



PRESS RELEASE

ETCOG Takes First Steps with ATCOG and Connected Texas Toward Creation of a Regional Broadband Plan

Seven Regional Meetings Planned for Stakeholders, Service Providers and Regional Champions to Attend

Kilgore, TX, April 25, 2014: ETCOG and Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) announce a partnership and informational meetings scheduled to begin the process of developing a broadband plan for the 23 county region. ETCOG and ATCOG are relying on a grassroots, bottoms-up approach and invite local leaders, telecom service providers, stakeholders, and interested volunteers to attend one of seven meetings scheduled in our area.

With the help of regional stakeholders and partners, the East Texas and Northeast Texas Regional Broadband project will result in the development and completion of a comprehensive, regional broadband blueprint for the underserved and unserved areas of our 23-county region. ETCOG and ATCOG are collaborating with Connected Texas, a public-private partnership working with the Texas Department of Agriculture on comprehensive broadband mapping and planning across the state, to assist us with the completion of this important project. For more information about Connected Texas please visit www.connectedtx.org or contact Program Coordinator LaTanya Tatum at LTatum@connectedtx.org or (512) 461-4159.

"Through this initiative, ETCOG, ATCOG and Connected Texas will work with the Texas Department of Agriculture to develop and implement effective strategies for technology ACCESS, ADOPTION and USE in the East Texas and Northeast Texas Region," said ETCOG Executive Director, David Cleveland. "When this planning effort is complete, we will have a locally developed plan that will guide our efforts to accelerate the availability and use of technology. Subsequently, when the plan is fully implemented, it will result in the creation of a more robust business environment, more effective community and economic development, improved healthcare, increased educational opportunities, and more efficient government."

The process will also require identifying "Community Champions" in each county, local individuals who will work with Connected Texas to lead and support the broadband community planning effort in their area. This is to ensure the Broadband plan will be shaped by the input and work of the counties, communities, local champions, local broadband providers, and the local planning team. Interested individuals are urged to attend any of the seven general informational meetings held throughout the regions:

TYLER MEETING

May 6, 2014
9:30 am to 11:30 am
Tyler Workforce Center
4100 Troup HWY, Tyler, TX
[RSVP](#)

PALESTINE MEETING

May 7, 2014
9:30 am to 11:30 am
2000 S. Loop 256 (Palestine Mall) Suite 18
Palestine, TX

[RSVP](#)

LONGVIEW MEETING

May 8, 2014
9:30 am to 11:30 am
Longview Workforce Center
2430 S. High St. Suite A-1
Longview, Texas

[RSVP](#)

SULPHUR SPRINGS MEETING

May 12, 2014
9:30 am to 11:30 am
Sulphur Springs Public Library
611 Davis St. North, Sulphur Springs, TX

[RSVP](#)

PARIS MEETING

May 12, 2014
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
Paris Junior College
McLemore Student Center
2400 Clarksville, Room 219, Paris, TX

[RSVP](#)

MT. PLEASANT MEETING

May 13, 2014
9:00 am to 11:00 am
Mt. Pleasant Public Library
601 N. Madison, Mt. Pleasant, TX

[RSVP](#)

TEXARKANA MEETING

May 13, 2014
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
Ark-Tex Council of Governments
4808 Elizabeth, Texarkana, TX

[RSVP](#)

For more information, contact, ETCOG Special Projects Lead, Nanette Stephens at Nanette.stephens@etcog.org or 325-212-5303. To attend one of the seven regional information meetings, please RSVP by clicking the link listed with the associated meeting above. Updates on the project will be added to the ETCOG website at <http://www.etcog.org/641/Broadband.htm>.

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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