



A MORE CONNECTED REGION:

H-GAC'S BROADBAND PLANNING TOOL LAUNCH EVENT

Thursday, May 13 – 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome**
- Chuck Wemple, Executive Director, Houston-Galveston Area Council
- 8:35 a.m. Introduction to H-GAC's Interactive Regional Broadband Planning Website**
- Jillian Donatto, Senior Planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council
- 8:45 a.m. Approaches to Funding Partnerships and Implementation Strategies**
- Heather Mills, Vice President of Grants & Funding Strategies, CTC Technology & Energy
- 9:00 a.m. Grant Programs to Support Expanding Broadband Infrastructure**
- Chip Spann, Director, Engineering & Technical Services, Connected Nation
 - Greg Santoro, SVP Chief Marketing & Strategy Officer, NRTC Rural Utilities Coop
- 9:25 a.m. Irrigating Digital Deserts: The Dayton Experience**
- Theo Melancon, City Manager, City of Dayton
- 9:45 a.m. Q&A**
- 10:00 a.m. Close**

PRESENTERS

CHUCK WEMPLE



Chuck Wemple is the Executive Director of the Houston-Galveston Area Council where he oversees all programs and services including transportation planning, community and economic development, public safety, aging services, and workforce development. He has extensive experience in addressing infrastructure, housing, small business, and economic recovery needs following natural disasters and economic downturns. His current initiatives include working with cities and counties to embrace a regional approach to flood and storm-surge mitigation, exploring privately funded solutions to address infrastructure and housing needs, developing a strategy to expand access to high speed internet, and examining the intersection of environmental justice and regional planning. Chuck is also currently serving as Chair of the Executive Directors' Council for the Texas Association of Regional Councils. The

Houston-Galveston Area Council covers over 12,000 square miles along the upper Texas coast, includes 13 counties and over 100 cities and towns, with 6.6 million people.

JILLIAN DONATTO



Jillian Donatto is a senior planner for Houston-Galveston Area Council where she focuses on economic development programs. Her work focuses on implementing regional strategies to promote resilience and sustainable economic growth. Prior to joining H-GAC she worked as a strategy consultant to public and private sector entities focused on talent attraction and retention, economic and market analysis, real estate and land planning, and place-making.

HEATHER MILLS



Heather Mills is the Vice President of CTC's Funding Strategies Team. She works with clients to identify, strategize, apply for, and comply with the requirements of major federal broadband funding programs. Heather has expertise in the Federal Communications Commission's E-Rate program and Healthcare Connect Fund. She also supports clients with grant and loan applications to the USDA programs and provides information on how to prepare for emerging NTIA broadband programs announced in the American Rescue Plan Act. Heather has worked with E-Rate applicants (schools, libraries, consortia) and public sector/non-profit providers that require training, strategic guidance, and support developing and evaluating RFPs. She also advises on RFP responses, reviews filings, and oversees market research. She prepared a guidebook for non-profit and municipal providers to help navigate the process of becoming an

E-Rate provider. Additionally, she has worked with clients as they navigate post-award processes including funding decision appeals.

CHIP SPANN



Charles (Chip) Spann is the Director of Engineering & Technical Services at Connected Nation. He leads the team in discussions with broadband service providers on data collection and improvements, developing propagation models for wireless coverage, and providing engineering solutions for providers, communities, and states. He also oversees extensive field validation and mobile drive testing. Chip is responsible for CAF Phase I, Mobility Phase I (Auction 901 and 902) mobile drive testing for the Universal Services Administrative Company (USAC) and develops testing methodologies and provides recommendations to USAC and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regarding programmatic process improvements. He serves as engineering consultant to the Ohio Department of Transportation and conducts mobile drive testing, completes engineering equipment specification reviews and develops procurement instruments used in the expansion of mobile and fixed broadband across targeted Appalachian counties in Ohio.

GREG SANTORO



Greg Santoro is chief marketing and strategy officer for NRTC where he is responsible for strategy, marketing, business development, and IT. He joined NRTC from NII Holdings where he was responsible for corporate marketing and branding, product and device development, and strategic planning for a Latin American wireless company. Greg has spent his career in the telecommunications and computer industries building and managing innovative new products and services holding senior positions at Nextel, Sprint, and Bellsouth.net. Greg has an MBA and MS in Engineering Management from Northwestern University, and a BS in computer science from the University of Vermont.

THEO MELANCON



Theo Melancon has served in various government management positions over the past decade. As City Manager in Dayton, he has spearheaded the modernization of business operations and raising development standards. Throughout his tenure, Dayton has quickly amassed numerous awards, including 2019 Sustainable Community of the Year by the Texas Masonry Council, 2019 Scenic City Recognized Status, and 2020 Community of the Year by the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association. Dayton's need for rapid change is due to Houston's current growth trends. These trends have changed in large part to the construction of the Grand Parkway, a tollway that will have four exits in Dayton's city limits. Theo, alongside staff and the City Council, has worked tirelessly to build the foundation for a vibrant Dayton that remains true to its agricultural and rural heritage.

Today's presentations will be available at h-gac.com/gulf-coast-economic-development-district/workshops

Your feedback is important to us. Please complete a brief survey about this event at form.jotform.com/211233960868965