

CAPCOG CONNECTIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



Elected Officials Urged to Attend June 3rd Forum For HUD Sustainable Communities Project

The first regional forum for the HUD Sustainable Communities Project targeted to city and county elected officials is set for June 3rd at the Thompson Center; if communities are interested in getting a Demonstration Site designation and the opportunity for consulting and analytical services at no cost to the local jurisdiction, participation at this event is encouraged.

These services are being made available by the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to jurisdictions that host one or more of CAMPO's 37 Activity Centers listed in the 2035 Transportation Plan.

The goal of the Demo Sites will be to develop or redevelop an area primarily located in the Activity Center to better accommodate a surge in growth over the next few years as the region continues to add about 50,000 people annually. More than half of the growth is now occurring outside the City of Austin, according to new Census Data, so outer ring cities can use this project as an opportunity to maximize the impact of adding residents. Funding for the Demo Site Planning as well as a new IBM Analytics Tool is being made available through the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, a new program representing the col-

laboration of HUD with EPA, DOT, USDA, and EDA in an effort to encourage integrated planning at the regional level. CAPCOG received a grant of \$3.7 million on behalf of the five-county MSA and a regional consortium of local governments, regional agencies, non-profits, and



other stakeholder groups who are developing the project's work plan.

"Since evaluation of the Demo Site applications will take into consideration the commitment and likelihood of implementation by a jurisdiction, we may be less likely to select a project that appears to be purely staff driven; we will be looking for evidence that the elected officials are engaged," commented

Betty Voights, Executive Director of CAPCOG which is the lead agency for the project.

Chad Coburn has been hired by CAPCOG to manage all aspects of the HUD Planning Grant and has experience in project management, state and federal grants, environmental projects, and working directly with local governments which made him a good fit for this project, according to Voights. Prior to this position, Chad managed comprehensive planning, transportation, and environmental projects at GrantWorks and is a graduate of UT's community and regional planning program with a specialization in housing. Email Chad at ccoburn@capcog.org or call him at 512.916.6012.

After the June 3rd introductory forum, a second regional forum will be conducted to provide guidance on how the Demo Sites will be selected in October which will include a formal application process. Consultant services will be contracted after the beginning of 2012 and development of the IBM analytics tool, being managed by the City of Austin with guidance from UT, is ongoing. The tool will allow community leadership to run "what if" scenarios as they plan for growth and development.

The Consortium Steering Committee members include CAMPO, CapMetro, CARTS, Envision Central Texas, the cities of Austin, Round Rock, and San Marcos, along with CAPCOG.

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Census Provides Less Information

Since 1940, the US Census Bureau has supplemented the "short form" involving basic questions regarding age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin with a "long form" that covered socioeconomic and housing characteristics of the American people. During the past 60 years, the long form census has become an increasingly rich source of demographic information. From average commute times to educational attainment to migration patterns, every decade the US Census Bureau has produced a remarkably detailed portrait of our country.

The 2010 Census eliminated the long form. The result is one of the least descriptive census counts in American history. Most individuals answered just seven questions: name, gender, race, ethnicity, and whether they sometimes live somewhere else. Heads of households were also asked how many

people lived in the residence and whether they resided in a house, apartment, or mobile home. **As a result, the 2010 Census will not contain any information on incomes, poverty status, education, occupation, employment status, home values, or disabilities.**

In place of the decennial census long form, the US Census Bureau launched the American Community Survey (ACS). For regions with more than 65,000 residents, the ACS will publish demographic, housing, social, and economic data on an annual basis. Information on communities with 20,000 or more people will be published using three-year estimates. For example, the proportion of residents living in poverty will be reported as the average of years 2007, 2008, and 2009. Finally, data on communities with fewer than 20,000 residents will be published as five-year estimates.

The primary limitation of the ACS is that it is based on a smaller sample size than the previous census long form. Although this methodology is less expensive to deploy, it creates significant margins of error for smaller communities and geographies. For places with fewer than 20,000 residents, large portions of data may be suppressed due to statistical limitations. Additionally, identifying certain trends may become more difficult for information published as multi-year averages. Despite these limitations, the ACS will remain the country's most comprehensive source of demographic, housing, social, and economic data.

For questions relating to US Census Bureau information, please contact John Rees, Director of Community and Economic Development, at jrees@capcog.org or 512.916.6183.

Texas Silver Haired Legislators Announced

The Capital Area Election Steering Committee, in cooperation with the Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area, is pleased to announce the names of the Texas Silver Haired Legislators for the Capital Region.

The Texas Silver Haired Legislature (TSHL) was established in 1985 and is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization comprised of 116 representatives elected by Texans 60 years and older to serve a two-year term. The TSHL motivates, engages, and educates older Texans in the legislative process and works closely with members of the Texas Legislature to advocate for passage of legislation that impacts older Texans.

The Capital Region will be represented in the 14th Texas Silver Haired Legislative Session by the following individuals. They serve at-large for the entire ten-county region. Feel free to contact them with concerns regarding legislative issues of importance to older adults:

Carlos Higgins
10712 Fountainbleu Circle, Austin, TX 78750
carlostm@sbcglobal.net

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PO Box 92612, Austin, TX 78709
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GeoMap 2012 – First Call for Projects

The Geospatial Base Mapping (GeoMap) Project coordinates cooperative purchasing of geospatial products, garnering discounts based on volume, and reducing duplicative efforts across the region. GeoMap's regional coordination leverages tax payer and industry dollars to acquire accurate data at an unbeatable price. Historically, project participants have received several dollars of data for every dollar contributed. Geospatial products include aerial imagery, LiDAR, contours, building footprints, vegetation, and land cover to name a few. These products are critical to many applications including, but not limited to, regional planning, conservation, ecology, growth assessment, E-911, Homeland Security, emergency management, and disaster response.

With GeoMap there is no need to make requests for proposals (RFP); CAPCOG has completed the process and chosen an established and reputable vendor that provides the products and services needed for the current year's anticipated projects. CAPCOG also handles the contract management with the vendor, as well as coordinates quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) services. These services ensure accurate products are delivered on time and contractual obligations are met, saving your organization time and resources and ensuring a quality product is delivered. There is currently interest in six-inch and twelve-inch resolution aerial imagery (6" and 12" orthophotos) in the region, which will bring about cost-sharing and volumetric discounts to all participants. **The first Call for Projects for**

GeoMap 2012 is June 1st. Anyone interested will have access to an interactive map which will show current areas of interest of regional participants and allow users to input their prospective areas of interest. Cost estimations will calculate on the fly, letting the user know how to target their areas of interest in the most cost-efficient manner. The online tool will allow users to enter various areas of interest and see what the cost estimate would be for those areas. As more participants join in, discounts will increase with increasing square mileage, saving money or extending the geographical extent of the project.

For more information regarding GeoMap 2012 please contact Eddie O'Connor at 512.906.6033 or eoconnor@capcog.org.

Homeland Security Funded Assets Assist First Responders with Oak Hill Fire

Media reports in April featured an out-of-control situation which started from a campfire. Due to dry conditions and high winds, a raging wildfire was sparked in a greenbelt abutting an Oak Hill residential area of southwestern Austin. Faced with possible loss of life, Incident Commanders on the scene ordered the evacuation of homes in the threatened areas and Austin Police Department Communications personnel activated the CAPCOG Regional Emergency Notification System (ENS) sending telephone messages to nearly 3,000 homes and businesses in the threatened area; this included 20 people who had registered their cellular telephones on the system.

Two Star Flight helicopters deployed to fight the blaze, making 69 120-gallon water drops on homes, flare-ups, and into areas ground crews could not reach. A mobile fuel trailer, purchased through Homeland Security grant funding provided by CAPCOG, enabled STAR Flight to refuel twice on-site saving precious time and possible lives.

In total, 100 firefighters and 30 fire trucks from five agencies activated, including the Texas Forest Service which deployed two C-130 Air Force Jets out of Laughlin AFB in Del Rio, to drop 6,000 gallons of red-tinted

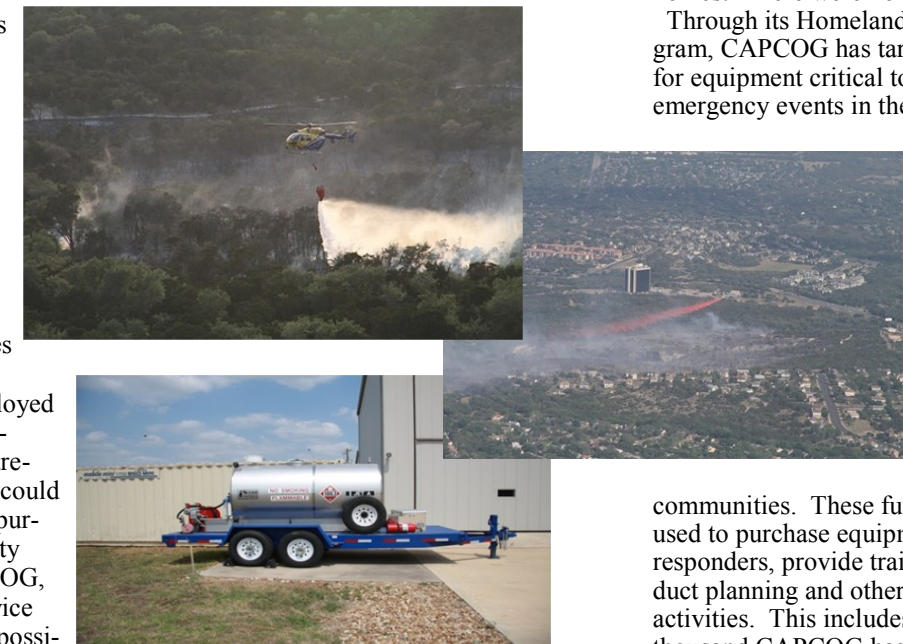
chemical fire retardant on the area.

According to Jim Carse, Public Information Officer for the Texas Forest Service, a total of 100 acres burned affecting 164 homes, destroying eight homes and severely damaging 10 homes. There were no injuries.

Through its Homeland Security Program, CAPCOG has targeted funding for equipment critical to these types of emergency events in the region; since

the program began in 2003, CAPCOG has coordinated the allocation of more than \$30 million in federal Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds to 93

communities. These funds have been used to purchase equipment for first responders, provide training, and conduct planning and other preparedness activities. This includes nearly \$200 thousand CAPCOG has spent on implementing and maintaining the ENS.



DEBATE OVER REGION'S IMPACT ON AIR QUALITY COMPLICATED AS CAPCOG'S PROGRAM FACES 50% CUT IN FUNDING

CAPCOG's Air Quality program is facing a 50% cut in funding due to state budget cuts. Since the program began a decade ago, it has been funded primarily through a state grant for "near-nonattainment areas" that is designed to help keep areas that were close to exceeding the ozone air quality standards in attainment of those standards. This funding has allowed CAPCOG to work with local governments to develop local air quality plans while keeping the area in attainment of ozone standards. The Austin area has seen a dramatic improvement in ozone levels since the beginning of the program, with levels dropping from 89 parts per billion (ppb) in 2000 to 74 ppb in 2010, a 17% decrease. The improvement in ozone levels in Austin has outpaced most of the other areas of the state, including the Dallas-Fort Worth area (16%), the

Beaumont-Port Arthur Area (15%), the Victoria-Corpus Christi area (12%), and the San Antonio area (11%) over the same time period.

The near-nonattainment area grant (known as "Rider 8") has played an integral role in this improvement. With this grant, CAPCOG has funded a variety of technical, planning, and outreach activities over the years. CAPCOG's technical projects have included operation of six ozone monitors to supplement the two monitors operated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), special airborne and mobile monitoring projects, development of improved estimates of emissions, and ozone modeling and data analysis. These technical projects have helped CAPCOG work with local jurisdictions to develop local air quality plans, including the 1-Hour Ozone Flex Plan, the Early Action Compact, and

the 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan. CAPCOG plans an ongoing role in providing staff support for the Clean Air Coalition, a group of local elected officials from Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties representing jurisdictions that participate in the Ozone Flex Plan. The Rider 8 grant has also enabled CAPCOG to conduct extensive outreach to the public and various stakeholders in the region.

The 50% funding cut will come at a time when the Austin area faces the imminent prospect of becoming a non-attainment area due to more stringent air quality standards. In Jan. 2010, EPA proposed to lower the ozone standard from 75 ppb (set in 2008) to a range of 60-70 ppb. After several delays in finalizing the standard, EPA now expects the standard to be finalized in July 2011. After EPA sets the standard, it has up to two years to designate areas as either attaining or not attaining the standard (nonattainment areas). Once an area is designated as nonattainment, the State is required to develop a plan to bring the area into attainment. The plan for the Austin area would need to rely heavily on the monitoring data, emissions inventory projects, and modeling undertaken by CAPCOG. With a 50% cut in funding, however, CAPCOG would need to dramatically scale back these crucial activities. The lack of high-quality local data could result in less accurate modeling of future ozone levels which can, in turn, make any ozone plan less effective and more costly to implement for local businesses, governments, and citizens.

In order to offset these lost revenues, CAPCOG has begun asking local jurisdictions to help fund some of these technical projects. These technical projects will help local jurisdictions gain cleaner air more quickly at less cost than what will be possible if the region has to rely solely on EPA or TCEQ, as their priorities may be more focused on the Houston and Dallas areas. The region's air quality plans have been a model of success in achieving clean air at reasonable cost. In order to continue this progress and retain access to data assessment and technical planning capability with a regional focus, local jurisdictions may want to consider the benefits of assisting in the financial support for CAPCOG's Air Quality program.

Honoring Seventeen Years of Service

Glenda Rogers, Director of Aging Services of the Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area, was recently honored during the bi-monthly Meals on Wheels and More board meeting for her assistance in developing the Country Wheels Program.

Ms. Rogers was instrumental in the development of the program in partnership with Meals on Wheels and More. The program, implemented in January, 2005, is designed to provide weekly meal delivery of seven frozen meals to rural, isolated clients unable to be served by the traditional hot meal programs. In addition to nutritious meals, the weekly contact by trained delivery staff helps to ensure the safety and well-being of the clients.

To honor Ms. Rogers for seventeen years of service to seniors and the implementation of the Country Wheels Program, Tim Hayden, Board Chair, and Dan Pruett, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels and More, presented a Crystal Summit award to Ms. Rogers and announced the renaming of the program as the "Glenda Rogers Country Wheels Program."

Among those attending the award ceremony for Ms. Rogers were members of her family, friends, and staff members of the Meals on Wheels and the CAPCOG Area Agency on Aging.



Glenda Rogers receiving her award from Dan Pruett, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels and More, Inc.

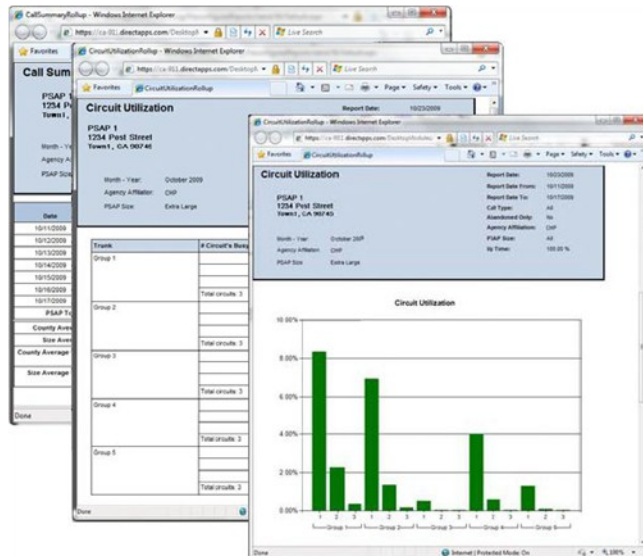
Emergency Call Tracking System Installed

The 33 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the CAPCOG Region have completed training on the newly installed Emergency Call Tracking System called ECaTS. Until now, extracting meaningful information from the statistics, facts, figures, numbers, call records, and call taker data contained in the 9-1-1 system throughout the ten-county CAPCOG Region has always been an arduous, time consuming task.

ECaTS was designed by Direct Technology specifically for the state of California's 9-1-1 system, and CAPCOG is the first 9-1-1 entity to implement ECaTS in the state of Texas. ECaTS is built on the concept of simplicity with its user-friendly reporting module providing simple, direct reporting options. Authorized users are able to generate near real-time information by simply selecting the type of report, the timeframe, and PSAP to be used in the report. The system then accesses the Digital Technology enterprise servers to generate the report directly over a secure Internet connection.

PSAP managers will have access to a wide range of standard reports including information such as Call Summary Reports, Number of Calls per Hour, Top 20 Busiest Hours, Call Duration, and various other statistical reports. To

meet our reporting needs, Digital Technology is adding call-taker level reports to the system. In addition to the standard reports usually found in 9-1-1 MIS packages, ECaTS includes a wide range of management reports. These reports specifically address the requirements of



the PSAP managers and CAPCOG staff and enable them to accurately evaluate the performance of the 9-1-1 system.

Some of the key management reports include:

- Trunk Group Utilization Report – Provides an in-depth analysis of call volume per trunk and trunk group. Managers can review and determine if PSAP trunks are being utilized at appropriate rates

(for example: Are they hunting correctly? reaching capacity resulting in possible busy signals? Is the PSAP over trunked?).

- Speed of Answer Report – Provides a clear scorecard of PSAP answering performance based on the National Emergency Number Association 90/10 rule – 90% of the calls should be answered in 10 seconds or less.
- Daily and Monthly Outage Report – Provides detailed information on the up-time and availability of the data collection system.
- Redirected Wireless Calls – This report provides a statistical analysis on all wireless tower faces and shows calls picked up by a particular wireless face that are transferred to another PSAP. This information may be used by CAPCOG staff to identify and correct misrouted wireless calls to improve call handling efficiency.

ECaTS also includes an ad-hoc reporting module that provides users with the capability to generate any report, as needed, with minimal computer skills. The module incorporates a user interface with check boxes and drop-down lists for generation of analytical reports directly out of the PSAP's database.

During the next 60 days the system will be undergoing the validation phase while final adjustments are put in place. As training was completed at each PSAP, the staff was impressed with the ease of use and very excited and eager to use the new reporting tool.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY CONTINUES 100% PASS RATE

CAPCOG's Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy (RLEA) exceeded its past performance last month when it graduated two Basic Peace Officer classes in the same week and both achieved a 100% first-attempt pass rate on the state-mandated TCLEOSE test. Cadet Class 58 (night class) and Cadet Class 59 (day class) graduated during ceremonies at the State Capitol in April as our region gained 56 new Texas Peace Officers.

The end of the two-year TCLEOSE training cycle is approaching and the RLEA has set

in-service training through the fourth quarter of this year. The RLEA will be hosting and conducting mandated courses such as State and Federal Laws Updates, Human Trafficking, and the entire intermediate core course during the summer months. The complete list of upcoming courses and registration can be viewed on our web site at www.capcog.org.

CAPCOG's RLEA is also preparing to hold a basic jailer's course in September which will be open to all agencies in our region and will be hosted by the Blanco County Sher-

iff's Office. Seating is limited and early registration is encouraged.

CAPCOG's "Use of Force" simulator has now made it completely around the region as its time wraps up in Caldwell County.

CAPCOG will begin developing a schedule for use of the simulator beginning again July 1st, so all agencies interested in scheduling this training system should contact Michael Jennings at 512-916-6164 or mjennings@capcog.org.