



**Austin-San Antonio  
Corridor Council**

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***Monday Morning Report – January 18, 1010 (MLK Edition)***

## **Internal**

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled to meet for a half-day retreat on, Tuesday, January 26, beginning at 7:00 am with breakfast and networking at the City of **San Marcos** Conference Center, Embassy Suites located at 1001 E. McCarty Lane. Long term goals and strategies for the Council will be discussed. Lunch will also be provided. Please RSVP to [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org) or call 512-558-7360 for more information.

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council will host a one-day conference and training session for Corridor 'emergency responders' on Monday, January 25, 9:00 am-1:00 pm at the **San Marcos** Activity Center. This is an opportunity for regional first responders and administrators to review and discuss improving traffic incident management on Interstate 35 between **San Antonio** and **Austin**. TxDOT will also be explaining the capabilities of their new IH-35 ITS system. The Corridor Council has secured a limited number of seats for members; if interested in attending, contact TJ Costello at [TJ@thecorridor.org](mailto:TJ@thecorridor.org).

## **Infrastructure**

In a major change from the Bush administration transit policy, President Obama's transportation secretary announced that the Federal Transit Administration would begin evaluating transit projects based upon environmental and economic development benefits, instead of just congestion relief benefits. The change will affect cities and projects all across the country. For more details, click [here](#).

Cash-strapped cities and counties are beginning to feel the impacts of a six-year old statewide program capping property taxes for senior citizens; already, local jurisdictions have lost billions of dollars in revenue and the problem will get worse as baby boomers move into the 'elderly' category. The state's elderly population is expected to double by 2030. Click [here](#) for more details from the **Dallas Morning News**.

Neal Peirce, the regional planning guru who has hosted several Corridor Council events in the past few years, had an interesting piece over the weekend entitled "*Why Is Congress Stalling?*" on re-authorizing the Federal transportation spending bill. Transportation funding has traditionally been non-partisan, and he talks about the problems of returning to that environment under current political conditions. Read it [here](#).

And speaking of Federal transportation funding, the **Dallas Morning News** says this morning that Texas probably won't receive any high speed rail funding. They cite comments by Federal Railroad Administration deputy director Karen Rae – once the general manager of **Austin's** Capital Metro. More [here](#).

## Economic Development (and ‘Other News’)

The **Federal Reserve** announced a record profit of \$46.1 billion last year, reflecting money made off its extraordinary efforts to rescue the US from the worst economic and financial crisis since the 1930s. It marks the biggest profit on record dating back to 1914 when the Fed was created. The previous record profit — of \$34.6 billion — was registered in 2007. In 2008, the Fed reported a profit of \$31.7 billion. The Fed says the bigger profit was primarily due to increased income from the securities it held last year. The windfall gets turned over to the Treasury Department. ***Details.***

*Southern Living Magazine* has named **Gruene** Hall as the “*Best Dance Hall in Texas.*” **Gruene** is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and draws more than one million visitors annually. ***Details.***

The South by Southwest *Music & Film Conference* funneled \$99 million into **Austin’s** economy last year, according to a comprehensive study released by *Greyhill Advisors*. In 2009, the five-nights of music featured more than 1,900 artists from 80 stages last year, while 330 films were cast on eight screens. ***Details.***

The new Westin **Austin** and the downtown W **Austin** Hotel & Residences are expected to add more than 430 jobs to the local economy. The W, set to open in December or early 2011, will be a 36-story project and will include 252 hotel rooms, 165 condos, 35,000 square feet of office, retail and restaurant space and a new theater to host KLRU’s **Austin** City Limits. ***Details.***

**San Marcos** City Council has allocated approximately \$439,213 from the General Fund for the 2010-11 fiscal year to assist programs of local social service agencies. Applications for funding are now available and are due by Feb 5. Applications can be picked up from the Finance Department in the Municipal Building, 630 E. Hopkins or may also be downloaded from the City of **San Marcos** *web site*. Applications must be received by 5 p.m. on February 5, 2010.

**Georgetown** based Ringdale, Inc is one of eight Texas companies (and one of 183 nationwide) to receive tax credits helping defray the cost of new investments in clean energy manufacturing facilities. Over 500 applications were filed with the winners selected after reviews by the Energy Department and the IRS. President Obama announced the 183 winners with total credits worth \$2.3 billion. ***Details.***

**San Antonio’s** Watermark Hotel & Spa and the Omni La Mansión del Rio were recently recognized in both *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Travel +Leisure* magazines as among the top hotels in the world. ***Details.***

### Thought for the week:

*“There are three ingredients in the good life: learning, earning, and yearning.”*

~ Christopher Morley