

CAPCOG CONNECTIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



CAPCOG's General Assembly Meets December 8th to Celebrate 40 Years

The Capital Area Council of Governments will welcome its General Assembly members to the Annual Membership meeting on Dec. 8th, 2010. Instead of the usual lunchtime meeting and speaker, it will be a brunch with an earlier start time and a panel discussion: *Planning for the Region – the Next 20 Years*. Registration begins at 9:30 am. The meeting will take place at the Omni Southpark at 4140 Governor's Row, Austin, Texas, 78744. Invitations will go out the first week of November.

Capital Area Council of Governments



LEADING THE REGION FOR 40 YEARS

CAPCOG Launches the Regional Training Center (RTC)

On Oct. 1, 2010, CAPCOG launched the Regional Training Center (RTC), a streamlined system of coordinating, advertising, and implementing specialized training events geared toward local governments, elected officials, staff, and other organizations in the region. The goal behind this initiative is to present an efficient and effective model for expanding and enhancing professional capacity to members, non-members, and out-of-region professionals through continuing education, certification courses, and special topic trainings.

CAPCOG has served as a provider for regional training to local governments for several years with a focus on public

safety but also covering other topics ranging from newly-elected officials classes to notary training.

This new effort will expand training beyond law enforcement, 9-1-1, and required homeland security classes to a broader range of issues that represent a more expansive approach to some areas already being trained but will also add new topics. For example, CAPCOG has provided basic GIS training for several years but will move into more advanced classes; a request received by many local government staff. Another new workshop not currently offered by any organizations in Texas will be Economic Development for Policy Officials, a class targeted at local elected

2010 Jack Griesenbeck Leadership in Regionalism Award Applications Due

Regional cooperation is becoming increasingly more important to our communities as we work to address issues across city and county lines. The Jack Griesenbeck Leadership in Regionalism Award was created to recognize a volunteer, community leader, or elected official who has made a significant effort toward regional cooperation within CAPCOG's ten-county area.

Nominations are due by Nov. 1st (applications are on our website) and the winner will be announced at the December General Assembly meeting. Past recipients of the award are Kirk Watson, former Mayor of Austin; Neal Kocurek, former Chairman of the Envision Central Texas project; Robert Huston, Chairman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; Ray Sanders, Lockhart Mayor and current Executive Committee member; Bob Daigh, District Engineer of Texas Department of Transportation; former Austin-area Senator Gonzalo Barrientos, and Caldwell County Judge H. T. Wright.

officials addressing cost/benefit analysis, performance measurement of local programs, and why a base analysis should guide a community's economic strategy.

The RTC will also provide access to training on special topics (*See RTC, p. 6*)

CAPCOG Regional Law Enforcement Academy Graduates Another Class

CAPCOG's most recent Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC), a night class conducted at the Williamson County Sheriff's Dept., graduated 37 cadets on Sept. 17, 2010, in a ceremony at the State Capitol with Sheriff James Wilson, Williamson County Sheriff, as the guest speaker.

A new night BPOC cadet class began Sept. 13th at CAPCOG's Regional Law Enforcement Academy (RLEA) with 36 cadets who will spend the next nine months in training covering subjects such as the Texas Penal Code, Arrest, Search and Seizure, Patrol Procedures, Defensive Tactics, and Firearms. Registration is now underway for the next BPOC day class which will begin Nov. 8, 2010.

CAPCOG is proud to finally announce the arrival of the Use of Force training simulator funded through a federal stimulus grant from the Criminal Justice Division of the

Governor's Office. The staff is now training on the operation of the simulator and expects to begin region-wide training the first week of Oct. The simulator creates safe, effective, and realistic scenarios to train officers in situational, judgment, force options, and marksmanship. To request the use of the simulator, contact Director Mike Jennings at 512-916-6164 or mjennings@capcog.org.

The RLEA has set its in-service training schedule for the fall of 2010. There will be several types of instructor courses offered: basic instructor, patrol rifle instructor, as well as firearms instructor. The complete list of training classes can be viewed at www.capcog.org.



Cadets in training

CAPCOG Completes Provider Database to the Regional Transit Coordination Committee

In its ongoing partnership with the Regional Transit Coordination Committee (RTCC), CAPCOG's Regional Services Division has just finished creating a database of regional

The database distinguishes the transportation providers based on the areas served and the riders targeted. This database was completed using the results from several previous par-

what transportation options are available to them and arrange a trip using those services. The ultimate goal of the RTCC effort is to create a seamless transportation system for the region and also create a network of professionals who are able to help their clients use the transit resources to their full availability.



transportation providers for the ten-county region covering all transportation providers in the region, ranging from large public transportation agencies and taxi companies to smaller medical transportation and services exclusively serving designated populations such as veterans or the elderly.

tial efforts to collect data region-wide, combined with transportation-related resources gained from several regional nonprofit organizations. The data CAPCOG collected will be used to analyze the levels of service available throughout the region and will eventually create a "dial-a-ride" service that will help residents find

The RTCC is a collaboration of CAPCOG, CAMPO, Capital Metro, CARTS, and several other regional governmental and non-profit organizations. For more information on the RTCC, please contact David Fowler, Senior Planner, at (512) 916-6165.

9-1-1 Awards Presented

Each September for National Telecommunicator Day, CAPCOG's Emergency Communications Division hosts an awards ceremony at the Texas State Capitol. The event recognizes two groups of award recipients from throughout the ten-county region.

The 9-1-1 Calendar Artwork contest is a public education event meant to educate and inform elementary school-aged children on how to call 9-1-1 and what information to give to the 9-1-1 call taker. A Red E Fox DVD (Red E Fox is the 9-1-1 mascot who is central to the video) and information packet are sent to all schools with grades kindergarten - third grade. Teachers are asked to have the children watch the video and create artwork based on what the children believe they learned about 9-1-1. Artwork is returned to CAPCOG and judged by a panel of regional telecommunicators who select the winners, as well as several honorable mentions. The winning artwork with the theme *what to do in an emergency* is compiled into a CAPCOG 9-1-1 Calendar that is printed and distributed as part of the 9-1-1 public education campaign.

The PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) Awards recognize superior performance and call taking abilities of CAPCOG's 9-1-1 Telecommunicators. Call takers are nominated by their agency, and submissions are sent to CAPCOG for evaluation by a panel of their peers.

Competition is intense and those selected are recognized at the Capitol ceremony. This year's winners included: Leslie Stanford, Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services, was selected Emergency Communications Operator of the Year. The Austin Police Department was awarded the Team Award for the Echelon building event. Leigh Carrico from Round Rock PD, Lynn Mullins from Round Rock PD, and Carolyn Shavers from the Austin PD were awarded Lifetime Service Awards for over 20 years of service to 9-1-1. Shawne Marshall from Travis County SO, Deborah McKenzie from Williamson County Emergency Communications, Melinda Wessels from Marble Falls PD, Eric Whiteman from Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services, John Spitzer from Hays County SO, Toni Maskunas from Georgetown PD, Nicholle Benedict from Cedar Park PD, and Mira Morales from the Austin PD received awards for Dedicated Service.

Finally, the 9-1-1 Kid Hero award was presented to three children who exhibited bravery and composure during calls to 9-1-1 in an emergency. These children were nominated, and received their awards, from the 9-1-1 call taker who received the child's call for help. This year's Kid Heroes are Kyle and Kayla Kunkle, who were nominated by Hays County Sheriff's office, and Merlin Reyes who was nominated by the Travis County Sheriff's Office.

Photos from the awards ceremony





Medicare Health Coverage Options and Change 2010-2011

Since the origination of Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, Medicare beneficiaries have had an opportunity, annually, to make a change in how they receive their health coverage or simply change to a new plan that better meets their needs. This annual open enrollment period is Nov. 15 – Dec. 31. Changes made during this time take effect Jan. 1st. However, there will be a change to the annual enrollment timeframe coming up in the fall of 2011. The new enrollment period will be Oct. 15 - Dec. 7 2011 and will affect coverage in 2012.

Another change is one that affects when a beneficiary can enroll or disenroll from a Medicare Advantage Plan. In previous years, the enrollment period for Medicare Advantage was Jan. 1- Mar. 31. This open enrollment period has now been eliminated. Beginning in 2011, Jan. 1- Feb. 14 will be the Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period (MADP). This MADP allows a beneficiary to disenroll from a Medicare Advantage Plan to join Original Medicare. They will not be allowed to enroll in another Medicare Advantage Plan. Beneficiaries who disenroll from a Medicare Advantage plan during this time may enroll in a stand-alone prescription drug plan.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Oct. 1 – Nov. 14, 2010

Existing Medicare beneficiaries should review their current plan options and decide if they would like to make any changes that will take effect in 2011.

Nov. 15-Dec. 31, 2010

Annual Election Period (AEP). Beneficiaries may join a Medicare Advantage Plan, change Medicare Advantage Plans, return to Original Medicare or change Medicare Prescription Drug plans (Part D). Changes during this time take effect Jan. 1, 2011.

Jan. 1 – Feb. 14, 2011

Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period (MADP). This MADP allows a beneficiary to disenroll from a Medicare Advantage Plan to join Original Medicare. Changes made during the MADP will take effect the month following the change.

Feb. 15 - Nov. 14, 2011

You cannot join, switch, or drop your Medicare plan during this time unless you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). There are many reasons that a beneficiary may be granted a SEP. To find out more, contact a CAPCOG Benefits Counselor at 1-512-916-6062 or email aaacap@capcog.org.

To request a presentation about Medicare, contact Lori Conner, Assistant Director of Aging Services, at 512-916-6022 or email lconner@capcog.org.

Regional Interoperable Communications Plan Created

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, clarified the issue and need for public safety responders being able to talk to one another via radio communications systems requiring communications interoperability to become a major focus from a national, state, and local level. The CAPCOG Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) is a strategic plan that describes the current and future state of regional interoperable communications in the CAPCOG Region. It was initially approved by the CAPCOG Executive Committee in March 2010 and approved again with plan modifications in September.

Development of the RICP was required by all 24 of Texas' councils of governments in 2010 in order to meet eligibility requirements for state and federal communications funding. The development also met

the Texas Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Emergency Communications (OEC) requirements for governance, standards of operation, and training and exercise.

The RICP was created using a statewide template developed by the Office of the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) at the Texas Department of Public Safety. The CAPCOG Homeland Security Task Force Long-Term Telecommunications Interoperability Committee (LTI) served to provide the leadership and direction for compiling the CAPCOG RICP. The CAPCOG RICP will serve as a living document and will be modified accordingly as data changes or by guidance provided by the Texas SWIC.

Components of the CAPCOG RICP include the regional governance structure for determining funding priorities, the regional migration plan to reach a regional public safety P25 Compliant Standards-Based Shared System for voice communications by 2015, regional standard operating procedures, and interoperable communications training and exercise needs.

For more national information about interoperable communications, please refer to the SAFECOM website at www.safecomprogram.gov or the DHS Office of Emergency Communication at www.dhs.gov.

For more information about regional communications interoperability, contact Ed Schaefer at (512) 916-6026 or eschaefer@capcog.org.

Second Annual Construction and Demolition Waste Management Summit Set

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 and the Austin Energy Green Building program, will host an educational and networking C&D Summit focusing on reduction and proper management of construction and demolition (C&D) materials on Nov. 4 at the Austin Convention Center. The Summit will include:

- Local case studies (commercial and residential)
- Regulatory guidance
- Project management tools
- Local resources

Last year, nearly 100 waste management professionals, homebuilders, green building program managers, regulators, local government representatives, and others attended the C&D Summit. This year the Summit will include the addition of a vendor showcase where attendees can get information on local services and resources for construction and demolition materials management.



Registration will open soon at www.capcog.org. Find more information about the C&D Summit at www.austinrecycles.com.

AWARD (cont'd from p. 1) The award is named for the first chairman of CAPCOG, former Bastrop County Judge Jack Griesenbeck, who understood the need for regionalism and still supports it today. Judge Griesenbeck was the first chairman of CAPCOG in 1970 and has also played a key role in the creation of the Texas Association of Regional Councils, the state association serving 24 councils of governments.

RTC (cont'd from p. 1) by coordinating and hosting events conducted by independent trainers.

To learn more about the RTC, upcoming CAPCOG-sponsored training events, go to www.capcog.org and click on the Training link on the left side of the screen

CAPCOG will be conducting a survey of its local governments in November to identify additional topics of interest. For more information, contact Betty Voights, 512-916-6008.

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