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EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PRESS RELEASE

GoBus Fare Increases Effective October 1st

Kilgore, TX, September 29, 2014: On September 4th, the ETCOG Executive Committee considered the report on staff results from a two month public hearing process and approved an increase in GoBus fares. The current rate of $2.00 per trip within a county and $5.00 per trip across counties had not been increased since 1997 when the average price of a gallon of gas was $1.25. To help build program sustainability, One-Way Fares to become effective October 1, 2014 are:

$4.00 Within Local Service Area
$8.00 Adjacent Local Service Area
$10.00 Maximum One-way Fare
$1.00 for each additional stop – up to two permitted

ETCOG publicized and held fourteen public hearings throughout the region to give the public opportunity to comment on the proposed fare increase. The hearings were held at the Workforce Solutions East Texas center in each of the 14 counties served by ETCOG and had approximately twenty-five attendees region wide. ETCOG also accepted telephone and online public comments throughout the public hearing process. Results from the public hearing process were shared in presentations to the ETCOG Executive Committee, EasTexConnects transportation committee, and the Rural Planning Organization comprised of regional county judges and transportation representatives. Resulting from the public comments, the proposed fare increase was mitigated to apply the base fare to local service areas rather than just within a county. The local service areas more accurately reflect customer travel patterns. Also, the maximum one-way fare was set at $10.

Changes for Seniors

While an agreement between the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas and GoBus has permitted all seniors age 60 and over to ride free, funding constraints have forced the AAA and GoBus to enter into a new agreement for senior trips. Effective October 1, 2014, the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas can only pay for trips to medical appointments, dialysis, and senior centers for seniors who have qualified for AAA assistance. Seniors making a trip not covered by AAA or who have not qualified for AAA assistance must pay regular GoBus fares. To see if you qualify for AAA assistance, please call GoBus at 800-590-3371.

Aside from fares, the total funding for GoBus comes from state and federal sources, with the exception of local contracts with the Area Agency on Aging of East Texas and Kilgore College for direct services and the City of Marshall to assist with funding its flex route system.

For more information, contact ETCOG's Director of Transportation, John O. Hedrick at (903) 218-6490 or John.Hedrick@etcog.org.

About GoBus

ETCOG's rural transportation system, GoBus, makes approximately 600 trips a day, 5 days a week, throughout the 14 counties of East Texas. There are approximately 40 vehicles in the GoBus fleet which provide demand/response

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service within the region and a fixed route service in Marshall. To schedule a trip, call 1.800.590.3371 before 2:00 pm the day prior to the requested service. You may call up to one week in advance to schedule a ride.

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.