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**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
EAST TEXAS**



PRESS RELEASE

Six Workforce Solutions East Texas (WSET) Offices to Close December 30th

New Mobile and Web Solutions to Launch for Expanded Customer Assistance

East Texas, December 21, 2016: Workforce Solutions offices, effective December 30, 2016, will be closing in six of the following communities: Carthage (Panola County), Emory (Rains County), Gilmer (Upshur County), Jefferson (Marion County), Pittsburg (Camp County), and Quitman (Wood County). WSET will continue to maintain all of the services that are available in our existing offices; Athens (Henderson County); Canton (Van Zandt County); Henderson (Rusk County); Longview (Gregg County); Marshall (Harrison County); Palestine (Anderson County); and, Tyler (Smith County).

This reduction in centers was passed unanimously on December 12th by the WSET Board and the Chief Elected Officials board which is comprised of 14 county judges in East Texas and the mayors of Longview and Tyler. Funding reduction led to the closure of the 6 centers as the \$31 Million budget fell almost \$730,000 this year. The closures were designated to the centers in the region with the lowest foot traffic, in which averaged 68 visits each in the last year.

"Our New Pledge is 'Serving You Where You Are', " said Doug Shryock, Director of Workforce & Economic Development at ETCOG, the administrative agency for WSET. "Workforce Solutions East Texas is committed to keeping up with the ever-changing needs and accessibility of our 14-county region customers. While yes, some of our office doors may be closing, know that we have established several new service methods in order to continue meeting client needs. We're not just in a building anymore!"

The VIP Call Center will be available beginning January 2, 2017. Nearly all of the services previously handled by a staff member in an office will be available over the phone, making access even more convenient for our clients. We encourage clients to give us a call at 1-844-ETWORKS (389-6757).

WSET has also expanded its footprint to include designated off-site locations in affected areas, such as, local libraries and other community agencies, as well as two Mobile Workforce Centers. The two units will be navigating our region, as needed, to bring staff-assisted services and computer job-search capability directly to the six affected cities. A schedule of both off-site locations and Mobile Workforce Centers will be available on our website.

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In addition to these services, the website, www.easttexasworkforce.org has recently undergone a face lift making program information and resources easier to find and understand. The ability to submit an Online Application and upload a client's completed documents has been added to the site. Prior to this change, a client could only apply for a service by entering a workforce center. The website will also be expanded in the coming months to include personal access to an applicant's own program information, forms, and more.

"Workforce services – now offered as close as your computer or smart phone!" said Doug Shryock. "And, as always, you can still visit www.WorkInTexas.com if you're looking for work in your area."

About Workforce Solutions East Texas

The vision of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is, "Active economic development with a premier workforce attracting and supporting growth of business and industry." To that end, our mission is to "Improve the quality of life through economic development by providing a first-class workforce for present and future businesses." The Board works in partnership with chief elected officials of the region and is the primary source of local workforce policy. The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is one of 28 local Workforce Solutions Boards located throughout the state. The board serves Henderson, Van Zandt, Rains, Wood, Upshur, Camp, Marion, Harrison, Panola, Gregg, Rusk, Cherokee, Anderson and Smith counties. The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) serves as the administrating agency of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board.

PROUDLY SERVING 14 COUNTIES

ANDERSON CAMP CHEROKEE GREGG HARRISON HENDERSON MARION PANOLA RAIN RUSK SMITH UPSHUR VAN ZANDT WOOD