

Water Emergency System Taking Shape

In 2007, the Bay Area Council celebrated a major legislative success. Two years of grinding efforts led by Board of Directors member Ron Cowan to prepare our region for the Big One bore fruit when the legislature created the Bay Area's first new transportation authority of the 21st Century, the Bay Area [Water Emergency Transportation Authority](#) (WETA). In 2009, the effort accelerates. In the words of the Chair of the WETA Board, Charlene Haught Johnson, "This promises to be a watershed year for ferry transportation It has been a long-time coming."



WETA was the result of Bay Area Council-sponsored [Senate Bill 976](#) to consolidate and operate Bay Area ferry service, and to plan and build an emergency water transportation system for the region in the event of an earthquake or other disaster. SB 976 consolidated all current public water transit operators and funding streams in the region under the authority and control of WETA, except those of Golden Gate Transit. As WETA explains, over the past two decades, events have focused us on the importance of emergency preparation and coordinated response-- from the Loma Prieta Earthquake, to 9/11, to Hurricane Katrina. Each of these demonstrated the need to plan for transporting large numbers of people and responding to calls for rescue following natural or man-made disaster in the Bay Area with a regionalized ferry system.

WETA is now completing the [Emergency Water Transportation System Management Plan](#), a key milestone to meet our region's emergency response capabilities. The Bay Area Council is actively participating in shaping this plan, and is very pleased to see WETA come so far.

Learn About Incredible "Teach For America" Program, May 6
Executive Committee member Joe Saunders, Chairman and CEO of VISA, recently discussed the phenomenal program called [Teach For America](#) (TFA). TFA recruits outstanding recent college graduates from prominent schools who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools and often end up becoming lifelong education leaders. An astounding 11% of all Ivy League seniors apply to serve in the program. As President Obama speaks out on behalf of public service as essential to our nation's future, with a special emphasis on education, the program is swelling with success. The Bay Area currently has 330 of these leaders working in our schools. On [Wednesday, May 6th at 6pm](#), Teach For America's CEO and Founder, Wendy Kopp, will speak at the Commonwealth Club and all Bay Area Council members are invited to attend.

Story of the Week

While there is a lot of heavy news, we have to share Bay Area sports legend John Madden announcing his retirement on KCBS radio – [filmed by KPIX, Channel 5](#).

Quote of the Week

"There's no reason why we can't do this. This is America." – [President Obama](#) on high-speed rail.