

## News & Notes

*December 2010*

### **E** mployee Benefits Pilot Project Update

Some of our customers have advised that any solution East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) can propose to reduce or contain the escalating cost of employee benefits would be of great value. In response ETCOG began a pilot project with Brinson Benefits; an employee benefits broker out of Dallas. The purpose of the pilot project was to determine if Brinson could help ETCOG reduce the cost of our employee benefits package without an adverse impact on our staff. In addition, we wanted to eliminate wasteful and inefficient practices associated with the administration of the benefits plan. While the pilot project is not totally complete as of this writing, I am pleased to report to you that as a direct result of



Brinson's efforts on our behalf, ETCOG will be able to deliver significant premium savings to our staff who insure their dependants. Moreover, ETCOG will reap approximately \$100,000 in net savings during the 2010-2011 plan year. While it is not realistic to expect this kind of return every year, as you might imagine we are thrilled with these stellar results. More details and information concerning the pilot project will be provided for our members when it is complete.

In the meantime, based on our successful experience thus far, we are beginning the negotiation process with Brinson Benefits to bring branded cost containment and reduction services to our dues paying members. In view of the complexities associated with recently enacted national health care legislation, we all may need a little more help in the near future. Stay tuned for more developments!

### New Statement of Benefits Report

It is important to me and to the Executive Committee that our dues paying members can see and to the extent possible, calculate the return on investment they receive for their annual dues. I promised some months ago that ETCOG would develop a system to track and report services we deliver for you so you can judge the value of your ETCOG membership for yourself. I am pleased to report that the very first Statement of Benefits report aggregated to the county level, was delivered to your mailbox last month. Please be sure to review the Statement of Benefits carefully, and advise concerning any additions, corrections, or clarifications you would like to see in next years report. By this time next year, we hope to deliver both county and city level reports.

With this report in hand, you can see that your ETCOG membership really does deliver an outstanding value in both lean and prosperous times. Rest assured that even more benefits and value are coming your way soon. We remained committed to continuous improvement so please do not hesitate to contact me by phone, email or U.S. mail if there is any way ETCOG can assist you.