

# PRESS RELEASE

## ETCOG Awards Regional Citizens for Contributions to East Texas

### *Five East Texans Honored at Board of Directors Meeting*

**Kilgore, TX, March 25, 2011:** ETCOG honored regional citizens who exemplify excellence in performance, innovation, and contributions to the community at its 82nd Semi-Annual Board of Director's Meeting on Thursday, March 24, at the Russell Memorial United Methodist Church in Wills Point, TX (Photos Available). Award criteria and recipient information is as follows:

#### **REGIONAL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – FRANK BREAZEALE, FIRST NATIONAL BANK IN GILMER**

This award is designed to honor a citizen of East Texas who has contributed to the well being of the East Texas Region. Frank Breazeale has helped to develop the region's financial

institutions. He recently retired as CEO of the First National Bank of Gilmer and CEO of First Gilmer Bankshares, the holding company that owns the First National Bank of Gilmer. The First National Bank also has branch banks in Pittsburg, Big Sandy and Mount Vernon. The holding company has banks in Ore City, Diana, Jefferson, Quitman, Mineola and Emory totaling assets of more than \$300 million and capital of more than \$37 million. In addition to growing the banking institutions in East Texas, Mr. Breazeale has helped create more than 120 jobs, with stability and long term service.



#### **REGIONAL CORPORATE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR- RUBEN MARTIN, MARTIN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**

The Regional Corporate Citizen of the Year award honors a corporate partner in East Texas that has contributed to the well being of the East Texas Region. Ruben Martin, President of Martin Resources, has been a major force in East Texas. His company employs over 2,000 individuals. He has businesses all over the United States; but he has chosen to have his corporate offices and operations headquartered in Kilgore, Texas. He and his family have been very philanthropic in their commitment to East Texas, having given hundreds of thousands of dollars to local charities and foundations. He has been recognized as an Outstanding Citizen by Rotary and his continued support of charitable activities includes support for the Boys and Girls Clubs, East Texas Literacy Council, Make a Wish Foundation, Association of Retarded Citizens, Special Olympics, CASA of East Texas, Junior League, AMBUCS, Junior Achievement and Impact a Hero.

#### **REGIONAL STATESMANSHIP AWARD - RICHARD ANDERSON, HARRISON COUNTY JUDGE 2007-2010 (PICTURED)**

The Regional Statesmanship Award recognizes a local, state, or federal official that has demonstrated valuable dedicated service to regional cooperation. David Cleveland, Executive Director of ETCOG, stated, *"It was a unanimous vote to recognize Judge Anderson as 'Statesman of the Year' due to his outstanding leadership, hard work, and dedication which has benefited not only Harrison County but our entire East Texas region with regard to transportation, safety, economic development, communication, and other important areas."* Among the regional projects with which Judge Anderson assisted were (1) the creation of the Rural Planning Organization for the 14-county area, (2) coordinating efforts between TXDOT, AMTRAK, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the East Texas

Corridor Council to develop higher speed rail along the Interstate 20 corridor and (3) efforts to expand broadband service within the 14-county area by applying for federal assistance for the construction of the "intermediate mile" in order to greatly improve telecommunication speed within our region. These efforts are all moving forward.

#### **REGIONAL COMMITTEE SERVICE AWARD – MARIAN LINDSEY, 9-1-1 ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Regional Committee Service Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a sustained, dedicated commitment to ETCOG efforts and activities. Marian Lindsey is the Communications Supervisor for the Jacksonville Police Department, where she has been employed for 25 years. Ms. Lindsey has always been a candid and supportive member of the ETCOG Public Safety Answering Point supervisors, but has also served specifically on the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee for the past three years. Prior to that she served as an appointment member of a variety of sub-committees investigating and advising on 9-1-1 strategies that support the regional approach of 9-1-1, and keeping us informed as to possible PSAP impacts as appropriate. She is a charter member of the 9-1-1 Public Education Committee since 1997 and a Charter Member of the Public Educating People (PEP) Team which identifies needs and develops programs to address those needs. Ms. Lindsey was a 2001 Texas State Telecommunicator of the Year award winner submitted by ETCOG. Her most recent contribution included a planned program to address concerns with communicating with the Spanish speaking community to stop hang up calls from 9-1-1 while the dispatcher is acquiring services from Language Line for translation.

#### **ETCOG EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD – CAROLYN UNDERWOOD, OF LONESTAR, TX**

The ETCOG Employee of the Year is nominated and voted on by ETCOG Staff and the top three candidates are presented to the ETCOG Selection Committee for consideration. Carolyn Underwood was selected as this year's recipient. Carolyn has been with ETCOG since 1999 as the Workforce Section Chief for contract services.

***"Carolyn Underwood is an employee who is one of the hardest working, dedicated members of the ETCOG staff. She has a number of extremely detailed tasks which require that she work long hours to complete. In doing so, she maintains a positive and objective attitude to look beyond established practice or routine approaches to achieve the required outcome," says Wendell Holcombe, Director of Workforce programs.***

For more information, contact ETCOG's Executive Director, David Cleveland, at (903)984-8641 x221.

###

#### **About ETCOG**

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) 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.