



March is Texas SmartScape Month - Attend an Event Near You

March 2017 marks the 16th annual "March is Texas SmartScape™ Month."

SmartScape Month is a regionally coordinated effort to promote the water conservation, pollution prevention, composting, and waste reduction principles of Texas SmartScape. SmartScape plants are native and adapted to the Texas climate and need less water and fertilizer to thrive even in the heat of Texas summers. In addition, the Texas SmartScape program encourages proper design, care, and maintenance techniques to better protect the environment.

Since March is an active month for landscaping, this is an excellent time to make your yard a SmartScape yard by planting native and adapted plants. Whether you're in the market for a major landscape overhaul or just a few quick fixes to save water this summer, www.txsmartscape.com has the tools to help you succeed: a searchable database that lists SmartScape-approved plants; landscape design tools; and care and maintenance tips.

Come to one of the educational plant events hosted by member cities of the Texas SmartScape program and participating retailers. You can also get ideas and tips for landscaping by talking with a master gardener, plant expert, or irrigation specialist. To find a Texas SmartScape event near you, visit www.txsmartscape.com.



CLIDE Application Closes March 17, 2017

The CLIDE (Celebrating Leadership in Development Excellence) Awards honor development and planning projects that exemplify the North Central Texas region's Principles of Development Excellence, which outline a vision for sustainable, livable communities in North Texas. Do you have a project or plan that exemplify these principles? The online application closes March 17, 2017. Awards will be selected in five categories including: New Development, Redevelopment, Special Development, Public Planning and Policy, and Raising Public Awareness. Winners will be recognized at the Annual NCTCOG General Assembly in June 2017. To submit your project application visit www.developmentexcellence.com.

EDA Regional Director Presents the North Central Texas Economic Development District Designation Memorandum to NCTCOG



(l-r) Mike Eastland (EDO) receives the Memorandum from Jorge Ayala, Regional Director for the Austin Regional Office of the U. S. Department of Commerce.

At the February Executive Board meeting, Mike Eastland received the Memorandum of Designation of this region as an Economic Development District from the United States Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, Jay Williams. Jorge Ayala, Regional Director for the Austin Regional Office of the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) presented the designation.

This designation represents the collaborative work of our counties, cities, economic development corporations, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, higher education institutions, business owners and stakeholders in economic development, in conjunction with NCTCOG, to fulfill the rigorous requirements necessary to achieve the designation, including the creation of a regional comprehensive economic development strategy.

For more information on the district designation, contact **Lucille Johnson** at ljohnson@nctcog.org, 817-695-9103.

Aging Program Receives Grant to Build Wheelchair Ramps

NCTCOG's Aging program has been awarded a small grant from Texas Health and Human Services to expand its residential repair program. Funds will be used to construct wheelchair ramps for persons of at least 60 years of age who live in the program's 14 county service area, including Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Somervell, and Wise counties.

Priority will be given to older persons with a hospitalization within the past two weeks, income below the poverty level, absence of family support, absence of formal support, need for assistance with two or more activities of daily living (e.g., transferring, walking, bathing, dressing, grooming, and feeding).

To make best use of the funds, Aging will partner with Texas Ramps, an all-volunteer organization that builds and installs ramps statewide. Grant funds will be used to purchase Aging clients' lumber.

For more information about Aging's residential repair program, contact Doni Green at 817-695-9193 or dgreen@nctcog.org.

NCTCOG to Participate in Spring Outreach Events

NCTCOG is participating in several community outreach events this spring to discuss air quality initiatives and transportation planning in North Texas. Residents who attend Fort Worth Earth Party, Colorpalooza: A Celebration of Spring, UNT University Day and Earth Day Texas at Fair Park, among others, can stop by the NCTCOG table to visit with staff about transportation projects and programs and learn how they can help improve air quality in the rapidly growing Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Information on NCTCOG transportation and air quality programs, including Try Parking It, Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Coalition, Air North Texas and AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine Program will also be available. Brochures and publications will be distributed, as well as lunch bags, water bottles, activity books, crayons and other educational items.



Center of Development Excellence Is Seeking Your Input

The Center of Development Excellence's goal is for North Texas to be a region where residents, businesses, and visitors enjoy a built environment that creates a true sense of place; uses water, energy, and environmental resources effectively and efficiently; protects a diversity of habitats; reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT); and supports public health and quality of life.

NCTCOG is looking for your input to best identify and prioritize the current needs in our region on a range of topics! Take a short survey at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/DevelopmentExcellence. If you have questions about the Center of Development Excellence visit www.developmentexcellence.com or contact Derica Peters at dpeters@nctcog.org or (817) 695-9217.

Building Code Updates

- **NCTCOG Approved Air Changes per Hour (ACH) Tradeoff Guidance for Code Officials, Raters, and Builders:** The Regional Codes Coordinating Committee has approved an update to the original ACH guidance has been developed that describes approved ACH tradeoffs that increase the flexibility of the code without impacting stringency. This tradeoff has been approved for use by the Texas A&M University Energy Systems Laboratory (ESL) and applies only to jurisdictions in the NCTCOG 16-county region. The NCTCOG ACH Tradeoff Guidance document can be found at www.nctcog.org/envir/codes.
- **Now Available - Adoption Guidance and Regional Amendments for the 2015 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code:** The Regional Codes Coordinating Committee (RCCC) has conducted a review of the 2015 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPS) and recommended two options for local governments considering adoption of the 2015 ISPS code. The Regional Amendments to the 2015 ISPS code and Regional Guidance for the Adoption for the ISPS code are available at www.nctcog.org/envir/codes.

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Notice of State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) Loan Fund Availability

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) invites eligible entities to apply for loan assistance to perform building energy efficiency and retrofit activities. The Texas LoanSTAR Revolving Loan Program finances energy-related cost-reduction retrofits for state, public school district, public college, public university, and tax district supported nonprofit hospital facilities. Low interest rate loans enable successful applicants to implement energy-related cost-reduction efforts at their facilities. The program's revolving loan mechanism allows applicants to repay loans through the stream of energy cost savings realized from the projects. Applications will be reviewed through August 31, 2017. For application information visit the SECO website.

Alternative Fuel Vehicle Procurement Kickoff

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is looking for fleet representatives and fleet procurement staff to participate in a new initiative, Fleets for the Future, with a focus on local public fleets.

NCTCOG plans to open a regional cooperative procurement of alternative fuel vehicles in the spring.

Through local fleet analysis and workshops, NCTCOG hopes to increase alternative fuel deployment by coordinating the procurement of select vehicles and infrastructure to obtain volume discounts that fleets cannot access individually. To learn more and take an alternative fuel vehicle fleet survey, visit the Fleets for the Future website, <http://www.nctcog.org/f4f>, or contact Bailey Muller at bmuller@nctcog.org or 817-695-9299.

Join NCTCOG for our procurement kickoff event this spring!

Save the Date! NCTCOG Sponsoring Car Care Clinics in April

NCTCOG is partnering with local automotive repair shops to sponsor Car Care Clinics throughout April 2017 to help North Texas drivers whose vehicles have the check engine light illuminated.

A vehicle's check engine light turns on when there may be an issue that could negatively impact its emissions.

These free clinics will provide drivers with an opportunity to talk to a technician about their vehicle's issues. Staff will be at each clinic to discuss financial assistance that is available to help drivers with repairs.

To find a clinic, visit www.NTXCarCare.org. For additional information, send an email to NTXCarCare@nctcog.org, or call 817-704-5697.

