



## Art Contest Winner Crowned

Congratulations to **Que'Andrae Watson**, the winner of the NCTCOG Transportation Department's inaugural Progress North Texas art contest. The Department recently partnered with Fort Worth ISD to hold the contest to help determine the design of Progress North Texas 2012: A Picture of the State of Transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. The students were asked how they think we will travel around the region in 2035, and Watson's was judged the best by a panel of NCTCOG staff members, Regional Transportation Council officers and art instructors. The department received dozens of entries.



Photo: Thinkstock

The fifth annual NCTCOG Aviation Summit brought together industry leaders from throughout North Texas to discuss the long-term outlook of aviation in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. NCTCOG recently completed the North Central Texas General Aviation and Heliport System Plan, which forecasts needs through 2035.

## Future Bright for N. Texas Aviation

**N**orth Texas has a rich aviation heritage and an economy that continues to be shaped by the industry. But a coordinated effort to interest students in aviation is needed to keep young people who aspire to work with aircraft from going out of state for their education.

Sustaining the region's robust aviation industry was a major thrust of the fifth annual NCTCOG Aviation Summit this winter. And many officials agreed that it starts with providing students the right tools, including the opportunity to pursue a four-year degree at home.

State Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas, encouraged those in attendance to continue working together on a comprehensive aviation education system in North Texas. The region needs to work together to make this happen so it can continue to maintain its place near the top of the US aviation industry, West said.

The influence of general and commercial aviation is evident throughout not just Dallas-Fort Worth, but the state. The industry employs an estimated 771,000 people in Texas and boasts an economic output of \$59 billion.

Nationwide, it is becoming

more apparent that the industry needs to grow along with the demand for flying. From 1997-2007, the number of student and private pilots in the US declined by 6.2 percent. During that same period, there was a 10.1 percent decrease in the number of registered aircraft mechanics in the US. Dallas-Fort Worth area leaders hope to reverse declines like these with cooperation and coordination.

"One thing we're trying to do now is make sure we have the same vision for North Texas so when we go to Austin, we can speak with one voice."

— Ross Perot Jr., chairman of Hillwood

Ross Perot Jr., chairman of Hillwood, said the region's cooperative spirit will lead it into the future, just as it helped establish Alliance Airport in Fort Worth in the 1980s and '90s. Perot delivered the keynote address, acknowledging the challenges D-FW faces economically, but urging those in attendance to work together to reach their goals. The region is in much better shape than it was at the end of the last major downturn, he said.

"One of the bigger challenges

we have is we've got these two big markets in Dallas and Fort Worth," he said. "One thing we're trying to do now is make sure we have the same vision for North Texas so when we go to Austin, we can speak with one voice."

He believes with the expiring of the Wright Amendment flight restrictions at Love Field and the restructuring of American Airlines, the region's aviation industry is on solid ground. General aviation seems to be following an upward path, also. NCTCOG reexamined the General Aviation and Heliport System Plan over the past five years to make sure the anticipated growth in the industry could be handled. The short answer is yes.

But more work is required as the region's population continues to grow. If the past 25 years is indicative of what will happen by 2035, the region could be a vastly different place then. From 1985-2011, the 16-county region welcomed 3 million new residents, an 84 percent increase. Employment grew from 2.3 million to 4.15 million, a 78 percent boost.

Planners say demand forecasts for general aviation activity in the region will follow this growth pattern, with the industry expanding nearly 70

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## A Message From Michael Morris

Transportation Director

# Push Toward Cleaner Air Involves Everyone

As we look back at the region's progress in 2011, it's easy to be excited about the future of Dallas-Fort Worth. Major roadway projects throughout the region have been undertaken thanks to the innovative approaches of our public-sector partners and creative partnerships these road-building agencies have formed with private business.

Our passenger rail network also is growing into one of the nation's most impressive systems and will soon provide direct access to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport via DART's Orange Line. The Blue Line will extend light rail service from downtown Garland to Rowlett.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments recently determined another massive rail project – passenger rail along the 62-mile Cotton Belt corridor – is viable. A comprehensive report of potential financing mechanisms indicates \$2.7

billion could be available over 40 years to help pay for it.

But as we admire the work being done to improve the reliability of the transportation system, we must remember how integral air quality is to our future mobility.

Much of North Texas is in serious nonattainment for ozone, meaning our air isn't clean enough to comply with federal ozone standards. We have been working diligently as a region for years to improve our air so our children and grandchildren can breathe easier. Yet, we are still falling short of attainment.

For years, NCTCOG has relied on programs and partnerships with the public and private sectors to help in this effort. TryParkingIt.com allows commuters to log their alternatives to driving alone and find neighbors to share rides with. The AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine Program provides vouchers for qualifying motorists who need help

Color	Air Quality	Actions to Protect your Health
Green	good	None necessary
Yellow	moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion
Orange	unhealthy for sensitive groups	Active children and adults and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion
Red	unhealthy	Active children and adults and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion
Purple	very unhealthy	Active children and adults and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid all prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion

The EPA uses a color-coded system to help residents determine when they may face health risks because of air quality.

replacing or repairing their cars. AirCheckTexas has led to the replacement of more than 25,000 cars and trucks and the repair of more than 25,000.

Air North Texas is the campaign promoting a consistent message and motivating residents to take simple steps to improve the air we breathe. We rely on Air North Texas to tie everything together.

We want to empower individuals and businesses to take ownership of our air quality and the steps necessary to correct our ozone problem.

After years of steadily getting closer to meeting attainment, we took a step back in 2011, thanks in part to the record heat we remember all too well. We are refocusing our Air North Texas campaign in an effort to meet

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## Regional Transportation Council

# Cedar Hill Mayor is Optimistic About the Region

### Member Profile

Rob Franke, Mayor, City of Cedar Hill

Rob Franke has learned an important lesson in his time as chair of the Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition. Although Dallas-Fort Worth has a diverse collection of large and small cities, everyone's challenges are similar.

Dallas' might be on a different scale than those of Cedar Hill, the city Franke has presided over as Mayor for 14 years, but residents deal with the same issues. One of the most important is transportation. And Franke is working at multiple levels to help ensure the region's transportation system continues to improve.

In Cedar Hill, which has grown from 32,000 to more than 45,000 since 2000, he has seen priorities change from simply widening roads to completing projects with a more context-sensitive approach.

For example, when expanding Belt Line Road, which cuts east-west through the city down toward Joe Pool Lake, the typical engineering approach would have been a straight road. But people wanted a road that would preserve the natural beauty of the area and make way for bicycles and trails.

A professional engineer with a degree from Kansas State

University, Franke has been involved in transportation at the city and regional levels for several years.

Duncanville's Grady Smithey, a former member of the Regional Transportation Council, sparked his interest in transportation, encouraging him to learn about the time a project takes from concept to construction. Franke also has been motivated by how transportation boosts quality of life.

Franke has represented Cedar Hill, Duncanville, DeSoto, Lancaster and Glenn Heights on the Regional Transportation Council since 2008. In those four short years, he has made his mark on transportation. He earned the 2011 William J. Pitstick Award, given annually by NCTCOG to a leader who exemplifies regionalism.

Dallas-Fort Worth cannot build enough roads to eliminate congestion, so it must follow a multimodal path, he said.

Passenger rail is part of that solution and brings innovation to the area, he said.

Franke chairs two RTC subcommittees responsible for examining how rail can be expanded in the region. The

Multimodal/Intermodal/High Speed Rail/Freight Subcommittee is developing different approaches to how the region will move people and goods by rail. The Transportation Funding Initiative's Legislative Fundamentals Subcommittee is working on issues related to the implementing agencies, voting geography and use of 4A and 4B tax revenue should the state grant local voters the right to impose additional transportation taxes.

The region faces many funding challenges as it seeks the money necessary to meet the transportation needs of more than 6.5 million residents. Franke has learned that while transportation planners and policymakers must think of the long-term effects of projects, the legislative process is driven by short-term priorities.

So how does one bridge that gap to bring North Texas the funding it needs?

The region should present long-term solutions that are quantifiable in the short-term and are part of a solution that can last years, he said.

People struggle with productivity during their commutes. But if they can drive just a few minutes to a rail station and board a train for the office, they can also get a

head start on the day much easier than if they are behind the wheel stuck in traffic. Once residents understand how they can use their time aboard mass transit vehicles, Franke believes they will be willing to pay for more transit.

The key is demonstrating that added value to people, he said.

Franke enjoys being part of the 43-member RTC because its members genuinely want to do what's best for the region, he said.

They advocate passionately for their positions, he said, but in the end want to find solutions that will help the entire area, not just specific cities, counties or transportation authorities.

But there is an adjustment period for new members.

"There are so many smart people in that room who know so much that it's easy for someone to feel intimidated until they get to know people," he said.

And it doesn't take long to realize that the RTC is full of people who want to do the right thing to boost regionalism, he said.

"I like to see the mutual respect we have for priority projects in the region," he said.

# After 40 years, Key Road is Coming



Construction has begun on Chisholm Trail Parkway. Pictured is work on one of the early segments, a bridge over the Davidson rail yard. Photo: NTTA

When Cleburne Mayor Justin Hewlett was a teenager, he remembers his father, a city councilmember, coming home one night and talking about a road that would connect the Johnson County seat to Fort Worth.

That was 1973.

"I remember thinking, 'Wow, if this road is built, in two years, when I get my license, it will give me another way to get up to Fort Worth. Now I hope to be driving on it before they take my license away,'" Hewlett joked.

He won't have to wait that long.

Residents, business leaders and public officials, some of whom had waited 40 years for the project to take shape, celebrated the groundbreaking of Chisholm Trail Parkway in December at separate events in Fort Worth and Cleburne.

Many projects have been completed since the 28-mile roadway began showing up on thoroughfare plans some four decades ago. But one thing has remained the same – the dream of people living and working along the corridor that they would one day have a direct route to Fort Worth, Cleburne or in between.

That dream could become reality

by mid-2014. That's when the North Texas Tollway Authority plans to complete Chisholm Trail Parkway, the first road the agency will build in Tarrant and Johnson counties.

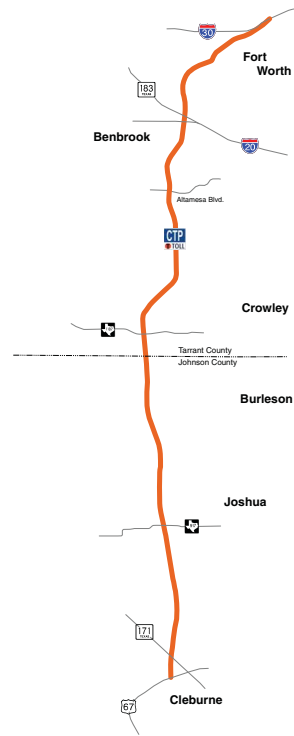
A common theme emerged from the beginning at the Cleburne event – cooperation. NTTA will build the road, but without the coordination of many local, state and federal partners, the project would likely still be in the discussion phase. NTTA, the Texas Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Regional Transportation Council, Johnson and Tarrant counties, and the cities along the corridor were all instrumental in the project moving from concept to construction.

"This is one of the most important events for this area since the railroad came to Cleburne," said Johnson County Judge Roger Harmon, an RTC member. "And I believe that you're going to see a tremendous change in the Johnson County area because of this."

Officials praised the project for the expected boost to business and quality of life it will provide. It will make trips between Tarrant and Johnson counties quicker and easier, as drivers will no longer have to endure the

numerous traffic lights on State Highway 174. Instead, they will have a direct route, reducing drive time and paving the way for business expansion.

Pieces of Chisholm Trail Parkway have been under way since 2010, with work on interchanges at Interstate Highway 20 and US Highway 67, and a Hulen Street bridge over the Davidson railroad yard. But now the work connecting these pieces and the communities in between has finally begun. And NTTA is listening to the concerns of residents and business leaders, holding regular meetings to discuss the project and address the public's concerns.



Still, those residents and businesses will have to deal with the inconveniences that accompany major construction projects for the next 2 years. But that's a small price to pay, especially for those who have waited more than 40 years for the road's arrival.

Soon, there will be a different route from Cleburne to Fort Worth.

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## NCTCOG Hopes to Open New Window with YouTube Channel

The North Central Texas Council of Governments Transportation Department recently established a YouTube channel, which will be used to further enhance communication with the public.

The Transportation Department plans to periodically post videos illustrating aspects of its role as the region's metropolitan planning organization. The channel will serve as a resource to illustrate the transportation planning process to the growing region.

It's hard to miss the many construction projects going on throughout Dallas-Fort Worth.

But construction is just one phase of a multipronged approach to transportation planning. Before the first shovel of dirt is turned, a project must go through an extensive planning process, which includes public involvement and an environmental review. Air quality is an essential component of any transportation project in the Dallas-Fort Worth area because nine counties are classified as being in ozone nonattainment. This requires transportation projects to proceed without harming air quality.

YouTube is the latest tool used to carry on a dialogue with the



public about transportation, whether it's the entire system or a specific project that aims to make trips around the region more reliable.

As with Facebook and Twitter, which the department has been on since 2010, public participation is crucial to success. Residents are encouraged to watch the posted videos and invited to comment and ask questions. Recommendations for future videos are also welcome.

To watch the department's videos, visit [www.youtube.com/nctcogtrans](http://www.youtube.com/nctcogtrans)

# Streetcar on Track for Dallas Return

Dallas is turning back the clock as it looks for alternatives to cars and trucks to move people around the congested downtown area. Streetcars will soon make their return to Dallas with construction on a 1.6-mile starter line now closer after the Federal Transit Administration environmentally cleared the project. And innovation is driving the development of this decades-old transportation mode.

The Dallas streetcar project received a \$23 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to fund much of the \$35 million project. The remaining \$12 million will be covered by regional toll funds received when the North Texas Tollway Authority agreed to build and maintain State Highway 121 through fast-growing Collin and Denton

counties, in the northern part of the 12-county region. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) will use its extensive experience as a transit operator to build and manage the line, while the city of Dallas owns the assets and the North Central Texas Council of Governments serves as the federal grantee, making sure the money gets to the right places.

The line is part of the city of Dallas' comprehensive plan update and is intended to aid the redevelopment of downtown and provide a key connection between the city center and surrounding neighborhoods.

Planners believe this is the beginning of a rebirth and by no means the completion of the vision established by streetcar proponents. The region wants a larger system, but this is what it can afford now. In a time characterized by tight budgets,

the Dallas streetcar project is set to be built thanks to the cooperative effort of three local agencies, the city of Dallas, NCTCOG and DART.

The streetcar system now moves toward final design and construction. DART will soon seek a design/build contractor and begin purchasing streetcar vehicles.

The project will provide a link between the downtown core and the neighborhood of north Oak Cliff via the Houston Street Viaduct over the Trinity River and offer easy connection to other transit options at Union Station. With another transportation option and improved connectivity, access to employment, education and entertainment centers is enhanced, and the city benefits.

With an intense focus on doing more with less, funding projects

has become more difficult. Governments have to look at multiple sources for the money to provide improvements residents are asking for. With TIGER grants, the federal government is helping advance these projects, many of which may have otherwise been placed on the backburner.

Residents will always rely heavily on cars and trucks to move throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area, but the rebirth of the streetcar in Dallas will provide them with one more option. And perhaps more important, it will give the region a model for future transportation projects – one that depends on the expertise of multiple agencies working together to deliver an improvement that makes it easier for people to access jobs and education without having to fight traffic themselves.

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percent by 2035. The system will need improvements to sustain this demand, but if the plan is implemented as anticipated, the industry will be able to continue to thrive amid the growth. The region will need more hangars to

keep up with the expected surge, but will be equipped to handle the increase in aircraft that will come with economic expansion and population growth.

If local and industry decision-

makers commit to funding improvements and system maintenance while continuing to monitor performance, as laid out in the system plan, the region could experience a tremendous economic expansion in the

coming decades. And with coordination of educational resources, North Texas can provide the aviation workforce necessary to maintain its position as a leader in the aviation world well beyond 2035.

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our attainment goal soon so we can ensure the transportation progress you see every day continues.

More important than mobility is the health of the region. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, exposure to ground-level ozone can lead to many health issues, including breathing problems and even permanent lung damage. We need to protect North Texans of all ages from harmful pollutants.

And it starts with you.

We're asking the public to help us by paying attention to ozone forecasts over the next several months. If an air pollution watch is expected for the next day, consider what you can do to minimize your effect on air quality. If you live close to a transit stop, think about taking the bus or train to work. If that's not an option, maybe you can bring your lunch, eliminating a short midday lunch trip. The region has many carpool and vanpool options through TryParkingIt.com. It allows residents to record how they commute to work every day and

see firsthand how much money they are saving. We encourage you to take what you learned from this and apply it during potentially high-ozone days throughout ozone season.

We also need the support of the business community. If you allow your employees to work from home periodically, consider implementing the practice for air pollution watch days. Many of you have experience with this after last year's snow and ice storms. We encourage you to take what you learned from this and apply it during ozone season.

Think beyond ozone season, which began March 1 and runs through October 31. You may decide that permanently implementing these changes makes sense for your company. Your employees may be happier, and even more productive, leading to a more successful bottom line for your business. Are we all doing our share for clean air?

Let's make air quality a focus this season and throughout the year so we can be proud to call Dallas-Fort Worth home. After all ... air quality matters.

For a list of upcoming Transportation Department events, visit <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/calendar.asp>

# mobilitymatters

Quarterly Newsletter of the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area

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