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**EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS**



PRESS RELEASE

21st Annual Conference for Regional Education on Aging, Caregiving & Healthcare (REACH) Next Week

October 16-17 at Maude Cobb Convention Center

Longview, TX, October 12, 2012: Approximately 500 East Texans who work with the elderly will receive training next week at the 21st Annual Regional Education on Aging, Caregiving & Healthcare (REACH) Conference at Maude Cobb Convention Center in Longview on October 16-17 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The Conference is hosted each year by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) which is administered by the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG).

The conference, themed "*Wild About REACH*," is a collaborative effort to provide educational workshops, plenary sessions and networking opportunities for professionals, caregivers, and anyone interested in Aging issues. REACH provides attendees a choice of 36 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.

Accreditation/continuing education hours are offered for the following: Nursing, Ethics, Social Work, Activity Professionals, Licensed Professional Counselors, Licensed Nursing Facility Administrators, Assisted Living Administrators, Adult Day Care Directors, Guardianship, and Ombudsman.

"We are proud to bring to East Texas, a premier conference, educating our public, seniors, providers and practitioners. The REACH conference has been a forum engaging the aging network, collaborating, building partnerships and networking on ways to better serve our citizens of East Texas. We are particularly proud of our vast number of sponsors, our partners and participants for these years of support and excitement which they exude in the opportunity to sharpen professional skills, and serve our public," said ETCOG's Director of Aging, Bettye Mitchell. "This year, we honor Claude Andrews, former Director of the Area Agency on Aging. Mr. Andrews served our fourteen county region for thirty eight years. Claude is known throughout the State and recognized on a national level for his service, his vision and passion to serve our aging population. We too recognize Ms. Priscilla Jones, Community Care Coordinator, and her staff for their untiring support in coordinating the REACH conference for these twenty oneyears."

REACH is partially funded by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services and the following sponsoring agencies: Scott & White Health Plan – Senior Care, Highland Pines Nursing and Rehab; Marshall Homecare & Hospice; Compass Hospice of East Texas, LLC; The Hospice of East Texas; Right At Home; Jordan Health Services; Care Improvement Plus; Texas Home Health and Hospice; Gateway Dental; Good Shepherd Medical Center; Alzheimer's Association, Greater Dallas Chapter/East TX; Prestige Estates; Southwest LTC; Southerncare; At Home Healthcare; and Heart'sWay Hospice of Northeast Texas. REACH is organized by a planning committee made up of fourteen State and Local agencies.

Additional information can be obtained by calling the Area Agency on Aging at ETCOG at (903)984-8641 extension 101 or 107 or on our website <http://www.etcog.org/404/REACH-Conference.htm>.

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About East Texas Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging of East Texas is designated by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services to coordinate services for persons in East Texas who are 60 or older, with particular attention to low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas. Programs include, but are not limited to: Information, Referral and Assistance, Benefits Counseling/ Legal Assistance, Nursing home Ombudsman, Care Coordination, Caregiver Support Program and transportation provided by GOBUS. The Area Agency on Aging provides Nutrition programs delivering hot, nutritious meals to eligible homebound senior and providing congregate meals at local senior center. The Area Agency on Aging is a program of ETCOG serving its 14 county region.

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.

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