

REGIONAL REPORT

ETCOG ROLLS OUT NEW MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to share with you ETCOG's new Vision and Mission Statements:

ETCOG Vision

"We are a trustworthy organization committed to providing leadership, education, and financial resources to our 14 county region."

ETCOG Mission

"In order to improve the Quality of Life for all of our Citizens, ETCOG pledges all of its resources to educate and assist its members to accomplish their goals."

Congratulations to the ETCOG Board of Directors who recently voted to

approve both statements in addition to our Core Business Services and Strategic Priorities. Many kudos also go to the ETCOG Executive Committee who under the leadership of immediate past Board Chair Emory Mayor Cay House; and current Board Chair, Smith County Commissioner JoAnn Hampton, guided this important project to completion. You are welcome to view or download the entire vision/mission document at our website (www.etcog.org).

As you may know, an organizational vision statement discloses what the

organization wants to BE; and the mission statement discloses what the organization wants to DO or accomplish.

It is interesting to note that this is the very first vision and mission statement defined for our 40 year old organization. In view of this fact, it is fair to ask why a vision and mission statement is so important. After all, the organization went without for 40 years!



ETCOG Executive Director, David Cleveland

An excellent question, indeed! The answer is straight forward. While an organization can continue to function and produce without a clear sense of its vision or mission (we have proved that point!); does that mean it is healthy to do so? By no means. Men and women

tend to thrive in an environment where they connect with a vision and mission that is much bigger than themselves and when they understand how they contribute to its achievement every single day. Consider NASA and their Kennedy-inspired vision of "sending a man to the moon and returning him safely to the earth". Every NASA employee in the decade of the 1960's could say, from the C.E.O. all the way to the custodian, that they were doing their part to send American astronauts to the moon!

Admittedly, ETCOG's Vision and Mission



NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members to the East Texas Council of Governments Executive Committee:

Commissioner Wade McKinney
Henderson County

Commissioner Jerry Gaskill
Wood County

Mayor Jeff Fratangelo
City of Jefferson

Judge Bill Stoudt
Gregg County

The ETCOG Executive 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.

To view who is representing your area on the Executive Committee, visit <http://www.etcog.org/200/Executive-Committee.htm>



REGIONAL SAFETY EXERCISE

East Texas Counties Joined Together to Test Interoperable Communications



On May 4, ETCOG hosted a Regional Homeland Security Exercise designed to test interoperable communications of all first responding agencies in the region. Approximately 150 first responders from EMS, Fire, Police, Sheriff's offices, the Texas Forest Service and the Department of Public Safety, met to test our communications abilities. The goal of this event, as required in federal emergency response guidelines, tested radio interoperability within 1 hour of arrival at the incident or exercise.



The event, hosted at the ALERT Academy in Big Sandy, tested interoperability with a scenario of mass contamination in the event a crop duster accidentally released hundreds of gallons of insecticide while passing over Canton's First Monday. The exercise lasted several hours and could not have been completed without the help of all responding jurisdictions, Emergency Management Coordinators, RCC Consultants, Inc. and the ETCOG Homeland Security Advisory Committee.

Conducting this exercise shows the Office of Emergency Communications that East Texas is working towards interoperability based upon the guidelines of the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) Goal 2. Regional Homeland Security Exercises are held every three years.

HOUSING PROGRAM PROGRESS

The East Texas Council of Governments housing program began in the Area Agency on Aging as a minor residential repair program for the elderly in 2003. As senior management identified the need for a more comprehensive and responsive housing program, Executive Director, David Cleveland, established a housing program within Public Information & Regional Services under Director Luke Kimbrough. Since its inception ETCOG Housing Program has served 950 clients. Working with the current senior home repair program, as well as developing and administering new programs, such as the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) CDBG Disaster Recovery Program and the TDHCA Housing Trust Fund Amy Young Barrier Removal Program, has been the focus of the past year. Services provided include accessibility modifications, general home repairs, and rebuilding of entire homes. ETCOG Housing Program served 201 clients last year. The lengthy list of repair requests and ongoing inquiries is indicative of the extreme need for these types of program in East Texas. New funding sources are being sought out to offer more housing services in our region in order to make substantial improvements to the lives of even more East Texans.



ETCOG FINANCE TEAM RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the East Texas Council of Governments by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for the tenth year in a row for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

An Award of Financial Reporting Achievement has been awarded to the department designated by the government as primarily responsible for preparing the

award-winning CAFR. This has been presented to the East Texas Council of Governments Finance Department. Executive Director, David Cleveland says, "I am proud of what ETCOG's Finance Team accomplishes year in and year out. They are consistent, reliable and committed to excellence in all that they do and this 10-year GFOA winning streak stands as an objective testimony to their professionalism!"

The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

Pictured Left: ETCOG member, Lindale Economic Development Corporation, celebrates the ground breaking of its new Lindale Industrial Park

EAST TEXAS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PROJECT, SUBURBAN EXTENDED STAY HOTEL, OPENS

Over the past year the East Texas Regional Development Company has been involved in over ten separate projects, including providing a small business loan for a new Suburban Extended Stay Hotel in Longview, TX (pictured right). With its grand opening on Thursday, April 28, 2011, the hotel invited the East Texas community to tour the facilities and enjoy refreshments provided by local vendors. The event was well-attended and turned out to be an afternoon full of food, fun and raffle.

The Suburban Extended Stay Hotel will provide East Texas with short-term housing accommodations and luxury hotel services. "I'm excited for this new business venture," said hotel owner and entrepreneur Dante Hahn, "I've been working with ETRDC for years and know the job will always get done." The hotel has a friendly staff that provides each tenant with quality customer service. Their accommodations include providing a fully supplied kitchen in each room and offering

weekly housekeeping services, onsite washers and dryers, and free high-speed Internet access.

"We anticipate great things from this project," said Luke Kimbrough, Director of Public Information and Regional Development at the East Texas Council of Governments, "East Texas will really benefit from Suburban Extended Stay Hotels."

"I've been working with ETRDC for years and know the job will always get done," says hotel owner and entrepreneur, Dante Hahn.

The East Texas Regional Development Company has provided small businesses in East Texas with the financing they need to expand and start businesses since 1983. Existing with the purpose of assisting small business, this private non-profit organization has helped many Texas business owners achieve long term financing for all of their business needs. To learn more about how the East Texas Regional Development Company can help your business with its financing needs, email Luke Kimbrough at Luke.Kimbrough@etcog.org or call (903) 984-8641.



NEW GOBUS WRAPPINGS & GIS MAPPING

Last May, ETCOG rolled out the new brand, GoBus, for its transportation system formerly known as the East Texas Rural Transit District. This spring, eight buses will be wrapped in the eye catching purple and green colors (pictured below) per week and take route throughout the region. You can GoBus! Just call 1.800.590.3371 to schedule your trip.

ETCOG's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division is in the final stages of developing a zoning map for the City of Henderson and water utility network map for the Fruitvale Water Utility Districts. ETCOG provides both GIS and GPS services, in the areas of planning, economic development, utilities, public works, emergency response, code enforcement, building inspections, redistricting, etc., to its member entities to promote the use of best methods and practices in day to day operations. For more information on GIS and GPS services offered by ETCOG, please contact Kris Gandham or Michelle Cahal at 903 984 8641.

NEW VISION & MISSION...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

is not nearly as awe inspiring as NASA's. Nevertheless, it is very important. As the common problems East Texans grapple with become more and more complex, the value of regional solutions to those problems becomes increasingly more valuable. You will benefit from an ETCOG team that now has more clarity and focus. We are "committed to providing leadership, education and financial resources to our 14-county region".

Our mission to "pledge all of [our] resources to educate and assist [our] members to accomplish their goals" will in fact "improve the quality of life

for all of our citizens". Every initiative we consider on behalf of the region from this point forward must now align with our new vision and mission. Finally, these new statements will help your ETCOG team keep our collective organizational eye on what is important to you and remain focused on fulfilling our purpose for existence as defined by our statute and by-laws. As your trustworthy stewards of limited resources, we cannot afford to do anything else especially in the current fiscal environment.





OMBUDSMAN - 1,798.25 HOURS OF SERVICE

Thursday, April 21st, ombudsman volunteers with the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas Ombudsman Program met at the Tyler Junior College West Campus, Tyler for Certified Volunteer Ombudsman Training. The volunteers, who are certified by the Department of Aging and Disability Services, are required to complete twelve hours of continuing education annually. The training events scheduled by local ombudsman staff are designed to meet this requirement.

The week of April 18th through April 23rd was National Volunteer Recognition Week. Framed certificates from the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services were presented to volunteers completing fifteen, ten and five years of service. All volunteers were recognized and presented green umbrellas with Texas Volunteer printed in white. Since the beginning of the State Fiscal Year, September 2010, the certified volunteers have given 1,798.25 hours of services in nursing homes and assisted living facilities located in the fourteen counties jurisdiction of East Texas Council of Governments.

CELEBRATING 9-1-1 APPRECIATION DAY & EDUCATION MONTH

Governor Rick Perry issued a proclamation in March declaring April 10-16, 2011 as Public Safety Telecommunicators week, stating, "The men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators, such as 9-1-1 operators and dispatchers, are dedicated to saving lives. They respond to Texans in times of great need, and their specialized skills and calm, caring, presence are invaluable to the Lone Star State."

To celebrate our local telecommunicators, ETCOG's 9-1-1 department hosted a 9-1-1 Appreciation Day on Saturday, April 9, 2011, at Oil Bowl Lanes in Longview (pictured left). Nearly one hundred dispatchers and their family members attended the event of dinner and bowling.

Also, ETCOG's 9-1-1 Emergency Services division, which provides training, equipment and database management for 17 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) offices in East Texas, recently promoted a national effort for 9-1-1 education. On the heels of the Senate's designation of April 2011 as National 9-1-1 Education Month, the National 9-1-1 Education Coalition announced the creation of www.know911.org. This website, a main component of the Coalition's 9-1-1: The Number to Know campaign, is designed to bolster 9-1-1 education efforts across the nation and

provide valuable resources to individuals, agencies, companies, and communities about the importance of 9-1-1 and its proper use.

The website contains many free resources to promote and support local, regional, and state 9-1-1 education, awareness, and outreach efforts. In addition, the site will continue to grow with the input of public safety educators and leaders across the nation who support the Coalition's mission.

"The men and women who serve as public safety telecommunicators... are invaluable to the Lone Star State."

Governor Rick Perry

ETCOG's 9-1-1 Emergency Services emphasizes its regional education efforts on the non English speakers in the community and also the hearing impaired. The staff hosts training to provide teaching ideas and strategies to reduce 9-1-1 hang up calls and provides educational

materials in English and Spanish versions at no cost to the PSAPs. The division will soon be hosting THOR - Tactical Homeland Operational Response - a two stories high, 80,000 pound, 80 foot public safety center on wheels at a Telecommunicator training at the East Texas Police Academy in Kilgore.

For more information on ETCOG's 9-1-1 program, visit <http://www.etcog.org/211/9-1-1-Emergency-Services.htm>.



REACH has approximately 60 exhibit booths to visit.

SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 2-3, 2011 REGIONAL EDUCATION ON AGING, CAREGIVING & HEALTHCARE (REACH) CONFERENCE

ETCOG will host its annual REACH - Regional Education on Aging, Caregiving & Healthcare Conference November 2-3, 2011, at the Maude Cobb Convention Center in Longview, Texas. The conference is a collaborative effort to provide educational workshops, plenary sessions and networking opportunities for professionals, caregivers, and anyone interested in Aging issues. ETCOG anticipates approximately 400 individuals will attend the 2011 REACH Conference. Cost to attend the two day conference is \$75.

REACH is planned by the ETCOG Area Agency on Aging and the following agencies: Texas Department

of Aging & Disability Services' Regulatory Services Division; Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services' Guardianship Program; Texas Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services; Hawkins Creek Assisted Living and Memory Care; Texas Department of Family & Protective Services; Lake Country Area Health Education Center; Good Shepherd Medical Center ClassiCare; Allegiance Specialty Hospital; The Hospice of East Texas; The Clairmont Tyler; Alzheimer's Association; Jordan Health Services; Kinsman Circle of Care; At Home Health Care and Andrews Center.

Visit <http://www.etcog.org/404/REACH-Conference.htm> for more information.

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS EAST TEXAS

HEALTHCARE SIMULATION STUDY COMPLETED

A Healthcare Simulation Feasibility study for East Texas funded by the Texas Workforce Commission was recently completed. Simulation is considered the wave of the future in healthcare training – both for degree seeking students and for current professionals wishing to increase their credentials and experience – it is particularly useful in areas where there may be a deficit of specific real-life medical conditions and situations through which trainees can practice skills.

Three regional workforce boards in East Texas – Workforce Solutions East Texas (WSET), Deep East Texas, and Northeast Texas - joined with healthcare academics and providers from the 35 counties represented regionally to address the potential for and barriers to the use of simulation labs in healthcare training across the area. Together these stakeholders gathered frequently to discuss and research the methods by which simulation could

be expanded to serve more students and address shortages in several critical healthcare professions.

- By 2020, it is predicted the state of Texas will need 24,870 nursing graduates, but fall short with an anticipated actual number of only 13,297 (Green, 2010)
- In 2009, only 9.8% of the state's nursing degrees or certificates were awarded in East Texas (U.S. Department of Education, 2011)
- Thirty-one of the 35 counties included in this project are anticipated to see population increases between 2009 and 2015 (Texas Department of State Health Services, Health Currents – Complete Report, 2009)
- In 2009, 16.1% of the individuals in these 35 counties were aged 65 or older, and will likely face dramatically increased healthcare needs in the coming years and decades (ibid, Texas Department of State Health Services)

Wendell Holcombe, Director of Workforce Programs for WSET said, "As a result of this project, East Texas now has a comprehensive and collaborative body that is well-armed to develop simulation into a state of the art system for healthcare training regionally." The network formed will expand the usefulness and efficacy of simulation by allowing for the training of more individuals, facilitating training in rural and more isolated areas throughout the region, increasing the number and type of medical experiences with which trainees can interact before reaching live patients, and providing all of the stakeholders in the area with increased solutions for the problems of simulation cost and updating.

For a copy the feasibility study, contact Gary Allen, at (903)984-8641 x 227 or gary.allen@etcog.org.

YOUTH PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE

The 8th Conference for Youth Professionals was held at the Holiday Inn Select in Tyler on Wednesday, April 13, 2011. The theme of the Conference was "Understanding Culture and Building Character for Our Future." The Conference was hosted by the Youth Advisory Group of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and provided a venue for youth professionals to learn about other cultures and building character in youth. 165 professionals serving area youth were in attendance.

The Board's Youth Committee Chair Mary Berry presided over the conference. Tyler City Councilman Jason Wright welcomed attendees to the City of Tyler and expressed his appreciation for the youth professionals' efforts.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Richard Froeschle, Director of Labor Market Information at the Texas Workforce Commission, and Board Member Andrea Mayo, Deputy Superintendent of Longview Independent School District. Mr. Froeschle made a presentation on "The Changing Face of the Texas Labor Market." Ms. Mayo's luncheon address was entitled "Rhymes, Rules and Reason: Building Character through Education."

Breakout sessions were featured addressing the conference theme of learning about cultures and building character. Breakout sessions presenters included: Rev. Orenthia Mason, Director of Teacher Education at Texas College, made a presentation titled - "Building Character: Understanding Culture with African American and Hispanic Youth;" Price Arredondo, Director of the Tyler Hispanic Business Alliance, and Pastor Gilberto Avila of Centro Cristiano Restauracion, presented on the topic - "The Hispanic Impact on Education;" Jamal Moharer, Tyler Businessman and owner of NDMJ, Ltd, conducted a session on "The Middle Eastern Workforce Makeup and Cultural Habits;" Wayne Allen with Longview's Wellness Pointe, presented on "Sports as Culture: The Art and Dynamics of Team Leadership;" and Greg Garner, Technology Instructor at Moore Magnet School in Tyler ISD, presented "Online Uprising: Trends of Today's Teens and What to Do About It."

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board's Staff presented a closing skit describing regional summer and year round work opportunities for young people and organizations available through Workforce Solutions East Texas.



Keynote Speaker, Robert Froeschle



Keynote Speaker & WSET Board Member, Andrea Mayo



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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.

ETCOG is an Equal Opportunity Employer / Program. Auxiliary Aids and Services are available upon request, to individuals with disabilities. Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2989 (TTY); 1-800-735-2988 (Voice); 1-800-662-4954 (Espanol).