



# PRESS RELEASE

## Public Transportation Linking East Texas to Dallas Now Available

*Veterans Group goes through Basic Training on May 10<sup>th</sup> - Interconnectivity Day*

**Kilgore, TX, May 2, 2012:** EastTexConnects, a transportation coordination committee administered by ETCOG, announces a new mobility program designed to give individuals in East Texas a way to get to the DFW area by using public transit options. EastTexConnects has declared Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, Interconnectivity Day and has partnered with veterans organizations in East Texas to offer "Basic Training," an accompanied walk through of the program, to a group of 25 veterans giving them the chance to visit the VA Hospital in Dallas.

*"We are currently targeting veterans with this program, because it eliminates the need to depend on friends or family to drive them two hours or more one way to Dallas for an appointment or an afternoon on the town, and get them there for less money than if they took a private car. Public transit systems are already in place, and can be used by anyone. Our Basic Training will show folks how to use public transportation," said John Hedrick, Director of Transportation at ETCOG.*

The kickoff event, which will feature the veterans traveling from several East Texas cities (Marshall, Longview and Mineola) to Amtrak stations, taking Amtrak to Dallas, and then DART to their Dallas destinations (stopping at the Dallas VA Hospital), and then returning to East Texas without having to ask anyone for a ride.

Media are invited to join EastTexConnects for the full trip, or to meet at Tyler Transit at 8:25 AM to join the passengers in their travels to Mineola, where they will stop for a photo as they are joined by other passengers at the Amtrak station before departing at 9:25 AM. Please email Lindsay Vanderbilt at [lindsay.vanderbilt@etcog.org](mailto:lindsay.vanderbilt@etcog.org) to reserve your seat.

### Amtrak Schedule for Basic Training

#### AM Departures

Marshall	7:50 AM
Longview	8:28 AM
Mineola	9:25 AM
Arrive at Dallas:	<u>11:30 AM</u>

#### PM Arrivals

Depart Dallas:	<u>3:40 PM</u>
Mineola	5:15 PM
Longview	6:15 PM
Marshall	7:01 PM

For more information, contact ETCOG's Director of Transportation, John Hedrick, at 903.984.8641 x242.

#### About EastTexConnects

EastTexConnects was formed by Texas Transportation Code 461, and formerly known as the East Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Planning Steering Committee. The committee includes representatives from stakeholders throughout the region and meets every other month in Kilgore. EastTexConnects is administered by the East Texas Council of Governments.

#### 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.