



Monday Morning Report

February 28, 2022

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is scheduled to meet Wednesday, March 16 by Zoom videoconference. To add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases are at 435.5 million this morning, with 5.95 million deaths. US cases have reached 78.9 million with 948,397 deaths. (2/28/22) ([Johns Hopkins](#)). Yesterday, Texas reported 5,430,285 confirmed cases with 83,516 deaths, including in **Bexar County**: 461,876 cases with 5,902 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 25,965 cases, with 385 deaths; **Comal County**: 21,583 cases, with 528 deaths; **Hays County**: 51,396 cases with 418 deaths; **Travis County**: 200,904 cases with 1,666 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 107,457 cases with 844 deaths (2/27/22). ([TDHHS](#)). *Current regional hospitalization-rate data is found [here](#).*

INFRASTRUCTURE

A United Nations report published this morning ([here](#)) warns that climate change is outpacing the ability of governments to adapt. But scientists' predictions have changed about how much global warming is actually 'locked in' to the atmosphere by thermal loading, thus reducing the potential recovery timeline required by the planet's weather systems, three researchers noted in the **Washington Post** last week. [Opinion](#).

The US Postal Service, defying Biden administration objections, is moving ahead on plans to spend \$11.3 billion on a new delivery fleet that is 90% gasoline-powered and 10% electric vehicles, the agency said in **Washington** last week. Previously announced plans to retrofit existing gas engines for electrics are also gone. [Story](#).

A recent spate of news reports about shipping disasters - new automobiles ablaze, shipping containers lost, leaking oil tankers - has added to pandemic-driven supply chain disruptions and caused some to question whether there are safety issues afloat in global sea lanes. The short answer is no, **The Atlantic** reports [here](#).

In a sign of just how far the pandemic has decimated air travel, the **Associated Press** reports that the **Dubai** airport - the world's busiest for international travel - retained its top spot with about 29-million passengers last year - a far cry from the pre-pandemic milestone of 86.4 million in annual traffic logged in 2019. [Story](#).

TxDOT staff reported to the Border Trade Advisory Committee last week on the agency's Texas-Mexico Border Trade Master Plan, which includes 661 targeted, location-specific projects with a combined estimated cost of \$37.4 billion. The plan was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission in March 2021. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

New housing starts in the **Kyle-Buda** area of **Hays County** continue to surge, now accounting for nearly 12% of all new housing starts in the **Austin** market, reports the **American-Statesman**. Latest addition to the boom is the D.R. Horton Prairie Lakes project, scheduled to put another 2200 single-family homes on 1000-acres in the area. **Story**. More on the US housing boom (and lack of supply) **here**.

New Braunfels-based Rush Enterprises, owner of the nation's largest network of commercial truck dealerships, posted a record profit for 2021 as higher demand for commercial vehicles and higher freight prices outweighed supply chain issues. Rush reported 2021 profits of \$241 million, more than double its 2020 profits. **Story**.

Texas Government Insider profiled **San Antonio** mayor Ron Nirenberg (2/25), and - after listing accomplishments that included an ambitious housing initiative and the Ready-To-Work development program - revealed that he originally wanted to cover the **Boston** Red Sox as a sportswriter. **Profile**.

More details emerged last week about a potential **Bastrop** campus for Elon Musk's The Boring Company that could include a research and development site, warehouses, and a 'Prufrock' tunneling technology project aiming to reach speeds of 7 miles per day of subsurface tunneling. Housing and a basketball court, too. **Story**.

Hats Off for The Rocket Man: Following a desperate plea from an embattled Ukraine official, **Austin's** Elon Musk activated his Starlink internet network yesterday to provide alternative broadband communications services to Ukrainians cut off by Russian cyber-attacks and power shortages. **Story**.

Thought of the Week

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."

- Carl Jung

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