



Monday Morning Report

March 16, 2026

INTERNAL

The next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee is scheduled for *this* Wednesday, March 18 at 2 PM by Zoom. It will be a brief meeting due to members with Spring Break plans. For more information or to add an item to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The internet blew up over the weekend with videos of long lines waiting to get into **Austin's** Bergstrom International Airport, with many passengers citing delays caused by the temporary US government budget fight over the Transportation Security Administration. But newsletter ***View From The Wing*** says the problem was systemic, not transitory, and noted that the passenger load related to SXSW was 50% higher than usual. ***Story***.

While details remain sketchy, the ***Express-News*** reports that the Trump administration will help to finance a \$300 billion petroleum refinery in **Brownsville**, the first such new facility to be built in the US in the last fifty years. The America First Refining plant claims it will produce 50-billion gallons of petro products per year. ***Story***.

The ***Washington Post*** says that **San Francisco's** Bay Area Rapid Transit appears headed for a financial death spiral, the latest transit victim of high costs and low ridership. 'Nationwide since the 1960's, the total number of transit trips is approximately the same, but the operating costs have quintupled, due to labor costs.' ***Opinion***.

Lonny Stern stepped down last week as the executive director of **Austin-based** Movability, a transit-oriented advocacy group, and will be replaced interim director Kate Harrington - currently the organization's Outreach and Engagement director. Stern moves on to a government relations post at Lime. ***Details***.

Elon Musk's **Bastrop-based** The Boring Company announced 16 finalists in a 'win-a-free-tunnel' competition that must be one of the strangest infrastructure competitions ever held. Boring received 487 submissions in a contest to select a one-mile long, 12-feet in diameter tunnel to solve 'real-world problems.' ***Story***.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Given the staggering impacts on domestic gasoline prices and inflation, US military strategists are wrestling with the complexity of re-opening the Straits of Hormuz without committing 'boots on the ground.' But the trade journal **Maritime Executive** lists other available options and sees signs for optimism. **Opinion**. Meanwhile, other nations such as India are trying to cut side deals with the Iranians to insure their ships' safe passage. **Story**.

Long an issue in **South Central Texas**, data centers - controversial due to their huge demands for electricity and water - are now emerging as a wedge issue in local political races all across the country as candidates weigh economic opportunity against the associated strain on voters' utility bills, **The Hill** reports. **Story**.

Texas Monthly is raising questions about the long-term viability of **Austin's** iconic South By Southwest Conference, the annual showcase for film, television, and technology, citing post-pandemic slowing crowd growth, abbreviated schedule, and dispersed venues due to convention center renovations. **Story. Analysis**.

The **San Antonio Express-News** highlighted the north-of-**Austin** suburb of **Leander** last week, noting explosive population growth in the city of 86,000 and touting its affordability, quality of life & schools, and safety. **Details**.

Thought of the Week

"By changing the inner attitudes of their minds, human beings can change the outer aspects of their lives."
– William James

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