

# **Texas Lyceum Convenes in East Texas to Tackle Touchy Topic “Local Control in Government: Truth and Consequences”**

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(TYLER) The Texas Lyceum, a statewide leadership group, will convene in Tyler this Friday to take on the often-sensitive topic of local control in government. The premier leadership group’s annual meeting will feature prominent state, local and city officials including former Lt. Governor Bill Ratliff.

The 28 year-old non-partisan and non-profit group, whose goal is to foster leadership in both public and private arenas, will hear discussion and debate from a prominent list of Texas officials including former Lt. Governor Bill Ratliff, former Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, State Senator and former Mayor Kevin Eltife, State Representative Fred Hill, and Harris County Tax Assessor/Collector Paul Bettencourt.

“We are honored to have such a noted group of current and former Texas public officials share their knowledge on this heated topic,” said Lyceum President John Boettiger. “I want to thank Tyler Mayor Joey Seeber and Austin Bank Vice Chairman, Jeff Austin, III for their leadership in hosting this event which will generate healthy debate and offer our directors the good, the bad and the ugly realities on how various levels of government implement public policy and sometimes pass the buck. Both Seeber and Austin are current directors in the Lyceum.”

The title of the Tyler conference is: Local Control Truth and Consequences. Participants will explore the issues of local, state and national governments and discuss how these levels of government interrelate and overlap. The topic is at the heart of many of the hot issues of the day; from unfunded mandates to immigration, health care to appraisal caps and property taxes.

“Tyler looks forward to showing our East Texas hospitality to the Lyceum,” said Tyler Mayor Joey Seeber. “Our community, just like many others in Texas, constantly deals with the issues that exist between the different levels of government. We welcome the opportunity to explore this topic and share our experiences with the leaders who are in the Lyceum.”

“Mandates from any level of government continue to have a large impact on the citizens and businesses of Texas,” said Jeff Austin. “Whether it is a federally required ID card required by the states to implement, air quality issues, or beautification initiatives, someone comes up with the idea and someone has to pay for it directly or indirectly. We look forward to having a greater understanding of these issues and beginning to influence the leaders of our state and local communities to foster better solutions.”

### Conference Schedule (Open to the Media)

**Friday, Jan. 18** – Kiepersol Estates

**6:00pm**

Former Harris County Judge Robert Eckels

Eckels served 6 terms in the Texas Legislature before going on to become Judge of the largest county in Texas with over 3.7 million residents. In 2005, he worked hand-in-hand with Houston Mayor, Bill White, to provide shelter to the evacuees of Hurricane Katrina in one of the largest humanitarian efforts in the history of the US.

**Saturday, Jan. 19** - UT Tyler, Ratliff Building North, RM 3035, second floor

**9:00 am**

Defining the Lines of Responsibility: an Overview *Governor Bill Ratliff*,  
Former Texas Lt. Governor

**10:30 am**

Defining the Lines of Responsibility: State Perspective Speakers: *Paul Bettencourt*, Harris County Tax Assessor/Collector and State Representative  
*Fred Hill*

**1:00 pm**

Defining the Lines of Responsibility: Local Perspective  
State Senator *Kevin Eltife* and Fort Worth Mayor *Mike Moncreif (invited)*

### About The Texas Lyceum

The Texas Lyceum, a non-profit, non-partisan organization, is the premier statewide leadership organization. The group consists of 96 men and women from throughout the state, who begin their six-year term while under the age of 46, and who have demonstrated leadership in their community and profession, together with a deep commitment to Texas.

In 2008, the Lyceum will release the second annual Texas Lyceum Poll, an independent survey of Texans’ attitudes about issues facing the state and the nation and conduct meetings in Tyler, El Paso and McAllen for the group’s directors. In October, the organization will hold its 23rd annual public conference in Houston on the topic of Transportation Infrastructure in Texas.

The Lyceum has an impressive list of former members who are serving or have served in the public office including: President George W. Bush, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison-(R) Texas, Governor Rick Perry, former Texas Comptroller John Sharp, Texas State Senators Rodney Ellis (D)-Houston and Kirk Watson (D)-Austin, Houston Mayor Bill White and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

The Texas Lyceum acts as a catalyst to bring together diverse opinions and expertise to focus on national and state issues, and seeks to emphasize constructive private sector, public sector and individual responses to the issues.

To accomplish these purposes, the Lyceum conducts periodic public forums, publishes the Lyceum Journal, The Texas Lyceum Poll and conducts programs for the Directors to explore and discuss key economic and social issues of the state and nation. For more information visit: [www.texaslyceum.org](http://www.texaslyceum.org).