

CAPCOG CONNECTIONS



A PUBLICATION OF THE CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

CAPCOG to Host Newly-Elected City Officials Workshop July 21st

The Capital Area Council of Governments will host a Newly-Elected City Officials Workshop on Tues., July 21, 2009, 9 am - 4:15 pm in the CAPCOG Pecan Room at 6800 Burleson Road in Austin which will be targeted to newly-elected mayors and city council members or aldermen.

The workshop will give an overview of the structure of city government, council procedures and actions, roles of elected and appointed staff, duties and responsibilities of Boards and Commissions, municipal annexation and boundary changes, open meetings, open records, and ethics.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. The agenda will kick off with a brief overview of CAPCOG programs followed by topic discussions at 9:30 a.m. At 4:15 p.m. wrap-up and final questions will conclude the workshop.

In addition to being helpful to the elected officials, these workshops have proven to be very valuable to appointed staff and to citizen board, commission, and committee members as well.

There will be a \$35 fee for the one-day workshop to cover the cost of meals and materials. To register call Mel Flores at 512-916-6041 or David Partlow, Regional Services Coordinator, at 512-916-6045.

The deadline to register is Friday, July 17th. You can sign up on line at: <https://training.capcog.org/Default.asp> under the heading of Community & Economic Development.

Regional Mass Fatality Tabletop Exercise Held in April

Imagine the unthinkable—explosions rock Darrell K. Royal Texas Memorial Stadium at the end of a home football game. Over 200 people are killed and 1,000 more are injured. How would public safety personnel and officials from both the public and private sectors handle an event of this magnitude?

On April 21, over 90 stakeholders participated in a regional tabletop exercise to deal with just such a scenario. This was the first regional exercise that focused strictly on a mass facility response. A mass fatality is any incident producing more deaths than can be managed with local available resources.

The objectives of the exercise were to identify: 1) stakeholders not currently participating in regional mass fatality planning, 2) key response and recovery issues for a mass fatality, 3) roles and responsibilities of agencies for certain facets during a mass fatality, and 4) key components for a regional plan. Participants included law enforcement, emergency management coordinators, hospitals, public health, EMS, the Travis County Medical Examiner's Office, and elected officials including

justices of the peace, mayors, and county judges. The scenario was facilitated by David Cronk, Director of Emergency Preparedness for (See *MASS FATALITY*, p. 4)



Over 90 representatives of public safety and public health agencies, along with elected officials and representatives of area hospitals, met April 21st at the Austin-Travis County Emergency Operations Center for the first-ever regional mass fatality tabletop exercise.

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Land Revitalization and Brownfield Redevelopment Workshop Planned

Communities often wonder how to redevelop that old abandoned Art-Deco gas station or former dry cleaners on Main Street. Maybe a city or county has a former oilfield or utility service yard that would make a great soccer field or basketball court. Perhaps that old rusted metal building sitting right in the middle of downtown would be a great site for that new bakery in need of a prime business location. Most Texas communities have buildings and sites like this, but they go untouched or underutilized due to liability associated with real or perceived contamination. Finding out how you can turn these eye sores into productive properties by using state

and federal programs will be the focus of the Capital Area Council of Governments' Land Revitalization and Brownfield Redevelopment Workshop Wed., June 17th, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm, at 6800 Burlinson Road, Bldg. 310, Suite 165.

The focus of the workshop will be to inform local government officials, local economic developers, commercial realtors, nonprofit and for-profit developers, and others interested in property revitalization about the state and federal programs that could help them develop contaminated property. Speakers from the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA), Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC), Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), URS Corporation, and the United States Business Council for Sustainable Development (US BCSD) will give presentations about grant opportunities, voluntary cleanup and site assessment programs, and promoting the conversion of underutilized brownfield properties back into productive use. CAPCOG will finish out the program with an overview of available data and planning resources in the CAPCOG region.

To register, visit the CAPCOG web site at <https://training.capcog.org/Default.asp> then look under the heading of Community & Economic Development. Registration cost is \$25 and includes lunch. For more information call David Partlow, Regional Services Coordinator, at 512-916-6045 or e-mail at dpartlow@capcog.org.



An old gas station converted into an antiques store in Fayetteville

Construction and Demolition Waste Management Summit

Construction and demolition materials make up approximately 25% of materials landfilled in the CAPCOG region. To facilitate reduction of this waste stream, the CAPCOG Regional Solid Waste Program, in cooperation with City of Austin Solid Waste Services, the Austin Energy Green Building program, and the Texas Department of Transportation, hosted an educational and networking Summit focusing on reduction and proper management of construction and demolition (C&D) materials at the Austin Convention Center in May.

The Construction and Demolition Waste Management Summit was attended by nearly 100 waste management professionals, homebuilders, green

building program managers, regulators, local government representatives, and others. Presentations included case studies of C&D programs in the Cities of Plano and Huntsville, regulatory requirements for C&D material processing, an overview of the Habitat for Humanity deconstruction program, specifications for materials reuse, and more. Attendees also participated in tours of area C&D processing facilities, hosted by Texas Disposal Systems, River City Rolloffs, and 973 Pit Materials.

Please visit the CAPCOG web site to view Summit presentation materials and tour photos. Results of a participant survey to identify emerging C&D management issues and opportunities will also be available soon on the CAPCOG web site.

Falls Prevention Bill Passes

Not a lot of attention has been paid to a bill signed this past week by Governor Rick Perry, but it's an important issue for older adults and their caregivers. House Bill 703, sponsored by State Representative Patrick Rose, calls for Falls Prevention Awareness Week beginning on the first day of fall every year and pushes for a proactive approach to a problem that impacts hundreds of seniors annually.

Passage of the bill followed work that began almost two years ago by Representative Rose in conjunction with the Texas Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the Texas Falls Prevention Coalition. The Falls Prevention Awareness bill also recommends that programs be developed to encourage state and local governments and the private sector to promote policies and programs that help reduce the incidence and risk of falls among older adults.

According to a 2007 report issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of accidental death among adults age 65 and over. A 2007 National Safety Council report says that falls account for the large majority (70%) of all emergency room admissions among older adults.

In 2007 the state's Texas Association of Area Agencies on Aging formed the Texas Falls Prevention Coalition (TFPC). (See *FALLS*, p. 4)

New Mapping Software Will Improve 9-1-1 Caller Locations

Telecommunicators around the region have a new tool to help locate 9-1-1 callers. ARIES, mapping software used to plot the 9-1-1 caller's location, has been installed at a number of PSAPs around the CAPCOG region to date; 26 of the region's 32 PSAPs will have the new software installed by August. ARIES will automatically plot the caller's location on the computer screen so the 9-1-1 telecommunicator has a visual of the call location but includes a map of the entire CAPCOG region. "This will be beneficial when a caller has an emergency outside the telecommunicator's county or a caller is unsure what jurisdiction they are in," explained Teresa York, Assistant Director for Emergency Communications at CAPCOG.

The ARIES software also supports updated aerial photography which is crisp, clear, and an improvement to previous photography. ARIES has other applications and is also being used at some agencies as an Incident Management System. Once a 9-1-1 call is received, telecommunicators can create a call, assign officers, and keep a computerized log of all commands associated with the call. For several agencies this means they no longer have to handwrite call notes or officer times, but can depend on the computer to log all the necessary information. ARIES is a positive change that will give the region's 9-1-1 call takers more information and better tools with which to do their jobs, according to York.

Spring 2008 Regional Planning Workshops and Training

CAPCOG Regional Planning continues to offer professional workshop and training opportunities to member governments and the public. This spring, CAPCOG offered a County Land Use Authority Workshop and three Geographic Information Systems (GIS) classes. Regional Planning held the County Land Use Authority Workshop in March at CAPCOG. The Workshop included:

- a review of current regulations by Hays County Commissioner Jeff Barton;
- panel discussion of current approaches; and

Ozone Action Heroes – Guardians of Clean Air

April is an important month for this region; it begins the annual Ozone Season. This past April was even more important because it kicked off the Ozone Season that will determine if the Environmental Protection Agency can justify designating our core counties as an Air Quality Nonattainment Area.

On April 20, 2009 elected officials from CAPCOG's five MSA counties and cities along with state legislators held a press conference at the Texas State Capitol to encourage citizens to take actions to reduce ground-level

ozone forming emissions by becoming Ozone Action Heroes. Elected officials took this opportunity to outline the "Big Push" and the urgency of taking heroic actions this summer so that the Capital Region can avoid being out of compliance with federal air quality health standards. Resolutions were introduced by Senator

Kirk Watson and Representative Donna Howard encouraging state government agencies to initiate emission reduction policies and programs in order to help Central and South Central Texas meet the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality

Standard for ground-level ozone.

Becoming an action hero means reducing your contribution to ground level ozone forming emissions. As Round Rock Mayor Alan McGraw outlined during the press conference, citizens can "... become Ozone Action Heroes [by pledging] to take at least three actions to reduce ozone

forming emissions." These actions are as easy as checking tire pressure on your car to make sure that you are optimizing gas mileage, turning off a light to save energy, and waiting to fill up your car with gas until after 6:30 p.m. Becoming an Ozone Action Hero is easy. (See *OZONE*, p. 4)



Left to right: Senator Kirk Watson, Representative Donna Howard, Comal County Commissioner Jay Millikin, Round Rock Mayor Alan McGraw, and standing, Bill Gill of CAPCOG. Also in the picture are Travis County Commissioners Sarah Eckhardt and Ron Davis. Picture courtesy of Peter Bella, AACOG.



Attendees Discuss Subdivision Regulations at the County Land Use Authority Workshop held at CAPCOG on March 6th.

Devon Humphrey with Waypoint Mapping taught the three GIS courses held at CAPCOG. The courses included:

- Real-time Weather for GIS;
- GPS Mapping for Emergency Response; and
- The "GIS Go Kit."

Registration filled up quickly for the Real-time Weather and GPS courses. Students learned how to integrate real-time weather information into their GIS and utilize GPS and digital cameras to map assets and critical infrastructure. The "GIS Go Kit" class was held at CAPCOG on June 1st. The half-day workshop demonstrated how to combine off-the-shelf GIS and GPS technologies into a portable GIS for use in emergency response. Visit the www.capcog.org for more workshops and training opportunities this fall.

MASS FATALITY (*cont'd from p. 1*) The University of Texas at Austin, and focused on two simultaneous fragmenting bombs that exploded on the west side of the stadium as fans were exiting and moving west after a home football game. The scenario included no structural damage to the stadium or surrounding buildings but did include 256 deaths and 1,000 people injured.

The first 30 minutes of the exercise was focused on establishing an incident management plan. A challenge for participants was moving from the response operations into recovery operations. The scenario challenged participants to think beyond their normal responses. The exercise provided networking and coordinating a multi-jurisdictional response. During the exercise, participants were given time to break out into jurisdictional and discipline-specific workgroups to discuss how they would respond to this event or one of the mass fatality incident examples provided in their take-home scenarios worksheet.

The exercise identified specific areas that need to be addressed in a regional plan including transportation of human remains and storage capacity, notifica-

tion of deceased to next of kin, and communication with the media. For more information about this exercise or mass fatality planning, contact Robin Wiatrek at 512-916-6014 or rwiatrek@capcog.org.

FALLS (*cont'd from p. 2*) The TFPC began as a collaboration of 17 area agencies on aging and their community partners whose primary function was to coordinate statewide replication and implementation of the evidence-based falls prevention model, *A Matter of Balance*. The TFPC has expanded to include other partners and is focused on identifying and developing goals, strategies, and action steps toward a comprehensive statewide falls action plan.

“The passage of HB 703 is a win for all Texans. As our older population continues to expand to the point in time when one in four Texans will be age 65 or older, we need to implement any strategy possible to have a positive impact on the number of individuals who fall and suffer serious injuries each year. The cost for not doing so is enormous. One strategy is awareness, and this bill provides a tool to educate Texans about this extremely im-

portant issue,” states Glenda Rogers, Director of Aging Services for the Capital Area Council of Governments. “Through his sponsorship of this bill and offering the Texas Falls Prevention Coalition his support, Representative Rose is helping make a difference in the lives of older Texans and their families. I thank him for that.”

The Texas Falls Prevention Coalition is answering the call. They are in the process of developing an awareness campaign to be launched the week of Sept. 21, 2009, the first week of fall. “We are looking for interested parties to join us in the work of the coalition to *Keep Texans Standing Tall*,” states Reuben Parrish, Texas Falls Prevention Coalition Coordinator. For more information on the Texas Falls Prevention Coalition, contact Reuben Parrish at 512-916-6182.

OZONE (*cont'd from p. 3*) To find out more about how you can join the effort to keep our air clean and what voluntary actions you can undertake to help the regional effort, go to <http://www.capcog.org/divisions/regional-planning/ozone-action-heroes>.

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