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**EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS**



PRESS RELEASE

ETCOG Awards Regional Citizens for Contributions to East Texas *Five East Texans Honored at Board of Directors Meeting*

Kilgore, TX, March 30, 2009: ETCOG honored regional citizens who exemplify excellence in performance, innovation, and contributions to the community at its 78th Semi-Annual Board of Director's Meeting on Thursday, March 26, at Emory Baptist Church in Emory, Texas. Award criteria and recipient information is as follows:

REGIONAL CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

This award is designed to honor a citizen of East Texas who has contributed to the well being of the East Texas Region. John Langston of Mount Enterprise is the recipient of the Regional Citizen of the Year award for his commitment to the community. Mr. Langston is a pharmacist and actively serves as a Lions Club member. It is not uncommon to see him at the pharmacy after hours, after Church to fill a prescription or deliver a prescription to customers who are unable to pick up their medicine. Mr. Langston was also the first recipient of the Mount Enterprise City Council's Citizen of the Year award in 2007.

REGIONAL CORPORATE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Regional Corporate Citizen of the Year award honors a corporate partner in East Texas that has contributed to the well being of the East Texas Region. Larry Roquemore, owner of Roquemore's Hardware in Whitehouse, was selected as the 2009 award recipient. Larry and his entire family are involved in different aspects of the community. Larry serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Whitehouse Chamber of Commerce, is the liaison between the chamber and the City of Whitehouse, was last years Chairman for the EXPO 2008 and also serves on the Board of Directors of the Whitehouse Community Economic Development Council.

REGIONAL STATESMANSHIP AWARD

The Regional Statesmanship Award recognizes a local, state, or federal official that has demonstrated valuable dedicated service to regional cooperation. Gregg County Judge Bill Stoudt was selected for this award for his commitment to regionalism through sharing his belief that in order to compete for economic development, higher education and legislation advantages for the rural area there is strength in numbers and East Texas County and City Governments must work together. Judge Stoudt is the past Chairman of the Longview Museum of Fine Arts, Regional Community Foundation, Longview Regional Hospital, Longview Economic Development Corporation, Gregg County Appraisal District, The Stoudt Companies, Cherokee Water Company. He has served on the board for City of Longview Higher Education Council, Texas Eastman Community Advisory Board, Regions Bank, University of Texas Longview Campus Centurion Club a past director of the Gladewater Rodeo and Rotary. Judge Stoudt was unavailable to attend the Board of Directors meeting on Thursday and sent his wife to accept the award on his behalf. An awards presentation will be held on Monday, March 30 at his Commissioners Court meeting.

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REGIONAL COMMITTEE SERVICE AWARD

The Regional Committee Service Award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a sustained, dedicated commitment to ETCOG efforts and activities. Artis Newsome of Tyler started volunteering for ETCOG in 2000 through the East Texas Economic Development District Board. This Board is responsible for overseeing the economic development planning efforts throughout the economic development district. He has stood out as a leader in the Board for his concern not only for the city he represents, but for East Texas.

ETCOG EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

The ETCOG Employee of the Year is nominated and voted on by ETCOG Staff and the top three candidates are presented to the ETCOG Executive Committee for consideration. Keith Huddleston was selected as the 2009 recipient. Keith has been with ETCOG since December 3, 1979 as the Section Chief-Monitoring and Assessment in the Workforce Department. Keith demonstrates the 4-way test in everything that he does and not only in his department, but with everyone at ETCOG. His personality for adding 'life' to the ETCOG employee gatherings shows his enthusiasm for this organization and the people here.

The Semi-Annual Board of Directors meeting also reviewed ETCOG's progress over the last year through its Strategic Agenda, congratulated ETCOG On the Spot award recipients for outstanding service, and highlighted future initiatives. For more information, contact ETCOG's Executive Director, David Cleveland, at (903)984-8641 x221.

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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