digest the cost over time.

So, next time you encounter a busy signal, please do call again until you get through, or send an email to customerhelp@etcog.org. In your email or telephone message (if you do not reach a live person), be sure to advise us of your need, provide a phone number and/or email address where you can be reached, and one of our staff will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you very much for your patience as we undergo this transition.

Remember, ETCOG is “under construction... please pardon our mess”.

# Serving a Fourteen County Region

**Providing services and programs to East Texas seniors, employers and job seekers**

## 9-1-1 EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT OF THE LAST QUARTER

CAROLYN FLORES,  
DIRECTOR OF  
9-1-1 EMERGENCY  
SERVICES AND  
HER DAUGHTER  
MICHELLE  
WOODS, WHO IS A  
DISPATCHER FOR  
THE VAN ZANDT  
COUNTY SHERIFF'S  
OFFICE



**T**he last quarter of the 9-1-1 fiscal year was a busy one. In a year filled with challenges, a major benchmark for ETCOG's 9-1-1 Regional Program was met. The CSEC (Commission on State Emergency Communications) approved ETCOG to move forward with requesting E9-1-1 services for location (referred to as Phase II Wireless or WP2). Very quickly vendors began responding and it is anticipated that all vendors will be deployed within the fiscal year ending August 31, 2009.

Another happy occurrence was the 10th anniversary of the ETCOG 9-1-1 Appreciation Day. This day is set to coincide with 9-11 each year recognized by the governor's office as 9-1-1 Day to honor telecommunicators and dispatchers throughout the state. The event, entitled "9-1-1 Stars Shine Forever", had to be postponed as Hurricane Ike entered the picture. The last minute changes were directed by Pattie Hanon, 9-1-1 Database Manager. Pattie is in charge of the PET (Public Education and Training) Team responsible for planning and executing the production. The delay caused the group to lose the band and caterer originally schedule. The scramble for a replacement band and caterer was successful and the event went off as planned on the alternative date.

GREGG COUNTY  
SHERIFF MAXEY  
CERLIANO AND  
WIFE, KATHY  
ENJOYING THE  
EVENING AT THE  
BANQUET.



ETCOG staff spent a goodly part of the year reviewing with the Equipment Team from the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee various equipment upgrades that could be appropriate to the 9-1-1 PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Point). At the end of the day, it was determined that upgrades were fundable for 15 9-1-1 centers and it would include at all the newly developed MIS (Management Information System) and map software. The process of sending maps and loading them at the equipment vendor's location is nearing an end and we anticipate a delivery date around December to January. Included at select locations will be the connectivity of PSAPs to one another. These are determined by network configuration and need. This has been a very busy and exciting quarter for 9-1-1.

KIM CLARK, 9-1-1  
MALI SPECIALIST,  
WAS WITH THE  
"PAPARAZZI" ON  
HAND.



## FREE GRANT WRITING WORKSHOPS

To all who plan to apply for CJD grants (VOCA, VAWA, SDFSCA, JJDP or SF 421) in 2009, ETCOG's annual FREE CJD Grant Writing Workshops have now been scheduled, as follows:

Thursday, December 18	10:00 a.m.
Thursday, December 18	2:00 p.m.
Friday, December 19	10:00 a.m.
Friday, December 19	2:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 31	10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, December 31	2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 6	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, January 6	2:00 p.m.

PLEASE RSVP to Angela.Norton@twc.state.tx.us at your earliest convenience, indicating which ONE session you would like to attend. Additional sessions will be scheduled if needed. As in previous years, each workshop will be about 2 hours in length, plus time for questions to be answered. Each applicant agency MUST send at least one representative to ONE workshop per year.

## SBA 504 LOAN PROGRAM CONTINUES SMALL BUSINESS LENDING IN SPITE OF CURRENT CREDIT CRISIS

In spite of the credit crisis that has gripped many financial institutions and slowed lending for commercial expansion, the National Association of Development Companies (NADCO) is assuring small business entrepreneurs that SBA 504 loans are still available for qualified small businesses during these turbulent economic times.

"The credit crisis has not frozen the SBA 504 loan program and loans are still available for businesses seeking to expand through real estate acquisition, or simply adding on to their existing facilities, or needing to make large equipment purchases" according to NADCO President Christopher Crawford. "Certified Development Companies (CDCs), our banking partners and the SBA are doing business as usual and will continue to do so for the long haul. 504 loans provide a steady source of new long term capital at a fixed rate, and frequently with only 10% down on a new project for a small business, helping to conserve cash for operating expenses."

**"THE EAST TEXAS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY STANDS READY TO ASSIST IN KEEPING AMERICA'S ECONOMY GOING... ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS."**

In fact, the intent of SBA loans is to provide access to capital for small businesses that might not otherwise be available through regular capital market channels. When the economy is strong and access to capital is a relatively easy, there is typically less demand for SBA financing. In the case of the SBA 504 loan, a private sector lender partners with a CDC to provide financing for the purchase, construction or renovation of owner-occupied commercial real estate. Use of the SBA 504 loan tends to become increasingly important as a source of long term financing when traditional sources of money decline as they have in recent months.

The East Texas Regional Development Company stands ready to assist in keeping America's economy going - especially in times of crisis. For more information on the ETRDC, contact Luke Kimbrough at (903)984.8641 ext. 219 or (903)742-3412.

## ETCOG REGION RECEIVES \$285,759 IN SOLID WASTE GRANT AWARDS

City of Gladewater  
\$13,600

City of Gun Barrel City  
\$30,000

City of Hallsville  
\$30,000

City of Henderson  
\$10,000

City of Jacksonville  
\$3,000

City of Longview  
\$6,073

City of Palestine  
\$5,010

City of Rusk  
\$28,000

City of Tyler  
\$6,073

City of Uncertain  
\$3,000

City of Van  
\$20,000

City of Waskom  
\$5,635

City of Wills Point  
\$3,000

ETCOG  
\$60,000

Gregg County  
\$10,000

Harrison County  
\$6,073

Rains County  
\$10,645

Upper Sabine Valley  
\$5,650

Van Zandt County  
\$30,000

## MEDICARE PART D OPEN ENROLLMENT

NOV. 15 - DEC. 31

On November 15, Open Enrollment began for Medicare beneficiaries to decide if a Medicare Part D plan is right for them, and if so, which plan they should choose.

ETCOG's Area Agency on Aging division conducted ten regional presentations and provided one-on-one assistance for Medicare Part D Open Enrollment.

Open Enrollment ends December 31, 2008. You must have Medicare Part A or B to be entitled to Part D and participate in open enrollment.

It's not too late to receive benefits counseling.

Contact the Area Agency on Aging at 1.800.442.8845.

## NEW ETCOG DIVISION BRINGS ADDED CUSTOMER BENEFITS

The East Texas Council of Governments wants to better serve you, our customer, by providing exceptional customer service and using our resources wisely to ensure our customers receive maximum benefit. ETCOG's renewed commitment to excellence is a top priority, and this year, a new division was created to lead our customer service and efficiency efforts, the Division of Innovation and Efficiency.

The Division of Innovation and Efficiency is another step towards realizing the strategic goals of ETCOG. The new Director, Deborah Butts, a 16 year ETCOG veteran, plans to involve all members of the ETCOG team as she identifies new opportunities to strengthen programs, services, and customer relationships. Key responsibilities include identifying and capitalizing on internal efficiencies and elimination of waste; customer relations, facilities management, establishment of streamlined internal purchasing and procurement services, eventual establishment of an external purchasing cooperative for member governments and identifying opportunities for and providing new services targeted to customer needs. Expanding ETCOG's customer base is also a priority.

"I BELIEVE THAT WHEN WE  
CONFRONT THE ISSUES THEY  
WILL CHANGE TO POSITIVE."  
DEBORAH BUTTS

Deborah is seeking input from all members of the ETCOG team. She encourages staff to share ideas, offer suggestions, and volunteer to implement new strategies. "I am honored to be the Director of Innovation and Efficiency," says Deborah. "I believe that when we confront the issues they will change to positive."

A proactive approach to identified and potential problems will create growth and opportunity for ETCOG. The new division will be a vital part of that growth.

## ETCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER RETIRES

ETCOG would like to thank Larry Shelton for his dedicated service to our fourteen county region by serving on the ETCOG Executive Committee.

Larry, in his position of Commissioner of Camp County, was elected to the ETCOG Executive Committee in July of 2006. The Committee is comprised of seventeen members and is responsible for carrying out the policies and programs as established by the Board of Directors, managing ETCOG funds, determining regional plans to be undertaken, authorizing contracts, and the application for grants.

After two years of service, Larry announced his retirement from the Committee and his position of Commissioner at a Committee meeting on November 6.

During his service, Larry also volunteered as a member of the ETCOG Nominating Committee. His hard work, time, and commitment to making East Texas a better place to live, work, and raise a family has been invaluable.



LARRY SHELTON, LEFT, RECOGNIZED FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO EAST TEXAS BY COMMITTEE CHAIR, JERRY GALLOWAY AND ETCOG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID CLEVELAND

# Workforce Solutions East Texas

## CONNECTING EDUCATION TO WORKFORCE NEEDS

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board in conjunction with the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board hosted a Bi-Regional Education Summit on Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at the Pinecrest Country Club in Longview for 221 attendees.

The Summit was themed **"Connecting Education to Workforce Needs"** and provided a venue for educators; community, business, and government leaders; and economic and workforce professionals to address the academic and workforce skills needed in our technologically based, globally driven society.

Keynote speakers included: Dr. Bill Daggett, President of the International Center for Leadership in Education and sponsor of the annual Model Schools Conference; Bill Ratliff, former Lieutenant Governor, State Senator, and Chairman of Raise Your Hand Texas; Tyane Dietz, Chair of the Texas Association of Workforce Boards; and Dr. Ray Marshall, former Secretary of Labor, Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas' LBJ School of Public Affairs.

Dr. Daggett's opening presentation was *"Preparing Students for the 21st Century."* He stated the skills, knowledge, and attitudes 21st century learners bring to our schools and the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they will need to be successful in the technological, globally driven world in which they will live and work have changed dramatically. Dr. Daggett described what schools must do to meet these challenges in order to prepare students well for the future rather than the past. His closing presentation, *"Bringing Focus and Effective Practices to Our Classroom,"* stated curriculum has expanded to the point of being unwieldy in terms of scope and breadth. To gain control, district and school leaders must have access to reliable data in order to decide what students need to learn to be successful in the 21st century.

Bill Ratliff delivered the luncheon keynote address and stated we have to have more than an academic pathway to high school graduation with career and arts needed. He urged all individuals to join Raise Your Hand Texas which is a bipartisan group of Texas business and community leaders, parents and taxpayers dedicated to strengthening and improving our public schools.



Tyane Dietz stated it is imperative all partners and stakeholders work together to grow and improve Texas' talent supply. She emphasized that youth in grades 1 – 6 today will be ready to enter college and join the workforce in the next 6 – 12 years. Their preparedness will be a determining factor as to whether Texas will, at a minimum, sustain its current level of economic growth.

Dr. Ray Marshall stated there is mounting evidence most American schools and job training systems are unable to meet the escalating learning needs of a more competitive and knowledge-intensive society. He encouraged radical changes in our school and workforce development systems.

The Summit hosted two panel discussions which addressed questions relating to regional concerns. The morning panel included: Jay Dean, Mayor of Longview; John Stroud, Executive Director of Longview Economic Development Corporation; Dr. Pamela Anglin, President of Paris Junior College; Patsy Bolton, Superintendent of Sulphur Springs ISD; and Dr. Daggett. The afternoon panel included: Dr. Charles Alworth, Mayor Pro Tem of Tyler; Price Arredondo, Director of the Hispanic Business Services Office of the Tyler Chamber of Commerce; Tom Mullins, Executive Director of Tyler Economic Development Corporation; Dr. Judy Traylor, Associate Vice President for Outreach Services at Northeast Texas Community College; Dr. Bill Daggett; and Dr. Ray Marshall.

We wish to extend our gratitude to Longview Economic Development Corporation and Paris Economic Development Corporation which participated in the event as Platinum Sponsors; and Kilgore Economic Development Corporation which participated as a Lunch Sponsor. With their assistance, we were able to provide a venue that strikes at the heart of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board's Mission and Vision.

**Our Mission** – *The mission of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is to improve the quality of life in this area through economic development by providing a first-class workforce for present and future businesses.*

**Our Vision** – *It is the vision of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board that Business and Industry will regard East Texas as a region with an ever improving quality of life, an active and coordinated economic development program, and a premier workforce.*



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The East Texas Council of Governments is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. Established in 1970, ETCOG, either directly, or through its contractors, provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG and its contractors also build the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provide peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and deliver rural transportation services, business finance programs, and environmental grant funding for the region.

**TDD: 211**



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