



HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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H-GAC CELEBRATES 55 YEARS OF COOPERATIVE PLANNING AND SERVICE TO THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON REGION

Activities Include a Special Invitation-only Symposium Featuring Long-time H-GAC Leaders, Partners, and University of Houston System Chancellor Renu Khator

HOUSTON, TX – In 1966, nine government officials met at Friendswood Town Hall to initiate the regional planning organization that would be the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Their goal was simple. H-GAC would serve as a center of coordinated planning to aid local governments in securing the financing and resources necessary to grow their communities and bring needed services to their residents.

Fifty-five years later, H-GAC has grown into the one of the largest regional cooperative planning organizations in the United States, with a service area that encompasses 13 counties, more than 100 member cities, and more than 7 million residents. With programs and services covering public safety, emergency and disaster planning, transportation and mobility, water quality and solid waste management, environmental conservation, business and economic development, workforce solutions, and aging services, H-GAC has helped cultivate the growth of the Houston-Galveston region into a nationally competitive economic powerhouse, while addressing region-wide challenges and working in tandem with local leaders and partners to improve residents' quality of life.

H-GAC will celebrate its 55th anniversary with a special symposium beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 15 at The Briar Club (2603 Timmons Lane). At the event, H-GAC leaders and partners will pay tribute to H-GAC's accomplishments, discuss the strengths of regional cooperation, and share their vision of where the Houston-Galveston region is headed. It will be invitation-only and will include a networking breakfast, two panel discussions, lunch, and an afternoon keynote presentation featuring Renu Khator, chancellor of the University of Houston System and president of the University of Houston.

“H-GAC's greatest strength has been its ability to foster cooperation. It takes hard work to bring together people from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests to build consensus on how we address the challenges that impact all of us and support the needs of a region as large and

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H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials from the 13-county Gulf Coast planning region, which includes an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 7 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars; serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local governments; and helps analyze trends and conditions affecting the region. For more information, visit h-gac.com.



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geographically and demographically diverse as ours,” said Chuck Wemple, executive director of H-GAC. “The tremendous growth and prosperity we’ve experienced over these last 55 years is a testament to that work and the commitment of the many outstanding leaders, employees, and stakeholders who have been a part of our organization over the years and serve with us now.”

Renu Khator’s keynote presentation will reflect on the growth of the Houston-Galveston region from the university system’s unique perspective and provide insight into where it might be headed in the future.

“H-GAC has been an integral partner in our system’s growth,” said Renu Khator, University of Houston System chancellor. “The ability to collaborate with the regional partners they bring to the table has played a key role in our success. Their impact on our region is profound.”

In addition to the keynote presentation, the two panel discussions will include prominent members of H-GAC’s board and assembly as well as long-time partners the agency has collaborated with over the years to serve the region’s residents and drive economic development. They will include:

“Understanding Regionalism and the Difference It Makes” Panel

- Rissie Owens, vice president, Huntsville I.S.D. Board of Trustees
- Trey Duhon, judge, Waller County; president, Waller County Sub-Regional Planning Commission
- Carol Lewis, Ph.D., chair, Gulf Coast Rail District; emeritus director, Texas Southern University Center for Transportation, Training, and Research

“The Future Is Connected: The Evolution of Technology in the Region” Panel

- Adrian Garcia, commissioner, Harris County Precinct 2
- B.J. Simon, president and CEO, Baytown-West Chamber County Economic Development Foundation
- Guy Robert Jackson, CEO, Chambers County Abstract Co., Inc.

H-GAC plans to premiere a special video in recognition of the agency’s 55 years of service at the symposium. The video will be shared on digital and social media channels after the event. For the remainder of 2021 and into 2022, H-GAC will hold other commemorative activities both internally and externally on social media highlighting the agency’s history, people, and accomplishments.

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“As we look to the future, we will embrace new processes that foster even more teamwork across programs and allow for more voices to have a say in our planning activities,” said Wemple. “It’s been an incredible 55 years. Together we stand ready to carry this great region and its people through the next 55 and beyond.”

To learn more about H-GAC’s regional programs and services, visit h-gac.com.

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