

East Texas Council of Governments - Announces 2010 Leadership Awards for East Texas Region

Presents former Harrison County Judge Richard Anderson Regional 'Statesman of the Year Award'

none

East Texas Council of Governments Announces 2010 Leadership Awards for East Texas Region Presents former Harrison County Judge Richard Anderson Regional "Statesman of the Year Award" The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG), which represents 14 counties in East Texas, presented former Harrison County Judge Richard Anderson its 2010 Regional "Statesman of the Year Award." The "Statesman Award" recognizes a local, state, or federal official who has demonstrated valuable and dedicated service to regional cooperation.

The award was presented to Judge Anderson at an awards ceremony to recognize the work of East Texas civic leaders during the ETCOG Board of Directors luncheon on Thursday, March 24, 2011 in Wills Point, Texas in Van Zandt County. About 120 elected officials and civic leaders from throughout the East Texas region were in attendance at the meeting.

The East Texas Council of Governments is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts, and special districts within a 14-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. In addition to Harrison County, the East Texas Council of Governments represents Smith, Gregg, Upshur, Camp, Anderson, Cherokee, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Van Zandt, and Wood counties.

Among the regional projects with which Judge Anderson assisted were (1) the creation of a Rural Planning Organization for the 14-county area, (2) coordinating efforts between TXDOT, AMTRAK, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the East Texas Corridor Council to develop higher speed rail along the Interstate 20 corridor and (3) efforts to expand and improve telecommunication speed within our East Texas region. These efforts are all moving forward.

Judge Anderson's work on these regional projects were in addition to his leadership on other projects and issues of concern to Harrison County. During his 2007-2010 term, Judge Anderson was instrumental in the completion of the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse restoration, the establishment of a \$1.5 million endowment to maintain the historic Courthouse into the future, more than doubling the number of miles of county road reconstruction, and the revised plans and construction of the new Harrison County jail annex which will solve the county's current jail overcrowding problem.

David Cleveland, Executive Director of ETCOG, stated: "We're honored to recognize Judge Anderson's outstanding leadership and dedicated work which has benefited not only Harrison County but our entire East Texas region with regard to transportation, safety, economic development, communication, and other important areas. As the old saying goes, a politician focuses on the next election, a statesman focuses on the next generation. That adage certainly describes Judge Anderson. He works not only to bring about solutions to benefit his county and our region now, but he also has a keen focus on solutions and infrastructure that will serve the people of his county and region well into the future. He's a true statesman and a true public servant."

Anderson served most recently as Harrison County Judge from 2007-2010. In the 1980s, he also served two terms as Harrison County Judge and one term as Texas State Senator of Senate District 1. He currently serves in a volunteer capacity as Chairman of the East Texas Corridor Council, a non-profit organization that is working to obtain higher speed rail along the Interstate 20 corridor between Bossier City and Dallas/Fort Worth Airport.

Judge Anderson stated: "It is indeed an honor to be named the recipient of the East Texas Council of Governments' 2010 Regional Statesman of the Year Award. In public service, I've always believed that you work most effectively for the people you represent when you work together to build consensus not only with the members of our community but also with leaders and citizens throughout our region. By working together in this way, we can find solutions and bring about improvements that help Harrison County and strengthen our region as well. To be singled out among leaders in these 14 counties and by such a fine regional organization as ETCOG is a humbling experience, and one for which I am truly grateful."

Others honored at the March 24 ETCOG ceremony include Frank Breazeale, former CEO of the First National Bank in Gilmer who was presented the Regional "Citizen of the Year Award" and Marian Lindsey of the 9-1-1 Advisory Committee who was presented the Regional "Committee Service Award."

3B1086