

# REGIONAL REPORT

## WORKFORCE PROGRAMS REVIEW UNDERWAY

### MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In August, a programmatic and structural review of the regional workforce development programs began. The goal of this Workforce programs review is to begin the process of becoming a nationally recognized leader in the design and delivery of relevant workforce solutions that meet our customers' needs. I authored a Team Charter to document this goal, to clearly set forth the purpose of this important program review and the specific tasks that the team needed to accomplish.

The complexity of the federal suite of programs currently referred to as the "Workforce Investment Act" (WIA) and the bureaucratic structures that govern the same make this task far more difficult than most program evaluations. At the same time these factors combined with the leadership of the respective governing boards, offer a unique opportunity to reinvent these programs so they are more relevant, efficient and effective. In order to ensure that national and state best practices were considered, and to help our workforce review team successfully navigate through the dense regulatory environment that surrounds the WIA programs, ETCOG contracted with a nationally recognized consultant, Greg Newton and Associates. Mr. Newton



**ETCOG Executive Director, David Cleveland**

and his staff have worked with 20 of 28 workforce boards in Texas, and over 190 workforce Boards nationwide. His expertise has proven to be invaluable to the team in many ways. Two of the benefits I have enjoyed early on is his ability to help keep this challenging project on track, and his vast knowledge of the programs and how other boards successfully reinvented themselves to serve the needs of their respective regions. Newton has immediate working knowledge of best practice information that would have taken us many months to research on our own.

Two additional developments combine to give me an infusion of hope and excitement for this project. First, in October the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board held a retreat. Some of the major outcomes and consensus points from the retreat are:

- To continue and strengthen the **focus on workforce development for economic development** and better link these functions within the region and within ETCOG.
- Increase horizontal alignment activities that **focus on broader community involvement and engagement** for workforce development, while maintaining

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## NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

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

**Councilman Robert Nelson**  
City of Lindale  
Chair

**Judge Thomas Cravey**  
Camp County  
1st Vice Chair

**Mayor Angela Raiborn**  
City of Rusk  
2nd Vice Chair

**Commissioner Lloyd Crabtree**  
Upshur County  
3rd Vice Chair

**Mayor Jeff Fratangelo**  
City of Jefferson  
Secretary - Treasurer

**Commissioner Virgil Melton, Jr.**  
Van Zandt County

**Judge Robert Johnston**  
Anderson County



## EAST TEXAS 9-1-1 SYSTEM UPGRADES



A new technology through Emergency CallWorx will upgrade the East Texas 9-1-1 system to allow for increased 9-1-1 call taking and mapping capabilities. The system, called the Emergency CallWorx Next Generation E9-1-1 Call Taking and Mapping solution, will improve efficiencies for dispatchers and allow for the caller in need of assistance to speak with dispatchers in the correct service location more quickly. Some of the immediate benefits include a prioritizing

capability for dispatchers and automatic recordings of all 9-1-1 calls. The prioritizing capability allows dispatchers to chat in a secure network to verify information between regional offices without having to call an administrative line. The new recording feature was only possible before with the purchase of recorders. The CallWorx system now eliminates the need of purchasing recording equipment. The new system will also allow supervisors to have remote access of active and archived calls.

This 9-1-1 solution will serve 10 East Texas counties and 19 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPS). The system will also be locally hosted and referred to as ETCOMnet, which stands for East Texas Communications Network. The first ETCOMnet system host was installed on October 25, 2011, and is located in Longview at the Atrium building

downtown. The second host was installed on October 26 and is located in Anderson County Sheriff's Office. These two hosts can manage 250,000 calls per minute, therefore, reducing the need for other hosts in the immediate future. The locally hosted network, with a robust MPLS network, will prepare the region to connect to the Texas Emergency Services Internet when it becomes available and funding is obtained.

ETCOG is proud to bring a 9-1-1 Solution of this magnitude and uniqueness. Estimated cost savings by using the new mapping and MIS system exceeds \$1.2 million. News coverage of the system has been posted as far as Denver and the UK. ETCOG staff is currently verifying all addresses, conducting training on the system, and working with the host centers of the new technology. Installation will continue throughout the end of the year.

## BENEFITS COUNSELING & MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT DATE CHANGES

During the past year, we have seen our Benefits Counseling Department increase its staff, its outreach efforts, presentations and number of clients served. They have worked diligently to serve our 14-county area and meet reporting requirements, while also availing themselves of training that has been available to keep abreast of changes in the system. We are proud of our benefits counselors!

If you or someone you care about has Medicare, mark your calendars. Medicare Open Enrollment is earlier this year. It starts on October 15th and ends on December 7th. The Benefits Counseling Department at Area Agency on Aging has certified benefits counselors who are experienced in reviewing and making comparisons of Part D and Advantage plans to find the plan best for you. They can also determine if you are eligible for the MIPPA program which provides extra help with prescription drugs.

Comparisons and enrollments to the plan of your choice and in the extra help program are available to you with no fee for our services. And be sure to take advantage of the new benefits for all people with Medicare — like wellness visits, preventive care and lower prescription drug costs. Call for assistance at 1-800-442-8845 or 903-984-8641. It's worth it to take the time to review and compare.

## PARTS OF EAST TEXAS TO RECEIVE BROADBAND SOON

In March 2010, ETCOG and several agencies submitted grant requests for stimulus funding through the National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) to bring Broadband Infrastructure to the region. On August 18, 2010, Peoples Telephone Cooperative became the recipient of a federal grant to lay over 600 miles of fiber optic cable throughout East Texas.

The result can be seen in the construction along our rural highways and will soon be enjoyed by East Texans too numerous to count. Peoples has already begun work in Van Zandt County and the project aims to serve areas in the counties of Van Zandt, Wood, Camp, Hunt and Kaufman, Hopkins, Lamar, Red River, Titus, Smith, UT Health Center, Rains, Delta, Fannin, and Franklin.

Our rural neighbors will begin to see broadband speeds increase and new locations serviced as a direct result of the fiber Peoples is installing. In certain areas, Peoples will not only provide the fiber network, but will also be able to offer the end-user connection as well.

The new fiber network will position Peoples to face the dramatically changing industry of telecommunications. By enlarging their footprint and diversifying their services, Peoples has strengthened their company by gaining new revenue sources. A stronger, local company means East Texans will continue to enjoy premium connections throughout the years to come at affordable prices without sacrificing service for living in rural East Texas.

## MONITORING REPORT ON AREA AGENCY ON AGING: NO FINDINGS

Claude Andrews, Director of Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of East Texas at ETCOG, received a letter on June 17, 2011, from the Department of Aging & Disability Services (DADS), confirming the on-site monitoring scheduled for the AAA on July 18-22, 2011. DADS Access and Intake staff reviewed the financial and programmatic operations of the AAA. The primary focus was on the achievement of goals and objectives specified in the approved area plan and the efficiency and effectiveness with which these goals and objectives are met. Compliance with the Texas Administrative Code, the Older Americans Act and other federal regulations were also assessed.

AAA of East Texas received DADS A&I/AAA initial report dated August 24, 2011, in regards to the DADS On-Site Monitoring of the AAA of East Texas. Details of the report are below:

### Overview:

Access and Intake – Area Agencies on Aging staff of the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS A&I/AAA) conducted a monitoring review of the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas.

This review focused on compliance with applicable federal, state and departmental rules, regulations, policies and procedures. Areas reviewed included fiscal, programmatic and performance reporting. The monitoring review disclosed no findings.

### DADS Access & Intake-Monitoring Staff:

Jake Beeler – Program Coordinator; Access & Intake-Area Agencies on Aging Section; Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services and Brent Black – Fiscal Coordinator; Access & Intake-Area Agencies on Aging Section; Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services.

### Monitoring Objectives:

Verification of Reported Expenditures; Verification of Reimbursement Request; Indirect Cost Allocation; Sub-Contract Provider Audits; Performance Measure Testing (In-House); Status of Prior Monitoring; Fixed Assets; Program Income/In-kind; Provider Monitoring; Information, Referral & Assistance; Benefits Counseling; Care Coordination; Caregiver Program Services; and AAA Contract Compliance.

## ETRDC MAKES TOP 50 AREA LENDERS LIST

ETCOG's small business development corporation, the East Texas Regional Development Company (ETRDC) has been recognized for making the Fort Worth Business Press' Top 50 Area Lenders list. Luke Kimbrough, Director of Public Information & Regional Services, is pictured with the award (below). In FY 2011, ETRDC secured 10 loans totaling \$3.9 million in development projects primarily located in the East Texas Region.

These 10 loans were to businesses throughout East Texas. Among these are the Suburban Extended Stay Hotel and Create Art! both in Longview, Texas. "It is a great honor to be recognized as one of the top 50 SBA lenders in the Dallas/Fort Worth area." stated Luke Kimbrough. The ETRDC competed against not only other Certified Development Companies, but private banking institutions as well.

Recently, the ETRDC partnered with the Kilgore College Small Business Development Corporation to host a series of seminars in the region entitled, "Access to Capital".

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the requisite focus on vertical alignment activities that focus on the centers and programs.

- Emphasize the **ongoing collection and dissemination of meaningful workforce intelligence** to inform Board strategy for vertical and horizontal alignment and support economic developers in their work.

The extent to which we are successful in accomplishing these outcomes for our region, our businesses, our economic development professionals and our job seekers will determine

the long term success of this project. The second encouraging development is our new workforce centers contractor, Dynamic Workforce Solutions, (DWS) under Mr. Paul Dunn's leadership, is fully engaged with us in the review effort. As ETCOG's new workforce centers contractor, it is of critical importance that we are working to chart the new future together. The final report and recommendations of the review team are currently scheduled to be released in February, 2012.





## GOBUS BRANDING CAMPAIGN WINS MARKETING SPOTLIGHT AWARD

Recently, the ETCOG Transportation division entered the South West Transit Association (SWTA) Marketing Awards contest. ETCOG placed first in the Spotlight Award category for the GOBUS branding campaign launched earlier this year.

In addition to the actual branding of vehicles (pictured above), the entry focused on the marketing efforts of GoBus which included notepads, pens, key chains, and 14 county-specific brochures designed to be passed out at health fairs, forums for seniors, transportation awareness events, and offices. A significant increase in ridership has occurred since the branding campaign began.

## MAPPING THE FUTURE

PUBLICATION: TEXAS RISING, AUTHOR: MICHAEL CASTELLON

Strength is found in numbers, and innovation is found in collaboration. This fundamental formula is behind the formation of East Texas Consortium - with a goal to solve big problems while benefitting taxpayers with cost-efficient services.

Local governments and other agencies which will be part of the East Texas GIS Consortium membership will partner to build a GIS infrastructure to improve public services. East Texas Council of Governments Executive Committee has approved the formation of the East Texas GIS Consortium at the November Executive Committee Meeting.

East Texas GIS Consortium, founded under the direction of the East Texas Council of Governments, is a productive network of counties and other governmental entities with a shared commitment toward smart government.

GIS — Geographic Information Services — encompass the technology and analysis of electronic maps and the data they represent. It's your GPS, but with a brain and a hard drive, allowing officials and workers to see geographic trends with satellite images, decreasing time in the field.

The East Texas GIS Consortium formed to share otherwise costly GIS systems, similar to a co-op. The ultimate benefit of the partnership falls on taxpayers, residents and businesses in East Texas.

The City of Rusk, for example, developed a mapping network of fire hydrants, allowing for the analysis of underserved areas. By spotting deficiencies in hydrant

service, officials can preempt disasters and other emergencies.

Similarly, Gladewater officials recently used GIS data to calculate the length and condition of street segments — a practice that traditionally requires a worker walking streets with a measuring wheel, costing several weeks of fieldwork and resources. GIS data allowed the distance measurements to be calculated in a matter of minutes.

In Anderson County, the Sheriff's Department uses GIS technology to access emergency response information from the field.

"ETCOG's GIS technology makes a big difference in our region," says Kris Gandham, who serves as associate director of transportation for the East Texas Council of Governments. "For about \$5,000 for each entity, we can provide all of our members, irrespective of their size or tax base, access to a full-fledged GIS system."

Gandham says the partnership has more big plans for the future, including expanded economic development planning that involves GIS data.

"GIS helps us answer a lot of difficult questions, including tax values jobs distributes across a specified area," he says. "Analyzing street and road traffic is also a considerable challenge. But GIS tools allow us to identify trends, and examine the impact that new businesses might have on a given area. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination."



This year's REACH conference hosted the highest number of attendees to date!

## 20 YEARS OF REACH...AND STILL BOOMING! REGIONAL EDUCATION ON AGING, CAREGIVING & HEALTHCARE (REACH) CONFERENCE

ETCOG's Area Agency on Aging hosted their 20th REACH (Regional Education on Aging, Caregiver and Healthcare) Conference themed, "Celebrating 20 Years of REACH. . . and Still BOOMING!", on November 2nd & 3rd at the Maude Cobb Activity Center in Longview, Texas.

The conference, which hosted over 500 East Texans, is a collaborative effort to provide educational workshops, plenary sessions and networking opportunities for professionals, caregivers, and anyone interested in Aging issues. REACH provided attendees a choice of 27 workshops over the two-day event,

access to 57 exhibit booths, and accreditation and/or continuing education hours relative to the attendees' field of work.

Of the 57 exhibitors at REACH, 16 were Silver & Bronze Sponsors. Without these sponsors & exhibitors, we would not be able to offer the conference to attendees at such an affordable cost. ETCOG would like to thank all sponsors, exhibitors, planning agencies and volunteers that made the 20th annual conference such a success.

# WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS EAST TEXAS

## NEW PROVIDERS FOR WORKFORCE CENTERS AND CHILD CARE SERVICES IN EAST TEXAS

On October 1, 2011, Dynamic Workforce Solutions (DWS) Inc. assumed responsibility as the new Workforce Centers Services Provider for the 14 county ETCOG region. Harold Womble will serve as Project Director for DWS. Also, on October 1, Neighborhood Centers Inc. (NCI) became the new Child Care Services operator. Daniel Head has been named Project Director for NCI.



Solutions has introduced a new East Texas Job Seeker Web Site at <http://easttexaswfs-jobseeker.us/etexas> (pictured). The website contains valuable information for job search planning and networking along with specialized advice for youth jobseekers. The website also includes contact and location information for the workforce centers and satellite offices in East Texas.

Both of the new providers, Dynamic Workforce Solutions and Neighborhood Centers Inc. have retained a high percentage of the staff from the previous contractor and are engaged in extensive staff training efforts. Workforce Centers and

Child Care customers can expect continuation of services offered through the centers along with significant enhancements during the coming months.

In conjunction with assuming the role as Workforce Centers Services Provider, Dynamic Workforce

ETCOG is looking forward to building relationships with the two new contractors, as well as completing and implementing the Workforce programmatic and structural review outlined by our Executive Director, David Cleveland, in the cover article on Page 1.

## REGIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY EXERCISE

The East Texas Council of Governments, in partnership with the City of Longview, conducted a Full Scale, Regional Safety Exercise on November 14-17, 2011. This 72 hour, around the clock event incorporated local, regional and state emergency responders as well as private business partners.

The purpose of the full scale exercise was to test interoperability between agencies, to practice use of the incident command system, and to train on techniques such as search and rescue. To simulate how an event would actually occur, the incidents were conducted in real time with a hands-on format.

Over the course of the 72-hour exercise, emergency response was staged in Longview and the surrounding area including Gladewater. The exercise began with a scenario of a tornado that touched down in various locations across Longview. Emergency responders attended to mass casualty and structural collapse scenarios at the former Stroh's Brewery Complex, located at 1400 W. Cotton St. There was also a search and rescue operations done by Mounted Horse Patrol at the Swinging Bridge Water Treatment Facility. The former Colonial Apartments on Judson Road also served as a search and rescue location. There was an active shooter scenario held at the former Foster

Middle School, located at 410 S. Green Street. There was also an "officer-down" event in Gladewater that requires a manhunt. Daytime and nighttime aircraft landing zones were established and coordinated for the removal of victims to nearby hospital facilities.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) performed various search and rescue operations. Behind the scenes, a Base of Operations was established, incorporating major aspects of the Incident Command System, Communications Inter-Operability, and various IT related events, i.e., WEB EOC, video conferencing. Regional hospital facilities received injured patients in their respective emergency rooms. The State of Texas Type III Incident Management Teams provided the Command and Control element.

During the 72 hour event, we hosted approximately 400 personnel from across the ETCOG Region, as well as the State of Texas. We would like to especially thank Russell Marshall for his planning and coordination of the event, the City of Longview, Longview Fire Department, Longview Police Department, Longview Public Works, Sam Dunn Enterprises (Stroh's), Texas Baptist Men, Sysco Food Services of East Texas, LLC and the very long list of businesses that donated goods and services along with volunteer groups for their contributions.





3800 Stone Road  
Kilgore, TX 75662

East Texas Council of Governments | Serving 14 Counties of East Texas | 2011

# REGIONAL REPORT

3800 STONE ROAD • KILGORE, TX 75662 • (903) 984-8641 • (903) 983-1440 F • ETCOG.ORG

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).