



HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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H-GAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHUCK WEMPLE APPOINTED TO LEAD TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS' EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS COUNCIL

Key Initiatives by the Council Include Funding Opportunities for Rural Transportation Planning Organizations and Increased Broadband Access Statewide

HOUSTON, TX – Chuck Wemple, executive director of the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), will soon be taking an additional leadership role in tackling the major challenges that affect communities across city and county lines. Wemple has been nominated by his peers to serve as chair of the Texas Association of Regional Council's (TARC) Executive Directors Council, the association's governing board announced Sep. 18. The appointment will begin on Oct 1.

Wemple will lead a group comprised of the executive directors of the state's 24 councils of government. The Executive Directors Council provides strategic direction and coordination of resources to major state initiatives and challenges, such as health and human service programs for older adults, public safety and emergency communications, and regional disaster recovery. Wemple has served on the council since he was named executive director of H-GAC in 2018. During his one-year term as chair, he will work in partnership with fellow councils of government to promote the betterment of the state and its more than 25 million residents.



"I'm honored to be nominated and humbled that my peers would have the faith and trust in me to take on this leadership position," said Wemple.

Wemple enters the position at a critical time as the state works to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic-driven economic downturn and local governments face revenue shortfalls that could

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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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result in deep cuts to crucial program areas and staffing. One of the Executive Directors Council’s key priorities will be to closely monitor the activity of the upcoming state legislative session and take immediate advantage of opportunities and advocate for the needs of all councils of government.

“We have a lot of big initiatives that could benefit greatly from policy decisions made in the next legislative session. One area we plan to focus on will be pursuing state and federal funding for rural transportation planning organizations,” said Wemple. “These planning organizations play an important role in removing barriers and expanding mobility options for rural residents, but they’re typically limited in the amount of funding they receive. Our goal is to make these organizations more viable and sustainable through increased funding and to also increase accountability to the Texas Department of Transportation and local governments.”

Wemple will also work with the councils of government to increase broadband access across the state – with targeted efforts in economically disadvantaged and rural communities – and to identify further opportunities for public service in light of the pandemic.

“Mr. Wemple was selected by his peers from the regional councils across Texas to lead this esteemed and dynamic group in the upcoming year,” TARC Executive Director Ginny Lewis said. “TARC looks forward to a year with a strong leader with creative ideas and the experience to guide us during the upcoming session through the many challenges all areas of Texas face with regional solutions in mind.”

TARC is the leadership association of the state’s 24 regional councils of government, including H-GAC. Members work with state and federal partners to bring continuity and consistency to projects that cross geographical boundaries and are vital to the health and safety of all Texas residents. The association is governed by a policy board of local elected officials, including county judges, commissioners, mayors and city council members from the 24 regions.

For more information about the Texas Association of Regional Councils, visit txregionalcouncil.org.

For more information about the Houston-Galveston Area Council, visit h-gac.com.

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