

ETCOG HAPPENINGS

GOBUS RECEIVES OUTSTANDING RURAL TRANSIT SYSTEM IN TEXAS AWARD FROM THE TEXAS TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

At its recent Annual Roadeo and Transit Expo held in Ft. Worth, the Texas Transit Association (TTA) presented ETCOG's GoBus public transit system, serving the fourteen counties of East Texas, the Outstanding Rural Transit System award for 2014.

The award is given to a public transportation system each year that has designed and implemented programs that demonstrate innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques and have applied these successfully in the public transportation industry.

GoBus was recognized for its efforts in offering stellar customer service, promoting the use of technology to gain efficiencies, excellent coordination within the region, and effective marketing. *"I was pleased to accept this award on behalf of our GoBus team—particularly our drivers and customer service folks who work with our customers every day. Since branding our rural transportation operation as "GoBus" in 2011, we have seen an 88% increase in ridership. Recently our dispatchers and drivers went through customer service training with a professional agency to enhance the quality of customer experience with GoBus. We have also spent many months migrating to RouteMatch, a dispatch software, which is helping to maximize efficiencies with our trips and allowing us to go paperless. We appreciate TTA's recognition of the efforts of the GoBus team,"* said ETCOG's Director of Transportation, John O. Hedrick.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING UPDATES

Eight AAA staff attended a week long training in Austin last week. New staff benefits counselor, Carol Jackson; volunteer, Detrese Harkey; and staff member, Al Pippins; completed Benefits Counselor 1 training and now will complete the test to be certified. Current staff members Christy Fowler and Nellie Henry completed their training and mock trials to complete their certifications as Benefits Counselor II. Benefits Counselor, Juanita Beason, completed "Assist" (suicide prevention) certification. Director, Bettye Mitchell, and Associate Director, Beverly Brown, were also in attendance to trainings regarding Benefits Counseling, reporting and data management. *"Juanita Beason serves as the lead Benefits Counselor and holds four certifications; Benefits Counselor 1, Benefits Counselor II, Long Term Care and Suicide Prevention",* says Bettye Mitchell. Congratulations to these staff for their training and new certifications.



President of TTA and CEO of Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority, Scott Neeley, with ETCOG's Director of Transportation, John O. Hedrick

BROADBAND MEETINGS HELD & MORE MEETINGS TO COME

In May, ETCOG and Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) announced 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 held 7 meetings around the region for local leaders, telecom service providers, stakeholders, and interested volunteers to attend. The meetings had approximately 100 attendees

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.

Please stay tuned for information on county kick off meetings that will be scheduled for late June/early July.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ORIENTATION



ETCOG welcome new Advisory Committee members at its bi-annual Advisory Committee Orientation in May at the Tyler Rose Gardens. Approximately 100 guests attended a session about ETCOG services and a breakout session with their new committee. The ETCOG Executive Committee and East Texas Regional Development Company boards also held official meetings.

OZONE SEASON AWARENESS KICKOFF



Northeast Texas Air Care (NETAC) leaders joined with state officials, federal officials and local industry leaders to mark the beginning of the 2014 Ozone Season for East Texas on April 22, 2014, at Maude Cobb in Longview. The annual luncheon is designed to raise public awareness of air quality during the season that officially runs from May 1st through September 30th of each year. Throughout this time, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality declares an Ozone Action Day whenever conditions are favorable for the formation of ozone at ground levels.

ETCOG UNVEILS JOINES - MCCLENNY CONFERENCE ROOM AT RETIREMENT RECEPTION FOR MAYOR CARSON JOINES



On April 15th, ETCOG held a retirement reception for Mayor Carson Joines of Carthage for his many years of service to East Texas through his 24 years of work on the ETCOG Executive Committee.

During the reception ETCOG dedicated its newly renovated conference room as the "Joines-McClenny Conference and Training Room" in honor of Carthage Mayor Carson Joines and Lindale Mayor Bobby McClenny.

Mayor Joines and Mayor McClenny rendered dedicated service to the East Texas region as active and engaged members of the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) Executive Committee for 24 years and 8 years respectively.

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