

NEWS RELEASE

April 28, 2021

From: Jasper County
Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG)
South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC)

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Governor Greg Abbott has approved the request of Jasper County to transfer from the Deep East Texas Council of Governments (State Planning Region 14) to the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (State Planning Region 15). The transfer effective date is April 27, 2021 although the actual transfer of programs and services will take place over a period of time.

“Over the past two years, we participated in several meetings and workshops conducted by the SETRPC to determine the benefits, feasibility and challenges that a move of this nature would bring,” reported Jasper County Judge Mark Allen. “These workshops included, but were not limited to, short and long-term transportation and transit planning, hazard mitigation planning, 9-1-1, radio communications infrastructure, public safety programs, disaster response and recovery, as well as aging and disability services. Through this process, it was learned that the vast majority of Jasper County’s daily out of county commerce and employment migration was to the SETRPC counties, as well as for medical, veterans and higher education services.”

He added, “Another consideration in this process was the ongoing need for close disaster evacuation coordination, as well as response and recovery training and planning with the SETRPC jurisdictions, as has been evidenced by Hurricanes Rita, Ike, Harvey and most recently Laura and Delta in 2020.”

Allen said Jasper County is thankful for Governor Abbott's approval of the application to transfer and for the support given during this process by the jurisdictions in both the SETRPC and DETCOG, as well as from Speaker Dade Phelan, Representative James White and Representative Joe Deshotel.

“Jasper County looks forward to working with the counties, cities and districts that make up the SETRPC to continue improving the quality of life for all of the citizens in the South East Texas region,” he said. “The boundaries of regions, counties and cities may have changed throughout what has been over one hundred, eighty-five years since Texas first became a Republic, but the bonds and friendships that our people and jurisdictions hold will last forever. Jasper County will always stand ready to assist our friends and fellow Texans in the DETCOG region.”

DETCOG Executive Director Lonnie Hunt noted that while he hated to see Jasper County transfer out of the Deep East Texas Region, the DETCOG Board had adopted a resolution supporting the request contingent upon the Governor’s approval. “We respect the right of Jasper County officials to decide where they will best be served,” he said. “We will do everything we can to ensure a smooth transition as we hand off existing programs in Jasper County to SETRPC.”

Hunt said there is a likelihood that the DETCOG Housing program will continue to serve Jasper County since SETRPC does not operate a similar program. “And no matter what, Jasper County is our neighbor, and we will continue to work with them and support them as we do all our neighbors.”

Shanna Burke, Executive Director of SETRPC, emphasized that due to the complexity of some programs and funding streams, the transition in some areas will not occur immediately but rather over time to ensure continuity and success. “SETRPC and DETCOG have already been working cooperatively as Jasper County explored this move and submitted the transfer request,” she noted, “and we will continue to work together to ensure as smooth a transition as is possible.”

“The SETRPC is honored to welcome Jasper County, the cities of Browndell, Jasper and Kirbyville, and other special districts as new member governments,” Burke said. “We look forward to and are excited about the opportunity to provide services to each of these communities and their citizens.”

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