

## TCOG Announces 2018 Better Leader Award Recipients

SHERMAN, October 22, 2018 – Eric M. Bridges, Executive Director of Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) announced the Cooke, Fannin, Grayson and Texoma “Better Leader” Award Recipients, all of whom were recognized and presented with awards last week during TCOG’s 2018 Annual Event.

“Each year we set aside time during our annual event to give recognition to some remarkable individuals whose passion drives them to improve quality of life in our communities in meaningful ways,” said Bridges. “Their selfless accomplishments and contributions are humbling and very deserving of this honor.”

The recipients of the awards are as follows: Mrs. Sandy Schmitz, Cooke County; Judge Joe C. Dale, Fannin County; Mrs. Gail Utter, Grayson County; and Bonham Mayor Roy Floyd, Texoma Regional Better Leader.

Cooke County Judge Jason Brinkley, TCOG’s board president, stated, “I want to congratulate the award recipients and thank them for their hard work and commitment to our region. We are fortunate to have countless volunteers that dedicate themselves to improving lives and strengthening our region.”

Mayor Roy Floyd of Bonham is no stranger to TCOG. For over 25 years, he served in various capacities on the governing board, including several terms as president.

Born in 1945, Floyd has made a tremendous impact on the lives throughout Texoma. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree from Arlington Baptist College in 1968 and has also studied at Southern Methodist University, Grayson College, and East Texas State University. He has served as a board member with the Bonham Chamber of Commerce, Texoma Senior Nutrition Board, Oklahoma & Texas’ Association of Broadcasters, Texas Employment Jobs Service Employment Committee, Texoma Workforce Board, and NETSO Trails Boy Scouts Board. Additionally, he has served as board chair for Bonham Rotary Club, Friends of Sam Rayburn, Texoma Regional Blood Center, Fannin County March of Dimes, Bonham Industrial Foundation, and the Texoma Regional Foundation. Since 2004, he has served as Mayor of the City of Bonham.

Floyd has been involved in many projects including: job recruitment through the Bonham Industrial Foundation, 2 State Prisons, Clyde Coper Texas Veterans Home, Lower Bois d’Arc Lake Project, and the Holiday Inn Express in Bonham. He was instrumental in the formation of the Annual Heritage Day Festival and also played a role in the expansion of Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center.

Floyd has owned several businesses in Bonham including numerous radio stations. In 2015, Floyd was awarded the Community Builder’s Award from the Freemason’s Constantine Lodge No. 13 and the H.G. Dulaney Public Service Award from the Friends of Sam Rayburn.

Sandy Schmitz is a former employee of Weber Aircraft (Zodiac) where she worked for 13 years. She and her husband are residents in Cooke County and have three daughters & a son-in-law: Tiffany & Mitchell, Shelby, and Suzanne. They are also the proud grandparents of one, Lucy Marie.

In the spirit of serving, Sandy served on the Hockaday School Board of Trustees where she was chair of the Executive Board. She has served on the board for The Boys & Girls Club for several years where she currently serves as the interim CEO. Schmitz also served on the Home & School Board at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Gainesville and was voted honoree of the year.

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After retiring from Texas Utilities in 1991, Joe C. Dale felt compelled to serve. In May of 1993, Dale was appointed by Fannin County's Commissioners Court as Justice of the Peace to fill a vacancy on the bench. In 1994, he was formally elected in Fannin County's Precinct one and, until his retirement in December 2014, was re-elected every term to serve Bonham and the surrounding areas for over 21 years.

Dale currently serves on the board at the Fannin Health Clinic and is the past president at the Fannin County Children's Center. In addition to these county programs, Dale serves on the Texoma Regional Advisory Committee and represents the senior population at the state level on the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization whose mission is to promote good government for all Texans by directly involving senior citizens in the legislative process.

Dale is a long-time member of the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Ladonia where he serves as a deacon after being ordained in 1969. He and his wife have one daughter, a teacher, who lives in Austin. When he's not busy being a better leader, he can often be found at Legacy Ridge Country Club practicing his swing of the club.

Gail Utter earned her BBA from Southern Methodist University in Dallas and her MBA from the University of North Texas. With more than 20 years of experience in the financial services industry, she has received numerous national professional awards in the financial industry including Barron's Top 1,200 Advisors 2009-18, Barron's Top 100 Women Advisors 2009-14, along with the statewide Texas Monthly 5-Star: Best in Client Satisfaction Wealth Managers award and, regionally, the Best of Texoma Award.

Utter has served as board member with the American Lung Association, Dallas chapter, chaired Austin College's Community Campaign and also served on Austin College's President's Advisory Board. Additionally, she has served as board member of the Grayson County Airport; is a co-founder and board member of Grand Central Station Dining Car & Soup Kitchen; is the co-founder of NEWCO, a mental health/community service alliance; board member of North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church Council on Finance and Administration; Executive Committee Member for the Red River March of Dimes; a member of the Rotary Club of Sherman; board member of Sherman Chamber of Commerce and the Sherman ISD Education Foundation; campaign chair and board member for United Way of Grayson County; finance chair at Wesley Village Methodist Retirement Home; and Chair of Wilson N. Jones Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees.

She has been recognized as outstanding citizen of the year at the Sherman Jaycees, Woman of the Year at Business and Professional Women, District 12; Citizen of the Year at the Sherman Chamber of Commerce; 2010 Star Award recipient at Sherman Service League; and 2013 recipient of the Emmett Essin Community Service Award.

Brinkley additionally noted, "These individuals are pillars in their communities and are truly helping to build better lives in our region."

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson counties. Established in 1968, Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Both directly and through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region

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and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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