JOINT MINUTES NORTHEAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, INC., AND ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING June 26. 2025

The Northeast Texas Economic Development District, Inc. (NETEDD), and the Board of Directors of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, June 26, 2025, at the Pilgrim's Community Center, located at 820 West Pecan Street, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, and via videoconference.

- Item 1. Scott Norton, Executive Director and CEO of TexAmericas, called the meeting to order.
- Item 2. Chris Brown, Vice President of the Hopkins County Hospital District, gave the invocation.
- Item 3. Public Comment.

No members of the public made a comment.

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- County Updates
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ATCOG Board of Directors Agenda Items

Item 6. Ms. Mary Beth presented for review and approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, March 27, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Chris Brown and seconded by Laney Harris, Director for the City of Texarkana, Arkansas. It was approved.

Item 7. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the Investment Policy, which establishes procedures to be followed in investing funds for ATCOG.

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Motion to approve was made by Dana Reeves, General Manager, Franklin County Water District, and seconded by Mayor Rushing. It was approved.

Item 8. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the proposed ATCOG Salary Schedule for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026.

The State requires regional planning commissions to submit a salary schedule 45 days prior to the start of the fiscal year, comparing the salaries of ATCOG employees with those in equivalent jobs. The schedule must be approved by the Board of Directors.

A recommended 3% COLA has been added for all ATCOG employees. All employees are paid at or near the lower end of the State salary scale. There are no positions at ATCOG that exceed the pay of State employees in equivalent positions.

Motion to approve was made by Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County, and seconded by Judge Crutcher. It was approved.

Item 9. Ms. Amber Murr presented for review and consideration approval authorizing the Executive Director to sign the Rerate and Benefit Verification Form with Texas Health Benefits Pool to continue to provide health, dental, and life insurance benefits to staff for Plan Year 2025-2026.

There were no insurance increases for Plan Year 2025-2026. ATCOG proposes to make a defined contribution of \$946.54 per employee each month. This will pay for the basic PPO health plan rate of \$946.54. Staff who wish to "buy up" to a more expensive plan may do so at their own expense. There is also a high-deductible plan at a rate of \$834.16 per month, which would allow staff to contribute the remaining defined contribution to a health savings account.

Motion to approve was made by Chris Brown and seconded by Mayor Rushing. It was approved.

Item 10. Ms. Leslie McBride presented for review and consideration approval of the revision to the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Policies and Procedures Manual.

The following revision to the policy and procedures manual is being proposed:

• 8.01 Holidays – General Policy. This revision adds the Juneteenth holiday to the general policy.

Upon Board approval, the policy revision will be distributed to all employees and added to our Policies and Procedures Manual.

A motion to approve was made by Becky Fellers, Board of Trustees, Liberty Eylau Independent School District, and seconded by Dana Reeves. It was approved.

Item 11. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of a resolution in support of Red River Army Depot (RRAD) operations.

RRAD repairs and maintains military vehicles and equipment for the U.S. Army and other branches. Unlike most federal agencies, RRAD is financially self-sustaining from customer revenue rather than taxpayer funding.

RRAD is located in the Texarkana region and serves as both a defense facility and major employer across Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.

RRAD has an annual economic impact of \$1.6 billion on the region, according to the Texas Comptroller's Office. The facility supports thousands of jobs and businesses across the four-state area.

Recent federal discussions about spending cuts could threaten RRAD's operations. This would harm both military readiness and the regional economy. Thousands of workers and their families depend on RRAD for employment.

ATCOG supports maintaining and expanding RRAD operations to protect both national security and regional jobs.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Ransom and seconded by Judge Crutcher. It was approved.

Item 12. Ms. Daneshia Cherry presented for review and consideration approval of the certification of ATCOG Housing 5–Year and Annual Plans for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025.

The 5-year and Annual Plans outline four (4) primary goals to enhance housing and self-sufficiency services. The goals focus on expanding housing opportunities by reducing voucher lease-up times and increasing HCV utilization; promoting self-sufficiency through the FSS program by enrolling families, tracking income increases, and supporting financial independence; strengthening community partnerships via outreach and service connections; and improving operational efficiency by streamlining processes, transitioning to digital platforms, and maintaining HUD compliance through timely reporting. These goals align with HUD's goals for the programs and help to advance the program.

HUD required a public meeting, and a public notice was published forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting. The meeting was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on May 20, 2025, and the only attendees were Housing Program staff. There were no comments or recommendations for changes to the Plans received in person, by email, or by phone.

Motion to approve was made by Laney Harris and seconded by Chris Brown. It was approved.

Item 13. Ms. Rea Allen presented for review and consideration approval of the region-wide transit advertising contract two-year renewal with TRAX as part of the 9-1-1 Public Education Program

The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) Program Policy Statement 025: Public Education Program deems enhancement of public awareness of the 9-1-1 system, including outreach and training programs, as required public service messages.

The CSEC-approved strategic plan for Public Education for ATCOG includes Outdoor/Billboard, Transit, Cinema, and News publication advertising within allocated and appropriated funds.

The annual renewal cost with TRAX totals \$55,080 as part of the region-wide Transit Advertising Campaign. The costs include a one-year contract for 18 vehicles that transport within the ATCOG region.

Motion to approve was made by Becky Fellers and seconded by Mayor Rushing. It was approved.

Item 14. Ms. Rea Allen presented for review and consideration approval of the region-wide transit advertising campaign with T-Line as part of the 9-1-1 Public Education Program.

The contract with T-Line totals \$60,984 as part of the region-wide Transit Advertising Campaign. The costs include a one-year contract for six (6) vehicles that transport within the ATCOG region, production costs, and online advertising.

Motion to approve was made by Dana Reeves and seconded by Chris Brown. It was approved.

Item 15. Mr. Mark Compton presented for review and consideration approval for the purchase of Alliance Transportation Group, Inc. consulting services.

On April 16, 2025, the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services to complete the Regional Coordinated Public Transportation – Human Services Coordination Plan (RCTP) 5-year update.

Our agency received five proposals in response to our RFP. All proposals were reviewed for compliance, accuracy, and reasonableness. All proposals met the RFP requirements. ATCOG recommends ATG, Inc. for approval due to ATG's work history, price reasonableness, and experience with transit coordinated planning. The total cost for this project is \$101,051. Funding for the project is being provided by FTA.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Cooper and seconded by Dana Reeves. It was approved.

Item 16. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval to cancel the July ATCOG Executive Committee meeting and to move the annual meeting from September to August.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Crutcher and seconded by Judge Cooper. It was approved.

<u>Announcements</u>

Paul Prange introduced Mr. Reeves Hayter, Chair of the Regional Flood Planning Plan Group (RFPG). Mr. Hayter briefed the Board on the planning group and its purpose. He encouraged participation from all counties within the region to submit projects they would like to add to the flood plan. The deadline to submit projects for the second cycle of the flood plan is August 2025. Please feel free to contact Paul Prange at the Ark-Tex

Council of Governments if interested.

Ms. Mary Beth Rudel announced that the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Training Conference 2025 will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, October 14-17, 2025. Please contact Marla or Mary Beth if interested in attending.

Brad Johnson announced that the Rural Rail Transportation legislation, which included grant funding specifically for short-line rail projects and rail districts, was successfully passed by both the House and the Senate. The governor signed the legislation on June 20; however, no funding is currently available. The next funding opportunity will be in two years.

Scott Norton announced that the next ATCOG Board of Directors meeting will be held on August 28, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Pilgrim's Community Center, located at 820 West Pecan Street, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, and via videoconference.

Scott Norton called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Chris Brown and seconded by Dana Reeves. The meeting was adjourned.

NETEDD BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County
Seth Cox, Commissioner, Delta County
Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville

ATCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville

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Chris Brown, Vice President, Hopkins County Hospital District
Becky Fellers, Board of Trustees, Liberty Eylau Independent School District
Laney Harris, Director, City of Texarkana-AR
Brad Johnson, NETEX Rural Rail Authority
Dana Reeves, General Manager, Franklin County Water District
Wesley Lyon, Mayor, City of Mt. Pleasant

GUESTS PRESENT

Claribel Banda, Mt. Pleasant Economic Development Corporation Ed Elam, Vice President, Director of Planning, ATG Reeves Hyter, Chair, Regional Flood Planning Group Rea Donna Jones, Director, Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director

Leslie McBride, Deputy Director Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Program Director Tina Bell, Public Relations/Media Coordinator Jenny Butler, Area Agency on Aging Director Daneshia Cherry, Housing Director Mark Compton, Transportation Director Samantha Davis, 9-1-1 Program Coordinator Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice Coordinator Melody Harmon, Economic Development Director Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Director Marla Matthews, Executive Assistant Amber Murr, Human Resources Director Paul Prange, Environmental Resources Coordinator Debbie Purifoy, Compliance and Purchasing Officer Sheen Record, Transportation Coordinator Bobby Williams, Transportation Operations Coordinator

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Bobby Howell, President Board of Directors Ark-Tex Council of Governments



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- Item 1. Scott Norton, Executive Director and CEO of TexAmericas, called the meeting to order.
- Item 2. Chris Brown, Vice President of the Hopkins County Hospital District, gave the invocation.
- Item 3. Public Comment.

No members of the public made a comment.

NETEDD Agenda Items

Item 4. The next order of business was to review and consider approval of the minutes as submitted for the NETEDD meeting held on Thursday, April 24, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County, and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

Item 5. Ms. Toni Lindsey presented for review and consideration approval of the 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – 2025 update.

This update establishes annual revisions and removes references to equity and climate change as per updated CEDS guidelines. To view the current <u>CEDS</u>, <u>click here</u>. The updates include the following:

- Entire document reformatted to meet ATCOG branding requirements.
- Removed "equity challenged areas" page 2 and "climate change" page 26 relating to the grant writing.
- County Updates
 The data on pages 38 46 has been updated for each County. An extra link has been added on each county page for "Economic Overview 2024."
- Economic Distress Criteria
 The data on page 47 has been updated, and a new link has been added for quick reference to Measure Distress Criteria by County.
- Education Attainment Comparison
 The chart on page 49 compares the Regional Education Attainment Breakdowns for the years 2021 and 2023.
- Industry Comparison
 The chart on page 50 compares NETEDD's industry years 2021 and 2023, and the Civilian employed population 16 years and over.

Motion to approve was made by Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County, and seconded by Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville. It was approved.

This concluded all NETEDD Agenda Items.

ATCOG Board of Directors Agenda Items

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