



# PRESS RELEASE

## Advisory Team to Position East Texas for Greater Transportation Funding *Advisory Team Formed by ETCOG*

**Kilgore, TX, June 17, 2009:** To position East Texas for federal and other funds, as well as prioritize regional transportation project needs, the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) has formed a Citizens' Advisory Team to advise staff on the development of a Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO).

Staff and Team efforts would place the region in front of proposed State Legislation which would encourage RTPOs being linked to Councils of Governments. The team will consider best practice alternatives with the goal to present the ETCOG Executive Committee an RTPO framework that will strengthen the region's transportation, planning, consensus building and advocacy activities.

*"ETCOG is always looking for ways to address regional needs. As a regional planning organization for nearly 40 years, this project is a perfect fit for us," said David Cleveland, ETCOG Executive Director.*

Citizens' Advisory Team Members include: Harrison County Judge Richard Anderson; Jeff Austin III, Chairman, Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority; Smith County Judge Joel Baker; Randy Brogoitti, MB Construction Management, LLC; Randy Hopmann, TxDOT Tyler District; Griff Hubbard, AMTRAK; Bobby Littlefield, TxDOT Paris District; Robert Ratcliff, TxDOT Atlanta District; Gregg County Judge Bill Stoudt; Tim Vaughn, East Texas Corridor Council Chairman; and staff members John Hedrick, Director of Transportation and David Cleveland, Executive Director.

*"As the chairman of the advisory team, I am thrilled with the caliber of leaders that have agreed to serve on this team," said Tim Vaughn. "We want to do everything in our power to ensure that the East Texas region is unified in pursuing available transportation resources. This project represents one step in that direction."*

### **Current ETCOG Transportation Activities**

- ETCOG serves as the Rural Transit District for the 14 County Region providing public transportation services.
- ETCOG provides administrative support for the East Texas Corridor Council which is seeking Higher Speed Rail along the I-20 Corridor.

For more information, contact John Hedrick, 903.984.8641 x242; David Cleveland, 903.984.8641 x221; or Tim Vaughn, 903.720.6700.

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**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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