

Economic Development Digest

Economic Development News

Rural and Small Town Downtown Revitalization Summit

Join H-GAC for the Rural and [Small Town Downtown Revitalization Summit](#) from 9 to 11 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 26. The event will be online, and [registration](#) is required.



Participants will consider recent urban-to-rural migration and opportunities for rural places to maximize their open spaces and outdoor recreation amenities. Strategies to explore include eco-tourism, trail-oriented development, and large-scale conservation. We will also highlight case studies from around the region.

For more information, contact [Sarah Torresen](#).

Make Plans to Attend H-GAC'S Annual Fall Planning Workshop on December 3

This [annual half-day workshop](#) for local governments features presentations on best planning practices for communities.



GROWING KID-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES
Fall Planning Workshop

This year's workshop is Growing Kid-Friendly Communities and will focus on three crucial factors that influence how welcoming a community is to young families:

- Economy
- Safety
- Strong Communities

The workshop will include expert presenters and panelists and will equip you with the necessary information to grow your community. [Register Today!](#)

Recap: Gulf Coast Economic Development District Quarterly Meeting on October 1

The Gulf Coast Economic Development District conducted a hybrid meeting for its quarterly board meeting on October 1.

The District welcomed two presenters. Pramod Sambidi from Houston-Galveston Area Council presented findings from recently released redistricting data from the 2020 Decennial

Census. Rob Stillwell from Newmark shared recent trends in the region's industrial sector and key considerations for corporate tenants assessing the region for relocation or expansion.



Visit the [GCEDD webpage](#) for previous meeting minutes, presentations, and information about upcoming GCEDD board meetings. The next quarterly meeting will be April 9 at 10 a.m. in person and on Zoom. [Pre-register here](#) for virtual attendance.

NTIA Announces Proposed Service Areas for Broadband Infrastructure Fund

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) [Broadband Infrastructure Program](#) is a \$288 million broadband deployment program directed to facilitate partnerships to promote fixed broadband service to areas lacking broadband. In their applications, which are currently undergoing review, applicants indicated their projects' proposed service areas using census blocks. To assist NTIA in targeting federal funds appropriately to areas lacking qualified broadband service, broadband service providers may voluntarily submit information about the broadband services they offer in any of the proposed areas a covered partnership has designated for funding. The Excel spreadsheet contains a complete list of census blocks as provided by applicants. [See all proposed service area census blocks.](#)



Governor's Broadband Development Council Releases 2021 Annual Report

Created in the 86th Legislative session convened in 2019, the [Governor's Broadband Development Council](#), in accordance with Texas Government Code Sec. 490.007, is mandated to submit an annual report by November of each year. The second report is an update to findings and recommendations based on the Council's duties. Key recommendations of the second report include: investing in infrastructure capable of exceeding federally designated broadband speeds of 25/3 Mbps; redefining underserved markets which may include access to speeds of 25/3 Mbps; study demand for high speed internet service at the community, regional and statewide levels, and; funding digital literacy programs to make progress on adoption rates of users. [Read the 2021 report here.](#)

Monthly Gulf Coast Workforce Report shows continued decline in regional unemployment rates

The regional unemployment rate in August fell to 6.1%, down from 6.8% in July and 8.1% a year ago. The regional rate of 6.1% is higher than both the statewide and national rates (5.3%). In the Houston-

Galveston region, this represents 209,340 individuals without work and looking for a new job. The primary drivers of growth were increases in Professional and Business Services, Education and Health Services, and Construction sectors. Gains were also recorded in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Financial Activities, and Mining and



Logging sectors. COVID-19 resulted in the loss of -361,400 jobs over March and April 2020 of which approximately 60% of Total Nonfarm employment has been recovered to date.

[Read the full report.](#)

Katy Area Economic Development Council seeks new President/CEO

The Katy Area Economic Development Council is seeking a new [Chief Executive Office/President](#). The Katy Area Economic Development Council provides economic development services to the Katy and Cypress area which is more commonly known as the Katy Independent School District and Cy-Fair Independent School District which in nearly 400 square miles. The area is located 30 miles west and northwest of downtown Houston, is known for the world-famous Energy Corridor, and is one of the fastest growing regions in Houston and state of Texas.

Funding Opportunities

Conservation Alliance Confluence Program Grants

Deadline: October 24, 2021

The goal of the Confluence Program is to intentionally connect to historically racially marginalized people for the protection of natural places. By the end of this year, The Conservation Alliance will award four multi-year grants to groups led by Asian, Black, Brown, Indigenous, Latinx, and other People of Color working to protect a natural place. Each grantee will receive \$50,000 in 2021 and another \$50,000 in 2022 for their effort to protect land and/or water and elevate the voices and perspectives of the people working to protect that place. [Learn more.](#)

USDA Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans & Grants

Deadline: November 1, 2021

This U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development program assists qualified applicants who cannot obtain commercial credit on terms that will allow them to charge rents that are affordable to low-income tenants. Borrowers must have sufficient qualifications and experience to develop and operate the project. [Learn more.](#)

NTIA Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program

Deadline: December 1, 2021

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration is accepting applications for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, which will direct \$268 million for expanding broadband access to eligible Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges or Universities (TCUs), minority-serving institutions (MSIs), and consortia led by an HBCU, TCU, or MSI that also include a minority business enterprise or tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Applications are due December 1. [Learn more.](#)

DOC RESTORE Act Direct Component—Construction and Non-Construction Activities, Gulf Coast Restoration

Deadline: December 31, 2021

U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) has extended the deadline for Gulf Coast Restoration projects. This announcement applies only to the Direct Component, for eligible construction and non-construction activities, including projects with or without a non-federal share for another federally funded project. This announcement also includes planning assistance needed to prepare the Multiyear Implementation Plan (Multiyear Plan) required by the RESTORE Act. [Learn more.](#)

EDA Public Works Grants

Deadline: Ongoing

U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) supports development in economically distressed areas of the United States by fostering job creation and attracting private investment. These Public Works Grants help communities build the infrastructure they need to support job growth and private investment. If you have an economic development infrastructure need in your community, contact Jillian Donatto at 631-897-3817. [Learn more.](#)

USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

Deadline: Ongoing

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development provides funding to construct, enlarge, or improve essential community facilities in rural areas. Rural communities can use these funds to build or modernize schools, health care clinics, libraries, and public safety facilities. [Learn more.](#)

EPA Brownfield Grants

Deadline: Ongoing

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has grants available for cleaning up brownfields in your community. Brownfields are properties that have been contaminated by pollutants or hazardous waste. The EPA offers Area-Wide Planning Grants, Assessment Grants, Revolving Loan Fund Grants, Cleanup Grants, Multipurpose Grants, and Job Training Grants. [Learn more.](#)

USDA Rural Energy for America Program

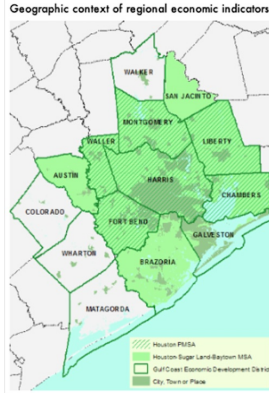
Deadline: October 31, 2021, January 31, 2022, and March 31, 2022

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is accepting applications for loan guarantees and grants for renewable energy systems; and to make energy efficiency improvements, conduct energy audits and provide development assistance. Funds are being made available under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). The deadlines to apply for grants are October 31, 2021, and March 31, 2022. Applications for technical assistance grants are due January 31, 2022. Applications for loan guarantees are accepted year-round. [Learn more.](#)

Regional Economic Trends

H-GAC has compiled regional economic indicators for the 13-county region, including monthly and yearly changes in unemployment rates, single and multi-family permits, and sales tax receipts. [Download the PDF.](#)

For more regional economic data visit:
www.h-gac.com/interactive-web-applications



Upcoming Developments

The Market at [Willis Shopping Center](#) has broken ground at the southeast corner of Interstate 45 and FM 1097 in Willis, just north of Conroe. The shopping center will be a 110,000 square foot H-E-B, which has already started construction. Phase 1 is expected to consist of over 200,000 square feet of retail and restaurants. Phase 2 will include a three-story, garden-style multifamily complex with 250 units.

A Costco is opening at [148,000 square feet retail store](#) on 13 acres at 12717 Network Dr in Stafford. The store will be with The Grid development and open this fall.

Construction has started on a 1.2 million square feet [industrial development](#) at 6563 FM 1405 near Baytown. The project will be in TGS Cedar Port Industrial Park and is expected to be complete in 2022.

A new 219,000 square feet [Amazon delivery station](#) recently opened in Spring. The delivery station is located at 22300 Northcrest Dr and it is expected to employ more than 200 part-time and full-time employees.

Compiled from information in the Houston Business Journal, Community Impact Newspapers, Houston Bisnow, and WPXI.com.

Upcoming Events

October 22 | [State of the Airports](#) | GHP | Houston

October 25 | [Upskill Works Forum](#) | GHP | Online

October 28 | [Planning for Economic Recovery](#) | IEDC | Online

November 3 | [State of Construction & Development](#) | Houston Bisnow | Houston

November 11 | [National Healthcare South](#) | Houston Bisnow | Houston

November 15 | [Equitable Economic Development Playbook](#) | IEDC | Online

November 18 | [Emerging Trends in Real Estate](#) | ULI-Houston | Houston

Conferences:

November 1-3 | [Planning in the New Paradigm](#) | APA Texas

November 17–19 | [Annual Texas Workforce Conference co-hosted with The Texas Chapter of The International Association of Workforce Professionals](#) | Texas Workforce Commission | Houston, Texas



Gulf Coast Economic Development District | 713-627-3200

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