



**Austin-San Antonio
Corridor Council**

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Monday Morning Report – November 23, 2009

Internal

The Corridor Council Executive Committee met for a special called meeting last week (11/19) in **San Marcos** to discuss long term strategy and goals for the organization. The Committee decided they wanted to schedule a retreat in January to consider some of our programs and initiatives in more detail. If you wish to become involved in these discussions, contact council@thecorridor.org.

The Economic Development Committee is scheduled to meet on Friday, December 11 at 10:00 am at the Corridor Council offices in **San Marcos**. All agenda suggestions should be submitted to TJ@thecorridor.org by December 1.

About 40 members of the Texas Greenbelt Coalition on clean and alternative energy met (11/18) in **New Braunfels** to hear about design progress on a new website and an 'electronic marketplace' built for the organization by the Digital Convergence Initiative. For more information, contact TJ@thecorridor.org.

According to the *Government Insider*, Executive Committee Member Blakely Fernandez is set to replace Charles Conner, who resigned in October, as **San Antonio's** Alamo College's District 7 trustee, Congratulations, Blakely!

Infrastructure

TxDOT approved several I-35 projects last week for a total of \$949 million, most of which will add lanes in **Central Texas** north of **Waco**. Funded by \$2 billion in Prop 12 funds, these projects were part of a final list approved that also included \$130 million for Wurzbach Parkway in **San Antonio**. Details [here](#) for a complete list of projects. For information on Prop 12 funding click [here](#).

Austin's City Council has approved \$13 million for flyovers to connect Mopac Expressway to Ben White Boulevard, according to **Austin Business Journal**. Construction begins in Spring 2010, completion in 2011. TxDOT will pay 80% of the construction cost, or \$10 million, and the city will pay the rest. [Story](#).

The 6th Annual Southwestern Rail Conference (the former South Central Rail Corridor Conference) meets January 28-29 at the Magnolia Hotel in **Dallas**. Leaders from Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas will discuss ongoing plans for higher speed passenger rail on the Federally-designated South Central High Speed Rail Corridor. [Details](#).

Austin launched a co-operative car-share initiative with Daimler last week, beginning the nation's largest car-sharing pilot program with 200 smart cars for the **Austin** area.

On February 26-27, 2010, a number of conservation groups will host "*Sustaining the Hill Country — Now and for Future Generations*," in **Fredericksburg**. For information, contact HHoldsworth@texas-wildlife.org or 800-TEX-WILD (210-826-2904). Program details [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

The Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority approved a 20-cent toll increase (11/18) on the 183-A toll road, scheduled to take effect Jan. 1. Beginning in 2013, tolls will rise by a percentage equal to the annual growth in the Consumer Price Index for urban areas. During the past five years, the cumulative increase in that index was 15.2%.

Economic Development (and ‘Other News’)

Dallas public television station KERA reports that Gov. Rick Perry and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison have agreed to debate on Jan. 14 -- statewide, televised, one hour, with questions posed to them from journalists. Keep a fire extinguisher handy.

BusinessWeek released their annual ranking of the best places to raise your kids in the US, and **San Marcos** made the Top 10. “This article affirms our community’s commitment to educational attainment and quality of place,” said Phyllis Snodgrass, local Chamber President. “**San Marcos** has the best of both worlds: it’s a great place to raise a family and grow a business.” [Story](#).

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas Inc. announced that it has already filled half of the 850 positions being added in **San Antonio** to produce the new Tacoma truck line and will soon begin a new round of hiring (mostly production, tool and die, and facilities positions).

In a speech on Wednesday (11/18), US Treasury Secretary, Timothy Geithner called on banks to "get back to the business of lending" and said a tough credit environment for small businesses will slow economic recovery. Geithner is trying to structure a new initiative to provide low-cost capital to community banks so they can increase lending to smaller firms. The size of the program, which will use money from the government's \$700 billion financial bailout fund, has not yet been determined. [Details](#).

Housing starts in Texas are improving along with national housing starts, according to housing market research firm Metrostudy. Starts increased sharply in the summer and early fall 2009, partly due to the \$8,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers and because speculative inventories are down sharply for many builders as affordable prices have created sharp demands. [Details](#).

Texas State University’s Center for Hetero-Functional Materials received a \$1 million Federal grant to aid in the development future devices used for military, medical and commercial applications. The funds will help position Texas State University as a leader in next-generation scientific innovation. [Details](#).

The **San Marcos** Area Chamber of Commerce’s will host its first *Green Living Showcase* at the **San Marcos** Conference Center on Saturday, March 20, 2010. The new event is expected to bring together hundreds of homeowners and business people for a day of workshops, exhibits and demonstrations involving clean energy and sustainable products. For information call 512-393-5900 or visit the Green Living Showcase [Website](#)

Pflugerville will hire Brandon Wade as the city's new manager. Wade has worked in **Galveston** as deputy city manager for 10 years and has more than 20 years of city government experience.

University of Texas at **Austin** researchers have received 123 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants totaling nearly \$56 million. The projects are spread among 14 schools and units, involving such areas as energy sources and storage devices, environmental products, biomedical applications, new materials and technologies. [Details](#).

Thought for the week:

“There are only three things that can happen when you put a football up in the air, and two of them are bad.”

~ Darrell Royal